Explicit code-switching instruction in writing for young adolescents speaking African American English

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Explicit Code-Switching Instruction in Writing for Young Adolescents

Speaking African American English

By

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Abstract

This study examined the effects of explicit and systematic code-switching or dialect-shifting instruction on a writing performance of a sixth grade student speaking African American English. Intervention included code-switching or teaching when a certain language variety is appropriate, a side-by-side contrasting of the features of African American English (AAE) and Standard American English, and sentence “translations” from one dialect into another one (Wheeler & Swords, 2008). The intervention was delivered to the subject over the course of nine 60-minute sessions. Writing samples were collected throughout the sessions and were analyzed for the number of features of African American English to monitor the subject’s progress. The findings of the study indicated that explicit code-switching instruction in subject-verb agreement made a positive effect on the student’s writing. While other features of AAE were present in her post-intervention writing sample, they were not sufficiently addressed in the intervention and can serve as a starting point for future studies.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a brief introduction to this case study, presenting an overview of the strengths and needs of the participating student. The purpose of the study was to design a research-based literacy intervention for a student struggling with writing. Design of the intervention and its connection to the special education law, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in particular, as well as the alignment of this study to the Common Core Standards, will also be presented below. The last portion of the chapter will contain an explanation of two terms, African American English (AAE) and Standard American English (SAE), essential to understanding the research.

Introduction to the Child

The only participant in this case study was a sixth grade African American female student, who was 12 years 10 months old at the time of the study. To keep the participant’s data confidential, the research subject was referred to by the pseudonym “Tanya”.

Based on Tanya’s records from her cumulative file, the student attended Eighty-First Street School for kindergarten and first grade. On 4/29/2008 the school referred Tanya for Special Education Services due to her low rates of achievement in reading and writing. She was not admitted into the program due to the absence of parental consent. In 2008 – 2009 Tanya attended Mt. Lebanon Lutheran School. She transferred to Emerson Elementary School for grades 3 and 4. Starting fall, 2011 Tanya has been attending Capitol West Academy. She finished her 6th grade there in June, 2013. The child has no medical concerns mentioned in her records.

Tanya’s major academic strengths are connected to science and social studies. According to her 2011-2012 WKCE assessment, Tanya scored at 373 on reading and 375 on math,
demonstrating minimal performance levels on both sections of the test. Looking at the breakdown of her reading skills, Tanya’s best results were in evaluating and extending text. Her lowest scores were in understanding the meaning of the text. Tanya’s WKCE scores from 2010-2011 indicate that she demonstrated minimal performance in language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. She earned 409 points in reading, placing her at a basic performance level with a cut off score of 396. Comparing the three areas for language arts (writing, language, research and inquiry), Tanya’s lowest score was in writing.

Looking at the line graphs based on Tanya’s reading and math MAP scores administered in grades four and five (10/11/2010, 1/18/2011, 5/18/2011, 9/28/2011, 1/27/2012, 5/3/2012), Tanya was lagging approximately 30 points below the norm-group averages for both types of assessments. She made a considerable improvement in Math on 5/17/2011, reaching her grade-level average, however her scores went down 35 points to 185 by the time of the latest MAP testing on 5/1/2012. Tanya’s reading scores improved by 22 points from 9/28/2011 to 5/3/2012. However, her latest RIT score of 187 was still considerably below the norm-group average score of 212.3.

Ms. Mucha, Tanya’s 1st grade teacher, noted in her report card that she recommended for Tanya to repeat her 1st grade. The teacher stated that Tanya’s assignments were adapted throughout the year, yet the student remained to be a frustrated learner. From an interview with Ms. Ervin, the student’s Math and Science teacher at the time of the investigation, Tanya was performing significantly below her peers in both Math and literacy-related activities. Ms. Ervin added that the parents have been contacted about offering Tanya additional supports through special education services, however the family was concerned about the stigma of Tanya labeled as a child with special needs and repeatedly refused the services.
The student was reported to work best when receiving individual attention. From her classroom observation on 07/01/2013, she gave up quickly after being frustrated with the assigned task and refused to continue. She rarely indicated she needed help and preferred looking at her classmates’ papers instead of asking the teacher. This information was helpful when planning interventions for Tanya. It was necessary to stress to her that learning the process with sufficient quality was more important than the result.

At the time of the investigation there were some concerns over Tanya’s willingness to stop participating. The only two office referrals located in Tanya’s cumulative file were from 2\textsuperscript{nd} grade. One of them was for fighting and another one was for being defiant and stubborn with the teacher. Tanya’s former teacher from Emerson High School noted in her comments in the student’s spring 2010 report card that “she talks a lot around other students, gets stubborn at times and doesn’t complete class assignments”. In her spring 2009 report card Tanya was described as a good leader and a friendly, hardworking student. Comments from the teacher in the same source noted that Tanya needed to work on her self-control, mental attitude, and respect for authority.

Tanya has exhibited excellent attendance throughout her school years. She had perfect attendance in 2011-2012 and only missed one day in 2012-2013. She missed one day during the research process because of oversleeping.

**Intervention Design**

After administering the pre-intervention assessment in the form of a writing prompt, the researcher identified that Tanya used multiple features of AAE in her formal writing. Additionally, an interview with Tanya’s teacher indicated that she needed support in writing and
frequently gave up working independently out of frustration. The student’s previous school records demonstrated that Tanya exhibited considerable interest in Language Arts in first and second grades. Her attitude and performance in writing had changed dramatically due to higher demands on her work as she progressed to higher grades. The student had been described as unmotivated and distracted possibly due to her low performance in reading and writing.

Given her areas of need, the researcher designed an intervention to connect the home language Tanya frequently used in oral speech to her writing in the school setting. The intervention provided specific instruction in code-switching, helping the student organize the grammar she already used with AAE and teach her specific strategies to transfer familiar to her structures into SAE. The researcher used sentence translations between formal and informal styles of writing, as well as contrastive analysis, where she discussed a side-by-side grammatical comparison between AAE and SAE, basing her examples in Tanya’s sentences from her writing samples.

**Connection to the Law**

Based on the records from her cumulative file, it is known that at age 6 the student had been referred to the special education services. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), a law that ensures services to children with disabilities, established that either a child's parent or school district can initiate a request for an evaluation to determine if a student is a child with a disability and needs special education. In Tanya’s case, the school has originated an initial referral to special education. Since the student’s parents did not wish for her to receive special education services, they did not provide consent for an evaluation. IDEA states that “if the parent of a child fails to respond to a request for, or refuses to consent to, the initial provision of special
education and related services, the public agency is not required to convene an IEP Team meeting or develop an IEP under Sec.Sec.300.320 and 300.324 for the child”. Tanya did not have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) developed at the time of the intervention; however her records have indicated that multiple teachers suspected she could benefit from receiving special education services.

**Connection to the Common Core Standards**

The intervention implemented in this case study focused on contrasting features of African American English and Standard American English with the purpose of improving the student’s ability to code-switch and use Standard English grammar in her formal writing. This goal is aligned to several Common Core Standards. One of the English Language Arts Standards for writing in the sixth grade states that the students should be able to “produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience” (English Language Arts Standard, Grade 6.4,” n.d.). The researcher emphasized to the student that multiple language styles and varieties are appropriate for different contexts. They focused on transferring grammatical forms of African American English into equivalent features of a more school-appropriate and formal Standard English.

Another English Language Arts Standard for writing in the sixth grade states that students should be able to “establish and maintain a formal style” (English Language Arts Standard, Grade 6.2e, n.d.). The intervention described what some of the components of formal writing are and how the student could incorporate and “translate” her home language to produce written material in formal settings.
**Explanation of Terms**

The two terms, Standard American English (SAE) and African American English (AAE), will be described below the way they will be used in the context of this study. The student will be taught to transfer common structures of AAE into SAE.

Standard American English (SAE) is a language variety of English spoken and accepted by the educated, affluent, professional, and governing groups of the United States (Wolfram, Adger, and Christian, 1999). SAE is used as “the lingua franca of the business and professional world” (Wheeler & Swords, 2008, p. 13). It is the form of American English used in the classroom and in the textbooks (Isaacs, 1996, p.2).

African American English (AAE), also known as African American Vernacular English, Black English, Black English Vernacular, and African American language, is a language variety spoken by many African Americans. It is commonly “used in casual, familial, community settings” (Wheeler & Swords, 2008, p. 13).

**Conclusion**

This chapter provided an overview of specific components of this case study, including information about the participant in this research, design of the intervention, its connection to the Common Core Standards and the special education law, and explanation of the terms used in the study. The following chapter will explore previously completed research on the subjects of African American English and the strategies used to improve literacy performance of the students speaking AAE. The researcher will summarize some of the existing literature on code-
switching and dialect-shifting published in scholarly journals to support the design of the intervention.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter summarizes the studies relevant to my action research: explicit code-switching instruction for improving writing of African American English speakers. The articles explore complex relationships between the use of African American English and development of literacy. The articles cover the following three major areas: 1) emergent literacy skills and the use of African American English, 2) grade-related changes with African American English, 3) code-switching and literacy outcomes.

Emergent Literacy Skills and African American English

produced by young children and their caregivers and how their interactions impact child’s dialectal development.

A study conducted by Kohler, Bahr, Silliman, Bryant, Apel, and Wilkinson (2007) examined African American English dialect and performance on nonword spelling and phonemic awareness tasks. The purpose of the study was to analyze the relationship between high and low dialect use of African American English (AAE) in first and third graders and their spelling and phonemic awareness skills. The researchers focused on three guiding questions. 1) How did children’s grade level and their dialect use impact their phonemic processing skills? 2) What was the relationship between children’s degree of dialect density and their scores on nonword spelling tests? 3) What were the types and frequencies of phonological features of AAE used by participants in their nonword spelling tests? Grade levels and dialect density were considered independent variables while nonword spelling scores and phonemic awareness data were treated as dependent variables.

The sample consisted of 80 typically-developing African American students, both male and female, from west central Florida. One half of the participants were first graders with the mean age of 7, and the other half were third graders with the mean age of 9. All of the participants were attending elementary schools where more than 75 percent of the students received free or reduced lunch, indicating that the schools serve students from high-poverty area (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). To be included in the study, the children had to go through a language screening and two narrative elicitations, in which they were asked to narrate silent videos. The students had to have at least two features of AAE present in their oral narratives to pass through the screening for the study. Participants from grades 1 and 3 were
further subdivided based on their degree of AAE use into high and low dialect density groups. The researchers implemented Dialect Density Measure (DDM), which was calculated by “dividing the total number of phonological AAE patterns by the total number of words” used in children’s narratives to determine their dialect use (Oetting & McDonald, 2002, p. 506).

All of the children were tested on two measures: phonological awareness and nonword spelling. In order to administer the spelling measure, real words targeting various AAE features from grade-appropriate curricula were converted into nonwords after substitution of certain phonemes. Students were supposed to listen to the recording of the words produced by a Standard American English (SAE)-speaker and write them down. The researchers produced a spelling assessment based on the Treiman-Bourassa Early Spelling Test (T-BEST; Treiman & Bourassa, 2000) to score children’s nonword spellings. In order to provide the phonemic awareness measure, the Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing (Wagner et al., 1999) was administered to all participants. The test demonstrated the students’ performance in three areas: phonological awareness, phonological memory, and rapid naming.

The researchers found that when comparing children with high dialect density measures (DDMs), first graders scored better than the third graders. The findings for nonword spelling indicated that there was a small negative relationship between the dialect use and nonword spelling accuracy for third graders. This correlation was not found in first graders. In a total of 920 nonword spellings for both grades, “30% contained an AAE pattern, 61% contained only SAE errors, and 9% were conventionally spelled” (Kohler et al., 2007, p. 164). The three most common phonological AAE patterns among the participants were: final consonant cluster reduction not involving /l/ (i.e. hes for hest), zero /l/ before bilabial stops (i.e. tep for telp), and final consonant devoicing (i.e. frit for frid).
Qualitative analysis of the nonword spellings indicated that regardless of the grade, AAE had an impact on children’s spelling accuracy. Although most of the spelling errors were not dialect-related, participants with higher DDMs produced more AAE-related errors in their spelling.

