

GRAMMATICAL FEATURES OF AFRICAN AMERICAN VERNACULAR ENGLISH IN KING OF KILLBRANCH ALBUM

Rio Raka Fatra^{1*}, Anit Pranita Devi²

Universitas Sebelas April, Indonesia, e-mail: riorakaf@gmail.com
Universitas Sebelas April, Indonesia, e-mail: anit.pranita.d@gmail.com



©2024 by the authors. Submitted for open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License-(CC-BY-SA) (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>)

DOI : <https://dx.doi.org/10.30983/mj.v4i1.8375>

*Corresponding Author

Submission: April 10, 2024	Revised: June 05, 2024	Published: June 30, 2024
----------------------------	------------------------	--------------------------

Abstract

This research aimed to identify and analyze the grammatical features of African American Vernacular English (AAVE) used in King Of Killbranch album by BIG30. This research also aimed to identify the most dominant grammatical feature of African American Vernacular English (AAVE) used in King Of Killbranch album. A case study method was applied to this research. The grammatical features of AAVE were analyzed based on the theories proposed by Wolfram (2004). The data analysis procedures included reading the song lyrics, identifying and classifying song lyrics that contain AAVE grammatical features, and examining the data using Wolfram's theory. The results showed that 10 grammatical features were found such as copula absence, invariant "be", completive done, sequential be done, remote "been", simple past had+verb, specialized auxiliaries, irregular verbs, subject-verb agreement, other verb phrase structures, negation, nominals, and question formation. Furthermore, the most dominant grammatical feature of AAVE in this album is copula absence.

Keywords: grammatical features, aave, king of killbranch

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi dan menganalisis fitur gramatikal African American Vernacular English (AAVE) yang digunakan dalam album King Of Killbranch milik BIG30. Penelitian ini juga bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi fitur gramatikal African American Vernacular English (AAVE) yang paling dominan digunakan dalam album King Of Killbranch. Metode studi kasus diterapkan pada penelitian ini. Fitur tata bahasa AAVE dianalisis berdasarkan teori yang diajukan oleh Wolfram (2004). Prosedur analisis data meliputi membaca lirik lagu, mengidentifikasi dan mengklasifikasikan lirik lagu yang mengandung ciri gramatikal AAVE, dan menguji data menggunakan teori Wolfram. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa ditemukan 10 ciri gramatikal seperti copula absence, invariant "be", completive done, sequential be done, remote "been", simple past had+verb, specialized auxiliaries, irregular verbs, subject-verb agreement, other verb phrase structures, negation, nominals, dan question formation. Selain itu, ciri gramatikal AAVE yang paling dominan dalam album ini adalah copula absence.

Kata Kunci: fitur gramatikal, aave, king of killbranch

1. Introduction

Language is primarily a valuable element for creating social identity, along with other stylistic identifiers such as clothing, gait, consumption patterns, and attitudes toward conceptualizing one's identity (Aryani, 2020). Languages can indicate people's identities, origins, or national affiliations (Kongsatt et al., 2023). Language is divided into two categories: standard language and non-standard language. Standard language is the formal version of a language, commonly used in official settings and taught in educational institutions. In contrast, vernacular language, which has not

undergone standardization, is commonly used in everyday interactions (Arifin & Dewi, 2023). Vernacular refers to the everyday language used by a specific local community (Pamangin et al., 2023). One of the vernacular languages is African American Vernacular English (AAVE).

African American Language, known by various names such as Negro Non-Standard Vernacular English, Black English, Ebonics, African American Vernacular English (AAVE), AAE, or AAL, is a variation of English spoken by African Americans in the United States (Suyudi et al., 2023). Terms like Black Vernacular English and African American Vernacular English refer to a particular form of African American identity often associated with youth street culture, although this linguistic variety is used by African Americans of all ages and genders (King, 2020). Despite its various names, AAVE is often wrongly perceived as an error in Standard American English (SAE) (Foster, 2020). AAVE has frequently been perceived as linguistically incorrect (Peoples, 2023). In grammar, AAVE features may be seen as errors because they do not conform to standard grammatical rules (Amina et al., 2021). However, AAVE is a legitimate and sophisticated dialect that follows specific linguistic rules and patterns (Naufal & Fadhli, 2023). AAVE is a unique dialect distinguished by its own phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic, and usage patterns (Kongsatt et al., 2023).

