

**A CHARACTERISTICS OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN
VERNACULAR ENGLISH (AAVE) IN “DJANGO UNCHAINED”
MOVIE SCRIPT : A GRAMMATICAL PERSPECTIVE**



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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan (1) untuk menjelaskan karakteristik tata bahasa Afrika-Amerika (AAVE) dalam film "Django Unchained" (2) untuk menggambarkan perbedaan antara tata bahasa Afrika-Amerika dengan bahasa Inggris standar dalam film "Django Unchained". Penelitian ini adalah deskriptif kualitatif dengan data yang diambil dari naskah film "Django Unchained". Penelitian ini menggunakan teknik dokumentasi untuk mengumpulkan data. Dalam menganalisis data, peneliti menggunakan teori oleh Rickford (1999) dan Wolfram (2004) untuk menyajikan data dengan kode, penomoran semua dan membandingkan tata bahasa Afrika-Amerika dan tata bahasa Inggris Standar. Hasilnya, peneliti menemukan 5 jenis frase kata kerja (*copula/auxiliary* absence 13,49%, completive *done* 4,29%, remote *been* 1,84%, irregular verbs 0,61%, subject-verb agreement 1,84%), 3 negasi (*ain't* 35,58%, multiple negation 20,24%, negative inversion 3,68%), 4 nominal (absence of *suffix -s in plural noun* 3,68%, *y'all* 12,26%, absence of *relative pronoun* 1,84%, existential *they got* 0,61%). Dan peneliti juga menemukan perbedaan antara tata bahasa AAVE dan Tata Bahasa Inggris Standar. Tata bahasa yang hilang (-) ditemukan pada *copula/auxiliary* absence, remote *been*, absence of *suffix -s in plural noun*, and absence of *relative pronoun*. Penambahan tata bahasa (+) ditemukan pada negative inversion. Persamaan tata bahasa (=) ditemukan di completive *done*, irregular verbs, subject-verb agreement, *ain't*, multiple negation, *y'all*, and existential *they got*.

Keywords : Ciri tata bahasa, Bahasa Inggris Afrika-Amerika, Bahasa Inggris standar.

Abstract

This research is aimed at (1) explaining the grammatical characteristics of African American Vernacular English (AAVE) in “Django Unchained” Movie (2) describing the differences between African American Vernacular English (AAVE) Standard English (SE) grammar in “Django Unchained” Movie. This is descriptive qualitative research with the data taken from “Django Unchained” movie script. This research uses documentation technique for collecting data. In analyzing the data the researcher uses theory by Rickford (1999) and Wolfram (2004) for presenting data with code, numbering of all and comparing AAVE grammar and Standard English grammar. As the results, the researcher found 5 types of verb phrase (*copula/auxiliary* absence 13,49%, completive *done* 4,29%, remote *been* 1,84%, irregular verbs 0,61%, subject-verb agreement 1,84%), 3 negation (*ain't* 35,58%, multiple negation 20,24%, negative inversion 3,68%), 4 nominal (absence of *suffix -s in plural noun* 3,68%, *y'all* 12,26%, absence of *relative pronoun* 1,84%, existential *they got* 0,61%). And the researcher also

found the differences between AAVE and Standard English grammar. Missing (-) grammar found in *copula/auxiliary* absence, remote *been*, absence of *suffix -s in plural noun*, and absence of *relative pronoun*. Addition (+) grammar found in negative inversion, Equivalent (=) grammar found in completive *done*, irregular verbs, subject-verb agreement, *ain't*, multiple negation, *y'all*, and existential *they got*.

Keywords : Grammatical features, African-American Vernacular English, Standard English.

1. INTRODUCTION

Some Americans people use Black English or African American Vernacular English (AAVE) as their daily languages and they also use it in several conversations in the movie. According to Fought (2006:46), African American Vernacular English (AAVE) is “a variety spoken by many African-Americans in the USA which has a set of grammar and other linguistic characteristics that distinguish it from various other American dialects”.

The movie selected is “Django Unchained”, a 2012 American revisionist Western film written by Quentin Tarantino as a director, depicting the life struggle of a slave, Django, which is played by Jamie Foxx who finally has the opportunity to find his wife and become independent. The movie was chosen because of its relevance to the use of African American Vernacular English (AAVE) which involving African American actors and linguistic characters.

The choice of topic is based on interesting phenomena in American societies about AAVE that have not been fully discussed and understanding the meaning of AAVE is so difficult because it has different grammatical pattern Therefore the researcher draws attention to studying it.