The previous study examined relationships between AAE dialect, phonemic awareness, and spelling performance of first and third graders. The authors identified a positive correlation between the students’ dialect use and the amount of errors they produced that were influenced by their dialect. The following study provides more insight in the relation between emergent literacy skills and the use of AAE while exploring similar variables now with preschoolers.

Connor and Craig (2006) wanted to understand the causes of the academic achievement gap between African American students and their European American counterparts. In order to do so, the researchers examined children’s dialectal features and their relation to emergent literacy skills in young students having limited exposure to formal education. Connor and Craig (2006) posed the following two questions for their study: (1) What is the relation between the students’ use of AAE and their language and emergent literacy skills? (2) What is the relation between AAE use when students are given explicit instructions as opposed to the absence of explicit instructions to use SAE?

The participants for the study were recruited from preschool classrooms in two school districts. Sixty-three African American children were selected. All of them were enrolled in federally funded preschool programs designed to support families with children at risk for academic underachievement. Forty-three participants were from a district located at in the urban fringe of a metropolitan city, where the percentage of African American children per classroom
was approximately 70%. Twenty of the children were from a district in a midsized city, where African Americans constituted about 30% of the children in the classroom. All children used AAE for informal conversations at home.

Children were assessed once in fall and five times in spring. The test designed for fall assessed receptive vocabulary and was administered through the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test – Third Edition (PPVT-3; Dunn & Dunn, 1997). Children were asked to identify the meaning of increasingly difficult words by pointing at one of the four pictures that matched the definition.

Spring assessments included AAE use and percent dialect density measure, sentence imitation, vocabulary, letter-word recognition, and rhyming. To determine the percent dialect density measure, the children were asked to narrate a picture book *Frog, Where Are you?* (Mayer, 1969). Dialect density measure (DDM) percentage was calculated as “the number of AAE tokens divided by the total number of words in the sample multiplied by 100” (Connor & Craig, 2006, p. 776). With sentence imitation task, the participants were asked to repeat sentences of increasing difficulty spoken in SAE. Researchers used this test for samples of children’s speech with an explicit instruction to use SAE. In order to assess vocabulary and letter-word recognition in the spring, the Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Achievement – Third Edition (Woodcock & Mather, 2001), a standardized norm-referenced assessment was administered. For the purposes of the study the investigators only administered the Picture Vocabulary and Letter and Word Identification subtests. For the final rhyming task, the children were first asked to determine whether two words rhymed and later were asked to come up with a word of their own that would rhyme with a target word provided by the researchers.
Interestingly, the data collected from the fall and spring assessments show that both children using AAE forms very frequently or very infrequently based on their DDM percentages, performed better on sentence imitation, letter identification and rhyming tasks when compared to the students who used a medium amount of AAE features in their oral narrative. This U-shaped relationship between preschooler’s dialect use and their literacy skills might be supporting dialect shifting and dialect awareness hypotheses (Charity et al., 2004; Craig & Washington, 2004a). The children who used more dialect features and the participants who used fewer DDM’s in their oral narrative both did well on subsequent literacy measures. However, speakers of AAE with high dialect features demonstrated their metalinguistic awareness, being able to switch between two dialects. On average, participants who scored higher on their fall vocabulary test, did better on spring literacy assessments than their peers with lower fall vocabulary scores. One of the most important implications from this investigation was that linguistic skill serves as a better predictor of children’s literacy skills than whether they use AAE or not.

While the two previous studies concentrated on how AAE influences children’s general literacy skills, the next two studies explore the influence of dialect on comprehension of students speaking AAE.

In their 1998 study researchers from the University of Michigan – Craig, Washington, and Thompson-Porter – analyzed comprehension skills of children speaking AAE. In order to accurately assess linguistic development of African American children, we need to understand what serves as a part of normal development and what assessment tools might be measuring language development inaccurately, due to a cultural bias. The researchers were trying to determine whether there was a systematic relationship between how well African American children were able to comprehend and appropriately respond to Wh-questions with passive and
active voice) and their age or grade. They also considered how children’s success with the aforementioned tasks related to their cognitive abilities and oral production.

Sixty-three African American children (31 boys and 32 girls) from the Detroit area comprised the subject sample for this study. Twelve of the children were attending preschool, thirty two were enrolled in kindergarten and nineteen were first graders. Participants were selected based on typically developing language skills, middle socio economic status, and their age ranging from four through seven years.

Two comprehension activities were designed specifically for the research: Response to Wh-Questions task and a Reversible Sentence task. The first task involved the researchers showing two pictures from the Bracken Concept Development Program (Bracken, 1986) and asking students what, who, why, how, when, and where types of questions using AAE. Each question presumed only one correct object from the picture as its correct response. The children received partial credit for answering a similar Wh-question instead of the target one or for mislabeling the correct object. The second task was designed to determine how well the participants were able to interpret active and passive sentence constructions. They were presented with thirty prompts and asked to point at the picture that best represented the stated sentence in either active or passive voice. For example, a researcher would say “The girl was pushed by the boy” and the child would be expected to point at the picture depicting the situation. Additionally, the Triangles subtest of the Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children (Kaufman & Kaufman, 1983) was administered to all children in order to assess their nonverbal cognition.
An error analysis of the children’s scores on both the Wh-questions task and the Reversible Sentence task demonstrated that there was a significant correlation between the children’s mean scores and their grades. First-graders performed significantly better than preschoolers, as was expected. There was also no significant correlation found between children’s gender and their scores. These findings indicate that comprehension of Wh-questions, as well as appropriate interpretation of passive and active sentence structures are parts of normal language development of African American children. These tasks can be used to assess a comprehension portion of language development for African American students.

Craig et al. (1998) identified that Wh-questions and tasks involving differentiation between active and passive voice constructions were free from the influence of AAE and could be used as a way to examine language development of a child speaking AAE. The next study also investigates comprehension, focusing on AAE-speaking children’s comprehension of two types of double negative structures.

In his 2004 study Coles-White examined negative concord in child African-American English and its implications for specific language impairments. He focused on comprehension of two different types of double negatives by African American English (AAE) – speaking students, contrasting it with that of Standard American English (SAE) – speaking students. The purpose of this study was to analyze and describe comprehension of negation structures with a potential of better identifying special learning impairments in children speaking AAE.

The researcher addressed the following three questions. 1) Do children speaking AAE vary in their performance from their SAE-speaking peers on a grammatical judgment task, requiring them to interpret sentences with double negative structures? 2) If differences in the
correct responses between children speaking SAE and AAE exist, are they correlated to dialect, age, and gender? 3) Were any items on the task more difficult for the speakers of AAE than for the SAE-speaking group? (Coles-White, 2004, p. 214) A child’s dialect, gender, and age were independent variables while his or her scores on the grammatical judgment task served as a dependent variable.

The sample consisted of 61 children (29 male and 32 female) ages 5 through 7 from working class backgrounds in the northern United States. Prior to conducting the investigation, the researchers videotaped all participants during a picture description task to determine whether they would be selected for target (AAE-speaking) or comparison (SAE-speaking) groups. The target group had 35 African American students and the comparison group had 25 European American children and 1 biracial child. All of the children were native English speakers and did not have any disabilities.

Coles-White distinguished between a true double negative and a negative concord. The latter was defined as “the expression of two negative elements in a syntactic environment or sentence where they are in agreement and, therefore, are interpreted together as a single negation (Martin, 1992). The statement “He didn’t feed the baby with no bottle” (Coles-White, 2004, p. 215) is an example of a negative concord. It has two negative elements, but would be interpreted as one negation, communicating that somebody did not feed the baby with a bottle. Coles-White (2004) uses a sentence “He didn’t feed the baby with no hair” (p. 215) as an example of true double negative. The sentence is supposed to be interpreted with two negatives in mind, taken separately, as if he did not give any food to the baby that did not have any hair.
The participants of the study were exposed to 5 short stories followed by a series of questions with supporting pictures to check for students’ comprehension. Each text included one true double negative sentence where both negative structures were meant to be interpreted separately; one negative concord sentence, where double negatives intended to communicate one negation; and a single negative sentence. Children were to answer the questions related to the text by pointing at a certain object on the picture. For instance, the researcher would read “He didn’t feed the one that meows; which one did he feed?” (Coles-White, 2004, p. 216). The expected response from the participant would be to point at a dog on the picture.

The findings of this study demonstrated that there were no significant differences between the scores based on children’s dialect. As developmentally expected, the number of correct responses increased with participant’s age. Across all groups, there were significantly more correct responses for negative concord sentence types, which may be due to the children learning to interpret it sooner than true independent double negatives.

The next study, conducted by Washington and Craig in 2002 examined morphosyntactic forms of African American English used by young children and their caregivers. The purpose of the research was to extend the knowledge base about children’s use of AAE in relation to their community. Washington and Craig (2002) analyzed whether there were any systematic differences between AAE forms used by adults and children. They also wanted to determine what specific similarities or differences were present between AAE forms used by children and their primary caregivers.

The participants of this study were 28 African American children (15 male and 13 female) from metropolitan Detroit area. They ranged in age from 4 years and 3 months to 7 years
and 1 month. All of the children were enrolled in the same metropolitan public school system, where more than 80% of the students were African American. Each child had their primary caregiver participate in the study. All of the adult participants were female. 25 of them were mothers and 3 were grandmothers. Most of the participants (N = 22) were from households with middle income. Remaining 6 participants came from households with low socio-economic status.

To collect their data, the researchers conducted home visits and audiotaped interactions between a caregiver and a child. Each recording lasted around 20 minutes. The children were prompted to select a toy set for play. They were offered three different options: “Barbie and Ken dolls with a Burger King play set, Ninja Turtle action figures and props, and the Fisher-Price School” (Washington & Craig, 2002, p. 213). To obtain a more authentic sample of the interactions, a researcher either stayed in the room quietly reading a book or went away after setting up her equipment and providing the toys. Audiotaped conversations between children and their caregivers were later transcribed using the CHAT conventions of the Children’s Data Exchange System (CHILDES; MacWhitney, 1994). The transcripts were scored for the types of AAE forms used and their total number. The researchers used definition of AAE features from their previous studies (Washington & Craig, 1994, 1998) to identify their number and the types of AAE produced in the recordings.

An examination of the child and adult transcripts revealed that there were three morphosyntactic forms evident in the speech of at least 24 out of 28 participants. They were deletion of the copula (i.e., she _ pretty), deletion of the auxiliary (i.e., I _ get you a shake), and subject-verb variation (i.e., he go to work). In addition to these three high-frequency AAE forms across the age groups, 86% of adults frequently used noninverted questions (i.e. That’s their house?), a feature only present in 32% child participants. It should be noted that although the
researchers used mean calculations to identify trends in the transcripts of both groups to produce generalizations relevant to the study, there was a great deal of individual variation across every subject. The quantitative data also indicated that both children and their caregivers had a very similar frequency of occurrence and distribution of their dialect use. Children, using the widest types of AAE, were found to be the closest in the amount of dialectal use in comparison to their caregivers. The findings of this study including preschoolers contrast to the results of previous research stating that adolescents’ use of AAE was more frequent compared to their parents.

To summarize this section, five articles were included that discussed how children’s use of African American English influenced their emergent literacy skills and comprehension. The research by Kohler et al. (2007) suggested that AAE-speaking children transferred some of their dialect-specific phonological features into writing. The children that used more dialectal features in their oral narratives also were more likely to make errors in their nonword spelling tests. Connor’s & Craig’s (2006) study noted that there was a U-shaped relation between children’s use of AAE features and their scores on literacy tasks. Preschoolers using a lot of AAE features or a few AAE features did better than the children who used a moderate amount of AAE in their speech. Both comprehension studies revealed that AAE-speakers were not struggling with comprehension tasks given to them by the researchers. Coles-White (2004) points out that his investigation found no significant differences in the scores of AAE-speaking children comparing their comprehension of double negative constructions to that of SAE-speaking children. Washington and Craig (2002) described and analyzed morphosyntactic features prevalent in children of preschool age and their caregivers. The following research review focuses on grade-related changes of AAE production.
Grade-Related Changes with African American English

Section two discusses three research articles that examine production of African American English across different stages of children’s development. The studies also investigate participants' literacy achievement at different grade levels. The first study has a sample with the youngest students, grades 1 through 5, participating in the research. The second study examines dialectal features of students across grades 3, 5, and 7. The last study compares production of AAE in oral and written setting among third and eighth graders.

