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Specific Grammatical Features of African-American Vernacular
Gramatická specifika afro-americké hovorové angličtiny

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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

Abstrakt

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá gramatickými rysy hovorové afroamerické angličtiny (AAVE). V teoretické části nalezneme základní informace týkající se této variety a přehled morfologických a syntaktických jevů, kterými se liší od standardní americké angličtiny (SAE) a dalších hovorových variet. Práce čerpá především z monografie Lisy Green: *African American English: A Linguistic Introduction* (2002), která představuje novější a nejpodrobnější popis AAVE, který máme k dispozici. V závěru teoretické části se objevuje krátké shrnutí typických rysů SAE, které slouží pro porovnání s AAVE.

Praktická část práce představuje analýzu sto morfo-syntaktických rysů této hovorové variety objevujících se ve třech současných afroamerických dílech: *The Color Purple* od Alice Walker, *Beloved* od Toni Morrison a *Brothers and Keepers* Johna Edgara Widemana. Většina rysů je objevena v oblasti morfologie sloves, která je obecně bohatá ne nestandardní rysy v jakékoli hovorové varietě. Nestandardní rysy se však objevují i v dalších slovních druzích a syntaktických konstrukcích.

Klíčová slova: afroamerická hovorová angličtina, hovorový jazyk, afroameričané, gramatické rysy, morfologické a syntaktické rysy

List of tables

Table 1	The use of auxiliaries in AAVE according to Green (2002)
Table 2	The use of aspectual markers according to Green (2002)
Table 3	Word count of the analyzed texts
Table 4	Overall representation of the AAVE instances in the analyzed texts
Table 5	Comparison of number of the AAVE instances in the analyzed texts
Table 6	Pronouns in the analyzed texts
Table 7	Verbs in the analyzed texts
Table 8	Prepositions in the analyzed texts
Table 9	Determiners in the analyzed texts
Table 10	Subjects in the analyzed texts I
Table 11	Subjects in the analyzed texts II
Table 12	Negation in the analyzed texts
Table 13	Multiple negation in the analyzed texts I
Table 14	Multiple negation in the analyzed texts II
Table 15	Questions in the analyzed texts

List of abbreviations

AAE	African American English
AASE	African American Standard English
AAVE	African American Vernacular English
SAE	Standard American English
pl	plural
sg	singular

Table of Contents

1	Introduction.....	9
2	Theoretical background	13
	2.1 Nouns.....	13
	2.2 Pronouns.....	14
	2.3 Verbs.....	16
	2.4 Relative clauses.....	29
	2.5 Negation	29
	2.6 Questions.....	32
	2.7 Existential and locative <i>it</i> and <i>dey</i>	35
	2.8 Verb phrase substitution and fronting.....	36
3	Grammatical features of Standard American English.....	37
	3.1 Nouns.....	37
	3.2 Verbs.....	37
	3.3 Tenses	38
	3.4 Subjunctive mood in <i>that</i> -clauses.....	39
	3.5 Adverbs	39
	3.6 Prepositions	39
	3.7 Pronouns.....	39
	3.8 Omission of <i>and</i>	39
4	Material	40
5	Analysis	42
	5.1 Nouns.....	45
	5.2 Pronouns.....	46
	5.3 Verbs.....	47
	5.4 Adverbs	50
	5.5 Prepositions	50
	5.6 Determiners	51
	5.7 Subjects	51
	5.8 Negation	53
	5.9 Questions.....	54
	5.10 Relative clauses.....	55
	5.11 Others	55
6	Conclusion	56
7	References.....	59
8	Sources	62
9	Resumé	63
10	Appendix	66

1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis focuses on selected morpho-syntactic characteristics of the speech of African Americans, the so-called ‘African-American English vernacular’ (Crystal 1997, 411), which represents “one of the clearest examples of ethnic linguistic variety” (Crystal 1992, 35), providing the contrast between the speech of black and white Americans. At the same time “that there is no simple correlation between color and language because there is considerable linguistic variation within both racial groups” (ibid.) according to language users (dialect) and language use (register). In addition, obtaining data for any vernacular variety is notoriously difficult. Bearing in mind both these aspects, the thesis focuses on the vernacular as it is represented in selected works of fiction.

Before any study on the topic can be conducted, it is necessary to clarify central concepts related to the speech of African Americans. Such definitions may be complicated as there are various, sometimes interchangeable, terms with multiple connotations used by linguists who do not always explicate their exact meaning. When referring to all varieties of the distinctive speech of African Americans, the term African American English (AAE) is preferred by most prominent linguists such as John R. Rickford. Yet, other terms such as Ebonics, Black English, Black Vernacular English and African American Language might be used to refer to the same variety. This broad class can be further divided into two subcategories: African American Standard English (AASE) and African American Vernacular English (AAVE). AASE represents a collective term for standard varieties “spoken primarily by higher income African Americans with more formal education” (Spears, Hinton 2010, 4) and differs from Standard American English (SAE) primarily by its prosodic features and some of its vocabulary (Spears 1998, 230). AAVE then denotes “a cluster of regional and social varieties [which] includes specific forms of this variety” (Spears, Hinton 2010, 6) and can be defined as “a variety of English with supra-regional phonological and grammatical features, which also show significant social and regional variation, as is to be expected of any spoken language” (Lippi-Green 1997, 8). The focus of this paper will be on AAVE. It is also essential to specify that by the term “vernacular” in this paper “a primary, native or indigenous language variety one speaks for day-to-day communication” (Mufwene 2001, 37) is meant.

The origin of AAE is a very complex issue resulting in a great diversity of opinion among linguists. The only part academics agree on is the fact that AAE is much more different from other non-African American dialects than non-African American dialects differ from each other (Di Paolo, Spears 2014, 102). We can encounter various hypotheses. The first group of theories focuses on the English origin of most AAVE vocabulary and its pronunciation which might have originated in specific English dialects, such as that of servants who were in contact with African slaves. Another theory is concerned with the similarities between AAVE and West African languages, such as the lack of the *th* sound. The last assumption is concerned with the shared features with Caribbean Creole English varieties such as dropping of the auxiliary (Rickford, 2014).

For four hundred years the “Black English” was considered to be substandard and its speakers accused of wrecking the English language and of “exhibiting pronunciation ‘errors’ related to ignorance and to laziness” (Toliver-Weddington 1973, 107). The first to recognize consistency in the African American speech were the linguists at the Center for Applied Linguistics in 1964. The result of their study was that “Mainstream American English is no better than black language or any other language dialect” (Toliver-Weddington 1973, 108). One of the terms which was applied in those days was Specific Negro English, nowadays considered extremely pejorative (Rickford, 2014). In 1973 the term Ebonics, which stresses the African roots, was created as a reaction against such titles. Ebonics then became popular in 1996 when Oakland School Board “recognized it as the ‘primary’ language of its majority of African American students and resolved to take it into account in teaching them standard or academic English” (Rickford, 2014). This was the key event as it meant instruction in Ebonics for its speakers in order “to maintain the legitimacy and richness of such language [and] public funding for teachers to learn the AAVE” (Morgan 1999, 173).

To avoid a general underestimating attitude towards the distinctive speech of African Americans, it has to be pointed out that its speakers “know more than just a few unique words and phrases [and that the] variety is not a version of bad English” (Green 2002, xi). AAVE is “a language system which, though it may differ from standard English in form and sometimes even in function, is nevertheless logical, coherent and [...]

grammatical“ (DeVere 1971, 22). Therefore, the usage of pejorative and diminishing terms such as “jargon” or “slang” should be avoided (Lippi-Green 1997, 7-12). Like any other variety it is not only consistent but it also plays a significant role in the lives of the majority of African Americans since it “is a system by which African Americans communicate [...] and a medium for African American thought” (Zeigler in Lanehart 2001, chapter 4). Toni Morrison, a contemporary African American writer supports this claim.

The worst of all possible things that could happen would be to lose that language. There are certain things I cannot say without recourse to my language. It’s terrible to think that a child with five different present tenses comes to school to be faced with those books that are less than his own language. And then to be told things about his language, which is him, that are sometimes permanently damaging (Toni Morrison in Lippi-Green 1997, 9).

Not only is AAVE indispensable to the African American community, but it has also affected the Mainstream American English vocabulary. Meanings of words and phrases such as “rap,” “jive,” “groove” or “right on” all originate in the African American community (Toliver-Weddington 1973, 110). Most of such words have, however, undergone a great change in the meaning. For example the word “jazz” originally denotes a specific sexual term while the use in Mainstream American English refers to a type of music.

The most common definition of the variety to hear today is “English as it is spoken by or among African Americans” (Mufwene 2001, 37). Not all African Americans, however, speak this variety and neither are all of its speakers of African descent. Although we do not have the actual numbers it is believed that about 95% of African Americans at least occasionally use AAVE of some kind. Minorities which have been in close contact with this community such as Puerto Ricans in New York City, also tend to speak it. On the other hand, African Americans who are not in proximity with other AAVE speakers do not show any traces of the variety in their speech. The use of AAVE also often depends on social context as many of its speakers are able to switch to AASE when the situation demands it. It is a common practice to hear rap artists regularly use AASE but shift to AAVE when recording or giving public interviews (Spears, Hinton 2010, 8).

As the above illustrates, the sociolinguistic factors are numerous within this broadly conceived variety. It is one of the objectives of this paper to grasp its main characteristics (Chapters 2 and 3) and compare their representation in three different sources (Chapter 3, 4 and 5).

2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Like with other varieties according to language users, AAVE features can be found at all linguistic levels: phonetics and phonology, morphology, syntax, lexicon and rhetorical devices (Lippi-Green 1997, 7-11). This thesis will focus on morphological and syntactic characteristics which will be subsequently analyzed in the practical part of the thesis. Pronunciation, specific vocabulary and rhetorical devices will not be the subject of the present study.

Morphology

2.1 Nouns

2.1.1 Genitive -s

The genitive -s marker is not obligatory in possessive and other genitive contexts. The possessive marker does not have to be expressed as the possessive relationship is believed to be sufficiently expressed by the word order within the phrase. The use or omission of the genitive -s only suggest the speaker's personal preference and does not differentiate the meaning (Green 2002, 102).

(1) I always get bites cause we be hanging out at my mama house. (ibid.)

(2) That's the church responsibility. (ibid.)

2.1.2 Plural -s

Although not as common as the omission of genitive -s plural -s might be omitted under certain circumstances too. A general absence of -s plural unrestricted by the type of noun does occur, however it is very infrequent (Wolfram 2004, 113-132).

(3) Some dog, two boy. (ibid.)

The zero plural is preferred when related to measure nouns with quantifiers which also occurs in various Southern based dialects and Northern rural vernacular varieties (ibid.).

(4) It's four mile from here. (ibid.)

On the other hand the plural -s might be used instead of irregular plurals, zero marking plurals and together with irregular plurals of some nouns. The process is comparable to other vernacular varieties (ibid.).

- (5) Oxes, gooses. (ibid.)
- (6) Three sheeps, two corns. (ibid.)
- (7) Two firemens, childrens. (ibid.)

2.2 Pronouns

2.2.1 Possessive pronouns

2.2.1.1 Independent possessive pronouns

Independent possessive pronouns differ from dependent possessive pronouns in that they function as nominal proforms. The following table shows the independent possessive paradigm of current AAVE (Green 2002, 183).

mines
 ourn, ours
 yourn, yours
 hisn, his
 hern, hers (ibid.)

As is seen from the list, most independent possessive pronouns have two possible forms, the latter corresponding to the Standard English forms of independent possessive pronouns. The first form though seems to be constructed analogically originating from the standard forms. *Ourn*, *yourn*, *hisn* and *hern* may follow the pattern of regular *mine* as they all end with the final *n* sound. *Mines* then resembles the pattern of *his*, *hers* and *yours* (Green 2002, 183).

2.2.1.2 *Y'all* and *they*

Second and third person possessives can be, apart from standard forms *your* and *their*, expressed with *y'all* for second person possessive and *they* for third person possessive. Both are fairly common in both Southern and Northern AAVE varieties and occur with singular and plural objects. (Wolfram 2004, 125)

- (8) It's y'all ball. (ibid.)
- (9) It's they book. (ibid.)

2.2.2 Associative plural *an 'em*

Associative plural *an 'em* is usually found after proper names and replaces another noun phrase related to the proper name such as the person's friends or family. Such feature is similar to English creoles as well as to southern white varieties (Mufwene 1998, 73)

(10) Felician an' (th)em. (ibid.)

'Felician and her friends or family or associates.'

2.2.3 Reflexive pronouns

2.2.3.1 Irregular form of reflexive pronouns

In AAVE the only reflexive pronouns which are not identical with standard forms are the reflexive pronoun *hisself* which has been regularized from the form *himself* and *theyselves* (Green 2002, 21).

(11) He call hisself a basketball player, and can't even dribble the ball. (ibid.)

(12) They call theyselves friendly, and they won't speak to people. (ibid.)

2.2.3.2 Infix *own*

In order to emphasize independence or individuality of a person the infix *own* might be inserted inside a reflexive pronoun. As with regular reflexive pronouns the reflexive pronoun has to correspond to the personal pronoun to which it refers. Following this pattern all three persons in singular and plural can be expressed (Green 2002, 22-23).

(13) He cooked his food hisownself. (ibid.)

(14) I don't need any help; I can do it myownself. (ibid.)

2.2.4 Benefactive datives

Benefactive datives follow a verb and are expressed with object pronouns *me*, *you*, *him*, *her*, *us* and *them*. Such a pattern is shared with some Southern dialects such as the one in Southern Louisiana and therefore cannot be treated as a unique feature of AAVE (Green 2002, 190).

(15) I got me all kind of boyfriend. (ibid.)

2.2.5 Demonstrative *them*

The object pronoun *them* might take a position of a demonstrative determiner (Hazen et al. 2001, 75). Although its appearance is considered rare, it occurs in many different English vernacular varieties such as in the Appalachian region, Jamaican English, Caribbean English as well as AAVE (Hazen et al. 2001, 77-78). Its primary function is alternation to the demonstrative pronoun *those* (Hazen et al. 2001, 74).

(16) Them apples are the best. (ibid.)

(17) We bought them Jeeps. (Hazen et al. 2001, 75)

2.3 Verbs

2.3.1 Auxiliaries

Primary auxiliary verbs *have*, *do* and *be* and modal verbs such as *will/would*, *shall/should*, *can/could* and *may/might* are, in AAVE, used similarly as in SAE, yet there are some differences. In order to capture those differences several tables displaying the distinctive use of auxiliaries in AAVE are listed below. Since the copula *be* shares many characteristics with the auxiliary *be*, it has been also included in the tables of the use of auxiliaries. Capitalized words in the tables represent stressed words (Green 2002,36-38).

Person	Affirmative	Emphatic structure	Negative
Present simple			
3rd person sg	eat	DO eat	don't eat
Past simple			
3rd person sg	ate	DID eat	didn't eat/ain'(t) eat/ ain'(t) ate
all other persons	SAE paradigm	SAE paradigm	didn't eat/ain'(t) eat/ ain'(t) ate
Preterite <i>had</i>			
all persons	had ate	does not exist	does not exist
Future <i>will</i>			
all persons	'a eat	SAE paradigm	SAE paradigm
Future <i>going to</i>			
1st person sg	'ma eat / 'm gonna eat / 'monna eat	SAE paradigm	ain't gon/'m not gon
2nd person sg, pl	gon eat / gonna eat	SAE paradigm	ain't gon/not gon
all other persons	gon eat	SAE paradigm	ain't gon/not gon
Present progressive			
1st person sg	SAE paradigm	SAE paradigm	'm not eating/ain'(t) eating
all other persons	eating	IS eating	ain'(t) eating/not eating
3rd person sg neuter	SAE paradigm	SAE paradigm	's not growing/ain'(t) growing
Copula <i>be</i>			
1st person sg	SAE paradigm	SAE paradigm	'm not tall/ain'(t) tall
all other persons	tall	IS tall	ain'(t) tall/not tall
3rd person sg neuter	SAE paradigm	SAE paradigm	's not tall/ain'(t) tall

Past progressive			
all persons	was eating	WAS eating	wasn't (wadn't) eating
Future progressive <i>will</i>			
all persons	'a be eating	SAE paradigm	won't(t) be eating
Present perfect			
all persons	ate	HAVE ate	ain't(t) ate/haven't ate
Past perfect			
all persons	had ate	HAD ate	hadn't ate
Present perfect progressive			
all persons	been eating	HAVE been eating	ain't(t) been eating/ haven't been eating
Past perfect progressive			
all persons	SAE paradigm	SAE paradigm	SAE paradigm
Modal perfect			
all persons	should 'a been eating	does not exist	shouldn't a been eating

Table 1 The use of auxiliaries in AAVE according to Green (2002)

One of the distinctive features of AAVE that is clear from the charts is that a single auxiliary form may be used with all persons. For example the same emphatic forms *do*, *was* and *have* are used with all persons, singular and plural. However, there are certain social factors which influence the speaker's choice and therefore it is possible to hear the singular verb form *was* in some linguistic and social environments and the plural verb form *were* in others with one subject (Green 2002, 38).