Regarding the research background, the problems raised by the researcher as follows: 1) What are the grammatical characteristics of African American Vernacular English (AAVE) in ”Django Unchained” Movie? 2) What are the differences between African American Vernacular English (AAVE) and Standard English (SE) grammar in “Django Unchained” Movie?

In this research, the researcher proposes two major objectives to be described as follows: 1) To explain the grammatical characteristics of African American Vernacular English (AAVE) in “Django Unchained” Movie. 2) To

describe the differences between African American Vernacular English (AAVE) Standard English (SE) grammar in “Django Unchained” Movie.

There are six previous study; Prasetyo (2015) studied about AAVE grammar used by Christopher Wallace in “Notorious Movie”. Ezgeta (2012) studied about the features of AAVE which is used by ten African-American public figures through interview. Antara, Suarnajaya, and Dewi (2018) compared the lexico-grammatical features between Black English and White English in The Movie Akeelah and The Bee. Dustan (2010) compared the use of AAVE by Hispanic Adolescents in Two North Carolina Communities. Weldon (1994) studied about the variability (Neg pres, NEG got (ta), NEG cop, NEG perf, and NEG past) in negation observed in AAVE. SUN and LEI (2018) studied about the linguistic features of AAE in terms of phonology from the actor’s speech in the famous African American film Crash through interview.

The researcher uses Rickford and Wolfram theory to explain the grammatical characteristics of African American Vernacular English (AAVE) in “Django Unchained” Movie. There are 25 grammatical characteristics of AAVE into four features which are verb phrase, negation, nominal, and question formation. The first, verb phrase includes *copula/auxiliary* absence, completive *done*, invariant *be*, sequential *be done*, simple past *had + verb*, remote *been*, specialized auxiliaries, double modals, quasi modals, irregular verb, and subject-verb agreement. The second, negation includes *ain’t*, multiple negation or negative concord, negative inversion, and *ain’t* and *don’t* with *but*. The third, nominal includes absence of suffix-‘s in possessive, absence of suffix-‘s plural noun, associative plural *an’em* or *nem*, appositive or pleonastic pronoun, *y’all* and possessive *they*, object pronoun after a verb, absence of *relative pronoun*, and existential *they got*. The last is question formation includes non-inverted wh question and inverted embedded question.

2. METHOD

In the research, the researcher uses a descriptive qualitative research. According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994) that qualitative research focuses on interpreting phenomena in their natural settings to make meaning that people bring to this

arrangement. “Django Unchained” movie script is the data source and the data of this research is conversations which used AAVE in the movie script. The researcher uses documentation technique for collecting data. In collecting the valid data, the researcher uses triangulation techniques by Denzin (1978: 96) and in analyzing the data, the researcher uses theory by Rickford (1999) and Wolfram (2004).

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

There are two aims of this research (1) The researcher will classify the data based on the characteristics of AAVE by Rickford (1999) and Wolfram (2004) theory and (2) The researcher will describe the differences between African American Vernacular English (AAVE) and Standard English (SE) grammar. There are 163 data (sentences) which related as AAVE. The data takes from “Django Unchained” movie script. The result as follows;

Copula is a technical term for **auxiliary verb** takes the forms *be, being, am, are, is, was and were*. There are 22 data of **Copula (auxiliary absence)** from 163 data in “Django Unchained” movie. Here is the example of **Copula (auxiliary absence)** in this research: (AAVE/A1) __You a doctor? (Dicky Speck: 3) The underscore (__) in the example is used to represent the missing of **to be (are)** in present interrogative sentence. It should be in Standard English (SE) “*Are you a doctor?*”

The word “**Done**” is a perfective marker. It indicates that the action has been completed. There are 7 data of **Completive Done** from 163 data in “Django Unchained” movie. Here is the example of **Completive Done** in this research: (AAVE/A3) Now, I **done** paid five hundred dollars for you. (*Calvin Candie: 86*) The bold word represents the use of **done**. It is used of **done** in the perfect tense. In SE, the pattern of perfect tense is **S + have/has + V3**. It should “*Now, I just have paid five hundred dollars for you*”. **Remote Been** The word “**Been**” is used to indicate an action which is currently happening on a situation. There are 3 data of Remote “**Been**” from 163 data in “Django Unchained” movie. Here is the example of Remote “**Been**” in this research: (AAVE/A5) You **been** on it. (*Calvin Candie: 83*) The bold word represents the use of **been**. It is the use of **been** in the