Two researchers from the University of Michigan, Craig and Washington (2004), analyzed changes in the production of AAE features based on the grade level. They were trying to determine whether there were differences in production on AAE depending on the students’ grade levels, what the AAE features for each grade level were, and how dialect density related to achievement. The investigators hypothesized that dialect-shifting was related to better reading outcomes.

Four hundred typically developing students (178 males and 222 females) preschool through fifth grade participated in the study. All of the students resided in the metropolitan Detroit area. One hundred fifty of the students came from households with low SES and 250 children were from middle-SES homes. The Peabody Picture Vocabulary – III (PPVT – III; Dunn & Dunn, 1997) was administered to every participant to determine that their scores were within two standard deviations from the mean. There were no children identified with any speech impediments or articulation difficulties.

In order to collect language samples, Craig and Washington (2004) asked participants to describe three action pictures from the Bracken Concept Development Program (Bracken, 1986).
Students’ responses were transcribed and coded for phonological and morphosyntactic features of AAE previously summarized in the research by Craig et al. (2003) and Washington and Craig (2002). A dialect density measure (DDM) was calculated, where the number of AAE features produced by the child was divided by the number of words in the narrative. In order to compare AAE dialect density and reading achievement, the researchers obtained the scores from state standardized reading achievement tests administered by the participants’ schools. Sixty seven percent of first through fifth graders’ results from standardized reading achievement tests were available for the study.

The study revealed that there was an overall decrease in morphosyntactic dialect features across the grades, which was most evident between kindergarten and first grade. Phonological features did not differ significantly across grades. The group of students with higher features of AAE and thus lower ability to dialect-shift demonstrated lower scores on standardized reading achievement tests. Interestingly, the students who used fewer dialect features and, who by implication, learned to dialect shift into Standard American English performed better on both reading standardized tests and the PPVT – III. The researchers concluded that “dialect-shifting is advantageous for reading acquisition” (Craig and Washington, 2004).

The previous study demonstrated that there was a sharp decrease in the use of AAE features at first grade possibly related to the students’ greater explicit academic expectations to use Standard American English. The researchers also determined that student who learned to switch their dialect across oral and written contexts performed better on reading achievement tests than their peers who did not show evidence of dialect-shifting (Craig and Washington, 2004).
The next study completed by Isaacs (1996) investigated the persistence and change of non-standard dialect production among African American and White children across three school grades. The research addressed the following three questions: (1) “Are school-age children able to discriminate between non-standard dialect and standard dialect across grade levels, race, and gender? (2) Does the comprehension of standard dialect vary across grade levels, race, and gender? (3) Does the production (use) of non-standard dialect vary across grade levels, race, and gender?” (Isaacs, 1996, p. 6). In this study grade, race, and gender were considered independent variables. Dialect discrimination scores, comprehension of standard dialect scores, and non-standard dialect production scores were treated as dependent variables. The researcher defined Standard English (SD) as the language used in the textbooks in school. In this study the non-standard dialect (NSD) the investigator is exploring is Black English (BE), however Isaacs specifically points out that NSD subsumes any dialect that deviates from the SD.

The participants in this study were 114 third-grade (N = 40), fifth-grade (N = 40), and seventh-grade (N = 34) students residing in central North Carolina. The students’ socio-economic status was not available; however, it was known to vary widely due to busing policies of the schools the students attended. Boys represented 35% of the population sample, and girls represented 65% of the sample. In each grade there were 19 African American students. There were 21 White students in fifth and third grades, and 15 White participants who attended seventh grade. All of the subjects were administered a hearing test to determine that they had no hearing impairments that could influence the results of the study. There were no children in the sample who were currently receiving or had ever been referred to special education services.

Scores for the following three tasks were collected during the investigation: (1) discrimination of non-standard dialect and standard dialect, (2) comprehension of Standard
dialect, (3) production of non-standard dialect. Based on the previous research by Washington and Craig (1994), researchers designed and recorded 20 sentence pairs that utilized five contrasting features commonly associated with SD and NSD. They were “(a) subject-verb agreement/ subject-verb disagreement, (b) negation/multiple negation, (c) possession/absence of possession, (d) use of copula/ absence of copula, and (e) absence of be/presence of be” (Isaacs, 1996, p. 5). The students were supposed to listen to the recording and mark sentences as “School Talk” or “Not School Talk”. For the comprehension part of the study the subjects performed Language Assessments Tasks (LAT) (Kellman, Flood, & Yoder, 1977). The test measured comprehension of syntax (before and after relationship, conjunctions, active/passive voice structures, comparative, and transitive relationships) and comprehension of the semantics (vocabulary, “Wh” questions, idioms, riddles). The production part of the investigation involved the subjects being administered the Sentence Production Task of the Test of Dialect Dominance (Wiener et al., 1983). The scores from the task determined to what extend a student used NSD and what were the features prominent in their dialect. Participants were presented with five different pictures with prompts specifically designed to elicit five dialect-specific features described in the aforementioned discrimination task.

As hypothesized by Isaacs (1996), the findings from the study indicated that significant differences in scores among all three tests of the investigation occurred only for a variable of grade. When investigating specific dialectal features used by the students during the production assessment, there was a significant difference in NSD decreased use when comparing third and fifth graders. The same difference was not observed between fifth and seventh graders. There was a decline in use of all NSD features across grades with a “presence of be” not being used by seventh graders at all. Subject verb disagreement was the most frequent feature of NSD among
third graders. Neither race nor gender had a significant effect on NSD production. The data also indicated that speakers of NSD comprehend SD.

The results of the study could be explained by language development and adaptation to greater language demands that the students face as they progress through the school grades. It appears that somewhere between the third and fifth grade the children learned to dialect shift to better adapt to the academic requirements of their schools.

As with the qualitative results of the study conducted by Craig and Washington (2004), Isaacs’ (1996) research demonstrated evidence of a decline in dialectal features of AAE-speaking children as they progressed through the school grades. The following study compares oral and written English styles in African American students across different stages of writing development.

The study conducted by Ivy and Masterson (2011) examined the development of code-switching skills among 3rd and 8th grade students speaking African American English. The researchers hypothesized that there would be more similarities and more dialect use in oral and written samples elicited from the 3rd graders than in the samples of the 8th graders. This would indicate that with age children learn to dialect shift between their oral language and the more formal and standard language of academic writing.

The participants of this study were 15 third grade and 15 eighth grade students from elementary and middle schools located in two different school districts of the northern Mississippi. All participants were typically-developing children, performing at their grade levels in reading and language arts. The third graders (9 boys and 6 girls) ranged in age from 8 years 0 months to 9 years and 11 months. The eighth graders (5 boys and 10 girls) ranged in their age
from 13 years and 8 months to 14 years and 9 months. The two grades were selected based on previous investigations and Kroll’s (1981) developmental writing model. His model suggested a child’s writing development went through four stages in relation to the similarities between writing and speaking. The third graders represented a sample of students in the developmental level prior to the differentiating between writing and speaking. The eighth graders were supposed to be at the last stage of their writing development, where they would know to dialect shift. All participants spoke AAE.

The researchers met with each participant during three 40-minute sessions. During the first meeting, participants were engaged in an informal conversation to determine their use of AAE. The researchers administered a hearing test and the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-III (PPVT – III; Dunn & Dunn, 1997) in the course of the same session. During sessions two and three the students were asked to complete two of the four experimental tasks: (1) watch a 10-minute video segment and spend 10 minutes on writing a narrative retelling what happened in the video; (2) watch a 10-minute video segment and spend 3 minutes orally retelling what happened in the segment; (3) answer open-ended interview questions in writing; (4) complete a spoken interview (Ivy and Masterson, 2011).

The findings of the study indicated that 67% of the participants were able to dialect shift and use fewer features of AAE in writing compared to their oral samples. While there were no significant differences in the dialect use of 3rd and 8th graders’ oral samples, the 8th graders decreased the number of their AAE features when writing. These findings support the researchers’ hypothesis, stating that the older children were able to code-switch between spoken and written modalities. This study confirms that there is a developmental transition occurring between the third and eighth grades, enabling the students to be aware of the rules of academic
writing and the contrast they pose to the spoken language of AAE speakers. It also provides further implications for explicit instruction of code-switching to facilitate the process of meta-awareness of contrasting features between the spoken dialect and formal writing for speakers of AAE.

To conclude, section three included summaries of the three articles about grade-related changes in production of African American English across grade levels and contexts. All of the studies indicated that children demonstrated a decrease in the use of AAE dialect as they moved up the grade levels in school. Ivy and Masterson (2011) as well as Craig and Washington (2004) went further with these findings and examined grade-related changes of African American English in oral and written contexts. In both studies older students were better able to dialect switch from AAE to SAE in oral and written contexts respectively. The next studies will examine how this ability to switch dialects or code-switch impacts literacy achievement.

**Code-Switching and Literacy Outcomes**

The last section of this literature review comprises three articles that examine the relationship between the ability of AAE-speaking students to dialect-shift and their reading and writing outcomes. The study by Thompson, Craig, and Washington (2004) focuses on variable production of African American English across oral and written contexts. Craig, Zhang, Hensel, & Quinn (2009) evaluated the contribution made by students’ ability to dialect shift within oral and written contexts to their scores on reading achievement tests. Hill (2009) shares her observations from an ethnographic case study, where a teacher uses code-switching pedagogy in his classroom. The following studies will describe the findings researchers obtained during their investigations.
In their 2004 study Thompson, Craig, and Washington examined how dialect shifting between African American English (AAE) and Standard American English (SAE) occurs in the context of different academic tasks. The purpose of this study was to investigate how much the students speaking AAE used it in their oracy, which refers to oral expression, and literacy. Specifically, the researchers asked three questions. 1) What is the discrepancy between the amount of AAE use in writing and reading as opposed to speaking? 2) What are the characteristics of AAE in speech, reading, and writing? 3) Are there specific features of AAE for each context? (Thompson et. Al., 2004, p. 271)

The pool of participants consisted of 50 typically developing third grade students (26 boys and 24 girls) from the Detroit area. Although not previously screened for a specific dialect, all students were identified as speakers of AAE based on a production of at least two features of AAE (Washington and Craig, 2002).

The students were asked to participate in three tasks: picture description, an oral reading assessment, and a writing task. All three tests were administered one on one in a single session to prevent any inconsistency with dialect shift due to a time lapse. During the picture description the students had to describe three action pictures from the Bracken Concept Development Program (Bracken, 1986) with as much as detail as they could. The students’ oral descriptions were audiotaped and then transcribed. To obtain an oral reading sample, researchers conducted The Gray Oral Reading Tests- Third Edition (GORT-3; Widerhold & Bryant, 1992). The assessment comprised 13 passages with increasing complexity. Participants were rated on their reading rate, accuracy, comprehension, and fluency. In order to assess students’ AAE use in writing, the researchers instructed participants to write a story of their choice that would have a
beginning, a middle, and an end. If a student struggled with his or her own topic, a general topic, such as family celebrations or something that a child did in the recent past, would be suggested.

The results of this study indicated that only one student made a complete shift from using AAE in speaking and SAE in writing and reading contexts. Although with significant variability in frequency, all of the students produced AAE during their oral task. Participants used both phonological and morphosyntactic features of AAE, but phonological features were considerably more common. With an oral reading assessment 46 out of 50 students produced features of AAE. Just as with the oral task, phonological features were the most frequent. Examining the students’ writing samples, 62% of them included at least one feature of AAE. Unlike with the other two tasks, “morphosyntactic features predominated in the students’ writing samples and were significantly greater than phonological” (Thompson et al., 2004, p. 277).