In this modern era, the usage of AAVE expands into various forms of communication, including social media, movies, music, etc. In the current era, music has become an integral part of human life. Music functions as a tool for self-expression. As a cultural product, music is considered one of the most influential mediums for transmitting language, including its linguistic features and dialects (Yannuar et al., 2023). AAVE in hip-hop reinforces African American community and solidarity, connecting artists (rappers) and fans through shared linguistic practices. Thus, AAVE in hip-hop can be used to explore linguistic diversity and cultural representation, offering educational insights into culture and language itself.

AAVE is widely utilized in a specific music genre known as rap, which is a fundamental component of African-American culture known as hip-hop (Astuti, 2018). Rap music or hip-hop, primarily developed by African American youth, includes significant elements that reflect AAVE characteristics (Smith, 2020). Hip-hop music, known for its use of AAVE, is one of the most popular genres that has been promoting and spreading a specific dialect (Yannuar et al., 2023). Hip-hop music and its associated dialect, AAVE, have spread globally, leading to the incorporation of this culture (Yannuar et al., 2023). Many young individuals and members of the hip-hop community, as well as speakers of other languages, have formed significant long-term relationships with AAVE and share a common paradigm as part of hip-hop culture (Yannuar et al., 2023). Thus, among young African Americans, AAVE is prominent due to its popularity within hip-hop culture (Bajri & MishiMing, 2022).

BIG30, whose real name is Rodney Lamont Wright Jr., is a rising rapper from Memphis, Tennessee. Before becoming a famous rapper, BIG30 was a member of Choppa Gang, a group of teenagers from Memphis who share an interest in hip-hop music. Choppa Gang members basically aspire to be rappers, and they often spend their time hanging out together while freestyling or rapping. They are also distinguished by their style, often seen carrying firearms when hanging out together, a trait shared by BIG30 and other Choppa Gang members like Pooh Shiesty and Big Scarr. BIG30, along with other Choppa Gang members, Pooh Shiesty and Big Scarr, went viral when they successfully signed with major labels.

They became solo artists and gained popularity in 2019. Later, BIG30 released one of his best albums, "King of Killbranch," in 2021. This album peaked at number 13 on the Billboard 200.

Before this research, other researchers also conducted similar research about AAVE grammatical features in album lyrics. The first research is "Grammatical Analysis of African American Vernacular English in The Eminem Show Album: A Linguistics Perspective" by Suyudi et al., (2023). This research focused on analyzing AAVE grammatical features in Eminem's album with Wolfram's theory. This research used the case study method. The result showed that 7 grammatical features were found, such as copula absence, invariant be, remote been, subject-verb agreement, negation, question formation, and nominals. The result also showed that the songs function as a medium for showing identity. The second research is "African American Vernacular English (AAVE) Used by Rich Brian: A Sociolinguistic Investigation" by Aryani (2020). This research aimed to identify the grammatical features of AAVE in Rich Brian's Amen album and to identify the reason on Rich Brian's use of AAVE. This research used Wolfram's theory and used a descriptive qualitative method. The results showed that 7 grammatical features were found, such as copula absence, invariant be, completive done, specialized auxiliaries, negation, nominal, and ain't. Besides, environmental aspects were the reason for the use of AAVE in this album's lyrics. The third research is "African-American Vernacular English As Hip-hop Artist Identity In Indonesian Rapper Ramengvrl's Songs" by Yannuar et al., (2023). This research focused on investigating the grammatical features of AAVE used in the song lyrics of Ramengvrl's album, "Can't Speak English", and identifying the reasons for this AAVE use. Wolfram's theory is also used in this research and descriptive qualitative is the method of this research. The results showed that Ramengvrl used 8 AAVE grammatical features such as copula/auxiliary absence, specialized auxiliary, subject-verb agreement, negation, remote "been," nominals, non-standard pronouns, and question formation. This AAVE use by Ramengvrl is caused by rapper influences, the authenticity of hip-hop culture, and anti-language representation.