Auxiliary verbs might also appear in contracted, reduced or zero forms (Green 2002, 40). The sentences in (18) and (19) provide examples of contracted *be* forms. The reduced form *'a* corresponds to standard *have* in (20) and to *will* in (21). Sentences (22) and (23) show the absence of overtly expressed auxiliary form (Green 2002, 40).

- (18) It's the one I like. (ibid.)
- (19) I'm driving to Amherst. (ibid.)
- (20) You should'a made your mind up before I called you. (ibid.)
- (21) Bruce'a study when he get home. (ibid.)
- (22) They ∅ walking too fast. (ibid.)
- (23) He ∅ there in a minute. (ibid.)

2.3.2 Copula/auxiliary *be*

One of the most striking differences between SAE and AAVE is the behavior of copula or auxiliary *be* for present tense states and actions. In general the auxiliaries *am*, *are* and *is* precede *V-ing* in the present progressive tense and the copulas *am*, *are* and *is* are followed by adjectives, nouns or prepositions. Since they share the same forms and follow the same rules, they can be treated as one item. The copula/auxiliary *be* is overtly expressed as in SAE with first person singular pronoun *I* and third person singular neutral pronoun *it*. Similarly, it occurs in emphatic contexts when the copula/auxiliary *be* is stressed. In such cases, however, only the pronoun *is* is used which replaces the pronoun *are* in first person plural, second person singular and plural and third person plural (Green 2002, 38).

(24) We is tall. (Green 2002, 37)

‘We are tall.’

(25) They is eating. (ibid.)

‘They are eating.’

Capital letters in the table suggest emphatic use of the copula/auxiliary *be*. The copula/auxiliary *be* is optional for first person plural, second and third person singular and plural with the exception of third person singular neutral *it* (Green 2002, 39).

(26) She tall. (Green 2002, 37)

‘She is tall.’

(27) She eating. (ibid.)

‘She is eating.’

2.3.3 Subject verb concord

2.3.3.1 Present tense

One of the most characteristic features of AAVE is the single form of a verb for singular and plural subjects in the present simple tense. Therefore, no third person singular *-s* suffix is applied after the third person singular subjects (Green 2002, 38.) This rule is applied for negative and emphatic forms as well.

(28) She run. (Green 2002, 36)

(29) She don't run. (ibid.)

(30) She do run. (ibid.)

Verbs can, however, also be marked with verbal *-s* functioning as a third person singular agreement marker as in other English varieties, narrative present marker and habitual

marker. In this chapter we will mainly discuss the second function and the habitual use will be analyzed later.

Verbal *-s* might express a narrative present marker on verbs in the narration of events. The narrative verbal *-s* with other than third person singular occurs in other varieties as well (Green 2002, 100).

(31) He had called me Wednesday afternoon and asked, “Do you want to go to the movies” ... so I gets in the car. (ibid.)

2.3.3.2 Generalization of *was*

Generalization of *was* operates the same way as generalization of *is* already mentioned in section 3.1. A single form *was* might be used in past tenses for both singular and plural. The same pattern is maintained in emphatic and negative constructions (Green 2002, 38).

(32) I always believed we was the most alike out of all the kids. (Green 2002, 192)

It is still grammatically possible, however, to use the form *were* with second person singular and all plural forms. The choice relies entirely on the speaker and may reflect different linguistic and social environments (Green 2002, 38).

2.3.4 Aspectual markers

The aspectual markers *be*, *BIN* and *dən* share similar forms with some SAE auxiliary verbs and therefore are often believed to function in the same way by laymen. *Be*, *BIN* and *dən* are, nevertheless, used in specific situations and indicate a special meaning referring to duration, completion or habitual aspect (Green 2002, 44-45). Such meaning is in SAE expressed by a sequence of verbs and an adverb or adverbial phrase (Green 2002, 47).

2.3.4.1 Aspectual *be*

The aspectual *be*, which may also occur in the form *bes*, denotes habitual meaning. Unlike the auxiliary/copula *be* aspectual *be* does not undertake inflection and cannot be omitted in the sentence since such absence might lead to misinterpretation (Green 2002, 47).

(33) Bruce running. (ibid.)
'Bruce is running now (these days).'

- (34) Bruce be running. (ibid.)
'Bruce is usually running (usually runs).'

While (33) indicates the present progressive with a missing auxiliary *be*, (34) denotes habitual meaning of aspectual *be* which corresponds to the use of adverbs *usually* or *always*.

Aspectual *be* does not only precede verbs but can also occur before adjectives, nouns, prepositions, adverbs, aspectual marker *dən* and at the end of sentences (Green 2002, 47-48).

- (35) I be in my office by 7.30. (ibid.)
'I am usually in my office by 7.30.'
(36) I always be scary stuff. (ibid.)
'I am always scary stuff.'

Aspectual *be* can be used in combination with frequency adverbs such as *always* and *often* as in (36) in which the adverb *always* specifies how often the activity occurs.

In some sentences aspectual *be* is used even if no action habitually takes place, on the contrary, the subjects there have permanent properties (Green 2002, 49-50).

- (37) Some iMacs be tangerine. (ibid.)
'It is usually the case that some iMacs are tangerine.'

In such situation the sentence does not mean that iMacs habitually change the color but that some out of the class of iMacs are usually tangerine and we might expect Apple to produce tangerine iMacs from time to time (ibid.).

At last it must be clarified that aspectual *be* is not a structure unique to AAVE. It also appears in Hiberno English spoken in Ireland and in the white Carolina variety in the US. There are, however, some differences in the usage among the three varieties (Green 2002, 53).

2.3.4.2 Future *be*

It is also important to explain that not in all cases the uninflected *be* denotes the habitual meaning of the aspectual *be*. In some situations it might also refer to future or future

habitual meaning. To decide which meaning of the uninflected *be* is employed the context and meaning of the sentence must be analyzed (Green 2002, 53).

- (38) You *be* surprised how the Lord can use you. (ibid.)
'You'll be surprised how the Lord can use you.'

2.3.4.3 Remote past *BIN*

BIN is a verbal marker which situates a state in the remote past. It can occur before verbs, adjectives, nouns, prepositions, adverbs and *dən*. As opposed to *been* in the present perfect progressive, *BIN* is stressed in speech and therefore, in order to distinguish these two forms, *BIN* is transcribed in capital letters.

The remote past that is expressed by *BIN* is relative; it might refer to a time period of fifteen minutes ago in one example and fifteen years ago in another. In order to simplify it, we can imagine that *BIN* suggests that a certain activity or state is held for a longer period of time than it is ordinarily. This will help us decide whether present progressive *been* or remote past *BIN* is more adequate (Green 2002, 54-55).

- (39) She *BIN* running. (ibid.)
'She has been running for a long time.'
(40) She *been* running. (ibid.)
'She has been running.'

There are three types of remote past *BIN* which depend on the type of predicate used with the verbal marker; *BINstat* (stative), *BINhab* (habitual) and *BINcomp* (completed).

BINstat refers to a state construction which started in the remote past and continue up to the moment of utterance. It precedes verbs ending in *-ing* or predicate phrases such as adjective or noun phrase. In case of stative verbs following the verbal marker, these verbs can be marked for past instead of having the *-ing* form. Such sentences do not differ in the meaning and might be translated into SAE by using the present perfect and the construction *for a long time* (Green 2002, 55-57).

- (41) I *BIN knowing* he died. (ibid.)
'I have known for a long time that he died.'
(42) He *BIN in the kitchen*. (ibid.)
'He has been in the kitchen for a long time.'

- (43) I BIN knew that. (ibid.)
'I have known that for a long time.'

BINhab describes an activity or state that began at some point in the remote past and continues habitually, therefore it expresses a habit. Verbs in such constructions can occur in their *-ing* forms such as in *BINstat* constructions but never in their past forms. Another difference in between the two subtypes is that it is only verbs that can follow *BINhab* (Green 2002, 57).

- (44) That's where I BIN putting my glasses. (ibid.)
'That's where I started putting my glasses some time ago and I still put them there.'
(45) Bruce BIN being a clown. (ibid.)
'Bruce started acting as a clown some time ago and he still acts as one from time to time.'

Some sentences are ambiguous in that the *BIN* construction can refer either to *BINstat* or *BINhab* (ibid.).

- (46) Bruce BIN putting those glasses on the shelves. (ibid.)

The sentence could be interpreted in two ways. First it might suggest that *Bruce started putting the glasses on the shelves a long time ago and he is still in the process of putting them there*. Second, habitual reading, would imply that *Bruce started putting the glasses on the shelves some time ago and he still puts them there from time to time* (ibid.).

Finally, *BINcomp* indicates an activity that ended in the remote past and which is therefore regarded as finished *a long time ago*. Verbs in *BINcomp* occur mostly in their past tense forms sometimes, however, the *-ed* ending is not pronounced due to phonological process (Green 2002, 58).

- (47) I could' a BIN went back to work. (ibid.)
'I could have gone back to work a long time ago.'
(48) I BIN give Brenda and Mr. Al their books. (ibid.)
'I gave Brenda and Mr. Al their books a long time ago.'

2.3.4.4 Verbal marker *dən*

The verbal marker *dən* refers to events, rarely to states, that are in the resultant state, that means, they have already ended. It usually precedes verbs in their past tense forms and

together with the aspectual *be* it represents the unstressed aspectual markers. It is therefore distinguished from SAE stressed *done* (Green 2002, 60-62).

(49) I told him you dən changed. (ibid.)

‘I told him that you have changed.’

(50) I dən already finished that. (ibid.)

‘I have already finished that.’

Although its primary function is to indicate finished eventualities it might also express recent past or experience (ibid.).

(51) I dən lost my wallet! (ibid.)

‘I have just lost my wallet.’

(52) She dən been to church. (ibid.)

‘She has been to church before.’

While in (51) the person has just realized that his wallet was stolen, (52) expresses the experience of attending church. The closest understanding of the aspectual *dən* is that of the present perfect in SAE (ibid.).

2.3.4.5 Aspectual combination *be dən*

The aspectual markers *be* and *dən* can be also combined together to *be dən*, which combines the habitual meaning of *be* and resultant state of *dən*. The construction carries the stress on its first element, the verbal marker *dən* remains unstressed (Green 2002, 63-64).

There are three possible readings of the *be dən* constructions; habitual resultant state, future resultant state and modal resultant state. The habitual resultant state meaning indicates the habitual completion of an event which could be translated into SAE as *have usually already*. Verbs in this meaning of *be dən* occur in their past forms and can be combined with the adverbs *usually*, *always* or *already* (ibid.). More information on the form *gone* (53) can be found in section 3.7.

(53) She gotta be there for 9, so they be dən gone to school. (ibid.)

‘She has to be there at 9, so they have usually already gone to school by then.’

The future resultant state also refers to activities which will be completed by a future time (Green 2002, 65).

- (54) They' a be dən grewed out that by then. (ibid.)
 'They will have already grown out of that by then.'

The modal resultant state reminds us of SAE conditionals and is used in threatening situations (ibid.).

- (55) Boy, I make any kind of move this boy be dən shot me. (ibid.)
 'If I move, this boy will shoot me.'

2.3.4.6 Aspectual combination *BIN dən*

Similarly to the aspectual combination *be dən*, *BIN dən* carries the stress on the first element while the second one continues to be unstressed. This sequence indicates the remoteness of an event which ended in the past and therefore seems to carry identical meaning with *BINcomp* constructions. However it remains unclear whether the two constructions are in fact interchangeable or differ in any way (Green 2002, 67).

- (56) You should' a BIN dən called me down there. (ibid.)
 'You should have called me down there a long time ago.'

One way of looking at the co-existence of *BIN dən* and *BINcomp* constructions is that marker *dən* emphasizes the notion of the event having ended; another suggests that *dən* superfluously used to mark the resultant state (ibid.).

In order to summarize the use of all aspectual markers in different contexts the following table has been incorporated. The same form is used regardless of the person and capitalized words refer to words that carry the sentence stress (Green 2002, 45-47).

Affirmative	Emphatic structure	Negative
Habitual		
be eating/bes eating	DO be eating	don('t) be ating
Remote past		
BIN eating	HAVE BIN eating	ain'(t) BIN eating/haven't BIN eating

Remote past (completion)		
BIN ate	HAVE BIN ate	ain'(t) BIN ate/haven't ate
Remote past perfect		
had BIN ate	HAD BIN ate	hadn't BIN ate
Resultant state		
dən ate	HAVE dən ate	ain'(t) dən ate
Past perfect resultant state		
had dən ate	HAD dən ate	hadn't dən ate
Modal resultant state		
should'a dən ate	does not exist	does not exist
Remote past resultant state		
BIN dən ate	HAVE BIN dən ate	ain'(t) BIN dən ate/haven't BIN dən ate
Remote past perfect resultant state		
had BIN dən ate	does not exist	does not exist
Habitual resultant state		
be dən ate	DO be dən ate	don't be dən ate
Future resultant state/conditional		
'a be dən ate	WILL be dən ate	won't be dən ate
Modal resultant state		
might be dən ate/may be dən ate	MIGHT be dən ate/MAY be dən ate	might not be dən ate/may not be dən ate

Table 2 The use of aspectual markers according to Green (2002)

2.3.5 Preverbal markers

The preverbal markers *finna*, *steady* and *come* have been known to be present in AAE but unlike the aspectual markers they have not been analyzed to such a great extent (Green 2002, 70-71).

2.3.5.1 Preverbal marker *finna*

Finna, which may appear in several forms including *fixina*, *fixna* and *fitna*, indicates imminence; the event will happen in the immediate future. The verbs following this preverbal marker occur in their non-finite forms unmarked for tense or agreement (ibid.).

(57) I don't know about you, but I'm finna leave. (ibid.)

'I don't know about you, but I'm getting ready/about to leave.'

(58) She was finna move the mattress herself when I got there. (ibid.)

'She was getting ready/about to move the mattress herself when I got there.'

- (59) They finna do something. (ibid.)
 ‘They are about to do something.’
- (60) They be finna go to bed when I call there. (ibid.)
 ‘They are usually getting ready/about to go to bed when I call there.’

The position preceding the marker might be occupied by the auxiliary *be* in contexts obligatory to the auxiliary such as in examples (57) and (58). In example (59) the auxiliary *be* is omitted as the third person plural does not represent the obligatory environment. The last example (60) shows the use of *finna* with the aspectual marker *be* (ibid.).

2.3.5.2 Preverbal marker *steady*

The marker *steady* precedes verbs in their progressive forms and indicates that an activity is carried out in an intense or consistent manner. As a result it is not normally used with stative verbs since it would be ungrammatical (Green 2002, 71-72).

- (61) They want to do they own thing, and you steady talking to them. (ibid.)
 ‘They want to do their own thing, and you’re continuing to talk to them.’
- (62) People be on them jobs for thirty years just steady working. (ibid.)
 ‘People usually stay on these jobs for thirty years, working consistently.’

Steady can be also preceded by an overtly expressed auxiliary *be* such as in (63) or aspectual *be* in order to indicate habitual use (64) (Green 2002, 72-73).

- (63) That politician was steady talking. (ibid.)
 ‘That politician was continuing to talk.’
- (64) Them students be steady trying to make a buck. (ibid.)
 ‘Those students are always working diligently to make money.’

As we have already said, due its nature, *steady* is not normally used with stative verbs. Yet, in case of combination with aspectual *be*, such phrase is grammatically acceptable and common in AAVE. We can say that aspectual *be* forces *have* to take on an activity reading, and, as a result, *steady* is no longer occurring with a state.

- (65) They be steady having money. (ibid.)

2.3.5.3 Preverbal marker *come*

The marker *come* belongs among those lexical items in AAVE that are able to express the speaker’s attitude; in this instance – indignation. It is followed by verbs ending in *-ing*

which marks the difference between *come* as a preverbal marker and *come* as a main verb (Green 2002, 73-74).

(66) You the one *come telling* me it's hot. I can't believe you got your coat on. (ibid.)

'You're the one who had the nerve to tell me that it's hot. I can't believe you've got your coat on.'

(67) Don't come acting like you don't know what happened and you started the whole thing. (ibid.)

'Don't try to act as if you don't know what happened, because you started the whole thing.'

Both examples show the speaker's disapproval of the addressee's doing or saying (ibid.).

2.3.6 Preterite *had*

The use of preterite *had* is interesting in that it markedly differs from the meaning of the past perfect in AAVE despite their identical forms. The past perfect, also known as the pluperfect, appears in contexts in which we refer to the past before the past. On the other hand, the preterite *had* plus verb with *-ed* simply refers to an event in the simple past (Green 2002, 91-92). Also, it only occurs with affirmative verbs, emphatic and negative forms of verbs cannot follow this preterite *had* (Green 2002, 39).

(68) The alarm at the detailing place next door had went off a few minutes ago. (Green 2002, 91-92)

'The alarm at the detailing place next door went off a few minutes ago.'

(69) I had got strep throat on the last day of school. (ibid.)

'I got strep throat on the last day of school.'