Findings of this investigation demonstrated that AAE features, although always present within both written and oral contexts, decrease from oracy to literacy. Participants of the study used distinct dialectal features within speech and literacy contexts.

The next study, conducted by Craig, Zhang, Hensel, & Quinn (2009), examined the relationship between dialect-shifting abilities of African American English (AAE)-speaking students and their reading achievement scores. The authors’ hypothesis was that “AAE production rates in written narratives would evidence an inverse relationship” (Craig et al., 2009, p. 842) with standardized reading scores for African American students who used AAE in their oral speech. The researchers expected the children with better dialect-shifting abilities to score higher on reading achievement tests. In this study the independent variables were socio-
economic status (SES), general oral language skills, and written language skills. Reading achievement scores were considered to be dependent variables.

The sample consisted of 165 African American first through fifth graders without disabilities residing in southeastern lower Michigan. Approximately half of them were girls. One third of the participants were from households with low-SES, and two-thirds were from households with middle-SES. All of the students were speakers of AAE.

In order to collect oral narratives, the researchers asked all participants to describe three pictures. For the written part, the students were to write on the topic of their choice as long as the narrative included a beginning, middle, and an end. All oral and written narratives were transcribed with the help of the Codes for Human Analysis of Transcripts (CHAT) conventions of the Child Language Data Exchange System (CHILDES; MacWhinney, 1994). AAE features from the narratives were coded for a potential set of phonological and morphosyntactic types based on a child AAE coding system previously developed by Craig and Washington (Craig & Washington, 2006). Dialect Density Measures (DDMs) were calculated by AAE frequencies divided by the number of words in the written or oral sample. One of the reading achievement tests from a small set was administered to every participant with their scores later standardized into z scores to compare their performance across different tests effectively.

The authors found that the number of DDMs in the students’ reading or oral narratives and their reading achievement were negatively related. Oral DDM showed no direct effect on the reading scores while written DDM showed a significant direct effect on the reading achievement scores. Most students (85%) decreased their use of AAE during the switch from the oral to the written narratives. In the group with the students scoring below the average, “81% of students
showed decreases in DDM between the oral and written narratives, and 19% showed no shifts” (Craig et al., 2009, p. 849). In the above-average reading group, 92% of students were able to dialect shift and decreased their use of AAE when comparing their oral and written narratives. Only 8% from that group showed no shifts. The results of the study provide support for the dialect shift-reading achievement hypothesis stating that AAE-speaking students with better skills to code-switch demonstrate higher literacy performance.

The findings can have significant implications for the research dealing with explicit instruction of code-switching strategies. It was not the use of AAE in oral speech that predicted a negative correlation with the reading scores, but the number of AAE features in writing. Students who were better adapted to switching to Standard American English in their writing were also able to perform better on standardized reading tests.

The previous study demonstrated that the students who used fewer AAE features in their writing compared to oral narratives, and hence dialect shifted or code-switched, also received higher scores on their reading achievement tests. The following study describes the progress of two students in a classroom where code-switching is explicitly taught to the children.

In her 2009 study, Code-Switching Pedagogies and African American Student Voices: Acceptance and Resistance, Dara Hill analyzed the importance of providing a non-threatening environment for applying standard and non-standard features of the English language in the classroom. She also discussed how a student’s home language is connected to his or her identity. Ms. Hill’s research concentrated on the following three questions. 1) What types of writing strategies help improve standard and nonstandard writing conventions? 2) How are such
experiences connected to student identity? 3) What was the focal students’ response to those practices? (Hill, 2009, p. 121)

During her study the researcher observed one English classroom with 29 seventh grade students, 14 male and 15 female, from an affluent Detroit suburb. Twenty-one students were European American, 5 were African American, 1 was Asian American, 1 was French, and 1 was Ethiopian. Two focal students were selected because of their backgrounds, having moved from inner-city schools in Detroit and desiring to retain their identities in writing and speaking. Both students spoke AAE.

The class was observed three to five days a week for one 46-minute period at a time during the course of five months. The researcher used her field notes from the observations, transcribed assertions by the teacher during writing instruction, student responses and their writing samples, as well as transcribed student and teacher interviews as her data.

Mr. Lehrer, a teacher from the study, provided multiple opportunities for the students to use non-standard conventions to express their voice in writing. Both focal students reported being able to express themselves more precisely and authentically whenever they were given an opportunity to use non-standard English. The students participated in literature-based writing responses, daily journaling activities, and poetry exercises where their use of AAE was valued and considered as a part of their voice and style. To increase the students’ comfort level with using non-standard English, Mr. Lehrer reported starting the year by reading a piece of literature that used features of AAE.

In order to scaffold from the students’ AAE dialect to SAE, Mr. Lehrer requested the students submit multiple drafts for their formal writing assignments. Students received written
feedback with Mr. Lehrer’s suggestions to translate their work into SAE. They were expected to correct their previous drafts and submit the edited version for further examination. Occasionally, one of the focal students resisted Mr. Lehrer’s corrections, expressing that they compromised her voice and ultimately, her identity.

By providing “low-stakes opportunities to write in nonstandard contexts” (Hill, 2009, p. 130), Mr. Lehrer ensured that his students had an outlet to use their home language. He also provided explicit instruction in contrasting AAE with SAE within the context of formal assignments. The data from the case study suggest that “the students were empowered upon preserving their voice without the threat of correction” (Hill, 2009, p. 130). They were more likely to accept Standard English as their means of communication in certain contexts. By the end of the case study, the students were able to utilize AAE as the basis for their assignments that they later edited to SAE.

In the next study, Piestrup (1973) analyzed six different styles of reading instruction and their effects on speakers of African American English. The purpose of her study was to examine dialect interference on learning to read and the ways teachers could accommodate their reading interventions for children speaking African American English. Her study was focusing on answering the questions of whether dialect interference occurred in the process of learning to read for the speakers of AAE, whether there were distinct approaches to reading instruction of the speakers of AAE, and what was the relationship between the teaching technique used and the reading scores of the children. Piestrup (1973) used both classroom observations and quantitative analysis of children’s reading and dialect scores to conduct her research.
Participants in the study were 208 African American children randomly selected from 14 classrooms in 4 schools in Oakland, California. Three of the schools served neighborhoods with low to lower-middle socio-economic status. Majority of the students in all schools were African American.

To conduct their research, two investigators made observations by taking notes and taping reading instruction in 14 classrooms. Teachers’ reading instruction styles were later analyzed and classified into 6 major groups: Vocabulary Approach, Decoding Approach, Standard Pronunciation Approach, White Liberal Approach, Black Artistic Approach, and Interrupting Approach. Each group had about 2-3 teachers.

Teachers using a Vocabulary Approach made sure that students understood the meanings of the words they were using before assigning them a task. They focused on explaining unfamiliar terms to the children. Teachers who incorporated Decoding Approach in their instruction taught their students to rely on sound-symbol correspondences in reading and frequently encouraged them to “sound out” their words. Standard Pronunciation Approach implied that students had to learn standard phonology to be able to learn to read. Children’s phonological dialectal features were considered errors and were corrected. Teachers using White Liberal Approach occasionally used African American English dialect or briefly copied intonation of their students. They accepted and encouraged the use of children’s home dialect not only by occasionally using it themselves, but also by displaying unedited students’ notes and stories on a bulletin board, where children often used features of African American English in their writing. Additionally, the teachers gave auditory discrimination training making sure that their students could distinguish dialect homonyms. The teachers using Black Artful Approach were similar to “White Liberal” teachers in the sense that they accepted their students’ speech
and had a good relationship with the children. One major difference was that they “used Black speech … directly involving the children in learning reading rather than to establish rapport as an intermediate stop” (Piestrup, 1973, p. 116). Just like the teachers using White Liberal Approach, they used auditory dialect discrimination training, where students had to identify certain sounds of a word that had a variation in pronunciation with AAE speakers. For example, devoicing final consonants is a common phonological feature of AAE. The teacher would ask the students to say the last sound in “feed”. She would ask them to make a sentence with “feed”. Then she would prompt the class to say the last sound in “feet” and make a vocabulary connection with that pronunciation. Children were encouraged to participate by speaking in the classroom. The teachers frequently used a call and response model, engaging the children in rhythmic verbal play. Like the Vocabulary Approach teachers, they emphasized differences in the vocabulary, but had the children explain the meanings instead of giving them to the children. The last style of teaching identified by the researchers was referred to as Interrupting Approach. Teachers did not seem to be aware of any dialectal differences. They repeated what students said during instruction and reading time. They often communicated a sense of impatience, not waiting for the students’ answers and interrupting them in their reading. They also used unfamiliar materials without explaining the new terminology to the students.

To analyze students’ reading achievement, researchers obtained Cooperative Primary Reading Test scores from the schools. Participants were administered a sentence repetition task as a measure of their dialect use.

Quantitative data revealed that the students’ reading scores were significantly higher with teachers using Black Artful Approach than with White Liberal or the Interrupting Approach. The two groups which differed the most (Black Artful Approach and Interrupting Approach)
were also the two groups that differed the most in students’ reading scores. “There was a significant negative correlation between dialect and reading scores for all groups” (Piestrup, 1973, p. 4). However, even for the students with the highest dialect score (more AAE features produced), when taught by the teachers using Black Artful Approach, their reading scores were similar to the scores of the students who used a few dialectal features with the Interrupting Approach. All 6 of the approaches were additionally rated on mutuality of communication between the teacher and the students, and task orientation. Black Artful Approach appeared to be rated high on both while White Liberal Approach was high on mutuality of communication, but low on task orientation. The results were reported not to be tied to ethnic similarity of the teachers and students since not all African American teachers used Black Artful Approach in their instruction. The data from this study demonstrated that the way teachers react to their students’ use of vernacular dialect can have a significant impact on the students’ achievement.

Findings from section three indicate that the students who were able to code-switch demonstrated higher literacy outcomes. The summaries support the researcher’s hypothesis, stating that explicit code-switching instruction would assist students in improving their writing. Craig et al. (2009) proposed that “AAE-speaking students who learn to use SAE in literacy tasks will outperform their peers who do not make this linguistic adaptation” (p. 839). Hill (2009) reported that code-switching pedagogy allowed the students she was observing to obtain a comfort level using SAE without jeopardizing their identity tied to their home language.
**Conclusion**

This chapter summarized research studies which in three sections addressed emergent literacy skills and African American English, grade-related changes connected to AAE, and code-switching instruction.

The first section included summaries describing how the use of African American English impacted children’s emergent literacy skills, in particular spelling, phonological awareness, vocabulary, and comprehension. There was a positive correlation between the errors children made in writing and the number of dialectal features they exhibited in their speech (Kohler et al., 2007). In the same study participants’ spelling errors carried resemblance with the phonological features of the dialect they spoke, which can be indicative of additional challenges with spelling for the students speaking AAE. Connor & Craig (2006) noted that “the nonlinear relationship between AAE use and language and emergent literacy skills, coupled with systematic differences in AAE use across contexts, indicate[d] that some preschoolers maybe dialect switching” (p. 771). The last two studies of the first section indicate that AAE does not pose as an obstacle for comprehension in speakers of the dialect.

The second section presented research comparing production of AAE among children within different grade levels. All three articles of the section indicated that participants in higher grades demonstrated fewer features of AAE and were better able to dialect shift in different contexts. These studies can add to the profile of language development of African American English-speakers. The skill of switching between different dialects based on the context is developing with the students’ furthering of their academic education.
The final section of this chapter discussed qualitative and quantitative data on explicit code-switching instruction within the classroom. According to the studies, the students who were better able to dialect-shift were also performing better on their reading and writing tests. Observations of the classroom that used a code-switching pedagogy, where a teacher used AAE to teach appropriate standard and non-standard contexts for writing and speaking, provided feedback in favor of the strategy. This will serve as a useful implication for the researcher when working with a student who uses AAE in her writing.
CHAPTER 3: PROCEDURES

This chapter describes in detail the participant in this investigation. Specific interventions, based on the student’s initial evaluation and her past academic performance, as well as research on code-switching pedagogy described in the previous chapter, are provided. Methods, duration, and setting, as well data collection are thoroughly described to assist with further understanding of the results.

