

Abstract

The thesis focuses on grammatical features of African American Vernacular English (AAVE). The theoretical part provides general information on the variety and describes the morphological and syntactic features that distinguish the variety from Standard American English (SAE) or other vernaculars. The main source used to capture these specific features is Lisa Green's *African American English: A Linguistic Introduction* (2002), which was found to present the most contemporary and detailed description of the variety. Occasionally, materials by other linguists were also employed. At the end of the theoretical part, a brief summary of features of SAE is included in order to show what the variety is contrasted with.

The empirical part of the thesis surveys the morpho-syntactic specificity of the vernacular as represented in fiction, identifying and classifying one hundred features of AAVE in each of three contemporary African American writings: *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker, *Beloved* by Toni Morrison and *Brothers and Keepers* by John Edgar Wideman. The majority of specific features are found in the area of verbs whose morphology tends, in general, to be specific in all vernaculars, but other word classes and syntactic structures are represented as well.

Key words: African American Vernacular English, AAVE, vernacular, African Americans, grammatical features, morphological and syntactic features