2.3.7 Past morphology

There is usually no distinction in the form between simple past and past participles in AAVE. The participle or *-en* form is often used in both the past and participle environments with the following verbs; *drink (drunk)*, *ring (rung)*, *see (seen)*, *sink (sunk)* and *sing (sung)*. Other verbs use the simple past for both contexts; *eat (ate)*. Yet sometimes, there is a morphological distinction expressed with some preterite and participle forms of irregular verbs; *broke/broken*, *grew/grown*, *sang/sung*, *sank/sunk*, *saw/seen*, *threw/thrown*, *took/taken*, *tore/torn* and *went/gone* (Green 2002, 95-96).

With *BIN* constructions which carry the meaning 'for a long time' or 'a long time ago' verbs usually take simple past morphology, yet sometimes they can occur in their participle forms (Green 2002, 97).

- (70) I could' a BIN went back. (ibid.) (attested)
'I could have gone back a long time ago.'
- (71) That stew BIN gone. (ibid.)
'That stew has been gone for a long time.'

Verbs following *dən* sequences can bear both past and *-en* morphology such as with *BIN*. Such sentences bear resemblance to the present perfect in standard English (ibid.).

- (72) I should' a dən went by now. (ibid.)
'I should have already gone by now.'
- (73) You dən been here a year. (ibid.)
'Yell, you have already been here a year.'

Aspectual *be* plus preterite verb sequences can be also formed both with verbs in their past and *-en* forms. Also simple past as well as past participle forms are used with passive constructions (ibid.).

It has been shown that both simple past and *-en* forms of irregular verbs are used in AAVE but it is not evident whether one form is appropriate for a certain environment while the other form in the other. With the verb *go* for instance, it may be that *gone* tends to occur with adjectival uses while *went* with verbal uses. The verb *see* is another useful verb for the distinction between the two forms. *Seen* is without exception used in sentences such as *She just want to be seen*. To sum up the choice of simple past and/or past participle form therefore relies on many factors such as the particular verb, adjectival or verbal meaning of the verb as well as the speaker and his background (Green 2002, 98-99).

Syntax

2.4 Relative clauses

Relative clauses are those clauses that serve as modifiers of a preceding noun. In AAVE they may be introduced by a relative pronoun *who* or *that* as we are used to in other varieties (Green 2002, 90).

(74) They like the teacher who graded her assignment. (ibid.)

(75) I know the person (who) you talking about. (ibid.)

(76) It's one gospel that fits all people. (ibid.)

The noun phrases with a postmodifier in the examples above function as a direct object in (74), (75) and a predicate nominative in (76). Relative pronoun *who* in (75) might or might not be used since the sentence remains grammatical in case of its absence.

Some relative clauses modifying a noun in predicate nominative (77) or object position (78) do not have to be introduced by a relative pronoun although they would be in standard American English. These unexpressed relative pronouns are then referred to as zero relative pronouns.

(77) There are many mothers ∅ don't know where their children are. (ibid.)

'There are many mothers who don't know where their children are.'

(78) I think Aunt M. had a daughter ∅ lived off. (ibid.)

'I think Aunt M. had a daughter who lived far away.'

2.5 Negation

2.5.1 *Ain't* as a negator

Ain't differs from other negations in that it is not formed from a particular auxiliary and a contracted form of *not*; *n't*. It can however appear in the same environments as auxiliary negators such as *isn't*, *didn't* and *haven't* (Green 2002, 41, 173).

(79) He ain't ate. (ibid.)

(80) He didn't eat. (ibid.)

The two sentences are contrastive in that in (79) it is the main verb that is overtly marked for tense rather than *ain't* while in (80) the auxiliary expresses the past context.

The form *ain't* does not have distinct past and non-past forms; the same form appears in past, present and future contexts (Green 2002, 39). This might lead to ambiguous sentences such as the following in which *ain't* could be interpreted as a perfect or simple past marker (Green 2002, 92).

- (81) They ain't paid me for two days that I had took. (Bf, 20s) (ibid.)
'They haven't paid me for two days that I worked.'/'They didn't pay me for two days that I worked.'

In the past, future, present progressive, present copula *be*, present perfect and present perfect progressive, there are always two ways of forming a negative sentence; with an auxiliary as in SAE or with the use of *ain't* (Green 2002, 36-37).

- (82) I ain't gon. (ibid.)
(83) I m not gon. (ibid.)
(84) I ain('t) eating. (ibid.)
(85) I m not eating. (ibid.)
(86) I ain't been eating. (ibid.)
(87) I haven't been eating. (ibid.)

2.5.2 Multiple negation

It is possible to use multiple negators within one negative sentence. Unlike in SAE double negatives are not considered ungrammatical and the rule of double negation meaning a positive is not implied in AAVE. Negation can be marked on auxiliary verbs such as *don't*, indefinite nouns such as *nobody* or indefinite noun phrases such as *no chalk*. There is no limit on the number of negators used in a sentence (Green 2002, 77-78).

- (88) Bruce don't want no teacher telling him nothing about no books. (ibid.)
'Bruce doesn't want any teacher telling him anything about (any) books.'
(89) I ain't never seen nobody preach under announcements. (ibid.)
'I have never seen anyone preach while they're giving announcements.'

The negative meaning of the sentences is not affected by the number of negative elements; the sentences do not become any less or more negative.

2.5.2.1 Negative inversion

In negative inversion two sentences or clause initial elements, an auxiliary and indefinite noun phrase, are obligatorily marked for negation (Green 2002, 78).

- (90) Don't no game last all night long. (ibid.)
 'No game lasts all night.'
 (91) Can't nobody tell you it wasn't meant for you. (ibid.)
 'Nobody can tell you it wasn't mean for you.'
 (92) Don't nothing come to a sleeper but a dream. (ibid.)

These constructions begin with a negated auxiliary followed by a negative indefinite pronoun. *No game* is considered indefinite as there is no specification of the game. Negative inversion does not only have to introduce a whole sentence but can appear at the beginning of a clause such as in (93). This phenomena refers to embedded negative inversion.

- (93) I know don't no game last all night. (ibid.)

Negative inversions resemble *yes-no* questions in that the auxiliary precedes the subject. The initial auxiliary however, must always be negative, so sentences such as *Do nobody want to go to the movies* are not grammatically correct negative inversions (Green 2002, 79).

There are some special cases in which the noun following the negative auxiliary is not negative. The meaning of the sentence remains the same as with a traditional negative inversion and therefore it can be considered a variant of these negative inversion constructions. The example in (94) comes from a chant shouted during a dance in dance halls (ibid.).

- (94) Freeze! Don't another person move! (ibid.)

Finally, negative inversion constructions can be also expressed without inversion.

- (95) No game don't last all night. (ibid.)
 (96) Nobody can't tell you it wasn't meant for you. (ibid.)
 (97) Nothing don't come to a sleeper but a dream. (ibid.)

2.6 Questions

In general question formation in AAVE is similar to the formation in SAE. It is a process in which the auxiliary assumes the position preceding the subject of the sentence. (Green 2002, 41-42).

(98) Can Bruce cook? (ibid.)

2.6.1 Optional auxiliaries

Although primary auxiliaries can appear at the beginning of interrogative sentences they can be completely omitted in *yes-no* questions, i.e. their presence is not obligatory. Following are the two ways of forming such questions, the first one with an auxiliary and the second one without it (Green 2002, 42).

(99) Is Bob here? (ibid.)

(100) Bob here? (ibid.)

(101) Have Bob left? (ibid.)

(102) Bob left? (ibid.)

(103) Did Bob leave? (ibid.)

(104) Bob left? (ibid.)

As there is no auxiliary in (100), in (102) and (104) it is the intonation of the speaker that has to signal the interrogative sentence. In (102) the past tense is marked on the main verb and the identical form with (104) is distinguished by the context in which the two questions appear (ibid.).

Modal verbs and the past tense auxiliary/copula *be*, on the other hand, have to appear in questions in all environments. They can remain in the position following the subject and preceding the main verb, or precede the subject .

(105) You'a teach me how to swim? (ibid.)

'You'll teach me how to swim?'

(106) Bruce can swim? (ibid.)

(107) Bruce was running? (ibid.)

Again, question intonation needs to be used to signal the discourse function (ibid.).

2.6.2 Tag questions

Tag questions are constructions in which *yes-no* questions are tagged onto the end of a declarative. They are formed by copying the auxiliary in a declarative sentence at the end of the sentence. If the original auxiliary is positive, the copied auxiliary will become negative and the other way around. The subject is copied in a form of a corresponding pronoun as we can see in the following example (Green 2002, 43).

(108) Bruce will finish his homework, won't he? (ibid.)

In case there is no inflected *be* form present in the declarative sentence, we form the tag as if it was overtly expressed (ibid.).

(109) Bruce \emptyset eating, ain't he? (ibid.)

(110) Bruce \emptyset not eating, is he? (ibid.)

In (109) the tag is formed with *ain't*, which corresponds to the positive form of the auxiliary that would appear in the declarative sentence if it was overtly expressed. In (110) the tag is formed with *is*, which corresponds to the \emptyset *not* in the declarative. The tag cannot be formed without an auxiliary and therefore auxiliaries that do not obligatorily appear in the sentences are forced to surface in the tags. This helps researchers in the determination of what auxiliaries would appear in sentences if they were overtly present (ibid.).

The positive tags that correspond to *ain't/ain* are formed as follows (ibid.). A simple rule can be applied with these tags. If *ain't* precedes a past form in the declarative sentence, use *have* or possibly *did* for some speakers. In other environments use the auxiliary *is* (ibid.).

(111) He ain't eating, is he? (ibid.)

(112) He ain't ate, have he? (ibid.)

2.6.3 Questions with auxiliaries

2.6.3.1 Yes-no questions

In the formation of *yes-no* questions with the auxiliary, two basic rules apply (Green 2002, 85). The auxiliary of a declarative is allocated to the beginning of the sentence (ibid.).

(113) He do be sleeping. → Do he be sleeping? (ibid.)

If there is no auxiliary in the declarative sentence, we insert it at the beginning of the question (ibid.).

(114) He be sleeping. → Do he be sleeping? (ibid.)

2.6.3.2 Wh-questions

Wh-questions are those questions introduced by *who*, *what*, *which*, *why*, *when*, *where* and *how*. They are answered with content replies. There are several ways of forming this type of questions in AAVE (Green 2002, 85-87).

In the first type, the auxiliary follows the *wh*-word and precedes the subject (ibid.).

(115) What did you eat? (ibid.)

In the second type, the auxiliary follows the subject (ibid.).

(116) What they was doing? (ibid.)

‘What were they doing?’

(117) Why they ain’t growing? (ibid.)

‘Why aren’t they growing?’

(118) Why those people don’t want to take that car? (ibid.)

‘Why don’t those people want to take that car?’

In the third type, there is no overt auxiliary (ibid.).

(119) What we gon get out the deal since we left everything? (ibid.)

‘What are we going to get out of the deal since we have left everything?’

(120) How you knew I was here? (ibid.)

‘How did you know I was here?’

(121) How long do you be out of school? (ibid.)

‘How long are you usually out of school?’

2.6.3.3 Indirect questions

Indirect *yes-no* questions can be formed in two ways; with the use of *if* or *whether* as in (122) or with an inverted auxiliary as in (123), (124) and (125). A combination of both is considered ungrammatical and is not likely to be uttered (126) (Green 2002, 87-89).

(122) I wonder if the mailman don passed. (ibid.)

‘I wonder if the mailman has already passed.’

- (123) It's gonna ask you do you wanna make a transfer. (ibid.)
 'It's going to ask you if you want to make a transfer.'
- (124) Tell me do it make any sense. (ibid.)
 'Tell me if it makes any sense.'
- (125) I wonder do it be like the water we drink. (ibid.)
 'I wonder if it is usually like the water we drink.'
- (126) *It's gonna ask you if do you wanna make a transfer. (ibid.)

Wh-questions are identical to the direct *wh*-questions with inversion.

- (127) I wonder what you doing about it. (ibid.)
 'I wonder what you are doing about it.'

2.7 Existential and locative *it* and *dey*

There are several ways of expressing existential and locative constructions in which *there is/there are* sequences are replaced by *it* or *dey*. Six different structures can be used to convey the meaning of *There is some coffee in the kitchen* (Green 2002, 80-81).

- (128) It's some coffee in the kitchen. (ibid.)
 (129) It got some coffee in the kitchen. (ibid.)
 (130) It have some coffee in the kitchen. (ibid.)
 (131) Dey some coffee in the kitchen. (ibid.)
 (132) Dey got some coffee in the kitchen. (ibid.)
 (133) Dey have some coffee in the kitchen. (ibid.)

In the sentences above, *there is* is replaced by *it's*, *it* or *dey* followed by *got* or *have*. *It* or *dey* are referred to as existential elements and *have*, *got* or *be* function as main verbs (linkers). Such a sequence is then followed by a noun phrase that the sentence presents (ibid.).

A slightly different meaning is expressed with *it* plus aspectual *be* sequences (ibid.).

- (134) It be too many cars in that parking lot. (ibid.)
 'There are usually/always too many cars in that parking lot.'
- (135) It be all kinds of cakes and pies in that store. (ibid.)
 'There are usually/always all kinds of cakes and pies in that store.'

Each construction must contain an existential element (*it* or *dey*) followed by a verb (linker) (*have*, *got* or aspectual or inflected *be*). Some other parts can be added to the constructions (ibid.).

- (136) It was seventy in the family that went down to Israel. (ibid.)
 ‘There were seventy in the family that went to Israel.’
- (137) Let’s stand; it might be somebody who needs to say yes to Jesus. (ibid.)
 ‘Let’s stand; it might be somebody who needs to say yes to Jesus.’
- (138) You say there’s a reason for it, and it could be. (ibid.)
 ‘You say there’s a reason for it, and there could be.’
- (139) Sometimes it didn’t have no chalk, no book, no teacher. (ibid.)
 ‘Sometimes there wasn’t any chalk, any book or any teacher.’

As is apparent from example (138), SAE construction *there is* can also appear in AAVE. The other existential constructions do not appear merely in AAVE; *be* existentials can be found in the Alabama variety and *have/got* existentials share similarities with Guyanese Creole, Haitian Creole and Hawaiian Creole English (Green 2002, 82-83).

2.8 Verb phrase substitution and fronting

The term verb phrase substitution refers to structures in which an auxiliary is substituted for deleted material such as in the following example in which the auxiliary *is* substitutes for the omitted \emptyset *dancing* in the second clause (Green 2002, 44).

- (140) Bruce \emptyset dancing, and Dee \emptyset dancing, too. → Bruce dancing, and Dee is, too. (ibid.)

Verb phrase-fronting represents a construction in which the auxiliary is postponed and the verb and other material forwarded (ibid.).

- (141) Bruce said he would win the election, and win the election, he did. (ibid.)

The verb phrase *win the election* is moved at the beginning of the clause, respectively, it precedes the subject *he* and the auxiliary *did* which now occupy the final position of the clause (ibid.).

The system used in AAVE closely resembles the system in SAE (ibid.).

3 GRAMMATICAL FEATURES OF STANDARD AMERICAN ENGLISH

Before proceeding to the identification of specific features of AAVE in literary texts, SAE of which it is a dialect must be defined. SAE, similarly to any other national standard, can be seen as a “variety of English [that is] devoid of both general and local socially stigmatized features, as well as regionally obtrusive phonological and grammatical features” (Wolfram 1998, 283) For our purposes only grammatical, i.e. morphological and syntactic features, will be discussed since phonology and lexicology are not the focus of this paper. Following is the list of the salient distinctive features of SAE as compared to another national standard, i.e. British English.

3.1 Nouns

3.1.1 Collective nouns

Collective nouns are such nouns that refer to groups of people, for example *committee*, *government*, *orchestra*, *party* or *staff*. These nouns generally take a singular verb whether the noun is considered to be one unit or a collection of people that do various personal things (Swan 2005, 519).

(1) The team is in Detroit this weekend. (ibid.)

3.1.2 Countability of certain illnesses

When referring to particular discomforts the minor ailments *toothache*, *earache* and *stomachache* are countable (Swan 2005, 131).

(2) I have a toothache. (ibid.)

3.2 Verbs

3.2.1 Past simple and participle forms

3.2.1.1 Regular past tense and participle of certain verbs

Unlike British English which employs both regular and irregular past tense and participle the verbs *burn*, *dream*, *lean*, *learn*, *smell*, *spell*, *spill* and *spoil* are treated as regular in SAE (Swan 2005, 286).

(3) I dreamed of you last night. (ibid.)

3.2.1.2 Irregular past tense of *dive*

Although regular in British English the past tense of the verb *dive* can also be irregular *dove* in SAE (Swan, 2005, 286).

(4) She dove into the sea. (ibid.)

3.2.1.3 Irregular past tense and participle of *fit* and *quit*

The verbs *fit* and *quit* are standardly irregular and share the same form in all three categories in SAE (Swan 2005, 286).

(5) Her feet were sore because her shoes fit badly. (Swan 2005, 40)

3.2.1.4 Two past participles of *get*

Both *got* or *gotten* can be used for the past participle of *get* in SAE (Swan 2005, 286).