This research addresses a gap by exploring how AAVE is uniquely utilized in hip-hop, contributing new insights into the dynamics of linguistic variation. It offers theoretical contributions by examining how the grammatical features of AAVE are used in "King Of Killbranch" album. Additionally, this research provides clear perspectives on the global influence of hip-hop on AAVE, advancing our language comprehension and its role in popular culture.

The object of this research is "King of Killbranch," one of the best albums by BIG30. In addition to peaking at number 13 on the Billboard 200, this album also featured some famous rappers such as Lil Durk, Future, Quavo, Moneybagg Yo, Pooh Shiesty, Big Homiie G, Yo Gotti, and Offset. This contributed to the album's increased popularity at that time. In this album, there are a lot of grammatical features of AAVE that are really different from Standard English (SE). Every song in this album contains various AAVE grammatical features. In analyzing the grammatical features of AAVE in BIG30's album, the researcher observed notable use of copula absence like the deletion of "is" and "are". This feature is still consistent with those found in BIG30's earlier works, suggesting a stable personal style. When compared to other Memphis rappers, such as Pooh Shiesty, a similar AAVE feature is also present, reflecting a common linguistic phenomenon. Therefore, this research states two research questions, such as :

1. What grammatical features of AAVE are used in “King of Killbranch” album?
2. What is the most dominant grammatical feature of AAVE used in “King of Killbranch” album?

Wolfram (2004) explained 13 grammatical features of AAVE. They are copula absence, invariant "be", completive done, sequential be done, remote “been”, simple past had+verb, specialized auxiliaries, irregular verbs, subject-verb agreement, other verb phrase structures, negation, nominals, and question formation. Wolfram’s theory is used in this research because it is relevant and suitable. Here are the grammatical features of AAVE proposed by Wolfram (2004).

1. Copula/auxiliary absence

The absence of copula for "is" and "are" is a well-documented grammatical feature of AAVE (Wolfram, 2004). For example "You disgusting" for "You're disgusting", and "She looking for her book" for "She's looking for her book". There is also the absence of an auxiliary “do”. For example, “What you see?” for “What do you see?”.

2. Invariant “be”

Invariant “be” also known as habitual “be”. For example "I be sippin' on that beer". In SE, it would be “I often sip on that beer”. Another example of the loss of "will" and "would" can be seen in "I be there". It is "I'll be there" in SE. There is also usage in hip-hop equative structure to capitalize on symbolic significance in AAVE. For example "Allen Carl be the name".

3. Completive done

The use of "done" with the past tense of the verb, as seen in sentences like "We done talked to Mr. Allen". In SE, it would be “We have talked to Mr. Allen”.

4. Sequential be done

AAVE also features a combination of "be" and "done" together in sentences such as "My cellphone be done broken by the time we get there". This indicates a resultative or future conditional state (Wolfram, 2004).

5. Remote “been”

Remote "been" refers to the usage of "been" instead of the present perfect tense form (Wolfram, 2004). For instance, "We been waiting" instead of "We have been waiting" in SE. This feature denotes an event or condition that occurred in the distant past and continues to the present (Wolfram, 2004).

6. Simple past had+verb

AAVE employs "She had ate rice" instead of "She ate rice". In SE, it indicates the simple past tense.

7. Specialized auxiliaries

The use of "come" to indicate an unpleasant situation (Wolfram, 2004). For example "He come walkin' in here with that bad hat". And then, the use of "steady" to indicate persistent activity (Wolfram, 2004). For example "Ricky Bell be steady steppin' in them number nines". Later, the use of "finna" to indicate a planned event (Wolfram, 2004). For example "We're finna eat". In SE, it would be “We are about to eat”.

8. Irregular verbs

AAVE employs 4 irregular verbs. First, the extension of the past tense as a participle, for example, "I had ate my lunch". Second, the use of the participle as past tense, for example, "I broken my cup". Third, the use of the bare root as past tense as in "I eat my cake two days ago". Fourth, the regularization of past tense forms as in "I knowed him".