Sample Population:

The sample for my research consisted of one sixth grade African American female student, who was 12 years 10 months old at the time of the study. In order to keep the participant’s data confidential, the research subject will be referred by the pseudonym “Tanya”.

Based on Tanya’s records from her cumulative file, the student attended Eighty-First Street School for kindergarten and first grade. On 4/29/2008 the school referred Tanya for Special Education Services due to her low rates of achievement in reading and writing. She was not admitted into the program due to the absence of parental consent. In 2008 – 2009 Tanya attended Mt. Lebanon Lutheran School. She transferred to Emerson Elementary School for grades 3 and 4. Starting fall, 2011 Tanya has been attending Capitol West Academy. She finished her 6th grade there in June, 2013. The child has no medical concerns mentioned in her records.

Tanya’s major academic strengths are connected to science and social studies. According to her 2011-2012 WKCE assessment, Tanya scored at 373 on reading and 375 on math, demonstrating minimal performance levels on both sections of the test. Looking at the breakdown of her reading skills, Tanya’s best results were in evaluating and extending text. Her
lowest scores were in understanding the meaning of the text. Tanya’s WKCE scores from 2010-2011 indicate that she demonstrated minimal performance in language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. She earned 409 points in reading, placing her at a basic performance level with a cut off score of 396. Comparing the three areas for language arts (writing, language, research and inquiry), Tanya’s lowest score was in writing.

Looking at the line graphs based on Tanya’s reading and math MAP scores administered in grades four and five (10/11/2010, 1/18/2011, 5/18/2011, 9/28/2011, 1/27/2012, 5/3/2012), Tanya was lagging approximately 30 points below the norm-group averages for both types of assessments. She made a considerable improvement in Math on 5/17/2011, reaching her grade-level average; however, her scores went down 35 points to 185 by the time of the latest MAP testing on 5/1/2012. Tanya’s reading scores improved by 22 points from 9/28/2011 to 5/3/2012. However, her latest RIT score of 187 was still considerably below the norm-group average score of 212.3.

Ms. Mucha, Tanya’s 1st grade teacher, noted in her report card that she recommended that Tanya repeat 1st grade. The teacher stated that Tanya’s assignments were adapted throughout the year, yet the student remained a frustrated learner. From an interview with Ms. Ervin, the student’s Math and Science teacher at the time of the investigation, Tanya was performing significantly below her peers in both Math and literacy-related activities. Ms. Ervin added that the parents have been contacted about offering Tanya additional supports through special education services, however the family was concerned about the stigma of Tanya labeled as a child with special needs and repeatedly refused the services.
The student was reported to work best when receiving individual attention. From her classroom observation on 07/01/2013, she gave up quickly after being frustrated with the assigned task and refused to continue. She rarely indicated she needed help and preferred looking at her classmates’ papers instead of asking the teacher. This information was helpful when planning interventions for Tanya. It was necessary to stress to her that learning the process with sufficient quality was more important than the result.

At the time of the investigation there were some concerns over Tanya’s willingness to keep participating. The only two office referrals located in Tanya’s cumulative file were from 2nd grade. One of them was for fighting and another one was for being defiant and stubborn with the teacher. Tanya’s former teacher from Emerson High School noted in her comments on the student’s spring 2010 report card that “she talks a lot around other students, gets stubborn at times and doesn’t complete class assignments”. In her spring 2009 report card Tanya was described as a good leader and a friendly, hardworking student. Comments from the teacher in the same source noted that Tanya needed to work on her self-control, mental attitude, and respect for authority.

Tanya exhibited excellent attendance throughout her school years. She had perfect attendance in 2011-2012 and only missed one day in 2012-2013. She missed one day during the research process because of oversleeping.

**Description of the Procedures**

To address Tanya’s literacy needs, an intervention was designed to target the AAE features in her writing. The researcher met with the student one-on-one for the duration of nine sessions. Since the first session was assigned for pre-intervention assessment and part of the last
The intervention sessions were heavily grounded in a code-switching instructional model, described by Wheeler & Swords (2008) in their book *Code-Switching: Teaching Standard English in Urban Classrooms*. The model emphasizes contrastive analysis approach, helping students understand and compare how their home language grammar contrasts and compares to that of SAE.

During the first session the student generated five sentences on her own to provide the researcher with a sample of her writing for a pre-intervention assessment. The student was given a prompt asking her to describe the way her summer was going or anything that happened during that period. The student read her writing sample out loud without any correction by the researcher. After assessing the student’s writing for presence of common morphosyntactic features of AAE (Craig & Washington, 2002, p. 227-229), the researcher identified the course of intervention mainly being focused on subject-verb agreement and past tense verbs.

During the next session the researcher asked the student to analyze formal and informal settings, which would later be used to assist the student with understanding the difference between contexts for using AAE and SAE. The student reviewed pictures from popular magazines, depicting formal and informal occasions. She had a discussion with the researcher about how people she knew behaved in formal contexts and how their language fit into the setting. The student used the magazine to cut out pictures of her choice, describing formal and
informal occasions. Afterwards, the student was prompted to construct a contrastive analysis chart. To do so, she analyzed a set of cards, with each of them having a sentence written in either “formal” or “informal” language. – The terms *formal* and *informal* were chosen instead of *Standard American English* and *African American English* following the suggested classroom terminology by Wheeler & Swords (2008). The student was prompted to locate two matching cards with similar sentences and compare them, identifying which one was stated using formal or informal language. The researcher did not correct the student but rather guided the student, using inquiry process, questioning the student’s responses and prompting her to think about the language her brother used at home or the way her teacher spoke in the classroom. At the end of the session, Tanya made a collage, where she separated her sentence cards into two columns (Formal and Informal), and added cut-out pictures describing the two settings (Appendix A). She underlined the endings of the verbs that included –s and left a little empty circle after each verb, where there was no –s in the formal version.

Session three started with the student producing another writing sample (Appendix B), describing her weekend. She reviewed the subject-verb agreement collage, created during the previous session with the researcher, underlining any words that differed between the formal and informal columns. She was prompted to analyze the subject in each sentence, where the verb endings differed in formal and informal contexts. “Translating from home speech to school speech is the most effective way to teach Standard English”, Fogel & Ehri (2000) stated in their study (Wheeler & Swords, 2008, p. 60). Tanya received a set of sentences (Appendix C), where she had to translate statements written in AAE into SAE. Subject-verb agreement variation was the only non-standard pattern present. For each pair, she read the sentences out loud and pointed out the differences or similarities between the sentences. She was allowed to reference her
contrastive analysis chart. At the end of the class, Tanya reviewed her first writing sample for any mistakes related to subject-verb agreement in present tense.

The researcher started session four by having the student sort through the cards with formal and informal versions of sentences with subject-verb agreement. The same procedure was conducted during session two. Tanya would pair up “She run fast” and “She runs fast”. The student would then compare and contrast the sentences, looking for patterns and identifying which sentence belonged in formal or informal style of language. To conclude the session, Tanya had to derive a rule from her card sorts on how to use present tense subject-verb agreement in formal language. She transferred the rule onto a 3 by 5 note card to serve as a reference and facilitate her with further translations from her home language into Standardized English.

Session five consisted of Tanya translating sentences with subject-verb agreement from informal into formal language, as she did in session three, and responding to a writing prompt. To encourage the student to use subject-verb agreement in her writing, she was asked to describe a picture. The researcher used reels for a stereoscope (View-Master Model G), providing multiple pictures of Native Americans in 3-D to spike Tanya’s interest in describing a picture of her choice. The student was prompted to include at least 7 sentences in her description. She performed an error analysis with the researcher at the end of the class, referencing her note card with a subject-verb agreement rule.

The tasks for the sixth session were identical to the ones in the fifth session. The student practiced contrastive analysis as she was translating sentences and provided a writing sample, describing a picture from a different View-Master reel.
Session seven involved the student performing a card sort she completed in sessions four and two. Instead of working on subject-verb agreement, the student was provided with the sentences that included regular verbs in past tense (e.g. *Last week she play basketball* and *Last week she played basketball*). Following the format established during the previous sessions, Tanya had to sort the cards into formal and informal. She then had to compare the cards and underline any differences. The student used the sentences from her card sorts to make a chart (Appendix D) similar to the one she created for session one. She then had to write down the answers to the questions: *What is the rule for showing past time in formal language?* and *What is the rule in showing past time in informal language?* at the bottom of her chart.

Session eight started with the student responding to a writing prompt about her weekend. She then analyzed her work and made corrections, referencing her subject-verb agreement note-card and the chart on forming past tense constructions in order to translate her writing into formal language. She then translated a set of sentences prepared for her beforehand and written using AAE variation for subject-verb agreement. The student completed the same task during three previous sessions. This time though, instead of using paper, the student typed her translations on the computer.

Session nine was split between the student practicing forming her past tense sentences and working on her final post-intervention assessment. Similarly to the way the student conducted her translations in session eight, she had to type her formal version of informal sentences, featuring regular verbs in past tense. For example, the researcher provided a sentence *Yesterday we watch TV*. The student was supposed to retype the sentence, including ending –ed at the end of the action verb. During the last part of the class, the student was prompted to
answer the same question she was asked during her pre-intervention assessment, using at least five sentences.

**Description of Data Collection**

Data from the interventions were collected using the following two methods: sentence translations and writing prompts. In seven out of nine sessions, the student was asked to rewrite or retype a sentence stated by the researcher in AAE into an equivalent sentence in SAE. All sentences provided by the researcher for the task were given in a written form. As most of the sentence translations were completed on a white board with the total count of sentences ranging from five to ten, the researcher took notes on the number of correct sentences out of the total, to further calculate the percentage of correct translations over the time the intervention was conducted. The type of errors was recorded in anecdotal notes.

The student produced one writing prompt prior to the starting point of the intervention and one writing prompt at the end of the last session of the intervention. She presented four written pieces of work in the middle of her intervention to help the researcher track her progress. For the pre- and post-intervention assessment the subject was asked to produce at least five sentences, describing her summer. The researcher then used a rubric, listed below, that was designed based on the research by Washington & Craig, 2002, to analyze the frequency and type of Tanya’s dialect use in her formal writing. The rubric described some of the most frequent morphosyntactic forms of African American English with definitions and examples drawn provided by Washington & Craig, 2002.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AAE Form</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Frequency of Occurrence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zero Copula</td>
<td><em>Is, are, am</em> and other forms of the verb <em>to be</em> not included in either copula or auxiliary form.</td>
<td>“The bridge ___ out.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“They ___ funny.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SubjectVerb Variation</td>
<td>The subject and verb in a a) first, b) second, or c) third person plural or singular construction differing in either number or person.</td>
<td>“She go___ fast.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“I gets hot.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zero Past Tense</td>
<td>Marker –ed not used to denote regular past constructions or the present tense form used in place of the irregular past form</td>
<td>“He punch___ me in the stomach.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“She bake___ cookies yesterday.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zero Auxiliary</td>
<td>Model auxiliary forms <em>will, can, do, and have</em> not included</td>
<td>“___you have another one?”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“I ___ get you a drink.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Negation</td>
<td>Two or more negative markers in one utterance</td>
<td>“I don’t remember nobody having no cars there.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zero Possessive</td>
<td>Possession coded by word order so that a) possessive –s marker is deleted or b) nominative or objective case of pronouns is used rather than possessive</td>
<td>“This go in Barbie__ kitchen.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appositive Pronoun</td>
<td>Both a pronoun and a noun or two pronouns used to reference the same person or object</td>
<td>“Barbie she going to work.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zero Plural</td>
<td>The plural marker –s not included</td>
<td>“I got two Ninja Turtle tape_.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conclusion**

Records from the students’ cumulative file, as well as teacher interview and a classroom observation, served as indicators that Tanya, the subject of this study, would benefit from intervention in writing. The researcher designed a set of procedures following the pre-intervention assessment, to target the student’s needs. The interventions were largely based on
the curriculum suggested in the book *Code-Switching: Teaching Standard English in Urban Classrooms* (Wheeler & Swords, 2008) and included explicit instruction of dialect-shifting, sentence translation, sorting of sentences into formal and informal, as well as writing samples that assisted in tracking the student’s retention of information on sentence construction using Standard American English. The researcher used a rubric, comprised of some of the most frequent morphosyntactic features of AAE (Washington & Craig, 2002) to assess Tanya’s progress in using fewer dialect features in her writing. The next chapter will present results from this data collection, describing the students’ writing samples, as well as the rate of successful sentence translations from informal into formal language style.
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Introduction

This study examined the effects of explicit code-switching instruction on a 6th grade student speaking African American English (AAE). Tanya, the student participating in this research, was asked to provide a writing sample prior to and after the intervention to determine whether implemented strategies were effective in minimizing her dialectal features in formal writing. The researcher met with the student one-on-one for the duration of nine one-hour sessions. The sessions took place from 10:30 am until 11:30 am during the summer school period at Capitol West Academy. The intervention designed to meet the needs of the student was based on a code-switching instructional model, described by Wheeler & Swords (2008) in their book *Code-Switching: Teaching Standard English in Urban Classrooms*. The model emphasized contrastive analysis approach, helping students understand and compare how the grammar of AAE contrasts with that of the Standard American English (SAE).