(6) They have got/gotten sick. (ibid.)

3.2.1.5 Two past tenses and participles of *spit*

The verb *spit* can be either *spit* or *spat* in past tense and participle (Swan 2005, 286).

(7) The boy spit/spat out the chewing gum. (ibid.)

3.2.2 Verbs of perception

The five verbs of perception; *see*, *hear*, *feel*, *smell* and *taste* are commonly used without the modal *can* in SAE (Swan 2005, 102).

(8) I see a car coming. (Swan 2005, 39)

3.3 Tenses

3.3.1 Simple past instead of present perfect

Instead of present perfect which is more common in British English the simple past can be used with past-time adverbs such as *already*, *yet*, *ever* and *before*. The simple past is also used to announce news (Swan 2005, 444).

(9) Did you eat already? OR Have you eaten already? (ibid.)

(10) Did you hear? Switzerland declared/has declared war on Mongolia! (ibid.)

3.4 Subjunctive mood in *that*-clauses

Unlike in British English in which it is considered odd in SAE formal style the subjunctive mood is habitually used when the clause proposes something being of great importance or desire. The subjunctive form of an ordinary verb resembles the plural present simple tense which is used with all persons singular and plural. Regarding the irregular verb *be*, the form resembles the bare infinitive (Swan 2005, 559).

(11) It is essential that every child have the same educational opportunities. (ibid.)

(12) It is important that Helen be present when we sign the papers. (ibid.)

3.5 Adverbs

In SAE mid-position adverbs frequently precede auxiliary verbs and *am/are/is/was/were* even when the verb is not emphasized (Swan 2005, 22).

(13) He probably has arrived by now. (ibid.)

3.6 Prepositions

3.6.1 Preposition *in*

In SAE negative sentences which describe a period of time up to the present point the preposition *for* can be replaced by *in* (Swan 2005, 75).

(14) I haven't seen her in years. (ibid.)

3.7 Pronouns

3.7.1 Pronoun *this*

Regarding the phone call conversation the demonstrative pronoun *this* can be used to refer to the hearer rather than to themselves. (Swan 2005, 584).

(15) Who is? (ibid.)

3.8 Omission of *and*

After the base forms of *go* and *come*, *and* can be omitted (Swan 2005, 45).

(16) Go jump in the river. (ibid.)

4 MATERIAL

The aim of the practical part of this thesis is to analyze the actual employment of AAVE features in three selected works of contemporary African American literature. Three literary texts by different authors are examined in order to be able to draw more general conclusions, and at the same time, compare and contrast the use of distinctive features by each author. The authors were selected so that they not only fall into the group of present-day African Americans but also speak AAVE, as not all persons of African American origin are able to use this variety. Their literary texts chosen for this research include a salient frequency of AAVE features employed by the characters, which clearly marks them as speakers of AAVE. Having considered all these factors, Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*, Toni Morrison's *Beloved* and John Edgar Wideman's *Brothers and Keepers* have been selected to represent AAVE in literary texts. They are briefly characterized in the following:

Alice Walker, Pulitzer Prize winner, is indisputably among the most known contemporary African American writers. Born into a poor black household of farmers in Georgia (Logue 1997, 165), Walker has been greatly affected by oral tradition of her family (Gussow 2000, E1). Her vast interest in depiction of African American linguistic heritage is probably most visible in *The Color Purple* as it is utterly written in AAVE (Rickford and Rickford 2000, 22). The 1982 epistolary novel consists of a series of letters to God by Celie; a poor uneducated African American teenager (Hsiao 2008, 94). The greatest benefit of the novel in relation to this thesis is Walker's use of "eye dialect" (Sauer 1994, 130) in Celie's "extensive interior monologue" (Butler-Evans 1989, 163) suggesting the girl "tries to write as she speaks" (Sauer 1994, 130). Once the reader overcomes the lack of structure in Celie's narrative, they realize it is almost as if she was standing next to them and they were listening to her story. It is mainly the absence of education in Celie's life that results in colloquial language, grammatical mistakes, informal spelling and primitive use of syntax and simplified treatment of tenses. This background provides us with the perfect grounds for analyzing numerous instances of AAVE features.

Toni Morrison, as well as Alice Walker, is a Pulitzer Prize winner and also a Nobel Prize winner. She was born in Ohio to a working-class family (Dreifus 1994), though her parents

came from the Southern part of the United States. In order to maintain their African American heritage Morrison was, similarly to Walker exposed to the traditional folktales (Mote 1997). In her novel *Beloved*, Morrison frequently uses “African American dialects in depicting the speech of her African American characters” as well as African American oral elements (Booker 1995, 285-291). Sethe, the protagonist, represents one of the African American characters in the novel which are marked by AAVE. She is a former slave who on her quest for freedom kills her baby daughter rather than return her to slavery (Schapiro 1991, 190-210). By using AAVE on the background of SAE Morrison also draws attention to “whether characters who speak African American Vernacular English are empowered or disempowered in relationship to the dominant discourse (Standardized English) and in society” (Cutter 2005, II) such as in case of Sixo (ibid.).

John Edgar Wideman, a Rhodes scholar of the University of Oxford and the PEN/Faulkner Award winner, grew up in a black district of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. (Encyclopaedia Britannica 2016) As well as Walker and Morrison, Wideman was also introduced to story telling from an early age (Price 1995, 113-115). His *Brothers and Keepers* represents the only nonfictional literary text analyzed in this thesis. The epistolary memoir contrasts the author’s successfulness with his brother’s failures as he is sent to prison for armed robbery and murder. (Dickson-Carr 2005, 225). The diametrically different life paths of the two siblings are reflected by the use of SAE and AAVE. Although both brothers clearly know AAVE it is Wideman’s brother Robby that is presented as a consistent speaker of AAVE while the author only occasionally switches from SAE into AAVE. The differences in their speech only increase the aloofness between the two brothers (Lippi-Green 1997, 192).

5 ANALYSIS

In order to gather material for the analysis of the use of AAVE in the three chosen texts, the first one hundred instances that appear in each publication have been excerpted (see Appendix). The overall number of examples under study amounts to three hundred.

Similarly to the choice of authors and titles, the choice of features under study is subject to several criteria. The first criterion is that only morphological and syntactic features that belong to AAVE have been taken into account. Since the focus of the thesis is on a vernacular (i.e. spoken-like, in our case) variety, non-standard graphic aspects and spelling variants have been excluded from the description even though they may reflect the phonological form. In *The Color Purple* this concerns the absence of quotation marks or other clearer marking between the direct speech and the rest of the text rather than the use of capital letters at the beginning of the direct speech, informal spelling variants such as *naw* (*no*), *an* (*and*), *gonna* (*going to*), *cause* (*because*) or *somethin* (*something*) or regional and dialectal spelling variants such as *yourn* (*yours*), *kilt* (*killed*), *chilren* (*children*) or *fine*(*find*). *Beloved* seems to be much closer to SAE in its graphic form, yet there can be found spelling variants such as *em* (*them*). Finally *Brothers and Keepers* lacks a boundary between the direct and indirect speech completely and also uses several spelling variants such as *gon* (*going to*), *ole* (*old*), *c'mon* (*come on*) or *em* (*them*).

Due to the varying nature of the three texts, namely the representation of what we consider the closest variant to the vernacular, not all text in the publications could be used for the analysis and each piece of writing had to be treated slightly differently. Regarding Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*, the first hundred morphological and syntactic features have been drawn from the text with no exception as the book is in a form of a diary (the length of the excerpted text is 826 words). With respect to Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, only the direct speech and thoughts of African Americans have been considered since non direct speech shows no signs of AAVE. Therefore both non direct speech and white speakers' speech have been excluded from the analysis and from the word count of the text needed in order to obtain one hundred specific features (the length of the text used is 1,816 words). In John Edgar Wideman's memoir *Brothers and Keepers* all text is taken into consideration

apart from white speakers' direct speech which has been ignored due to the origin of their speakers (i.e. 18,877 words were needed to draw one hundred instances).

As the nature of each piece of writing differs, the length of the text needed to acquire one hundred morphological and syntactic features of AAVE is different. The length of each analyzed text is shown in the following table.

Author and title	Length of analyzed text
Alice Walker - <i>The Color Purple</i>	826 words
Toni Morrison - <i>Beloved</i>	1,816 words
John Edgar Wideman - <i>Brothers and Keepers</i>	18,877 words

Table 3 Word count of the analyzed texts

It is obvious from the table above that the text with the most frequent presence of AAVE features is Walker's *The Color Purple*. Such result was only expected knowing that the book is written as a journal which is fairly close to spoken language and that Celie, the author of the diary, uses AAVE exclusively as it is her only means of communication. To obtain one hundred features in *Beloved*, more than twice as long direct speech of African Americans was needed as Morrison's representation of AAVE in this novel is not as recurrent as in Walker's book. Nevertheless, the longest portion of analyzed text was needed in *Brothers and Keepers* due to Wideman's shifts from AAVE to SAE which prevails in most of the book and reflects the struggle between the ghetto background and academic, intellectual and "White-like" life.

The objective was to classify the identified features into eleven different groups in such a way that all specific features described in the theoretical part of the thesis be potentially covered. Surprisingly, some features encountered did not fall into any category and were therefore marked as "others." On numerous occasions a sentence contained more than one feature and therefore each grammatical feature has a separate number. The classification and proportional representation of the three hundred features identified in the texts is summarized in the following table.

Category	Number of instances	Percentage
Nouns	3	1 %
Pronouns	19	6.3 %
Verbs	119	39.7 %
Adverbs	4	1.3 %
Prepositions	6	2 %
Determiners	13	4.3 %
Subjects	62	20.7 %
Negation	38	12.7 %
Questions	26	8.7 %
Relative clauses	7	2.3 %
Other	3	1 %
Total	300	100 %

Table 4 Overall representation of the AAVE instances in the analyzed texts

The table shows that the richest area of AAVE features is indisputably the verb morphology with more than one third of the total number of features. Other fairly represented groups are syntactic categories; subjects, negation and questions. On the other hand the poorest areas with fewer than ten features were the areas concerning the morphology of nouns, adverbs, prepositions and relative pronouns.

In order to see if the distribution of AAVE features is proportionally represented in each book the following table was added.

Author and title	<i>Alice Walker - The Color Purple</i>	<i>Toni Morrison - Beloved</i>	<i>John Edgar Wideman - Brothers and Keepers</i>
Category	Number of instances	Number of instances	Number of instances
Nouns	3	0	0
Pronouns	2	2	15
Verbs	65	31	23
Adverbs	0	4	0
Prepositions	4	0	2
Determiners	3	6	4
Subjects	6	21	35
Negation	12	14	12

Author and title	Alice Walker - <i>The Color Purple</i>	Toni Morrison - <i>Beloved</i>	John Edgar Wideman - <i>Brothers and Keepers</i>
Category	Number of instances	Number of instances	Number of instances
Questions	3	20	3
Relative clauses	2	1	4
Other	0	1	2
Total	100	100	100

Table 5 Comparison of number of the AAVE instances in the analyzed texts

In the first two books the biggest number of features remains in the verbal area, Wideman's *Brothers and Keepers* is, nevertheless, richer in the area concerning subjects. The distribution of other specific features differs as well. The second most prominent category in *The Color Purple* is negation, other categories contain only a small number of features while adverbial area remains unrepresented. This might be caused by the large number of features in the verbal area (66). The prominent areas of *Beloved* are, apart from verbs, subjects, questions and negation, while the other categories are rather limited. No features were found in the nominal area. Such distribution, especially in the area of questions, is directly related to the fact that only direct speech was used in this book. The richest areas in *Brothers and Keepers* are subjects, verbs (although compared to the other sources, they are markedly low), pronouns and negation (comparable to the other two texts). Other areas contain only a few specific features and nominal and adverbial areas contain none.

5.1 Nouns

Nouns (cf. 2.1) are the least represented area of all the features with only three instances found in total and only in Walker's *The Color Purple*. In two cases proper nouns lacked the genitive marking (cf. 2.1.1) and were used in their base form without *-s* despite their possessive character.

(1) With God help. (CP68)

(2) Mr. _____ finally come right out and ast for Nettie hand in marriage. (CP97)

In the third case an irregular plural proper noun was also marked by the plural *-s* (cf. 2.1.2).

(3) I don't even look at mens. (CP86)

The occurrence of zero plurals with countable nouns was not found.

5.2 Pronouns

Pronouns	Number of instances	Percentage
Demonstrative	8	42.1 %
Personal	6	31.6 %
Benefactive datives	2	10.5 %
Appositive	1	5.3 %
Possessive	1	5.3 %
Reflexive	1	5.3 %
Total	19	100 %

Table 6 Pronouns in the analyzed texts

The pronominal area (cf. 2.2) is richer in the number of instances and also in the number of subcategories it covers. Most features were found in the subcategory of demonstrative pronouns. Seven out of eight instances are the use of demonstrative *them* (cf. 2.2.5) in front of a plural noun (4), (5). One instance shows the use of the demonstrative *that* with a singular noun (6) instead of the use of, in such a situation, more common dependent possessive pronoun, e.g. *your wife*. This feature is not described in the theoretical part, yet it represents an unexpected use of the demonstrative pronoun.

(4) “Them boys found out I told on em.” (B94)

(5) Got to get them crazy dudes out here before they tear the man's place up. (BK12)

(6) ..., then maybe you earn you a few quarters to send home for that wife and them babies waiting down yonder for you if she's still waiting and you still sending. (BK51)

All six instances of marked personal pronouns appear in *Brothers and Keepers* and represent the use of *youall*, which is not only related to AAVE but also to Southern dialects. This feature was not mentioned in the relevant secondary literature and is thus not mentioned in the theoretical background, although the second person possessive *y'all* is.

(7) ..., youall were back home in the ghetto to remind me how lucky I was. (BK62)

(8) Slow down, youall. (BK98)

Another marked feature in the use of pronouns exclusively employed by Wideman and shared with Southern dialects is the benefactive datives (cf. 2.2.4).

(9) ..., then maybe you earn you a few quarters to send home for that wife an them babies waiting down yonder for you if she's still waiting and you still sending. (BK49)

(10) If you ain't got no woman to send for then maybe them few quarters buy you a new shirt and a bottle of whiskey so you can find you some trifling body give all your money to. (BK56)

In one case the pronoun is used as an appositive to a noun.

(11) My mama she fuss at me an look at me. (CP27)

In (12) the pronoun occupies the position of a dependent possessive but lacks the genitive marking and therefore shares the form with its corresponding personal pronoun.

(12) When I start to hurt and then my stomach start moving and then that little baby come out my pussy chewing on it fist you could have knock me over with a feather. (CP51)

Finally, there is a specific reflexive pronoun with the infix *own* (2.2.3.2).

(13) But she can't help grinning her ownself cause she had to hear it too. (BK28)

5.3 Verbs

Verbs	Number of instances	Percentage
Subject-verb concord	52	43.7 %
Special uses of <i>got</i>	27	22.7 %
Aspectual <i>be</i>	11	9.2 %
Omission of copula <i>be</i>	10	8.4 %
Omission of auxiliary	7	5.9 %
Specific preterite forms	4	3.4 %
Omission of modal	3	2.5 %
Future meaning of <i>be</i>	2	1.7 %
Specific participle forms	2	1.7 %
Marker <i>steady</i>	1	0.8 %
Total	119	100 %

Table 7 Verbs in the analyzed texts

The verbal area (cf. 2.3) is indisputably the richest one of all, with one hundred and eighteen features further divided into ten subcategories. The most prominent is the subject-verb concord (cf. 2.3.3). There are forty-five instances in which a standard uninflected form of a verb is used with the third person singular (14) and seven instances in which the -s inflected form of a verb is used in other than the third person singular (15). The latter include the generalization of *is* (16) and *was* (17) with a plural subject and the generalization of *is* in existential clauses (18). The marked features in the subject-verb concord are plentiful in the text, yet, they are not used automatically in all contexts. In fact, one speaker might use both standard and specific forms. For instance, Celie does not use the -s form of a verb in the first person singular at all times. The following sentence occurs only two pages after example (15): *I think he sold it to a man an his wife over Monticello.* (Walker 1982, 5) Similarly, the verb form *are* can be found in the direct speech of *Beloved* with a plural subject: “*Then they know what it’s like to send your children off when your breasts are full.*” (Morrison 1987, 32).

- (14) Darryl don’t need to tell me anything. (BK70)
- (15) And now I feels sick every time I be the one to cook. (CP25)
- (16) “Same, but to listen to her, all her children is dead.” (B28)
- (17) “We was talking ‘bout a tree, Sethe.” (B92)
- (18) When we go to the beach, Mom, there’s three. (BK85)

The specific forms in the subject-verb concord appear mostly in the present simple tense. It is, however, important to point out that in many instances in *The Color Purple* the use of the present simple tense seems to be simplified. From time to time Celie clearly uses the preterite marking to denote past actions, yet, in many instances, the present simple tense form is preferred. It might be the case that due to her lack of education and rather unsophisticated way of expressing herself she uses the narrative or historic present even in situations which undoubtedly ask for a preterite form and might be linked to the eye dialect discussed in the theoretical part. Since Celie uses preterite marking in some situations, this feature is therefore not captured in the thesis and the subject-verb concord is in such instances treated only in the context of the present simple tense. The following is an example of the overuse of the present simple.