9. Subject-verb agreement

In AAVE, there is absence of the 3rd person singular "-s" suffix (Wolfram, 2004). For example "Alvia run". And then, for the present tense, "are" and "am" are leveled to "is," as seen in "My friends is here". Meanwhile in the past tense, "be" levels to "was," as in "My friends was here".

10. Other verb phrase structures

In AAVE, the verb "beat" can function as an intransitive verb, as illustrated in examples such as "I beat" where "beat" means "won" (Wolfram, 2004). There is also a combination of verbs and particles that can function together lexically, such as "blessed out," meaning 'scold,' as in the construction "We blessed him out." Another structure is the use of "say" to introduce a quote, as in "She told him say 'Who is that guy?'".

11. Negation

Negative concord or multiple negation constructions can be seen in "It wasn't nothing", "Nobody don't like them", and "Don't nobody like Alvia". Multiple negations are used to emphasize the negation (Wolfram, 2004). AAVE also uses "ain't" as a general negation for "aren't", "am not", "is not", "haven't", and "hasn't" (Wolfram, 2004). For example, "You ain't happy", means "You're not happy" in SE. And then, the use of "ain't" & "but" to indicate "only" (Wolfram, 2004). For example, "Alfredo ain't but five years old" means "Alfredo is only five years old" in SE.

12. Nominals

The loss of possessive "-s" can be seen in "The brown cat tail was wagging". There is also a loss of "-s" with measure nouns and quantifiers. For example "We got 27 cent". And then, the use of "an 'em" for "his friends", can be seen in "Billy an 'em". Furthermore, the use of "y'all" like "It's y'all glove" and the use of the possessive adjective "they", for example, "It's they pencil" for "It's their pencil" in SE. And then, the use of the objective form "them" in attributive demonstratives, like "She likes them chairs". For SE, it would be "She likes those chairs".

13. Question formation

AAVE form question without subject-auxiliary inversion, as in "Why I can't eat?" or "Who that is?".

2. Method

This research adopted a qualitative approach, which involves exploring, understanding, and detailing how people or groups perceive and interpret social or human issues (Creswell, 2009) This research aims to examine a specific social issue: the grammatical features of AAVE, given that some consider AAVE to be an error language. To achieve this, a case study method within a qualitative framework was used. A case study involves an in-depth analysis by the researcher of a particular program, event, activity, process, or individual (Creswell, 2009).

In the context of this research, the activity investigated was “King of Killbranch” album by BIG30, because the album lyrics are an artistic activity. The objective was to find out the grammatical features of AAVE and the most dominant grammatical feature of AAVE in “King of Killbranch” album.

This album contains 15 songs, including "Backseat Of The Rolls Truck," "Miss My Glock 26" (ft. Lil Durk), "No Hospital Gang," "Dyin' Expensive," "Whatever Come With It" (ft. Future), "Mista," "Pressin'" (ft. Moneybagg Yo & Quavo), "Shots Out The Vette," "King Of My Projects," "Free Shiest Life" (ft. Pooh Shiesty), "Red Key" (ft. Big Homiie G & Moneybagg Yo), "Opp Pacc," "Too Official" (ft. Yo Gotti), "Fuck The Opps 4L" (ft. Offset), and "Allegations" (ft. Pooh Shiesty). Song lyrics were selected based on their relevance to the research focus on AAVE grammatical features. To gain a broad range of AAVE grammatical features, lyrics from all songs within the “King of Killbranch” album were chosen. The form of the data in this research was in lingual units such as expressions in phrases, sentences, or clauses found in “King of Killbranch” album lyrics. In this research, the main instrument was the researcher himself and the second instrument was the datasheet used by the researcher. The data were collected through qualitative methods by repeatedly listening to the album on the Spotify app and by reviewing the transcribed lyrics on Genius (Genius, 2021), the world’s most accurate lyrics collection website.

The data analysis procedures included reading all the song lyrics carefully. After reading every song's lyrics, the next step was identifying and classifying the grammatical features of AAVE for every song in a datasheet. The datasheet is a table for classification with the codes for grammatical features of AAVE. For example, copula absence code is (CA), invariant “be” code is (IB), completive done code is (CD), etc. The datasheet example can be seen below.