This chapter will demonstrate Tanya’s progress throughout the intervention with the help of her sentence translations and writing samples. Her pre- and post-intervention assessments will be analyzed through her written work during the first and the last sessions.

Pre-Intervention Results

During her first session Tanya was prompted to compose at least five sentences describing the way her summer was going or an event that happened in that period. The student seemed to struggle significantly coming up with her own sentences. She composed five sentences (Appendix E) with a repetitive subject-verb construction in the present tense (i.e. *I*
play..., I watch...). She did not produce any dialectal features in her writing sample. Her repetitive sentence constructions were indicative of her reluctance to deviate from what she knew was correct. The student could express herself more freely when given sentence starters that explored her interests (Appendix F). The student’s writing from her session 1 was assessed for presence of common morphosyntactic features of AAE, compiled by Craig & Washington (2002, p. 227-229). Table 4.1 featured below illustrates the type of dialectal features Tanya’s writing exhibited and the rubric the researcher used to assess her writing samples from the first, pre-intervention session.

Table 4.1: AAE Dialectal Features in Student’s Pre-Intervention Writing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AAE Form</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Frequency of Occurrence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zero Copula</td>
<td><em>Is, are, am</em> and other forms of the verb <em>to be</em> not included in either copula or auxiliary form.</td>
<td>“The bridge __ out.”</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“They __ funny.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject-Verb Agreement Variation</td>
<td>The subject and verb in a) first, b) second, or c) third person plural or singular construction differing in either number or</td>
<td>“She go_ fast.”</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“I gets hot.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Explanation</td>
<td>Examples</td>
<td>Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zero Past Tense</td>
<td>Marker –ed not used to denote regular past constructions or the present tense form used in place of the irregular past form</td>
<td>“He punch me in the stomach.” “She bake cookies yesterday.”</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zero Auxiliary</td>
<td>Model auxiliary forms will, can, do, and have not included</td>
<td>“__you have another one?” “I ___ get you a drink.”</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Negation</td>
<td>Two or more negative markers in one utterance</td>
<td>“I don’t remember nobody having no cars there.”</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zero Possessive</td>
<td>Possession coded by word order so that a) possessive –s marker is deleted or b) nominative or objective case of pronouns is used rather than possessive</td>
<td>“This go in Barbie kitchen.”</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appositive Pronoun</td>
<td>Both a pronoun and a noun or two pronouns</td>
<td>“Barbie she going to work.”</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
used to reference the same person or object

| Zero Plural | The plural marker –s not included | “I got two Ninja Turtle tape.” | 0 |

In total, Tanya produced 3 dialectal features out of 21 sentences that she had to finish. Two of the features dealt with subject-verb agreement (as in “she buy me clothes” and “she take care of me”) and the third one was missing a possessive -s marker with an apostrophe when indicating possession (as in “my cousin house”). Based on the initial assessment, the researcher designed the intervention to focus on subject-verb agreement and marking of possession in Standard English.

**Data Collected During Intervention**

The student completed 7 sets of sentence translations in the course of the intervention. She was presented with a sentence that used one of the features of African American English, marked as *Informal*, and asked to modify it to fit Standard English conventions. To simplify the terminology used during the task of translating and to comply with the suggestions provided by Wheeler and Swords (2008), sentences that incorporated features of the AAE were referred to as “Informal” and sentences that followed SAE grammar were referred to as “Formal”. Five of the sets for translation had one form of Subject-Verb Agreement Variation in each informal sentence (i.e. “She bake cookies”). Translations for session 4 featured Zero Possession dialectal form, as in “my teacher chalk”. The last set of sentence translations, completed on the final day of the intervention, had Zero Past Tense feature of AAE in each sentence, as in “Yesterday she bake”
“cookies”, to teach the student to consistently add –ed at the end of regular verbs in past tense.

Based on the willingness of a student to participate in an intervention on a given day, Tanya was prompted to translate either 5 or 10 sentences during each of the 6 sessions, when she had to perform the task. Percentages were used to compare the number of sentences translated correctly into SAE in each set. The table below describes the number of AAE features Tanya had in her translations, as well the number of sentences she had to work with in total for each day.

Table 4.2: Sentence Translation Results during the Intervention (Sessions 3 – 9)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Number of AAE Features</th>
<th>Number of Sentences</th>
<th>Percentage of Sentences Correctly Translated into SAE</th>
<th>Target AAE feature for translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>07/08/2013</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>Subject-Verb Agreement Variation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07/09/2013</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>Zero Possession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07/10/2013</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>Subject-Verb Agreement Variation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07/11/2013</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>Subject-Verb Agreement Variation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07/16/2013</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>Subject-Verb Agreement Variation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07/17/2013</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>Subject-Verb Agreement Variation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07/18/2013</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>Zero Past tense</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since most of the sessions focused on subject-verb agreement in present tense, the student’s progress in that area will be discussed first. As the table 4.1 illustrates, Tanya translated
8 out of her 10 sentences correctly when working on subject-verb agreement feature of AAE in her session 3 on July 8th. By then, she had only been receiving the intervention for 1 day, comparing the cards with Standard and African American English on them. The student placed -s inappropriately when translating the fifth sentence in her set. Her “Informal” sentences stated “The school day end at 4:45”. The four previous sentences that were translated into Standard English appropriately had “they”, “my mom”, “the cat” and “the dog” as a subject. It is possible that the student struggled with identifying what pronoun could be used for “the school day” after learning that the subjects that could be replaced with he, she, or it needed an –s added to corresponding to them predicates. In sentence 8 the student added an –s when translating Jordan and Shawn play basketball, which indicated to the researcher that subject-verb agreement with compound subjects were particularly challenging for her. Tanya explained that since both Jordan and Shawn were male and could be referred to as “he”, she deemed it necessary to add suffix –s at the end of the verb. The student was then prompted to draw Jordan and Shawn to help her remember that -s was not added when the sentence referred to two or more people or things at once.

For session 5 on July 10th, the student translated all of the sentences correctly except for the one that featured a compound subject (as in Malik and Jayden sit at the table). Once again, Tanya focused on the first part of the subject, neglecting the fact that together Malik and Jayden would form a plural. The student used her reference card for most of the sentence translations that featured the rule for subject-verb agreement the student derived with the researcher previously.

In her set of sentences for session 6 on July 11th, that only included 5 sentences, the student made 1 mistake when translating the following sentence using African American English
into Standard American English: *That pizza smell good.* Once again, it was evident from her previous translations, that the student struggled more with the sentences that did not feature a pronoun or a name of a person as a subject.

During the 7th intervention session on July 16th, the student translated 9 out of 10 sentences correctly, including the two sentences that did not have a name of a person or a pronoun as a subject. Tanya’s one sentence that was not transferred into SAE properly was *Gru and Lucy work together fighting villains.* The student rewrote the sentence as “*Gru and Lucy works together fighting villains.*” As in previous examples, she hyper-corrected herself when she added –s to the verbs, corresponding to persons other than third person singular.

For session 8 on July 17th, the last session where Tanya had to complete sentence translations that focused on Subject-Verb Agreement Variation in AAE, the student was able to translate all of her sentences properly. Two of them included compound subjects.

The graph below illustrates Tanya’s progress with learning appropriate Subject-Verb Agreement in SAE.
Besides the sentences that targeted subject-verb agreement, the student worked on past tense with regular verbs and indicating possession in SAE. Her fourth session on 07/09 revealed that Tanya understood general principal of showing possession in writing. She translated 5 out of 5 of her sentences correctly and did not need further intervention.

When analyzing one of the student’s writing samples, the researcher noted that Tanya did not consistently use –ed suffix to designate past tense with regular verbs. Due to the limited amount of time, the student was only able to practice her past tense translations once, during her last session of the intervention on July 18th. She might need more support in that area in the future. The student made 2 mistakes in her 10 sentences, when attempting to add –ed suffix to “they” and “last” (as in “Last week”) in her first two sentences. She translated the remaining 8 sentences properly after we reviewed the rules for forming past tense in Standard English with the help of the poster she previously made (Appendix G).

The researcher was able to obtain 5 writing samples from the student throughout the intervention. The subject was explicitly asked to write using formal language. Table 4.3, featured below, illustrates the number and the types of AAE features the student exhibited in her writing. Since Tanya was instructed to compose at least 5 sentences, but was not limited in the length of her writing otherwise, the number of her sentences varies based on the writing sample. The researcher notes the number of sentences produced for each written work to facilitate with better interpretation of the results.
Table 4.3: AAE Features in Writing Samples Completed During the Intervention (sessions 3-8)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Number of Sentences Produced</th>
<th>Number of Dialectal AAE Features</th>
<th>Types of Dialectal AAE Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>07/08/2013</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Zero Past Tense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07/10/2013</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Subject-Verb Agreement Variation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07/11/2013</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Subject-Verb Agreement Variation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07/16/2013</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07/17/2013</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Past Tense with Irregular Verb Variation (2) Zero Past Tense (1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In her writing from July 8th, during session 3 the student described the movie she had seen over the weekend. Her narrative was set in the past tense. Tanya wrote 8 sentences, depicting events from *Despicable Me 2*. Overall, the student did well, adding –*ed* suffixes to the verbs to display past tense and remembering appropriate forms of irregular verbs. She did, however, once state “*Gru try to save Lucy.*” The researcher pointed out that in another sentence the student had “*Gru saved Lucy*”, which prompted Tanya to self-correct her previous mistake.
On July 10th, during her fifth session, the student wrote a detailed description of the picture of her choice. She was encouraged to write as if she were describing the photograph to a blind person. Tanya composed 6 sentences with 2 AAE features that dealt with subject-verb agreement. The student wrote “The younger girl sit on the right” and “She wear green beads”. The student added –s to both verbs in the sentences above after she reviewed the rules of subject-verb agreement with the researcher.

The next day, during session 6 on July 11th, the student chose a different picture to describe but was only able to come up with 5 sentences. She did not seem as focused as the day before and included 3 dialectal features in her writing. She wrote “he untangle the strings”, “It look like he’s wearing pajamas” and “he have clothes”. All of the sentences had a subject-verb agreement variation. When reviewing the sentence “It look like he’s wearing pajamas”, the student attempted to correct her sentence by adding –s to like, as in “it look likes” which was not a verb in the given sentence. Tanya was able to correct her sentences appropriately after reviewing sentence translations she performed earlier in the session.