Last spring after little Lucious come I heard them fussing. He was pulling on her arm. She say It too soon, Fonso, I ain’t well. Finally he leave her alone. A week go by, he pulling on her arm again. She say Naw, I ain’t gonna. Can’t you see I’m already half dead, an all of these chilren. (Walker 1982, 3)

Another prominent feature is the verb *get* in its preterite form (*got*) and its special uses in informal contexts. In twenty-four cases the form *got* is used instead of the verb *have* or *have got* (19) while in one of them also the verb form *is* accompanies it (20). In three cases the form *got to* is used instead of the verb *have to* or *have got to* (21). The same form *got* is used in all instances regardless of the person.

- (19) Got no money in the bank. (BK46)
- (20) Nettie is got a boyfriend in the same shape almost as Pa. (CP76)
- (21) “You got to stay awhile.” (B20)

One of the very common, yet not distinctive features in AAVE that occurs within the area of verbs, is the use of the aspectual *be* (cf. 2.3.4.1) in order to denote a habitual meaning (22) or permanent properties (23).

- (22) He be on her all the time. (CP71)
- (23) By time I git back from the well, the water be warm. (CP37)

Only in two cases the uninflected *be* does not denote the aspectual *be* but the future habitual meaning (cf. 2.3.4.2) (24). In order to distinguish between these two uses of the uninflected *be*, the meaning of the sentence had to be analyzed within its context.

- (24) After that, I know she be big. (CP92)

Another common feature is the verb deletion (cf. 2.3.1); the deletion of the copula *be* (25), an auxiliary verb (26) or the auxiliary *had* in a modal idiom (27) in affirmative declarative sentences.

- (25) Some of that mess ∅ so dumb, ... (BK65)
- (26) “You ∅ forgetting how little it is,” ... (B3)
- (27) You ∅ better not never tell nobody but God. (CP1)

Several specific preterite and participle forms occur within the texts (cf. 2.3.7). Specific preterite forms found in the texts are *seen*, *gone*, *run*. Specific participle forms are *knock* and *forgot*. In five out of six instances a participle is used as a preterite form (28) or vice versa (29). Only in one instance a bare infinitive is used in a position of a participle (30).

- (28) He seen Nettie in church and now every Sunday evening here come Mr. _____. (CP79)
- (29) “Told them to put sugar water in cloth to suck from so when I got there in a few days she wouldn’t have forgot me.” (B90)

(30) When I start to hurt and then my stomach start moving and then that little baby come out my pussy chewing on it fist you could have knock me over with a feather. (CP52)

Finally, the marker *steady* (cf. 2.3.5.2), is used only once in Wideman’s *Brothers and Keepers* to capture the intensity of the author’s passion for the music (31).

(31) Of course I was steady enjoying the music, too. (BK67)

5.4 Adverbs

The specific use of adverbs is found only in *Beloved*. Three instances show omission of the first adverb *as* in a comparative construction *as — as* (32) and (33). In the fourth case an adjective is used in a position of an adverb (34). Neither of them is described in the theoretical part since omission of words that do not affect the meaning of a sentence and use of an adjective in a position of an adverb do not represent a distinctive feature of AAVE. They might appear in informal spoken contexts of other varieties as well (especially the adverb – adjective homomorphy).

(32) “Θ Soft as cream.” (B21)

(33) “He lets me look good Θ long as I feel bad.” (B26)

(34) “Used to roam them woods regular.” (B63)

5.5 Prepositions

Omitted preposition	Number of instances	Percentage
of	3	50 %
at	1	16.6 %
on	1	16.6 %
like	1	16.6 %
Total	6	100 %

Table 8 Prepositions in the analyzed texts

The instances regarding the prepositional use all concern the omission of a particular preposition. Prepositions fall into the category of grammatical words and therefore the text is often comprehensive even when they are omitted. Such a feature is not exclusive to AAVE and therefore is not to be found in the theoretical part of the thesis.

(35) I say Marry him, Nettie, an try to have one good year out Θ your life. (CP91)

(36) And you were gon act Θ a nigger and let the cat out. (BK66)

5.6 Determiners

Omitted determiner	Number of instances	Percentage
The	10	76.9 %
A	3	23.1 %
Total	13	100 %

Table 9 Determiners in the analyzed texts

As in the prepositional area, only the deletion of determiners, which are also grammatical words, was found in this group. The deletion of the definite article *the* is more than three times more prominent and occurs especially with superlatives such as *the least* (37) and fixed expressions such as *by the time* (38) but also with cataphoric reference (39). The deletion of the indefinite article *an* occurs with nouns that are mentioned for the first time (40) or in other contexts of non generic reference (41).

(37) “∅ Least I can do, cooking from dawn to noon, is bring dinner home.” (B72)

(38) By ∅ time I git back from the well, the water be warm. (CP36)

(39) ∅ Car they’d borrowed in Utah turned out to be stolen to, ... (BK30)

(40) ∅ Old raggedy-ass Olds-mobile got Utah plates. (BK17)

(41) I think of you as ∅ little brother because I have no other handle. (BK60)

5.7 Subjects

Only the deletion of subjects was found within the three texts. Solely the treatment of omitted subjects in declarative sentences will be discussed in this section. Omitted subjects in interrogative sentences will be analyzed in the “Questions” category.

The subject is one of the constitutive clause elements, which normally occurs before the verb in declarative sentences and is obligatory in finite clauses, except in imperative sentences. The subject determines the number and person of the verb and requires the subjective form for pronouns (Quirk 1985, 724-725). In order to be grammatically correct, the following sentence (42) should therefore begin with a subject which would be realized by a noun or a personal pronoun.

(42) ∅ Left me to see after the others. (CP12)

The subject is deleted in fifty-nine instances in total, yet, the cases can be divided into two groups as their nature slightly differs. The first group represents those situations in which only a subject is deleted (43). In the second group, not only a subject is deleted but also the copula *be* (44), the auxiliary verb *have* (45), the lexical verb *be* (46) or the modal verb *will* (47). Example (46) is different from the others as the omitted *there* functions as a grammatical subject. The notional subject of the sentence, *nothing original in my tactics*, is expressed. The distribution of these subcategories is shown in the table below.

- (43) “Q Had to.” (B31)
- (44) “Q Cool out here.” (B15)
- (45) Q Been listening to blues all my life. (BK71)
- (46) Q Nothing original in my tactics. (BK81)
- (47) Q Kill this one too, if he can. (CP57)

Omission of	Number of instances	Percentage
Subject only	43	69.4 %
Subject + copula <i>be</i>	9	14.5 %
Subject + lexical verb <i>be</i>	7	11.3 %
Subject + auxiliary verb <i>be</i>	2	3.2 %
Subject + modal verb <i>will</i>	1	1.6 %
Total	62	100 %

Table 10 Subjects in the analyzed texts I

In order to track the omitted subjects, the context in which the sentences occur has to be examined. The diversity is displayed in the following chart. In all instances, apart from six, the deleted subject is a personal pronoun in its subjective case. The remaining six subjects are the existential construction *there* subjects.

Omission of	Number of instances	Percentage
I	26	41.9 %
it	10	16.1 %
he	9	14.5 %
there	6	9.7 %
she	5	8.1 %
they	3	4.8 %
you	2	3.2 %

Omission of	Number of instances	Percentage
we	1	1.6 %
Total	62	100 %

Table 11 Subjects in the analyzed texts II

5.8 Negation

Negation	Number of instances	Percentage
multiple negation	25	65.8 %
negator <i>ain't</i>	12	31.6 %
other	1	2.6 %
Total	38	100 %

Table 12 Negation in the analyzed texts

Negation (cf. 2.5) is distinctive in AAVE and therefore is described in depth in the theoretical part. *The Color Purple*, *Beloved* and *Brothers and Keepers* also proved to be fairly rich in these instances. There are two basic subcategories of negation in the texts; multiple negation (cf. 2.5.2) (48) and the negator *ain't* (cf. 2.5.1) (49). One instance that is not described in the theoretical part is the use of a negative declarative clause in a position of a negative infinitive (50).

(48) He act like he can't stand me no more. (CP59)

(49) "Bread ain't trouble." (B71)

(50) "Can't have a friend stop by and don't feed him." (B70)

Multiple negation	Number of instances	Percentage
Double negation	23	92 %
Triple negation	2	8 %
Total	25	100 %

Table 13 Multiple negation in the analyzed texts I

Multiple negation	Number of instances	Percentage
Without negative inversion	23	92 %
With negative inversion	2	8 %
Total	25	100 %

Table 14 Multiple negation in the analyzed texts II

Multiple negation can be further divided based on how many negative elements there are and whether negative inversion, i.e. inversion of a subject and a verb in a negative sentence, is present or not. Most cases include double negation without negative inversion (51). Only two instances of triple negation (52) and two instances of negation with negative inversion were found (53).

(51) It's what I like and don't need nobody telling me what's good. (BK78)

(52) ..., and saying nothing to nobody not part of our gang. (BK23)

(53) Don't nobody come see us. (CP53)

5.9 Questions

Questions	Number of instances	Percentage
Omission of auxiliary	17	65.4 %
Absence of subject-verb inversion	5	19.2 %
Specific indirect question	2	7.7 %
Specific subject-verb concord	1	3.8 %
Other	1	3.8 %
Total	26	100 %

Table 15 Questions in the analyzed texts

Another syntactic area that proved to be fairly numerous among our examples is the area of interrogatives/questions (cf. 2.6). The most prominent is the deletion of an auxiliary verb (cf. 2.6.1) in *yes-no* questions (54) and *wh*-questions (55). The deletion of an auxiliary verb in *yes-no* questions is sometimes accompanied by the deletion of the subject (56).

(54) "You know my father?" (B54)

(55) How you doing? (BK5)

(56) "Mind if I join you?" (B17)

In several instances, questions lack the subject-verb inversion (57) and indirect questions, despite following the rules of for their formation in SAE, are capitalized and therefore treated as direct questions (58). In one case there is specific subject-verb concord (59). In another the subject is deleted and the *wh*-word comes at the end of the question (60).

(57) But what I'm sposed to put on? (CP64)

(58) She ast me bout the first one Whose it is? (CP46)

(59) "Then why don't it come?" (B2)

(60) "Can't what?" (B79)

5.10 Relative clauses

Regarding specific features of relative clauses (cf. 2.4), all instances display a zero relative pronoun (61). By mistake, another example (62) was initially classified in this category but had to be excluded as no specific feature occurs here.

(61) “How come everybody \emptyset run off from Sweet Home can't stop talking about it?” (B64)

(62) ~~Our Father Who Art ...~~ (BK41)

One case was found ambiguous as the relative clause might represent a participle construction and therefore no relative pronoun would be needed (63). In two instances not only a relative pronoun was missing but also the copula *be* in one case (64) and the auxiliary *be* in the other (63).

(63) She was kilt by her boyfriend \emptyset coming home from church. (CP77)

(64) ..., and saying nothing to nobody \emptyset not part of our gang. (BK24)

5.11 Others

Three instances were found unfitting to the previously analyzed categories and will therefore be discussed here individually.

The first one represents a bare infinitive in a position of a *to*-infinitive (65).

(65) If you ain't got no woman to send for then maybe them few quarters buy you a new shirt and a bottle of whiskey so you can find you some trifling body \emptyset give all your money to. (BK57)

The second is an imperative sentence which, given the context, lacks the periphrastic structure *let's* (66).

(66) \emptyset Talk about uptight. (BK79)

The third instance is a combination of a seemingly imperative clause and a first-conditional *will*. In SAE such sentence would be probably realized by a first-conditional clause introduced by *if* (67).

(67) “ \emptyset Sit down too long, somebody will figure out a way to tie them up.” (B47)

(68) ~~“Be thankful, why don't you?”~~ (B10)¹

¹It is also important to mention that in the early stages of the thesis a question tag of an imperative sentence in Morrison's *Beloved* was mistakenly classified among specific features and had to be excluded from the analysis (68). Due to that, another specific feature had to be added to reach the desired one hundred instances for each book.

6 CONCLUSION

Our study revealed that the chosen texts: *The Color Purple*, *Beloved* and *Brothers and Keepers* vary in the number of different specific morphological and syntactic features rated as constituting AAVE. The majority of marked features encountered in *The Color Purple* concerned the morphology of the verb (65%), and due to that, the representation of other categories was not very high (the second largest area was negation with only 12%). This is probably the result of the narrative nature of *The Color Purple* and Celie's unawareness of SAE and its grammatical system. It can be said that due to this reason the analysis of *The Color Purple* was the easiest as only six pages were needed to acquire one hundred instances of AAVE features. In practice, however, the analysis proved to be quite demanding. One sentence often contained more instances, in one situation as many as five different AAVE features occurred within one sentence, therefore, the text had to be examined very carefully in order to capture all specific features and to understand the meaning. The lack of quotation marks also made it hard to navigate in the text.

From the graphic point of view, the analysis of *Beloved* was less challenging since only the direct speech of African American speakers, which was clearly marked by quotation marks, was taken into consideration.² The fact that only the direct speech is analyzed resulted in a much higher number of features in the syntax of questions (20%) compared to the other two sources (both 3%). Other syntactic categories such as the omission of subjects (21%) and specific negation (14%), which are typical for spoken language, were also prominent. The AAVE features in the morphology of the verb, however, dominated (31%). In order to reach a more explicit conclusion on the distribution of specific features in *Beloved* the speech of each speaker of AAVE in the book would have to be examined individually as there are several of them, e. g. Sethe, Baby Suggs, Paul D and Denver. The analysis of the speech of individual speakers of AAVE in *Beloved* could be the subject of future comparisons.

The analysis of *Brothers and Keepers* was found to be the most fascinating as the author, and at the same time the protagonist, skillfully switches between AAVE and SAE.

²The occurrence of quotation marks in *Beloved* is the reason why they are used with the extracts from *Beloved* in the analytical part and also in Appendix 3 and 4, which concerns *Beloved* as well.

Although SAE is the prevailing vehicle in his memoir, there are many occasions on which only AAVE can accurately describe his thoughts, often linked to his childhood in an African-American ghetto, struggles in the White-ruling society outside the ghetto or reports of his less fortunate brother's life. An analysis of situations in which the author prefers AAVE could be an interesting subject of future studies. Wideman's shifts and ability to use SAE eloquently affects the word count needed for the analysis of *Brothers and Keepers* and explains why the length of the text is approximately ten times bigger than the one of *Beloved* and more than twenty times bigger than the one of *The Color Purple*. More than forty pages were needed to capture one hundred features; the use of AAVE is therefore sparse yet recurrent and essential. Unlike in the previous two books the most prominent area of specific categories was not the verbal area (23%) but the area of subjects (31%), specifically their omission. *Brothers and Keepers* is also the only writing with the personal pronoun *youall*, which also appears in Southern vernaculars.

As a whole, the analysis was very engaging since it allowed us to work with three contemporary African American pieces of writing, i.e. texts that serve as written depiction of the vernacular which is most prominent in spoken language. It is important to stress that the subject of the analysis was continuous text rather than isolated excerpts which could have been found in a corpus. That means the analysis proved to be demanding with respect to the range of various specific features which it comprised. Out of three hundred instances drawn from the texts one hundred and twenty-four (approximately 41%) were not previously described in the theoretical part of the paper. They included the omission of subjects, prepositions, determiners and adverbs, special uses of *got* and *that*, the use of appositive pronouns and a personal pronoun *youall* and other. This may be due to the fact that they may not be limited to AAVE but may represent features of nonstandard spoken language in general. From a methodological point of view, a more accurate description would have to include more situational variables and comparison with other vernaculars. Nevertheless, some of instances encountered indicate that there appear specific morpho-syntactic environments requiring a more detailed treatment in specialized literature (e.g. the negation of infinitives "Can't have a friend stop by and don't feed him." (B70)). On the other hand, some features described in the theoretical part did not appear in the analyzed texts. They include the use of *y'all* and *they* as possessive pronouns, the plural *an 'em*, the

aspectual markers *BIN* and *dən*, the preverbal markers *finna* and *come*, the preterite *had* and existential and locative *it* and *dey*. The non-correspondence between the features in the theoretical and analytical part might have several reasons. Firstly, many of the features that occurred in the texts are shared with other vernaculars and therefore are not described as distinctive features of AAVE, e.g. the omission of subjects or grammatical words. Secondly, they may suggest that texts from different registers may be needed to complete the picture.

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9 RESUMÉ

V úvodní kapitole bakalářské práce je vymezena varieta afroamerické hovorové angličtiny (AAVE), jejíž gramatickými rysy se bude práce zabývat. Čtenář je seznámen se základními pojmy týkajícími se AAVE, její stručnou historií, mluvčími, významem a postavením vůči standardní americké angličtině (SAE). Důraz je kladen na pochopení důležitosti AAVE a boření mýtů týkajících se méněcennosti hovorového jazyka afroamerické populace v USA.