Table 1. Example of the datasheet for analyzing song lyrics (Song 5: Whatever Come With It)

NO	LYRICS	CA	IB	CD	SBD	RB	SPHV	SA	IV	SVA	OVPS	NEG	N	QF
1.	And we gon' come through first, me and my niggas don't do spinnin' back	√												
2.	Know until my heart stop, BIG30 gon' handle business	√												
3.	You ain't sellin' dope or slimin' shit out, you ain't my twin											√		

After classifying all the grammatical features of every song, the next step is selecting the data that will be analyzed in the discussion section. The data were analyzed with Wolfram’s theory and compared to Standard English (SE) grammatical rules.

Creswell (2009) describes eight procedural steps that researchers can use to ensure the accuracy of their findings. These steps include: triangulating data from various sources, conducting member checks, using detailed descriptive language, acknowledging researcher biases, presenting contradictory or negative findings, spending a significant amount of time in the field, participating in peer debriefing, and employing external auditors. To ensure the data findings, this research used detailed descriptive language based on Wolfram's theory.

3. Results and Discussion

A. Grammatical Features of AAVE used in "King Of Killbranch" Album

Out of the 13 grammatical features of African American Vernacular English (AAVE) proposed by Wolfram (2004), 10 grammatical features were found in "King Of Killbranch" album. The grammatical features were copula/auxiliary absence, invariant "be", completive done, remote "been", specialized auxiliaries, irregular verbs, subject-verb agreement, negation, nominals, and question formation. Here is the analysis of song lyrics that contained grammatical features of AAVE.

COPULA & AUXILIARY ABSENCE

Copula absence is a well-documented grammatical feature of AAVE (Wolfram, 2004). Here are some of the song lyrics that contained the absence of copula "is" and "are".

1. *357 'cross my lap just for Mista, **we purgin'** - Miss My Glock 26*
2. *Baby girl, **this your life you playing with**, ho, don't get shot – No Hospital Gang*
3. ***We No Hospital Gang** the same day they hand out candles – No Hospital Gang*

In datum 1, there is the absence of "are" after the subject pronoun "we" and for the SE, it would be "357 'cross my lap just for Mista, we are purging". In datum 2, the songwriter did not employ "is" before the possessive pronoun and noun "your life" and did not employ "are" after the subject pronoun "you". In SE, it would be "Baby girl, this is your life you are playing with, ho, don't get shot". In datum 3, the songwriter did not employ "are" after the subject pronoun "we". No Hospital Gang is the name of the song and also refers to a gang name called "No Hospital Gang". Thus, in SE, it would be "We are No Hospital Gang the same day they hand out candles".

The absence of the auxiliary "do" is also appeared in this album. Here are some of the song lyrics that contained the auxiliary absence "do".

4. *A hospital, you will never see, **what you know about first degree?** - King Of My Projects*
5. *Big Blrrrd, ask them **why they call me Thirty Shots** – Too Official*

In datum 4, it can be seen that there is a question in the lyrics. The songwriter did not employ auxiliary "do" after "what" and for SE, it would be "A hospital, you will never see, what do you know about first degree?". Another question also appeared in datum 5. It can be seen that the auxiliary "do" is absent after "why". In SE, it would be "Big Blrrrd, ask them why do they call me Thirty Shots".

INVARIANT "BE"

This album contained the invariant "be" which refers to a kind of habit or activity that occurs frequently. Here are some of the song lyrics that contained habitual aspects or habitual actions.

6. ***I be with murderers and robbers, bitch, that's everyday** – Mista*
7. *Investigation, **I be quiet**, Ion't even try to lie – King Of My Projects*
8. *Yup, **they be stretchin'**, bit your shoulders, miss your head, boy, that's a blessin' – Too Official*

In datums 6, 7, and 8, "be" refers to habitual action. In datum 6, the SE would be "I am often with murderers and robbers, bitch, that's everyday". In datum 7, the SE would be "Investigation,

I am usually quiet, I don't even try to lie". And then, in datum 8, the SE would be "Yup, they are often stretching, hit your shoulders, miss your head, boy, that's a blessing".

COMPLETIVE DONE

In the album, completive done can be found. In AAVE, "done" is often used to emphasize an action or an activity that has been finished (Wolfram, 2004). Here are the song lyrics that contained completive done.