perfective continuous tense without **auxiliary (have)**. In SE, it should “*You **have been** on it*”. In AAVE, **Irregular Verbs** include *the bare root as past, the extension of pasmt as participle, regularization of past tense and the participle as past*. However only one data of irregular verbs from 163 data as follows; (AAVE/A10) You **seen** one nigger fight, ya **seen** ‘em all. (*Django*: 75) This sentence is ambiguous where someone can interpret it as an incorrect present perfect form in which deletion of the **auxiliary (have)**. It falls within irregular verb category in which past participle is used to indicate a simple past tense form although in AAVE this sentence is correct. In this case, past participle of **see** is employed instead of the past simple form which is **saw**. In SE, it should “*You **saw** one nigger fight, ya **saw** ‘em all*”. **Subject-verb agreement** includes *the absence of verbal marker-s* in 3rd person singular environment for present tense form, the construction of **be** leveling and the rendering of **does + not** to **don’t** for 3rd person singular. There are 3 data of **Subject-verb agreement** from 163 data in “Django Unchained” movie. Here is the example of **Subject-verb agreement** in this research: (AAVE/A11) Seein’ as **he don’t** see many niggers where he from. (*Stephen*: 119) The bold words represent the use of **Subject verb agreement**. It is the used of **don’t** instead of **does not**. In Standard English, **don’t** is used by 1st and 2nd person plural and singular and 3rd person plural (I, you, we, and they). While **doesn’t** is used by 3rd person singular only (he, she, and it). In SE, it should “*Seeing as **he doesn’t** see many niggers where he from*”. The word “**Ain’t**” is a general **negative** indicator in AAVE. It corresponds to any **present tense** of **be + not, have/has + not** and **do/does + not**. There are 58 data of **ain’t** from 163 data in “Django Unchained” movie.. Here is the example of **ain’t** in this research: (AAVE/B1) This **ain’t** my horse (*Django*: 10) The bold word represents the use of **ain’t**. It show that “**ain’t**” used to replace the **negative auxiliary** in present tense. Because the subject before **ain’t** is “**this**”. It should in SE “**isn’t**” to indicate the sentence is negative. Therefore in the SE sentence “*This **isn’t** my horse*”. **Multiple negation** can interpret it as use the **negative auxiliary** and omit the word **no** in one sentence. On the other hand, one can omit the negative auxiliary instead. There are 33 data of **Multiple Negation or Negative Concord** from 163 data in “Django Unchained” movie. Here is the example of **multiple**

negation in this research: (AAVE/B2) I **can't** feed **no** horse. (*Django: 11*) It is the use of **double negation** in a single negative proposition by using negative auxiliary **can't** with negative word **no**. In SE, it should "*I **can't** feed **any** horse*" **Negative inversion** occurs when declarative sentence begins with a **negative auxiliary or modal** (e.g. ain't, can't and won't) followed by **the negative indefinite pronoun** (e.g. no one, none, nobody, nothing). There are 6 data of **Negative inversion** from 163 data in "Django Unchained" movie. Here is the example of **negative inversion** in this research: (AAVE/B3) **Ain't nobody** gonna cheat the hangman in my town! (*Marshall Tatum : 19*) It is the use of **negative inversion** by placing negative auxiliary (**ain't**) in the beginning of the clause which is then followed by a negative indefinite pronoun (**nobody**). In SE, it should "***Nobody** gonna cheat the hangman in my town!*"

AAVE allows the **absence of suffix-s in plural noun** and in some cases of irregular plural it also happens. There are 6 data of Copula (auxiliary absence) from 163 data in "Django Unchained" movie. Here is the example of **absence of suffix-s in plural noun** in this research: (AAVE/C2) But those two tend_ to be lucky. (*Calvin Candie: 100*) The underscore (_) in the example is used to represent the missing of **suffix-s in plural noun**. **Two tend** is **plural noun**. So, in Standard English is added **suffix -s** as in the sentence "*But those **two tends** to be lucky*". The word "**Y'all**" is used to remak second person plural. The phrase **y'all** is for short of you all. It can be used as **pronoun or possessive**. There are 20 data of **y'all** from 163 data in "Django Unchained" movie. Here is the example of **y'all** in this research: (AAVE/C5) Now why **y'all** wanna come into my town, start trouble, and scare all these nice people? (*Sheriff Sharp: 17*) The bold word represents the use of **y'all**. In this situation **y'all** is "**you as an individual and the team**". As in SE, it should "*Now why **you and your team** wanna come into my town, start trouble, and scare all these nice people?*"