Na začátku druhé kapitoly jsou definovány gramatické rysy AAVE, které budou zkoumány v analytické části. Práce se zaměřuje na morfologické a syntaktické jevy, ostatní lingvistické roviny AAVE jsou zmíněny pouze okrajově. Zbytek kapitoly představuje podrobný popis základních morfologických a syntaktickým rysů, které odlišují AAVE od SAE a jiných hovorových variet. V morfologii jsou popsány oblasti podstatných jmen, přídavných jmen a sloves, přičemž nejvíce prostoru je věnováno právě slovesům, u kterých se nestandardní jevy projevují nejčastěji. Popsány jsou například pomocná slovesa, shoda podmětu s přísudkem a speciální použití *be*, *BIN*, *dan*, *finna*, *steady* a *come*. Syntaktická část se zabývá popisem rysů u vztažných vět, záporu, otázek, existenciální a lokativní vazby *it a dey* a substitucí a “fronting” slovesných vazeb, nejpodrobněji se věnuje otázkám a záporu.

Třetí kapitola shrnuje základní rysy standardní americké angličtiny (SAE), na jejímž pozadí je AAVE porovnávána. Zmíněny jsou hlavní rysy které se SAE liší od britského standardu jako použití kolektivních podstatných jmén, počitatelnost některých podstatných jmen, morfologie preterit a participií některých sloves, slovesa smyslového vnímání, časy, subjunktiv a další.

Čtvrtá kapitola představuje úvod do analytické části práce, ve které jsou zkoumány rysy AAVE v současné afroamerické literatuře. Vybrány byly tři knihy: *The Color Purple* od Alice Walker, *Beloved* od Toni Morrison a *Brothers and Keepers* od Johna Edgara Widemana. Při jejich výběru ze současné literatury byl kladen důraz na afroamerický původ autorů, jejich schopnost používat AAVE a dostatečné zastoupení této variety v textu. Dále jsou krátce představeni nejen autoři, ale i knihy samotné, přičemž jsou zmíněny jejich odlišnosti týkající se použití AAVE.

Na začátku páté kapitoly je čtenář seznámen s průběhem analytické části, jejímž podkladem je sto rysů AAVE v každé ze zmíněných knih. Do analýzy je zahrnuto prvních sto rysů AAVE, které spadají do morfologické nebo syntaktické roviny a vycházejí z úst afroamerických mluvčích. Ve zkratce jsou uvedeny grafické rysy jednotlivých knih jako například absence úvozovek u přímé řeči a odlišnosti v hláskování, které však nejsou hlavním předmětem práce. Následuje přehled délky textu potřebného pro nalezení sto gramatických rysů v každé z knih, jehož různorodost je popsána a vysvětlena. Dále nalezneme tabulky s přehledem jednotlivých kategorií analýzy, počtem jevů v každé z nich a procentuální zastoupení. Ze tří set rysů spadá sto devatenáct (39,7%) z nich do oblasti sloves. Dále jsou v hojném počtu zastoupeny jevy v oblasti podmětů (20,7%) záporu (12,7%). Nejméně se rysy vyskytují v oblasti podstatných jmen (1%), příslovcí (1,3%) a předložek (2%).

Nejčastější jevy a jejich procentuální zastoupení se u jednotlivých knih díky jejich různorodosti liší. V knize *The Color Purple* převládají slovesné nestandardní jevy (65 %), ostatní kategorie jsou zastoupeny v relativně malém počtu. Slovesa patří tradičně k oblasti s nejvíce nestandardními jevy nejen u AAVE, ale i u ostatním hovorových variet, v tomto případě je číslo umocněné hrdinčinou neznalostí SAE a jejího gramatického systému. V *Beloved* je kromě slovesných rysů (31%) početná i kategorie podmětů (21%) a otázek (20%), což je pravděpodobně způsobeno tím, že se tu rysy AAVE objevují v jen přímé řeči. *Brothers and Keepers* je nejbohatší v oblasti podmětů (35%), sloves (23%) a zájmen (15%). Z hlediska prolínání AAVE a SAE je nejzajímavějším zdrojem práce.

Je důležité podotknout, že ne všechny rysy objevené v analytické části byly popsány v části teoretické. Ze tří set rysů nebylo sto dvacet čtyři z nich dříve zmíněno. Tento jev souvisí s velkým množstvím jevů, které jsou shodné pro hovorové variety obecně a nevyskytují se tedy v teoretické části věnující se specifickým rysům AAVE. Může také ukazovat nové tendence variety. Několik různých rysů objevujících se v teoretické části naopak nenašlo uplatnění pro analytickou část.

V neposlední řadě je třeba dodat, že analýza by mohla být v budoucnu rozšířena o studii ukazující používání nestandardních rysů jednotlivými mluvčími v *Beloved* a nebo vliv kontextu na prolínání AAVE a SAE v *Brothers and Keepers*.

10 APPENDIX

Appendix 1 Instances in *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker in chronological order

Code	Example	Page
CP1	You <u>Θ</u> better not never tell nobody but God.	3
CP2	You better <u>not never</u> tell <u>nobody</u> but God.	3
CP3	Last spring after little Lucious <u>come</u> I heard them fussing.	3
CP4	She <u>say</u> It too soon, Fonso, I ain't well.	3
CP5	She say It <u>Θ</u> too soon, Fonso, I ain't well.	3
CP6	She say It too soon, Fonso, I <u>ain't</u> well.	3
CP7	Finally he <u>leave</u> her alone.	3
CP8	A week <u>go</u> by, he pulling on her arm again.	3
CP9	A week go by, he <u>Θ</u> pulling on her arm again.	3
CP10	She <u>say</u> Naw, I ain't gonna.	3
CP11	She say Naw, I <u>ain't</u> gonna.	3
CP12	<u>Θ</u> Left me to see after the others.	3
CP13	<u>Θ</u> Just say You gonna do what your mammy wouldn't.	3
CP14	Just <u>say</u> You gonna do what your mammy wouldn't.	3
CP15	Just say You <u>Θ</u> gonna do what your mammy wouldn't.	3
CP16	First he <u>put</u> his thing up gainst my hip and sort of wiggle it around.	3
CP17	First he put his thing up gainst my hip and sort of <u>wiggle</u> it around.	3
CP18	Then he <u>grab</u> hold my titties.	3
CP19	Then he grab hold <u>Θ</u> my titties.	3
CP20	Then he <u>push</u> his thing inside my pussy.	3
CP21	When that <u>hurt</u> I cry.	3
CP22	He <u>start</u> to choke me, saying You better shut up and git used to it.	3
CP23	He start to choke me, saying You <u>Θ</u> better shut up and git used to it.	3
CP24	But I <u>don't never</u> git used to it.	3
CP25	And now I <u>feels</u> sick every time I be the one to cook.	3
CP26	And now I feels sick every time I <u>be</u> the one to cook.	3
CP27	My mama <u>she</u> fuss at me an look at me.	3
CP28	My mama she <u>fuss</u> at me an look at me.	3
CP29	My mama she fuss at me an <u>look</u> at me.	3

CP30	She <u>Q</u> happy, cause he good to her now.	3
CP31	She happy, cause he <u>Q</u> good to her now.	3
CP32	My mama <u>Q</u> dead.	4
CP33	She <u>die</u> screaming and cussing.	4
CP34	She <u>scream</u> at me.	4
CP35	She <u>cuss</u> at me.	4
CP36	By <u>Q</u> time I git back from the well, the water be warm.	4
CP37	By time I git back from the well, the water <u>be</u> warm.	4
CP38	By <u>Q</u> time I git the tray ready the food be cold.	4
CP39	By time I git the tray ready the food <u>be</u> cold.	4
CP40	By <u>Q</u> time I git all the children ready for school it be dinner time.	4
CP41	By time I git all the children ready for school it <u>be</u> dinner time.	4
CP42	He <u>don't</u> say nothing.	4
CP43	He <u>don't</u> say <u>nothing</u> .	4
CP44	He <u>set</u> there by the bed holding her hand an cryin, ...	4
CP45	She <u>ast</u> me bout the first one Whose it is?	4
CP46	She ast me bout the first one <u>Whose it is?</u>	4
CP47	I <u>don't</u> know <u>no</u> other man or what else to say.	4
CP48	When I start to hurt and then my stomach <u>start</u> moving and then that little baby come out my pussy chewing on it fist you could have knock me over with a feather.	4
CP49	When I start to hurt and then my stomach start moving and then that little baby <u>come</u> out my pussy chewing on it fist you could have knock me over with a feather.	4
CP50	When I start to hurt and then my stomach start moving and then that little baby come out <u>Q</u> my pussy chewing on it fist you could have knock me over with a feather.	4
CP51	When I start to hurt and then my stomach start moving and then that little baby come out my pussy chewing on <u>it</u> fist you could have knock me over with a feather.	4
CP52	When I start to hurt and then my stomach start moving and then that little baby come out my pussy chewing on it fist you could have <u>knock</u> me over with a feather.	4
CP53	<u>Don't nobody</u> come see us.	4
CP54	Finally she <u>ast</u> Where it is?	4
CP55	Finally she ast <u>Where it is?</u>	4
CP56	<u>Q</u> Kilt it out there in the woods.	4
CP57	<u>Q</u> Kill this one too, if he can.	4
CP58	He <u>act</u> like he can't stand me no more.	5
CP59	He act like he <u>can't</u> stand me <u>no</u> more.	5

CP60	Θ Say I'm evil an always up to no good.	5
CP61	<u>Say</u> I'm evil an always up to no good.	5
CP62	I <u>got</u> breasts full of milk running down myself.	5
CP63	He <u>say</u> Why don't you look decent?	5
CP64	<u>But what I'm sposed to put on?</u>	5
CP65	I <u>don't</u> have <u>nothing</u> .	5
CP66	I keep hoping he <u>fine</u> somebody to marry.	5
CP67	She Θ scared.	5
CP68	With <u>God</u> help.	5
CP69	He <u>come</u> home with a girl from round Gray.	6
CP70	She <u>be</u> my age but they married.	6
CP71	He <u>be</u> on her all the time.	6
CP72	She <u>walk</u> round like she don't know what hit her.	6
CP73	She walk round like she <u>don't</u> know what hit her.	6
CP74	I think she thought she <u>love</u> him.	6
CP75	But he <u>got</u> so many of us.	6
CP76	Nettie <u>is got</u> a boyfriend in the same shape almost as Pa.	6
CP77	She was kilt by her boyfriend Θ coming home from church.	6
CP78	He <u>got</u> only three children though.	6
CP79	He <u>seen</u> Nettie in church and now every Sunday evening here come Mr. _____.	6
CP80	He seen Nettie in church and now every Sunday evening here <u>come</u> Mr. _____.	6
CP81	It <u>be</u> more then a notion taking care of children ain't even yourn.	6
CP82	It be more then a notion taking care of children Θ ain't even yourn.	6
CP83	It be more then a notion taking care of children <u>ain't</u> even yourn.	6
CP84	And look what <u>happen</u> to Ma.	6
CP85	He beat me today cause he <u>say</u> I winked at a boy in church.	7
CP86	I don't even look at <u>mens</u> .	7
CP87	Maybe cause my mama <u>cuss</u> me you think I kept mad at her.	7
CP88	Maybe cause my mama cuss Θ me you think I kept mad at her.	7
CP89	But I <u>ain't</u> .	7
CP90	Sometime he still <u>be</u> looking at Nettie, but I alway git in his light.	7
CP91	I say Marry him, Nettie, an try to have one good year out Θ your life.	7

CP92	After that, I know she <u>be</u> big.	7
CP93	A girl at church <u>say</u> you git big if you bleed every month.	7
CP94	I <u>don't</u> bleed <u>no</u> more.	7
CP95	Mr. _____ finally <u>come</u> right out and ast for Nettie hand in marriage.	8
CP96	Mr. _____ finally come right out and <u>ast</u> for Nettie hand in marriage.	8
CP97	Mr. _____ finally come right out and ast for <u>Nettie</u> hand in marriage.	8
CP98	He <u>say</u> she too young, no experience.	8
CP99	He say she <u>Q</u> too young, no experience.	8
CP100	<u>Q</u> Say Mr. _____ got too many children already.	8

Appendix 2 Instances in *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker according to their classes

Code	Example	Page
Nouns		
CP68	With <u>God</u> help.	5
CP86	I don't even look at <u>mens</u> .	7
CP97	Mr. _____ finally come right out and ast for <u>Nettie</u> hand in marriage.	8
Pronouns		
CP27	My mama <u>she</u> fuss at me an look at me.	3
CP51	When I start to hurt and then my stomach start moving and then that little baby come out my pussy chewing on <u>it</u> fist you could have knock me over with a feather.	4
Verbs		
CP1	You <u>Q</u> better not never tell nobody but God.	3
CP3	Last spring after little Lucious <u>come</u> I heard them fussing.	3
CP4	She <u>say</u> It too soon, Fonso, I ain't well.	3
CP5	She say It <u>Q</u> too soon, Fonso, I ain't well.	3
CP7	Finally he <u>leave</u> her alone.	3
CP8	A week <u>go</u> by, he pulling on her arm again.	3
CP9	A week go by, he <u>Q</u> pulling on her arm again.	3
CP10	She <u>say</u> Naw, I ain't gonna.	3
CP14	Just <u>say</u> You gonna do what your mammy wouldn't.	3
CP15	Just say You <u>Q</u> gonna do what your mammy wouldn't.	3
CP16	First he <u>put</u> his thing up gainst my hip and sort of wiggle it around.	3
CP17	First he put his thing up gainst my hip and sort of <u>wiggle</u> it around.	3
CP18	Then he <u>grab</u> hold my titties.	3
CP20	Then he <u>push</u> his thing inside my pussy.	3
CP21	When that <u>hurt</u> I cry.	3
CP22	He <u>start</u> to choke me, saying You better shut up and git used to it.	3
CP23	He start to choke me, saying You <u>Q</u> better shut up and git used to it.	3
CP25	And now I <u>feels</u> sick every time I be the one to cook.	3
CP26	And now I feels sick every time I <u>be</u> the one to cook.	3
CP28	My mama she <u>fuss</u> at me an look at me.	3
CP29	My mama she fuss at me an <u>look</u> at me.	3

CP30	She <u>Q</u> happy, cause he good to her now.	3
CP31	She happy, cause he <u>Q</u> good to her now.	3
CP32	My mama <u>Q</u> dead.	4
CP33	She <u>die</u> screaming and cussing.	4
CP34	She <u>scream</u> at me.	4
CP35	She <u>cuss</u> at me.	4
CP37	By time I git back from the well, the water <u>be</u> warm.	4
CP39	By time I git the tray ready the food <u>be</u> cold.	4
CP41	By time I git all the children ready for school it <u>be</u> dinner time.	4
CP42	He <u>don't</u> say nothing.	4
CP44	He <u>set</u> there by the bed holding her hand an cryin, ...	4
CP45	She <u>ast</u> me bout the first one Whose it is?	4
CP48	When I start to hurt and then my stomach <u>start</u> moving and then that little baby come out my pussy chewing on it fist you could have knock me over with a feather.	4
CP49	When I start to hurt and then my stomach start moving and then that little baby <u>come</u> out my pussy chewing on it fist you could have knock me over with a feather.	4
CP52	When I start to hurt and then my stomach start moving and then that little baby come out my pussy chewing on it fist you could have <u>knock</u> me over with a feather.	4
CP54	Finally she <u>ast</u> Where it is?	4
CP58	He <u>act</u> like he can't stand me no more.	5
CP61	<u>Say</u> I'm evil an always up to no good.	5
CP62	I <u>got</u> breasts full of milk running down myself.	5
CP63	He <u>say</u> Why don't you look decent?	5
CP66	I keep hoping he <u>fine</u> somebody to marry.	5
CP67	She <u>Q</u> scared.	5
CP69	He <u>come</u> home with a girl from round Gray.	6
CP70	She <u>be</u> my age but they married.	6
CP71	He <u>be</u> on her all the time.	6
CP72	She <u>walk</u> round like she don't know what hit her.	6
CP73	She walk round like she <u>don't</u> know what hit her.	6
CP74	I think she thought she <u>love</u> him.	6
CP75	But he <u>got</u> so many of us.	6
CP76	Nettie <u>is got</u> a boyfriend in the same shape almost as Pa.	6
CP78	He <u>got</u> only three children though.	6