9. **We done been through shit** inside them trenches you can't imagine, nigga – *Miss My Glock 26*
10. **I done witnessed** niggas buy bitches, shit they won't buy they mans – *Mista*
11. *Almost upped the chop on my fan, he done got too close to my neck, blrrrd* – *Free Shiest Life*

The use of "done" in datums 9, 10, and 11 are used to emphasize an action that has been completed. For datum 9, the SE version would be "We have been through shit inside those trenches you can't imagine, nigga". For datum 10, the SE version would be "I have witnessed niggas buy bitches, shit they won't buy their man". Finally, for datum 11, the SE version would be "Almost upped the chop on my fan, he has gotten too close to my neck, blrrrd".

REMOTE "BEEN"

Grammatical features like remote "been" also appeared in the album. In AAVE, "been" is used to indicate an action or an activity that began in the past and continues until now (Wolfram, 2004). Here are some of the song lyrics that used "been".

12. **I been spinnin'**, too official, ask my city – *Too Official*
13. **Look how the Patek been glistenin'** – *Fuck The Opps 4L*
14. *Ever since I lost Tadoe, been creepin' with the kitchen homies* – *Allegations*

In datums 12, 13, and 14, "been" indicates an action that started in the past and continues until now. In datum 12, the SE would be "I have been spinning, too official, ask my city". In datum 13, the SE would be "Look how the Patek has been glistening". And then, in datum 14, the SE would be "Ever since I lost Tadoe, have been creeping with the kitchen homies".

SPECIALIZED AUXILIARIES

In this album, there are "steady" and "finna" which are classified as specialized auxiliaries in AAVE. Here are the song lyrics that used specialized auxiliaries.

15. *I just know you, I don't know him, we finna take off your man* – *Shots Out The Vette*
16. **Steady clutching on this Glock**, I think this bitch stuck to my thumb – *Opp Pacc*
17. **Finna go shoot to L.A.** and see my new ho, she play tennis – *Too Official*

In datum 15 and 17, "finna" is used to indicate a planned action. In datum 15, the SE would be "I just know you, I don't know him, we are about to take off your man". Meanwhile, in datum 16, "steady" is used to emphasize the continuous nature of an activity or an action. In SE, it would be "Continuously clutching on this Glock, I think this bitch stuck to my thumb". And then, In datum 17, the SE would be "About to go shoot to L.A. and see my new ho, she plays tennis".

IRREGULAR VERBS

The participle as past "seen" can be found in this album. Here are the song lyrics that used participle as past.

18. **My granny seen me** Dior head-to-toe, she said I'm sharp – *No Hospital Gang*
19. *I had this drip right here way 'fore they seen it* – *Pressin'*
20. **Thought I seen a F-E-D**, damn near scared me – *Red Key*

In datums 18, 19, and 20, “seen” is used as the past tense form of “see”, just like “saw” in SE. For datum 18, the SE is “My granny saw me Dior head-to-toe, she said I'm sharp”. For datum 19, the SE is “I had this drip right here way before they saw it”. And for datum 20, the SE is “Thought I saw a F-E-D, damn near scared me”.

SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT

The type of subject-verb agreement found in this album was “be” levels to “was” in the past tense. Here are some of the song lyrics that used “was”.

21. *Boy, you was damn near wasted, watch where you drop the location – Miss My Glock 26*

22. *Me and Von was fightin' our case together, the state hate to see our face together – Miss My Glock 26*

In datum 21 and 22, “was” is used for both singular and plural objects. Meanwhile, SE used “were” for plural objects and for subject pronouns like “you”, “we”, and “they”. For datum 21, the SE would be “Boy, you were damn near wasted, watch where you dropped the location”. For datum 22, the SE would be “Me and Von were fighting our case together, the state hates to see our face together”. In this lyric, “Me and Von” indicate two persons or plural objects.

Another subject-verb agreement found in this album was the absence of the 3rd person singular “-s” suffix. Here are some of the lyrics.