The last week of the intervention the researcher wanted to focus on Tanya’s Zero Past Tense feature of AAE. The student was absent on July 15th. For her session 7 on July 16th, the student was asked to write about her weekend, prompting the use of past tense in her writing. The student produced 6 sentences with no dialectal features present in her work.

As a part of her session 8 on July 17th, Tanya had to describe her evening the day before. The student was very motivated to write and produced more sentences on her own than on any other day of the intervention. She composed 15 sentences, making for a good sample of sentences indicative of her progress using Standard American English grammar with past tense.
Tanya used “keeped” as a past tense of the verb “keep” twice in her sentences “I keeped playing...” and “I keeped trying to pass the mission”. The researcher had not addressed past tense irregular verbs with the student due to a limited amount of time. Further along in her writing, the student stated “I took a break and watch TV for a couple minutes”. After finishing her contrastive analysis poster of past tense formed with the help of AAE grammar and SAE. Tanya returned to her writing prompt and added –ed to “watch”.

**Post-Intervention Results**

As with the pre-intervention assessment, the student’s writing from her session 9 on July 18th was analyzed for the presence of common morphosyntactic features of AAE, compiled by Craig & Washington (2002, p. 227-229). The student was asked to respond to the same prompt given to her prior to the intervention. She was asked to describe her summer or any event that happened at that time. Table 4.4, featured below, illustrates the type of dialectal features Tanya’s writing exhibited and the rubric the researcher used to assess her writing samples from the final, post-intervention session.

**Table 4.4: AAE Dialectal Features in Student’s Post-Intervention Writing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AAE Form</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Frequency of Occurrence</th>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“They __ funny.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Subject-Verb Agreement Variation** | The subject and verb in a) first, b) second, or c) third person plural or singular construction differing in either number or person. | “She go__ fast.”  
“I gets hot.” | 0 |
| **Zero Past Tense**      | Marker –ed not used to denote regular past constructions or the present tense form used in place of the irregular past form | “He punch__ me in the stomach.”  
“She bake__ cookies yesterday.” | 2 |
| **Zero Auxiliary**       | Model auxiliary forms *will, can, do, and have* not included | “__you have another one?”  
“I __ get you a drink.” | 0 |
| **Multiple Negation**    | Two or more negative markers in one utterance | “I don’t remember nobody having no cars there.” | 0 |
| **Zero Possessive**      | Possession coded by word order so that a) possessive –s marker | “This go in Barbie__ kitchen.” | 0 |
In her 7 sentences produced for her final post-assessment writing prompt, Tanya used 2 morphosyntactic features of AAE, leaving out –ed with regular past tense verbs. She wrote “I play video games with my cousin” and “We watch a movie” while referring to both of the events in the past. Her omitting of the suffix –ed was not consistent. In another sentence she correctly stated “We watched TV”.

Unlike with her pre-intervention assessment, at the end of the intervention the student was able to produce a more meaningful writing sample with varying sentences. She seemed to be more comfortable around the researcher and found it easier to share about her topics of choice in writing. While concentrating solely on the sentence constructions Tanya knew were correct during the first session, she did not use any dialectal features, the final writing prompt shows growth in her writing style, however also twice includes a Zero Past Tense feature of AAE.
When prompting the student to finish the sentences provided by the researcher during the first assessment in order to receive a more diverse sample of writing from the student, Tanya demonstrated a Zero Possessive feature of AAE once and a Subject-Verb Agreement Variation twice in her writing. The student did not exhibit any of the AAE features from her pre-intervention assessment in her final writing prompt. This can be interpreted as growth in her differentiation between the subject-verb agreement and possessive forms in Standard American English (formal) and African American English (informal).

**Conclusion**

This chapter illuminated the results of the study using two types of assessments: error analysis from writing samples and contrastive analysis between AAE and SAE in sentence translations. The student has demonstrated growth in her use of subject-verb agreement, moving from 80% of sentences with no use of AAE features to 100% in her last session that focused on subject-verb agreement translations. The student received fewer sessions focusing on Zero Past Tense feature of AAE than what the researcher intended. Tanya’s writing for her post-intervention prompt indicated that she needed more practice with forming past tense when following Standard English grammar. In the next chapter, I will connect the case study to previous research, discuss its strengths and limitations, and present recommendations for future research.
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Introduction

The purpose of this case-study was to raise the literacy skills of a student with low writing skills. This research aimed at developing strategies to help the student code-switch in her writing from her preferred dialect of use (African American English or AAE) to Standard American English (SAE). In this study the investigator used various research-based methods to develop a writing intervention for the participant. This chapter will highlight some of the research in connection to the study and the way its framework was aligned to the Common Core Standards. Explanation of the results, the case study’s strengths and limitations, and future recommendations for the student will also be examined below.

Connections to Existing Research

The intervention implemented in this study was largely based on a code-switching/contrastive analysis model designed by Wheeler and Swords (2008). The researchers recommended teaching students to code-switch or “translate” their writing into whatever language variety is appropriate. They offered to teach the grammar of SAE with the help of the language varieties that the students already know by contrasting corresponding features of AAE and the Standard English. The researchers suggested that “instead of seeking to correct or irradiate home speech styles, we add language varieties to the child’s linguistic toolbox, bringing a pluralistic vantage to language in the classroom” (Wheeler & Swords, 2008, p. 38). The core of the approach is to “draw students’ attention specifically to the differences between the vernacular and the standard language” (Rickford, 2004) to help them be better writers.

In his article Using the Vernacular to Teach the Standard, Rickford (1999) describes a study conducted by Hanni Taylor in 1989. In her study, summarized in the book Standard
Taylor worked with two groups of students in Chicago area. The control group received conventional instruction in writing with no mentioning of vernacular while the experimental group received a contrastive analysis instruction, where students were taught to note differences between AAE and SAE. After 11 weeks of instruction implementation, the control group had an 8.5% increase of AAE dialectal features in their writing while the experimental group, which was exposed to contrastive analysis, decreased their use of vernacular in writing by 59%. One of the AAE features that Taylor’s research addressed was third person –s absence. Rickford (1999) notes that “students taught by traditional techniques did show a small reduction (-11%) in the use of this feature...but the kids who were taught by contrastive analysis showed a massive decrease in the use of this feature (-91.7%)” (p. 31).

A large part of the intervention implemented by the researcher in the given study was contrastive analysis technique with the third person singular –s in present tense, or as the investigator previously referred to it in the case study, Subject Verb Agreement Variation. The participant in the study frequently hyper-corrected herself, adding –s in instances, where it was not required (as in they walks). Burling (1973) explains that because speakers of AAE have no basis in their natural speech to differentiate between the verbs corresponding to third person singular and to other persons, “they have difficulty limiting their use of the –s to the third singular alone” (p. 49). This is one of the examples of why it is important to draw a connection to the grammar of the language variety a student is already using to help them understand how it is organized and how it can be “translated” into the Standard English.

Baker (2002) argued that the teachers should familiarize themselves with the ways their students speak and the grammar of the language dialect they use at home. She suggested that as
long as the teachers could demonstrate interest in the student’s home language, they could later “concentrate on how different forms of English are appropriate in different contexts, instead of relying on the right/wrong dichotomy students usually face in school” (p. 52). As Taylor’s study results, mentioned above, maintain, this could lead to the students feeling safe to learn SAE without feeling as if they were losing their identity.

Delpit (2002) supports Baker’s views, stating that “to speak out against the language that the children bring to school means that we are speaking out against their mothers, that their mothers are not good enough to be a part of the school world” (p. 47) By accepting AAE as one of the language variations in this intervention, the researcher is presenting the student with an opportunity to share their background knowledge and consequently help the investigator locate the right approach to transfer the student’s existing knowledge to better write in SAE.

Piestrup (1973) analyzed six different styles of reading instruction and their effects on speakers of African American English. Her research indicated that the way in which teachers responded to the vernacular in the classroom had a significant effect on how well the students mastered the Standard English, evaluated on standardized tests.

Observations from Hill’s 2009 ethnographic case study, where a teacher uses code-switching pedagogy in his classroom, provide similar implications to the research mentioned above. Hill noted that the students were more likely to accept Standard English as their means of communication in certain contexts once their teacher acknowledged their way of speech in teaching SAE grammar.

Additionally, the study, conducted by Craig, Zhang, Hensel, & Quinn (2009) demonstrated that the students who used fewer AAE features in their writing than in their verbal
narratives, and hence dialect shifted or code-switched, also received higher scores on their reading achievement tests. One of the implications from this research is that the students could learn the metalinguistic awareness skills required for them to switch between vernacular and standard dialects with the help of the explicit instruction in dialect-shifting.

In support of the structure of this intervention, various studies have indicated that code-switching instruction is an effective method of teaching speakers of a vernacular dialect to write using SAE. Not only contrastive analysis helps AAE speakers better relate to the grammar of Standard English, they are also more willing to participate in the instruction without jeopardizing their identity tied to their home language.

**Connection to Common Core Standards**

The intervention implemented in this case study focused on contrasting features of African American English and Standard American English with the purpose of improving the student’s ability to code-switch and use Standard English grammar in her formal writing. This goal is aligned to several Common Core Standards. One of the English Language Arts Standards for writing in the sixth grade states that the students should be able to “produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience” (English Language Arts Standard, Grade 6.4,” n.d.). The researcher emphasized to the student that multiple language styles and varieties are appropriate for different contexts. They focused on transferring grammatical forms of African American English into equivalent features of a more school-appropriate and formal Standard English.

Another English Language Arts Standard states that students should be able to “establish and maintain a formal style” (English Language Arts Standard, Grade 6.2e, n.d.). The
intervention described what some of the components of formal writing are and how the student could incorporate and “translate” her home language to compose for formal settings.

**Explanation of Results**

Overall, the student had improved her writing skills, especially with appropriate subject-verb agreement in SAE. The results of the explicit code-switching intervention were measured with the help of the students’ writing samples and her sentence translations. Her pre-test writing prompt did not include any of the features of AAE, however it only included the minimum amount of sentences required and used repetitive sentence constructions, which it seemed, the student knew she used correctly. Since the student was intimidated to deviate from the only sentence construction she employed, the researcher provided sentence starters for Tanya to explore multiple grammatical constructions in her writing. After 21 sentences that she had to finish, the student demonstrated 3 features of AAE in her writing, when using definitions from Craig & Washington (2002, p. 227-229). There were 2 instances of Subject-Verb Agreement Variation and 1 instance of Zero Possessive.

In the course of the intervention the researcher dedicated 5 sessions out of 9 working on subject-verb agreement, using sentence-translations and error analysis. At the end of the intervention, the student did not have a single instance of Subject-Verb Agreement Variation in her writing. Nevertheless, her final writing prompt was not free of AAE forms and included 2 instances of Zero Past Tense. Due to her attendance and time constraints of time allotted for the study, the student only spent 2 days working on contrastive analysis of Zero Past Tense feature of AAE. Additionally, the student appeared to be less motivated than usual during the post-intervention assessment.
Based on the comparison of the features present in the pre- and post-intervention assessments, it is possible to conclude that the intervention improved the student’s ability to decrease the use of the AAE feature emphasized in the majority of her sessions. She moved from using 80% of sentences with no Subject Verb-Agreement Variation to a 100%. The intervention would need to last longer and incorporate more AAE features to provide more conclusive results that could be generalized to the strategy of explicit code-switching overall.

**Strengths and Limitations**

One of the major limitations of this research was the amount of time allocated for the intervention. When stating the results, the researcher expressed that more substantial and accurate findings could be produced regarding more AAE features if the intervention lasted longer. The validity of this study could be easily questioned since the sample consisted of only 1 student. It is difficult to conclude if the results of the study pertain solely to this student or if they would be consistent with a bigger sample. Another limitation of the study was the break in sessions that occurred due to a holiday during one of the weeks and due to a student’s absence during another week. A 4-day pause from the intervention that occurred twice could have significantly skewed the rate at which Tanya was improving. The investigation was administered with one student in the course of the 9 sessions, including a pre-and post-intervention assessments.