CP79	He <u>seen</u> Nettie in church and now every Sunday evening here come Mr. _____.	6
CP80	He seen Nettie in church and now every Sunday evening here <u>come</u> Mr. _____.	6
CP81	It <u>be</u> more then a notion taking care of children ain't even yourn.	6
CP84	And look what <u>happen</u> to Ma.	6
CP85	He beat me today cause he <u>say</u> I winked at a boy in church.	7
CP87	Maybe cause my mama <u>cuss</u> me you think I kept mad at her.	7
CP90	Sometime he still <u>be</u> looking at Nettie, but I alway git in his light.	7
CP92	After that, I know she <u>be</u> big.	7
CP93	A girl at church <u>say</u> you git big if you bleed every month.	7
CP95	Mr. _____ finally <u>come</u> right out and ast for Nettie hand in marriage.	8
CP96	Mr. _____ finally come right out and <u>ast</u> for Nettie hand in marriage.	8
CP98	He <u>say</u> she too young, no experience.	8
CP99	He say she <u>Q</u> too young, no experience.	8
Prepositions		
CP19	Then he grab hold <u>Q</u> my titties.	3
CP50	When I start to hurt and then my stomach start moving and then that little baby come out <u>Q</u> my pussy chewing on it fist you could have knock me over with a feather.	4
CP88	Maybe cause my mama cuss <u>Q</u> me you think I kept mad at her.	7
CP91	I say Marry him, Nettie, an try to have one good year out <u>Q</u> your life.	7
Determiners		
CP36	By <u>Q</u> time I git back from the well, the water be warm.	4
CP38	By <u>Q</u> time I git the tray ready the food be cold.	4
CP40	By <u>Q</u> time I git all the children ready for school it be dinner time.	4
Subjects		
CP12	<u>Q</u> Left me to see after the others.	3
CP13	<u>Q</u> Just say You gonna do what your mammy wouldn't.	3
CP56	<u>Q</u> Kilt it out there in the woods.	4
CP57	<u>Q</u> Kill this one too, if he can.	4
CP60	<u>Q</u> Say I'm evil an always up to no good.	5
CP100	<u>Q</u> Say Mr. _____ got too many children already.	8
Negation		
CP2	You better <u>not never</u> tell <u>nobody</u> but God.	3

CP6	She say It too soon, Fonso, I <u>ain't</u> well.	3
CP11	She say Naw, I <u>ain't</u> gonna.	3
CP24	But I <u>don't never</u> git used to it.	3
CP47	I <u>don't</u> know <u>no</u> other man or what else to say.	4
CP43	He <u>don't</u> say <u>nothing</u> .	4
CP53	<u>Don't nobody</u> come see us.	4
CP59	He act like he <u>can't</u> stand me <u>no</u> more.	5
CP65	I <u>don't</u> have <u>nothing</u> .	5
CP83	It be more then a notion taking care of children <u>ain't</u> even yourn.	6
CP89	But I <u>ain't</u> .	7
CP94	I <u>don't</u> bleed <u>no</u> more.	7
Questions		
CP46	She ast me bout the first one <u>Whose it is?</u>	4
CP55	Finally she ast <u>Where it is?</u>	4
CP64	<u>But what I'm sposed to put on?</u>	5
Relative clauses		
CP77	She was kilt by her boyfriend <u>⊕</u> coming home from church.	6
CP82	It be more then a notion taking care of children <u>⊕</u> ain't even yourn.	6

Appendix 3 Instances in *Beloved* by Toni Morrison in chronological order

Code	Example	Page
B1	“Granda Baby must <u>be</u> stopping it,” ...	4
B2	“ <u>Then why don’t it come?</u> ”	4
B3	“You <u>Q</u> forgetting how little it is,” ...	4
B4	“Maybe she <u>don’t</u> want to understand,” ...	5
B5	“ <u>Not</u> a house in the country <u>ain’t</u> packed to its rafters with some dead Negro’s grief.”	7
B6	“Not a house in the country <u>ain’t</u> packed to its rafters with some dead Negro’s grief.”	7
B7	“We <u>Q</u> lucky this ghost is a baby.”	7
B8	“You <u>Q</u> lucky.”	7
B9	“You <u>got</u> three left.”	7
B10	“ <u>Be thankful, why don’t you?</u> ” *	7
B10	“A man <u>ain’t nothing</u> but a man,”... **	44
B11	“Every one of them <u>gone</u> away from me.”	7
B12	“ <u>How you been, girl, besides barefoot?</u> ”	9
B13	“ <u>Q</u> Messed up my legs back yonder.”	9
B14	“ <u>Q</u> Porch is fine, Sethe.”	10
B15	“ <u>Q</u> Cool out here.”	10
B16	“And I swear I <u>Q</u> been walking every one of em.”	10
B17	“ <u>Mind if I join you?</u> ”	10
B18	“ <u>You want to soak them?</u> ”	10
B19	“ <u>Can’t baby feet.</u> ”	10
B20	“You <u>got</u> to stay awhile.”	11
B21	“ <u>Q</u> Soft as cream.”	11
B22	“ <u>Q</u> Sorry you missed her though.”	11
B23	“But if all the truth <u>be</u> known, I go anywhere these days.”	11
B24	“But if all the truth be known, I <u>Q</u> go anywhere these days.”	11
B25	“You <u>Q</u> looking good.”	11
B26	“He lets me look good <u>Q</u> long as I feel bad.”	11
B27	“ <u>Q</u> Same, but to listen to her, all her children is dead.”	13
B28	“Same, but to listen to her, all her children <u>is</u> dead.”	13
B29	“ <u>Q</u> Claimed she felt each one go the very day and hour.”	13

B30	“ <u>When she say Halle went?</u> ”	13
B31	“ <u>Q</u> Had to.”	13
B32	“ <u>Q</u> Couldn’t be no waiting.”	13
B33	“Couldn’t <u>be</u> no waiting.”	13
B34	“ <u>Couldn’t</u> be <u>no</u> waiting.”	13
B35	“ <u>You got</u> company?”	14
B36	“You <u>got</u> company?”	14
B37	“ <u>What kind of evil you got in here?</u> ”	14
B38	“What kind of evil you <u>got</u> in here?”	14
B39	“ <u>Q</u> Soft as cream.”	16
B40	“ <u>She didn’t live?</u> ”	16
B41	The one I was carrying when I <u>run</u> away is all I got left.”	17
B42	The one I was carrying when I run away is all I <u>got</u> left.”	17
B43	Boys <u>gone</u> too.	17
B44	“ <u>Q</u> Probably best.”	17
B45	“Probably <u>Q</u> best.”	17
B46	“If a negro <u>got</u> legs he ought to use them.”	17
B47	“ <u>Q</u> Sit down too long, somebody will figure out a way to tie them up.”	17
B48	“ <u>You here by yourself?</u> ”	17
B49	“ <u>That all right by you?</u> ”	17
B50	“ <u>Can’t nobody</u> catch up on eighteen years in a day.”	20
B51	“ <u>Q</u> Glad to get a look at you.”	21
B52	“ <u>Q</u> Got her daddy’s sweet face.”	23
B53	“ <u>Got</u> her daddy’s sweet face.”	23
B54	“ <u>You know my father?</u> ”	23
B55	“ <u>Q</u> Knew him.”	23
B56	“ <u>Q</u> Knew him well.”	23
B57	“ <u>Q</u> Must be something you got it wants.”	25
B58	“Must be something you <u>got</u> it wants.”	25
B59	“ <u>Q</u> Reminds me of that headless bride back behind Sweet Home.”	25
B60	“ <u>Remember that, Sethe?</u> ”	25
B61	“ <u>Q</u> Used to roam them woods regular.”	25

B62	“Used to roam <u>them</u> woods regular.”	25
B63	“Used to roam them woods <u>regular</u> .”	25
B64	“How come everybody <u>Q</u> run off from Sweet Home can't stop talking about it?”	26
B65	“ <u>Q</u> Look like if it was so sweet you would have stayed.”	26
B66	“ <u>Look</u> like if it was so sweet you would have stayed.”	26
B67	“ <u>Girl</u> , who you talking to?”	26
B68	“ <u>Q</u> Comes back whether we want it to or not.”	26
B69	“ <u>Q</u> Can't have a friend stop by and don't feed him.”	26
B70	“Can't have a friend stop by and <u>don't</u> feed him.”	26
B71	“Bread <u>ain't</u> trouble.”	26
B72	“ <u>Q</u> Least I can do, cooking from dawn to noon, is bring dinner home.”	26
B73	“ <u>You got any objections to pike?</u> ”	26
B74	“You <u>got</u> any objections to pike?”	26
B75	“If he <u>don't</u> object to me I don't object to him.”	27
B76	“She <u>got</u> no cause to act up with a stranger.”	27
B77	“I <u>can't</u> no <u>more</u> .”	27
B78	“I <u>can't</u> no <u>more</u> .”	27
B79	“ <u>Can't what?</u> ”	28
B80	“I'm a grown man with nothing new left to see or do and I'm telling you it <u>ain't</u> easy.”	28
B81	“ <u>What you care?</u> ”	29
B82	“ <u>They won't let you leave?</u> ”	29
B83	“ <u>You going to tell me it's all right with this child half out of her mind?</u> ”	29
B84	“I <u>got</u> a tree on my back and a haint in my house, ...”	29
B85	“ <u>No</u> more running from <u>nothing</u> .”	29
B86	“I <u>don't</u> see <u>nothing</u> growing on your back.”	30
B87	“ <u>Q</u> Whitegirl.”	31
B88	“ <u>Q</u> Could have cherries too now for all I know.”	31
B89	“ <u>Q</u> Told them to put sugar water in cloth to suck from so when I got there in a few days she wouldn't have forgot me.”	32
B90	“Told them to put sugar water in cloth to suck from so when I got there in a few days she wouldn't have <u>forgot</u> me.”	32
B91	“Men <u>don't</u> know <u>nothing</u> much.”	32
B92	“We <u>was</u> talking 'bout a tree, Sethe.”	32

B93	“ <u>Q</u> Held me down and took it.”	32
B94	“ <u>Them</u> boys found out I told on em.”	33
B95	“ <u>Q</u> Schoolteacher made one open up my back,…”	33
B96	“ <u>They used cowhide on you?</u> ”	33
B97	“ <u>They beat you and you was pregnant?</u> ”	33
B98	“She <u>got</u> enough without you.”	36
B99	“She <u>got</u> enough!”	36
B100	“A man <u>ain</u> ’t nothing but a man,”…	44

* The instance was excluded from the analysis

**The instance was subsequently added to the analysis

Appendix 4 Instances in *Beloved* by Toni Morrison according to their classes

Code	Example	Page
Pronouns		
B62	“Used to roam <u>them</u> woods regular.”	25
B94	“ <u>Them</u> boys found out I told on em.”	33
Verbs		
B1	“Granda Baby must <u>be</u> stopping it,” ...	4
B3	“You <u>Θ</u> forgetting how little it is,” ...	4
B4	“Maybe she <u>don</u> ’t want to understand,” ...	5
B7	“We <u>Θ</u> lucky this ghost is a baby.”	7
B8	“You <u>Θ</u> lucky.”	7
B9	“You <u>got</u> three left.”	7
B11	“Every one of them <u>gone</u> away from me.”	7
B16	“And I swear I <u>Θ</u> been walking every one of em.”	10
B20	“You <u>got</u> to stay awhile.”	11
B23	“But if all the truth <u>be</u> known, I go anywhere these days.”	11
B24	“But if all the truth be known, I <u>Θ</u> go anywhere these days.”	11
B25	“You <u>Θ</u> looking good.”	11
B28	“Same, but to listen to her, all her children <u>is</u> dead.”	13
B33	“Couldn’t <u>be</u> no waiting.”	13
B36	“You <u>got</u> company?”	14
B38	“What kind of evil you <u>got</u> in here?”	14
B41	The one I was carrying when I <u>run</u> away is all I got left.”	17
B42	The one I was carrying when I run away is all I <u>got</u> left.”	17
B43	Boys <u>gone</u> too.	17
B46	“If a negro <u>got</u> legs he ought to use them.”	17
B53	“ <u>Got</u> her daddy’s sweet face.”	23
B58	“Must be something you <u>got</u> it wants.”	25
B66	“ <u>Look</u> like if it was so sweet you would have stayed.”	26
B74	“You <u>got</u> any objections to pike?”	26
B75	“If he <u>don</u> ’t object to me I don’t object to him.”	27
B76	“She <u>got</u> no cause to act up with a stranger.”	27

B84	“I <u>got</u> a tree on my back and a haint in my house, ...”	29
B90	“Told them to put sugar water in cloth to suck from so when I got there in a few days she wouldn’t have <u>forgot</u> me.”	32
B92	“We <u>was</u> talking ‘bout a tree, Sethe.”	32
B98	“She <u>got</u> enough without you.”	36
B99	“She <u>got</u> enough!”	36
Adverbs		
B21	“ <u>Q</u> Soft as cream.”	11
B26	“He lets me look good <u>Q</u> long as I feel bad.”	11
B39	“ <u>Q</u> Soft as cream.”	16
B63	“Used to roam them woods <u>regular</u> .”	25
Determiners		
B14	“ <u>Q</u> Porch is fine, Sethe.”	10
B27	“ <u>Q</u> Same, but to listen to her, all her children is dead.”	13
B45	“Probably <u>Q</u> best.”	17
B72	“ <u>Q</u> Least I can do, cooking from dawn to noon, is bring dinner home.”	26
B87	“ <u>Q</u> Whitegirl.”	31
B95	“ <u>Q</u> Schoolteacher made one open up my back, ...”	33
Subjects		
B13	“ <u>Q</u> Messed up my legs back yonder.”	9
B15	“ <u>Q</u> Cool out here.”	10
B19	“ <u>Can</u> ’t baby feet.”	10
B22	“ <u>Q</u> Sorry you missed her though.”	11
B29	“ <u>Q</u> Claimed she felt each one go the very day and hour.”	13
B31	“ <u>Q</u> Had to.”	13
B32	“ <u>Q</u> Couldn’t be no waiting.”	13
B44	“ <u>Q</u> Probably best.”	17
B51	“ <u>Q</u> Glad to get a look at you.”	21
B52	“ <u>Q</u> Got her daddy’s sweet face.”	23
B55	“ <u>Q</u> Knew him.”	23
B56	“ <u>Q</u> Knew him well.”	23
B57	“ <u>Q</u> Must be something you got it wants.”	25

B59	“ <u>Q</u> Reminds me of that headless bride back behind Sweet Home.”	25
B61	“ <u>Q</u> Used to roam them woods regular.”	25
B65	“ <u>Q</u> Look like if it was so sweet you would have stayed.”	26
B68	“ <u>Q</u> Comes back whether we want it to or not.”	26
B69	“ <u>Q</u> Can’t have a friend stop by and don’t feed him.”	26
B88	“ <u>Q</u> Could have cherries too now for all I know.”	31
B89	“ <u>Q</u> Told them to put sugar water in cloth to suck from so when I got there in a few days she wouldn’t have forgot me.”	32
B93	“ <u>Q</u> Held me down and took it.”	32
Negation		
B5	“ <u>Not</u> a house in the country <u>ain’t</u> packed to its rafters with some dead Negro’s grief.”	7
B6	“Not a house in the country <u>ain’t</u> packed to its rafters with some dead Negro’s grief.”	7
B10	“A man <u>ain’t</u> <u>nothing</u> but a man,”... **	44
B34	“ <u>Couldn’t</u> be <u>no</u> waiting.”	13
B50	“ <u>Can’t</u> <u>nobody</u> catch up on eighteen years in a day.”	20
B70	“Can’t have a friend stop by and <u>don’t</u> feed him.”	26
B71	“Bread <u>ain’t</u> trouble.”	26
B77	“I <u>can’t</u> no <u>more</u> .”	27
B78	“I <u>can’t</u> no <u>more</u> .”	27
B80	“I’m a grown man with nothing new left to see or do and I’m telling you it <u>ain’t</u> easy.”	28
B85	“ <u>No</u> more running from <u>nothing</u> .”	29
B86	“I <u>don’t</u> see <u>nothing</u> growing on your back.”	30
B91	“Men <u>don’t</u> know <u>nothing</u> much.”	32
B100	“A man <u>ain’t</u> nothing but a man,”...	44
Questions		
B2	“ <u>Then why don’t it come?</u> ”	4
B12	“ <u>How you been, girl, besides barefoot?</u> ”	9
B17	“ <u>Mind if I join you?</u> ”	10
B18	“ <u>You want to soak them?</u> ”	10
B30	“ <u>When she say Halle went?</u> ”	13
B35	“ <u>You got company?</u> ”	14
B37	“ <u>What kind of evil you got in here?</u> ”	14

B40	“ <u>She didn’t live?</u> ”	16
B48	“ <u>You here by yourself?</u> ”	17
B49	“ <u>That all right by you?</u> ”	17
B54	“ <u>You know my father?</u> ”	23
B60	“ <u>Remember that, Sethe?</u> ”	25
B67	“ <u>Girl, who you talking to?</u> ”	26
B73	“ <u>You got any objections to pike?</u> ”	26
B79	“ <u>Can’t what?</u> ”	28
B81	“ <u>What you care?</u> ”	29
B82	“ <u>They won’t let you leave?</u> ”	29
B83	“ <u>You going to tell me it’s all right with this child half out of her mind?</u> ”	29
B96	“ <u>They used cowhide on you?</u> ”	33
B97	“ <u>They beat you and you was pregnant?</u> ”	33
Relative clauses		
B64	“How come everybody <u>Q</u> run off from Sweet Home can't stop talking about it?”	26
Others		
B10	“ Be thankful, why don’t you? ” *	7
B47	“ <u>Q</u> Sit down too long, somebody will figure out a way to tie them up.”	17

