

Questions for reading, Chapter 7: 'Ethnicity and Language'

1. What other names are used for what linguists usually call 'African-American Vernacular English'? Why do we use this name? (We often just abbreviate it to 'AAVE'.) By the way, this is starting to change, as more people who work in the area use 'African-American Language'.
2. How did AAVE come about? That is, what are its historical origins?
3. What was the Oakland School Board decision and why is it important? (If you want more information, check out this:
<http://www.stanford.edu/~rickford/papers/EbonicsInMyBackyard.html>.)
4. What are some of the key structural aspects of AAVE?
 - a. in the verb system?
 - b. in pronunciation?
 - c. others beyond the ones discussed?
5. What's the 'Great Migration'? How, when and why did African-Americans come to Wisconsin in large numbers? Where they did settle, within Milwaukee in particular? What's salient about this situation?
6. Describe John Baugh's study and what it reveals, about language and discrimination and about language and cognition. What about EEOC vs. Target?
7. Tom says that AAVE is the 'most stigmatized' variety of American English. And Rosina Lippi-Green (in *English with an Accent*) writes that 'AAVE evokes a kind of panic' among many whites. Why?
8. John Baugh writes: "Pragmatic reality forces the burden of adjustment on groups who are outside positions of influence and power. It does little good to claim that street speech [=AAVE] is a valid dialect — which it is — when the social cost of linguistic and other differences can be so high." What practical ramifications does that have?