Absence of relative pronouns is **relative pronouns** (who, whom, whose, which, that) is not mentioned to refer to **previous nouns** in sentences. There are 3 data of **Absence of relative pronouns** from 163 data in "Django Unchained" movie. Here is the example of **y'all** in this research: (AAVE/C7) We only get two out of every batch of five fighters _ we buy (*Calvin Candie: 100*) The

underscore (_) in the example is used to represent the missing of **Absence of relative pronouns**. In SE, **relative pronoun** that replacing objects in the form of people, not animals or others and following by **subject** is **whom**. Therefore it should “*We only get two out of every batch of five fighters **whom** we buy*”.

The use of **they got** as a plural equivalent of singular **it is** instead of **there are** However, only one data of **existential they got** from 163 data. Here is the example of **y’all** in this research: (AAVE/C8) But Lara Lee, Dr. Schultz is from Dusseldorf, **they don’t got** niggers there. (*Calvin Candie: 120*) The bold words represent the use of **existential they got**. The used of **they don’t got** in the AAVE sentence as a replacement of **there are no**. Therefore in SE it should “*But Lara Lee, Dr. Schultz is from Dusseldorf, **there are no** niggers there.*”

Based on the finding, the frequency of characteristics of AAVE which is used can be seen in this following table;

Table 1 The characteristics of AAVE in “Django Unchained” movie

No.	Characteristics		%
1.	Copula (Auxiliary absence)	22	13,49 %
2.	Completive <i>Done</i>	7	4,29 %
3.	Remote “Been”	3	1,84 %
4.	Irregular Verbs	1	0,64 %
5.	Subject-Verb Agreement	3	1,84 %
6.	Ain’t	58	35,58 %
7.	Multiple Negation or Negative Concord	33	20,24 %
8.	Negative Inversion	6	3,68 %
9.	Absence of “Suffix –s in Plural Noun”	6	3,68 %
10.	Y’all	20	12,26 %
11.	Absence of relative pronouns	3	1,84 %
12.	Existential <i>they got</i>	1	0,61 %
Total		163	100 %

Based on the findings, the researcher found more characteristics of AAVE grammar than the previous findings, Prasetyo (2015) only found negator *ain’t*, formation of direct question, multiple negation, generalization of *was* and absence

of *auxiliaries*. Ezgeta (2012) only found the possessive–*s* absence, the third person singular–*s* absence, the plural–*s* absence, the generalization of *is* and *was* to plural and second person pronouns. Antara, Suarnajaya, and Dewi (2018) only found *slang*, auxiliary *be*, multiple negation, identical singular and plural verb forms, aspectual markers: *be*, *BIN*, *dən*, specific phrases, and negative inversion. Dustan (2010) only found invariant *be*, *copula* deletion, and third-person singular–*s* absence.

However, previous study by Weldon (1994) only focused on investigating the variability between negative auxiliaries in predicative constructions based on a quantitative analysis of data collected in Columbus, Ohio. And the last previous by SUN and LEI (2018) analyzed the linguistic features of AAVE in terms of phonology from the actor’s speech in the famous African American film *Crash* while this research is to analyze AAVE grammar.

4. CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that from 25 characteristics, this research found 12 characteristics of AAVE in 163 data in “*Django Unchained*” movie script. They are 5 types of verb phrase (*copula/auxiliary* absence 13,49%, completive *done* 4,29%, remote *been* 1,84%, irregular verbs 0,61%, subject-verb agreement 1,84%), 3 negation (*ain’t* 35,58%, multiple negation 20,24%, negative inversion 3,68%), 4 nominal (absence of suffix –*s* in plural noun 3,68%, *y’all* 12,26%, absence of *relative pronoun* 1,84%, existential *they got* 0,61%).

Proven there are differences between AAVE and Standard English grammar. Missing (–) grammar found in *copula/auxiliary* absence, remote *been*, absence of *suffix –s in plural noun*, and absence of *relative pronoun*. Addition (+) grammar found in negative inversion, Equivalent (=) grammar found in completive *done*, irregular verbs, subject-verb agreement, *ain’t*, multiple negation, *y’all*, and existential *they got*. The theory by Rickford and Wolfram can be used to analyze all the data found in “*Django Unchained*” movie script.

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