* The instance was excluded from the analysis

**The instance was subsequently added to the analysis

Appendix 5 Instances in *Brothers and Keepers* by John Edgar Wideman in chronological order

Code	Example	Page
BK1	Θ Always wanted things to be easy; ...	3
BK2	Θ Filled him in on the news.	5
BK3	Θ Shared everything from the metaphysics of the weather to the frightening circumstances surrounding the premature birth of Jamila, ...	5
BK4	Θ Wrote the letter and of course never sent it, ...	7
BK5	<u>How you doing?</u>	7
BK6	Θ Think that's where we's at, anyway.	7
BK7	Think that's where we's at, anyway.	7
BK8	<u>Them</u> nuts is bowling.	8
BK9	Them nuts <u>is</u> bowling.	8
BK10	Θ Got to get them crazy dudes out here before they tear the man's place up.	8
BK11	<u>Got</u> to get them crazy dudes out here before they tear the man's place up.	8
BK12	Got to get <u>them</u> crazy dudes out here before they tear the man's place up.	8
BK13	Well, <u>youall</u> c'mon over here.	8
BK14	Θ Got some Chinese restaurant beside it.	8
BK15	<u>Got</u> some Chinese restaurant beside it.	8
BK16	We <u>be</u> in the car outside.	8
BK17	Θ Old raggedy-ass Olds-mobile got Utah plates.	8
BK18	Old raggedy-ass Olds-mobile Θ got Utah plates.	8
BK19	Old raggedy-ass Olds-mobile <u>got</u> Utah plates.	8
BK20	Θ Kept running and kept pumping blood and pumping his arms and legs past the plate-glass windows of the office, ...	8
BK21	Θ Years since we'd spoken on the phone, ...	9
BK22	He'd been with me when I was writing Θ Sunday, ...	9
BK23	..., and saying <u>nothing</u> to <u>nobody</u> <u>not</u> part of our gang.	10
BK24	..., and saying nothing to nobody Θ not part of our gang.	10
BK25	Θ Funny, because like Sluggo they were dead serious about the role they were playing.	10
BK26	Θ Dead serious and fooling nobody.	11
BK27	That's enough <u>youall</u> .	12
BK28	But she can't help grinning <u>her ownself</u> cause she had to hear it too.	12

BK29	That's enough now, that's enough <u>youall</u> .	12
BK30	⊖ Car they'd borrowed in Utah turned out to be stolen to, ...	13
BK31	<u>Never no</u> peace.	14
BK32	⊖ Warned him about the shoot-em-up mentality of wester cops, ...	14
BK33	⊖ Little else to say.	15
BK34	⊖ Done the bleeding.	15
BK35	⊖ Had to get up off the stool then, ...	16
BK36	⊖ Coochy-cooed and gently rocked her, ...	18
BK37	She's right, <u>ain't</u> she?	20
BK38	⊖ Still up there on the third floor under his covers and he's thinking.	20
BK39	...,and <u>ain't</u> no getting round her.	21
BK40	...,and <u>ain't no</u> getting round her.	21
BK41	Our Father Who Art ... *	22
BK41	..., anything got legs and something between them <u>start</u> to looking good to me. **	46
BK42	Some of his children's children ⊖ dead already.	23
BK43	..., people going straight to work after hanging out all night with some whore and you <u>got</u> to smell him and smell her beside you while you trying to pull your shift in all that heat.	23
BK44	..., people going straight to work after hanging out all night with some whore and you got to smell him and smell her beside you while you ⊖ trying to pull your shift in all that heat.	23
BK45	⊖ Got no money in the bank.	23
BK46	<u>Got</u> no money in the bank.	23
BK47	Joints <u>was</u> rowdy and mean and like I'm telling you if some slickster don't hustle your money in the street or a party-time gal empty your pockets while you sleep and you don't nod off and fall in the fire, ...	23
BK48	Joints was rowdy and mean and like I'm telling you if some slickster <u>don't</u> hustle your money in the street or a party-time gal empty your pockets while you sleep and you don't nod off and fall in the fire, ...	23
BK49	..., then maybe you earn <u>you</u> a few quarters to send home for that wife and them babies waiting down yonder for you if she's still waiting and you still sending.	23
BK50	..., then maybe you earn you a few quarters to send home for <u>that</u> wife and them babies waiting down yonder for you if she's still waiting and you still sending.	23
BK51	..., then maybe you earn you a few quarters to send home for that wife and <u>them</u> babies waiting down yonder for you if she's still waiting and you still sending.	23
BK52	..., then maybe you earn you a few quarters to send home for that wife and them babies waiting down yonder for you if she's still waiting and you ⊖ still sending.	23
BK53	If you <u>ain't</u> got no woman to send for then maybe them few quarters buy you a new shirt and a bottle of whiskey so you can find you some trifling body give all your money to.	23

BK54	If you <u>ain't</u> got <u>no</u> woman to send for then maybe them few quarters buy you a new shirt and a bottle of whiskey so you can find you some trifling body give all your money to.	23
BK55	If you ain't got no woman to send for then maybe <u>them</u> few quarters buy you a new shirt and a bottle of whiskey so you can find you some trifling body give all your money to.	23
BK56	If you ain't got no woman to send for then maybe them few quarters buy you a new shirt and a bottle of whiskey so you can find <u>you</u> some trifling body give all your money to.	23
BK57	If you ain't got no woman to send for then maybe them few quarters buy you a new shirt and a bottle of whiskey so you can find you some trifling body <u>Q</u> give all your money to.	23
BK58	<u>Q</u> Nothing pretty about it, ...	25
BK59	<u>Q</u> Not kids any longer by any stretch of the imagination.	25
BK60	I think of you as <u>Q</u> little brother because I have no other handle.	25
BK61	It's sure fucked up around here, <u>ain't</u> it?	27
BK62	..., <u>youall</u> were back home in the ghetto to remind me how lucky I was.	27
BK63	To succeed in the man's world you must become like the man and the man sure <u>didn't</u> claim <u>no</u> bunch of nigger relatives in Pittsburgh.	28
BK64	They're the ones <u>Q</u> listen to the Midnighters, ...	28
BK65	Some of that mess <u>Q</u> so dumb, ...	28
BK66	And you were gon act <u>Q</u> a nigger and let the cat out.	28
BK67	Of course I was <u>steady</u> enjoying the music, too.	28
BK68	<u>Q</u> Missed it on the barren stretches of turnpike between cities.	28
BK69	Drifters <u>got</u> one I like out now.	29
BK70	Darryl <u>don't</u> need to tell me anything.	29
BK71	<u>Q</u> Been listening to blues all my life.	29
BK72	<u>How you gon tell me what's good and not good?</u>	30
BK73	<u>Q</u> Lit it without disturbing the sneer.	30
BK74	<u>Q</u> Don't need to hear no Broonzy or Toonsy or whoever the fuck he is.	30
BK75	<u>Don't</u> need to hear <u>no</u> Broonzy or Toonsy or whoever the fuck he is.	30
BK76	I don't give a shit about him nor any of <u>them</u> other old-timey dudes you're talking about, man.	30
BK77	It's what I like and <u>Q</u> don't need nobody telling me what's good.	30
BK78	It's what I like and <u>don't</u> need <u>nobody</u> telling me what's good.	30
BK79	<u>Q</u> Talk about uptight.	30
BK80	<u>Q</u> Let anger and shame and humiliation fill me to overflowing so the hate is still there, ...	31
BK81	<u>Q</u> Nothing original in my tactics.	32
BK82	I didn't want <u>youall</u> to discover I was a traitor.	33

BK83	⊖ Problem is, ...	34
BK84	⊖ Keeps track of them when we make trips.	37
BK85	When we go to the beach, Mom, there's three.	37
BK86	... <u>got</u> that?	37
BK87	... <u>got that</u> ?	37
BK88	Yes, I <u>got</u> that, smartass.	37
BK89	⊖ Looks like Stevie Wonder.	37
BK90	..., because they don't see him and they don't know him and it's <u>not none</u> of their business.	38
BK91	⊖ That quick.	38
BK92	⊖ Got two minds to leave here.	40
BK93	<u>Got</u> two minds to leave here.	40
BK94	⊖ Ride the rickety cars up the mountain's sheer face for fun now, ...	41
BK95	⊖ Always a catch.	43
BK96	⊖ Always an angle so the published rules don't literally apply.	43
BK97	⊖ No real danger here but lessons, ...	44
BK98	Slow down, <u>youall</u> .	44
BK99	..., anything ⊖ got legs and something between them start to looking good to me.	46
BK10 0	..., anything <u>got</u> legs and something between them start to looking good to me.	46

* The instance was excluded from the analysis

**The instance was subsequently added to the analysis

Appendix 6 Instances in *Brothers and Keepers* by John Edgar Wideman according to their classes

Code	Example	Page
Pronouns		
BK8	<u>Them</u> nuts is bowling.	8
BK12	Got to get <u>them</u> crazy dudes out here before they tear the man's place up.	8
BK13	Well, <u>youall</u> c'mon over here.	8
BK27	That's enough <u>youall</u> .	12
BK28	But she can't help grinning <u>her ownself</u> cause she had to hear it too.	12
BK29	That's enough now, that's enough <u>youall</u> .	12
BK49	..., then maybe you earn <u>you</u> a few quarters to send home for that wife and them babies waiting down yonder for you if she's still waiting and you still sending.	23
BK50	..., then maybe you earn you a few quarters to send home for <u>that</u> wife and them babies waiting down yonder for you if she's still waiting and you still sending.	23
BK51	..., then maybe you earn you a few quarters to send home for that wife and <u>them</u> babies waiting down yonder for you if she's still waiting and you still sending.	23
BK55	If you ain't got no woman to send for then maybe <u>them</u> few quarters buy you a new shirt and a bottle of whiskey so you can find you some trifling body give all your money to.	23
BK56	If you ain't got no woman to send for then maybe them few quarters buy you a new shirt and a bottle of whiskey so you can find <u>you</u> some trifling body give all your money to.	23
BK62	..., <u>youall</u> were back home in the ghetto to remind me how lucky I was.	27
BK76	I don't give a shit about him nor any of <u>them</u> other old-timey dudes you're talking about, man.	30
BK82	I didn't want <u>youall</u> to discover I was a traitor.	33
BK98	Slow down, <u>youall</u> .	44
Verbs		
BK7	Think that's where we's at, anyway.	7
BK9	Them nuts <u>is</u> bowling.	8
BK11	<u>Got</u> to get them crazy dudes out here before they tear the man's place up.	8
BK15	<u>Got</u> some Chinese restaurant beside it.	8
BK16	We <u>be</u> in the car outside.	8
BK19	Old raggedy-ass Olds-mobile <u>got</u> Utah plates.	8
BK41	..., anything got legs and something between them <u>start</u> to looking good to me. **	46
BK42	Some of his children's children <u>o</u> dead already.	23
BK43	..., people going straight to work after hanging out all night with some whore and you <u>got</u> to smell him and smell her beside you while you trying to pull your shift in all that heat.	23

BK44	..., people going straight to work after hanging out all night with some whore and you got to smell him and smell her beside you while you ⊕ trying to pull your shift in all that heat.	23
BK46	Got no money in the bank.	23
BK47	Joints <u>was</u> rowdy and mean and like I'm telling you if some slickster don't hustle your money in the street or a party-time gal empty your pockets while you sleep and you don't nod off and fall in the fire, ...	23
BK48	Joints was rowdy and mean and like I'm telling you if some slickster <u>don't</u> hustle your money in the street or a party-time gal empty your pockets while you sleep and you don't nod off and fall in the fire, ...	23
BK52	..., then maybe you earn you a few quarters to send home for that wife and them babies waiting down yonder for you if she's still waiting and you ⊕ still sending.	23
BK65	Some of that mess ⊕ so dumb, ...	28
BK67	Of course I was <u>steady</u> enjoying the music, too.	28
BK69	Drifters <u>got</u> one I like out now.	29
BK70	Darryl <u>don't</u> need to tell me anything.	29
BK85	When we go to the beach, Mom, there's three.	37
BK86	... <u>got</u> that?	37
BK88	Yes, I <u>got</u> that, smartass.	37
BK93	Got two minds to leave here.	40
BK10 0	..., anything <u>got</u> legs and something between them start to looking good to me.	46
Prepositions		
BK22	He'd been with me when I was writing ⊕ Sunday, ...	9
BK66	And you were gon act ⊕ a nigger and let the cat out.	28
Determiners		
BK17	⊕ Old raggedy-ass Olds-mobile got Utah plates.	8
BK30	⊕ Car they'd borrowed in Utah turned out to be stolen to, ...	13
BK60	I think of you as ⊕ little brother because I have no other handle.	25
BK83	⊕ Problem is, ...	34
Subjects		
BK1	⊕ Always wanted things to be easy; ...	3
BK2	⊕ Filled him in on the news.	5
BK3	⊕ Shared everything from the metaphysics of the weather to the frightening circumstances surrounding the premature birth of Jamila, ...	5
BK4	⊕ Wrote the letter and of course never sent it, ...	7
BK6	⊕ Think that's where we's at, anyway.	7

BK10	⓪ Got to get them crazy dudes out here before they tear the man's place up.	8
BK14	⓪ Got some Chinese restaurant beside it.	8
BK20	⓪ Kept running and kept pumping blood and pumping his arms and legs past the plate-glass windows of the office,	8
BK21	⓪ Years since we'd spoken on the phone, ...	9
BK25	⓪ Funny, because like Sluggo they were dead serious about the role they were playing.	10
BK26	⓪ Dead serious and fooling nobody.	11
BK32	⓪ Warned him about the shoot-em-up mentality of wester cops, ...	14
BK33	⓪ Little else to say.	15
BK34	⓪ Done the bleeding.	15
BK35	⓪ Had to get up off the stool then, ...	16
BK36	⓪ Coochy-cooed and gently rocked her, ...	18
BK38	⓪ Still up there on the third floor under his covers and he's thinking.	20
BK45	⓪ Got no money in the bank.	23
BK58	⓪ Nothing pretty about it, ...	25
BK59	⓪ Not kids any longer by any stretch of the imagination.	25
BK68	⓪ Missed it on the barren stretches of turnpike between cities.	28
BK71	⓪ Been listening to blues all my life.	29
BK73	⓪ Lit it without disturbing the sneer.	30
BK74	⓪ Don't need to hear no Broonzy or Toonsy or whoever the fuck he is.	30
BK77	It's what I like and ⓪ don't need nobody telling me what's good.	30
BK80	⓪ Let anger and shame and humiliation fill me to overflowing so the hate is still there, ...	31
BK81	⓪ Nothing original in my tactics.	32
BK84	⓪ Keeps track of them when we make trips.	37
BK89	⓪ Looks like Stevie Wonder.	37
BK91	⓪ That quick.	38
BK92	⓪ Got two minds to leave here.	40
BK94	⓪ Ride the rickety cars up the mountain's sheer face for fun now, ...	41
BK95	⓪ Always a catch.	43
BK96	⓪ Always an angle so the published rules don't literally apply.	43
BK97	⓪ No real danger here but lessons, ...	44

Negation

BK23	..., and saying <u>nothing</u> to <u>nobody</u> <u>not</u> part of our gang.	10
BK31	<u>Never</u> <u>no</u> peace.	14
BK37	She's right, <u>ain't</u> she?	20
BK39	...,and <u>ain't</u> no getting round her.	21
BK40	...,and <u>ain't</u> no getting round her.	21
BK53	If you <u>ain't</u> got no woman to send for then maybe them few quarters buy you a new shirt and a bottle of whiskey so you can find you some trifling body give all your money to.	23
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BK63	To succeed in the man's world you must become like the man and the man sure <u>didn't</u> claim <u>no</u> bunch of nigger relatives in Pittsburgh.	28
BK75	<u>Don't</u> need to hear <u>no</u> Broonzy or Toonsy or whoever the fuck he is.	30
BK78	It's what I like and <u>don't</u> need <u>nobody</u> telling me what's good.	30
BK90	..., because they don't see him and they don't know him and it's <u>not</u> <u>none</u> of their business.	38
Questions		
BK5	<u>How you doing?</u>	7
BK72	<u>How you gon tell me what's good and not good?</u>	30
BK87	... <u>got that?</u>	37
Relative clauses		
BK18	Old raggedy-ass Olds-mobile <u>Q</u> got Utah plates.	8
BK24	..., and saying nothing to nobody <u>Q</u> not part of our gang.	10
BK41	Our Father Who Art ... *	22
BK64	They're the ones <u>Q</u> listen to the Midnighters, ...	28
BK99	..., anything <u>Q</u> got legs and something between them start to looking good to me.	46
Others		
BK57	If you ain't got no woman to send for then maybe them few quarters buy you a new shirt and a bottle of whiskey so you can find you some trifling body <u>Q</u> give all your money to.	23
BK79	<u>Q</u> Talk about uptight.	30

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