The student’s performance varied widely due to her mood and overall well-being. During one of the sessions, Tanya complained of a headache and did not appear as engaged as she was normally. Since the student was not familiar with the researcher prior to the day before the first session, the student’s pre-intervention assessment in the form of the writing prompt was difficult
to interpret. The student struggled forming her sentences and only used one sentence construction she knew was correct. Closer to the end of the intervention, the length of the student’s writing prompts increased considerably with her seeming at ease to share her writing samples with the researcher. Even though the researcher provided sentence starters during the first session to compensate for the lack of sentence variety in the sentences produced by Tanya on her own, it is not entirely accurate to compare AAE features in the student’s writing with sentence starters (pre-intervention assessment) and without them (post-intervention assessment).

As for the strengths of this study, it was very beneficial to be able to work with the student one-on-one in a separate room. During her classroom observation, the researcher noted that the student was very concerned of her classmates’ opinions of her. She frequently pretended she understood the subject presented in class and resorted to copying or giving up on her assignment when the students were asked to work independently. It was helpful to see the students without any of her peers present since she was honest about her challenges.

Another big strength of this research was a limited focus on a minimal amount of variables. It can be overwhelming for the student and the researcher to address grammatical, spelling-related, and stylistic components that go into writing. The student was able to experiment with her writing without the fear of the researcher criticizing her about multiple aspects of her work. The student could feel supported asking for help with her spelling, however she knew exactly what grammatical features of her sentences she had to figure out on her own. The researcher focused on one dialectal feature at a time to prevent confusion and solidify Tanya’s new knowledge set through practice. The student demonstrated genuine willingness to grow in her writing skills despite her admitting she did not enjoy the process of writing.
**Recommendations**

Although the results of the intervention indicate an improvement in Tanya’s use of the SAE in her writing, the student is still performing below her appropriate age and grade level in writing. It is a recommendation of the researcher of this case study that Tanya is evaluated across academic disciplines to determine if she would benefit from special education services. It is also recommended that Tanya continues instruction in contrastive analysis, familiarizing herself further with the grammar of AAE and SAE.

Though the intervention period for this study was brief, Tanya demonstrated growth in using subject-verb agreement in her formal writing. It is thus recommended that the student continues her work on contrasting features of AAE and SAE with a teacher or a trusted adult. Providing opportunities for Tanya to write using her home language while also encouraging her to code-switch and use SAE at school would also be beneficial.

**Conclusion**

Tanya participated in a 3-week writing intervention, designed to meet her literacy needs. Although the intervention was brief, the student was able to show growth with some of her grammatical features when constructing her own sentences. The design of the intervention was heavily based on the model suggested by Wheeler and Swords (2008), but also relied on other research about African American English and literacy outcomes. The strategies implemented were aligned with the Common Core Standards for Language Arts. Tanya would benefit from further, longer instruction in explicit code-switching to help her use appropriate for the setting grammar.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>SESSION</th>
<th>INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN</th>
<th>SPECIFIC OBSERVATIONS FROM LESSON</th>
<th>CONCERNS/CHANGES WARRANTED</th>
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<tr>
<td>07/01/2013</td>
<td>Test the student’s writing, asking her to write 5 sentences about her summer.</td>
<td>My student was switched. Due to the absence of a consent form for the new student, I will conduct my first class with her tomorrow. Observed the student in her class and took notes for her profile.</td>
<td>No lesson conducted today. Instructional plan is the same for tomorrow.</td>
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<td>Fill out the questionnaire to find out more about her personality</td>
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<tr>
<td>07/02/2013</td>
<td>Test the student’s writing, asking her to write 5 sentences about her summer.</td>
<td>The student completed her 5 sentences in about 10 minutes. She paused for a while after each sentence not knowing what to write. All of her sentences had a repetitive nature with the ending -ed absent for the verbs in past tense. The student completed her personal inventory. She demonstrated consistent absence of 3person sing. –s in her present tense verbs. The student also struggles with capitalization of proper nouns and the use of apostrophe. She indicated she enjoys cars, hip hop, and wants to be a police officer. The student was very fidgety.</td>
<td>I will check out books from the library on the topics that interest my student. Design interventions for 3rd person singular verb endings and apostrophe use.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Fill out the questionnaire to find out more about her personality</td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Activities</td>
<td>Notes/Comments</td>
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<td>07/03/2013</td>
<td>- Sorting of the cards with SAE and AAE</td>
<td>I will continue explicitly pointing out the differences in Standard American English as opposed to African American English the student occasionally uses in her writing. Working on the collage took significantly more time than I expected. I will plan a little study break next time. We will read the book out loud during the next lesson.</td>
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<td>- Discussion about the differences with each sentence</td>
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<td>- Collage with two parts: “Formal” and “Informal” that will include discussed cards, decorated with magazine cut outs.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Read aloud of <em>The Jones Family Express</em> by Javaka Steptoe</td>
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<td>The student correctly sorted most of her cards into formal and informal. With the cards that read “she run fast” and “she runs fast”, the student noted that the meaning was the same, but could not identify right away the difference in writing. The same happened with a possessive form. The student seemed to enjoy the process of making a collage. She asked to finish decorating it at home.</td>
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<td>07/08/2013</td>
<td>- 5 sentences about the student’s weekend</td>
<td>Since the student formed a past tense form with and without –ed in the same text (as in <em>He save her</em> and <em>He saved her</em>), I will include construction of past tense constructions with regular verbs in our future lessons.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Error analysis</td>
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<td>- Contrastive analysis of possessive forms</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Read aloud of <em>The Jones Family Express</em> by Javaka Steptoe</td>
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<td>The student was eager to write about the movie she watched over the weekend. She struggled separating her sentences and had to be reminded about the use of periods. When confronted about some of the inconsistencies with her verb endings for past and present tense verbs, the students seemed confused about the concepts of tenses. We started contrastive analysis of present tense verbs with he/she/it.</td>
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<td>07/09/2013</td>
<td>- Continue working on contrastive analysis of present tense verbs with</td>
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<td>subject-verb agreement with</td>
<td>Create a flash card with a summary of the rule for subject-verb agreement with</td>
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<td>The student did well combining informal sentences with formal ones (e.g. “she take good</td>
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<td>07/10/2013</td>
<td>- Translate 10 sentences from AAE into SAE (informal – formal)</td>
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<td>- Describe the picture in the View Master slides about Native Americans</td>
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<td>- Write a description using subject verb agreement in present tense</td>
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The student translated all of the sentences correctly except for the one that included “Malik and Jayden” as a subject. The student wanted to add an “s” to the verb. She was very interested in viewing the View Master slides and seemed to enjoy writing her description. The student was inconsistent with adding “s” at the end of the verbs with he/she/it, but she self-corrected herself when we proofread her work. The student seemed to struggle more in response to my question “What does he or she do?” as if she remembered that I used the verb “do” and uses it in her sentence without any modifications (e.g. She do

Since the View Master descriptive exercise was such a success with the student and prompted her to write more than she normally would, I will use the slides next week, as well. Discuss the role of “does” in questions and statements.
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Homework Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>07/11/2013</td>
<td>- Describe a picture of student’s choice from Viewmaster’s slides.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Error analysis</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Discuss the role of “does” in sentences</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Read <em>aloud The Jones Family Express</em></td>
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<th>Date</th>
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<td>07/15/2013</td>
<td>- Practice translating from AAE to SAE with the help of sentence strips (present tense constructions).</td>
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<td>- Derive a rule for making past tense verbs in AAE and SAE.</td>
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<td>- Have a student describe her weekend using past tense sentence constructions.</td>
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<td>- Error analysis.</td>
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<th>Date</th>
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<td>07/16/2013</td>
<td>- Practice translating from AAE to SAE with the help of sentence strips (present tense)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The student correctly translated 9 out of 10 sentences from AAE into SAE when working on present tense sentence constructions. The only</td>
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<td>Finish the Past tense poster during the next lesson since we ran out of time. Use computer during each class for the rest of the week.</td>
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</table>
Derive a rule for making past tense verbs in AAE and SAE.

Have a student describe her weekend using past tense sentence constructions.

Error analysis.

The student made a mistake when a sentence had compound subject (e.g., “Gru and Lucy work”). The student used her reference card to assist her with the “s” ending for 5 of the sentences and did the last 5 on her own. The student enjoyed typing up her translations on the computer.

When describing her weekend in writing, she did not make a single mistake that had to do with past tense, but since she made a mistake with her -ed endings in the past, we reviewed formal rules of forming a past tense sentence, starting on a poster that would show the differences between formal and informal English.

Finish the Past Tense poster.

Practice translation of the sentences in the past tense from informal to formal language by typing them up on the computer.

Discuss the use of apostrophes forming

The student omitted -ed ending when writing “I watch TV yesterday” in her home journal. This was the first time she volunteered her writing practice at home and was very proud of her work.

We reviewed subject-verb agreement in present tense with the student still struggling with the cases including compound

We did not get a chance to go through practice translations for past tense sentence constructions, so we will work on it tomorrow before the post-test writing prompt.
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tr>
<td>07/18/2013</td>
<td>The student seemed to be more reserved and unmotivated today than usual. She slowly typed with one hand when practicing her translations on the computer and made 2 mistakes out of 10 sentences working with the past tense construction. The student attempted adding –ed ending to “they” and “last” (as in “last Friday”) in her first two sentences, but then got the remaining 8 sentences right after we discussed again when you have to add –ed in Standard English. By the time I asked the...</td>
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<tr>
<td>student to work on her post-test free writing piece about her summer, she opened up and was more willing to participate. She still made a mistake when using past tense, writing “keeped” instead of kept, but overall her writing was free of dialectal features.</td>
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Appendix

Appendix A: Contrastive Analysis of Subject-Verb Agreement in AAE and SAE
Margo was dating a boy and Gru was upset because they were dancing together so he decided he wanted to dance better. And Margo took the boy away from Gru. Gru try to save Lucie so the robot couldn’t leave. And the purple minions were saw the yellow minions because they were acting like the purple minions so they could save Lucie. They started fighting the purple minions. Gru and Lucie saved Lucie. Gru and Lucie were married.
Appendix C: Sentence translations from AAE into SAE

1. The dog wag his tail.
   The dog wags his tail.

2. They sing in the choir.
   They sing in the choir.

3. My mom walk to work.
   My mom walks to work.

4. The cat drink milk.
   The cat drinks milk.

5. The school day end at 3:45.
   The school day ends at 3:45.

6. The baby need his mom.
   The baby needs his mom.

7. We love to draw in art.
   We love to draw in art.

8. Malik and Jayden sit at the table.
   Malik and Jayden sit at the table.

   Destiny eats pizza for lunch.

10. My mom buy me clothes.
    My mom buys me clothes.
Appendix D: Contrastive Analysis Chart for Past Tense Regular Verbs

Appendix E: Pre-Intervention Writing Prompt
Appendix F: Pre-Intervention Assessment with Sentence Starters

Student Interest Survey

I love when ... I go on birthday parties.

I hate when ... I do math.

The farthest I have ever traveled from home is ... Florida.

My favorite place in the world is ... New York.

I admire mom because she buys me clothes and she takes care of me.

If I have a problem at school, I know I can talk to teacher.

What is a good book you have read and why did you like it?
I enjoy reading Diary of a Wimpy Kid book because it's a funny book.

Tell me about a good movie you’ve seen recently and why you liked it.
Fast Furious 6 because the race in cool cars.
Appendix G: Post-Intervention Writing Prompt

What happened:

Yesterday afternoon when I was going home from school my dad and I went home and made some roman noodles. Then I played my Dead Space 3 on my playstation while I was eating roman noodles.

My dad told me that he was leaving then I said okay goodbye and I said I love you so my dad said I love you too and he said set the alarm and I said okay and then he left.

I kept playing my Dead Space 3 on my playstation. And I was struggling on the mission on the game so I could learn how to play. So I was stuck on the hardest mission so I kept trying to pass the mission.