

## **Linguistic accommodation among AAVE and WAVE youngsters in a time of community conflict.**

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The purpose of this study was to learn if urban middle school teenagers who spoke WAVE (White American Varieties of English) in a predominantly African American school, accommodated features of the AAE (African American English) spoken by most of their classmates. Teachers at this school maintained that WAVE speakers acquired aspects of AAE; this study formally examined their observation. Data were collected at a time of high racial tension in the community. Five WAVE students, mostly second generation Urban Appalachians, were interviewed in a monoethnic condition. Later, they were interviewed in a multiethnic condition where they spoke with AAE peers. Recorded interviews were analyzed for the presence of speech markers characteristic of AAE. The incidence of these markers in the AAE students was compared to that of the WAVE students in both the monoethnic and multiethnic conditions.

The study found that all WAVE speakers showed some level of AAE marker occurrence, even in their unaccommodated speech. A t-test did not show an overall significant difference in occurrence of AAE markers for WAVE speakers under the monoethnic and multiethnic conditions. However there was a significant chi-square value for three of the five WAVE speakers. It was therefore possible to reject the null hypotheses, that there would be few or no AAE markers in the unaccommodated speech of WAVE students, and that there would be no significant difference between WAVE speakers in the monoethnic and multiethnic conditions.

This presentation will include contextual data describing social conditions at the host school and the surrounding community. There will be discussion of why linguistic accommodation may have occurred. The data showed that linguistic accommodation between AAE and WAVE students, noted earlier by teachers, is an actual occurrence.