23. *I know what it feel like, take this, make sure this pill right – Allegations*

24. *I keep poppin' all these pills 'cause I like what it feel like – Allegations*

Both datums 23 and 24 did not use the “-s” suffix in the verb “feel”. For datum 23, the SE would be “I know what it feels like, take this, make sure this pill is right” and for datum 24, the SE would be “I keep popping all these pills because I like what it feels like”. The subject pronoun “it” must use the “-s” suffix with verbs in the present tense. This is also used for other 3rd person singular subjects like “he” and “she”.

NEGATION

The use of “ain’t” as a general negation for “aren’t” and “wasn’t” can be seen in these lyrics.

25. *And it ain't shit I'm worried about – Dyin' Expensive*

26. *You ain't sellin' dope or slimin' shit out, you ain't my twin – Whatever Come With It*

In datum 25, “ain’t” is used for “wasn’t”. There is a subject pronoun “it” in datum 25 and for SE it would be “And it wasn’t shit I'm worried about”. Meanwhile, in datum 26, “ain’t” is used for “aren’t” due to the subject pronoun “you”. For datum 26, the SE would be “You aren't selling dope or sliming shit out, you aren’t my twin”.

Multiple negations or negative concord also appeared in this album. Multiple negations are used to emphasize the negation (Wolfram, 2004). Here are some of the lyrics with multiple negations.

27. *Can't trust these hoes from nobody hood no more, they backdoor, play together - Miss My Glock 26*

28. *Ain't no nigga did nothing to me – No Hospital Gang*

29. *Ain't no nigga never gave me shit, I ran off with a bomb – Opp Pacc*

In datum 27, “nobody hood” and “no more” are used for negation emphasis. In SE, it would be “Can't trust these hoes from any hood anymore, they backdoor, play together”. In datum 28, “ain’t”, “no”, and “nothing” are used to emphasize the negation. In SE, it would be “No nigga has done anything to me”. And for datum 29, “ain’t”, “no”, and “never” are also used for negation emphasis. In SE, it would be “No nigga has ever given me shit, I ran off with a bomb”.

NOMINALS

AAVE uses “they” as the possessive adjective “their” (Wolfram, 2004). Here are some of the lyrics with the possessive pronoun “they”.

- 30. *I'm booked up on the weekend, but hitting they block in my schedule - Backseat Of The Rolls*
- 31. *My entourage trail me with .223s in stolen cars, that's they job - No Hospital Gang*
- 32. **We spin they block for fun – Mista**

In datums 30, 31, and 32, the lyrics used “they” for the possessive adjective “their”. In datum 30, the SE would be “I'm booked up on the weekend, but hitting their block in my schedule”. In datum 31, the SE would be “My entourage trail me with .223s in stolen cars, that's their job”. And then, in datum 32, the SE would be “We spin their block for fun”.

The use of “them” which means “those” also appeared in this album. “Those” is a demonstrative pronoun or demonstrative adjective to indicate plural objects far from the speaker’s location. Here are some of the lyrics with the use of “them”.

- 33. *I'm with the same niggas, we used to hoop on crates inside them alleys, nigga – Miss My Glock 26*
- 34. **Have them shooters at your neck just like a Adam's apple – Dyin' Expensive**
- 35. *Fuck the opps for life, I'm sending hollows 'til them bitches bleed – Fuck The Opps 4L*

In datums 33, 34, and 35, “them” means “those”. This usage indicates plural objects that are located far from the speaker. For datum 33, the SE would be “I'm with the same niggas, we used to hoop on crates inside those alleys, nigga”. For datum 34, the SE would be “Have those shooters at your neck just like Adam's apple”. Later, for datum 35, the SE would be “Fuck the opps for life, I'm sending hollows until those bitches bleed”.

QUESTION FORMATION

Here are the lyrics with question formation.

- 36. *Ayy, you did smoke? Then say somethin', get too close, my niggas spray somethin' - Miss My Glock 26*
- 37. *Bitch, we want all smoke, we quick to pull up where it's at now – No Hospital Gang*

Datum 36 shows that the question is reversed. In SE, it would be “Ayy, did you smoke? Then say something, get too close, my niggas spray something”. In datum 37, there is a question without subject-auxiliary inversion. The SE version would be “Bitch, we want all smoke, we quick to pull up where is it at now?”

B. The Most Dominant Grammatical Feature of AAVE Used in “King Of Killbranch” Album

The table below shows every grammatical feature of AAVE that appeared in every song in the album.

Table 2. Song list that contained grammatical features of AAVE

NO	SONG	CA	IB	CD	SBD	RB	SPHV	SA	IV	SVA	OVPS	NEG	N	QF
1.	Backseat Of The Rolls Truck	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	1	-
2.	Miss My Glock 26	3	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	6	3	1
3.	No Hospital Gang	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	5	2	1

4.	Dyin' Expensive	13	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	11	5	-
5.	Whatever Come With It	7	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	2	-
6.	Mista	1	1	1	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	5	6	-
7.	Pressin'	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	2	2	-
8.	Shots Out The Vette	7	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-
9.	King Of My Projects	6	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	3	-
10.	Free Shiest Life	8	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	2	-
11.	Red Key	8	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	-	4	1	-
12.	Opp Pacc	3	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	4	1	-
13.	Too Official	11	4	-	-	2	-	1	-	1	-	3	4	-
14.	Fuck The Opps 4L	7	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	3	5	-
15.	Allegations	6	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	2	-	2	4	-
TOTAL		96	9	3		8		3	3	8		63	42	2

Note :

Copula Absence = CA

Specialized Auxiliaries = SA

Invariant "be" = IB

Irregular Verbs = IV

Completive done = CD

Subject-Verb Agreement = SVA

Sequential be done = SBD

Negation = NEG

Remote "been" = RB

Nominals = N

Simple Past "had + verb" = SPHV

Question Formation = QF

The total data of grammatical features of AAVE used in "King Of Killbranch" album is 237 data. From the table, it can be seen that the most dominant grammatical feature of AAVE in this album is copula absence with 96 data. The absence of copula "is" and "are" are the most dominant features. Furthermore, the absence of copula "is" and "are" are used in every song in "King Of Killbranch" album. The second most dominant grammatical feature is negation with 63 data, and the third is nominals with 42 data. The grammatical features that did not appear in this album are sequential be done, simple past had + verb, and other verb phrase structures. According to Wolfram (2004), the copula absence of "is" and "are" is a well-documented grammatical feature of AAVE.

4. Conclusion

Based on the discussion above, two conclusions can be drawn. First, in "King Of Killbranch" album, BIG30 with other featured rappers employs 10 out of 13 grammatical features of AAVE. Those grammatical features are copula/auxiliary absence, invariant "be", completive done, remote

“been”, specialized auxiliaries, irregular verbs, subject-verb agreement, negation, nominals, and question formation. Second, the most dominant grammatical feature of AAVE in this album is copula absence. This also relates to Wolfram’s explanation where he states that the copula absence of “is” and “are” is a well-documented feature. It seems that this grammatical feature is a common thing in AAVE.

The findings from this research offer a deeper understanding of how AAVE is employed in contemporary music like hip-hop. By highlighting the grammatical features, this research provides insight into the ways rappers like BIG30 use AAVE in their music. This research also contributes to refining existing perceptions of AAVE. By presenting evidence of its unique and valid grammatical features, it is hoped that this research counters misconceptions that may view AAVE as "error" or “incorrect” language. This research shows the importance of exploring linguistic diversity within hip-hop music, specifically through the analysis of AAVE grammatical features. With this research, it is hoped that future researchers might be inspired to investigate other linguistic varieties or dialects across different genres, broadening the scope of linguistic diversity, especially in the context of popular culture.

References

- Amina, A., Hamza, W., & Mouro, R. (2021). *African American Vernacular English Examination In Mark Twain’s Huckleberry Finn*.
- Arifin, J. A., & Dewi, I. I. (2023). Lexicogrammatical Analysis On African-American Vernacular English Spoken By African-American You-Tubers. *E3S Web Of Conferences*, 426. <https://doi.org/10.1051/E3Sconf/202342601055>
- Aryani, I. T. A. (2020). African American Vernacular English (AAVE) Used By Rich Brian: A Sociolinguistic Investigation. *Language Circle: Journal Of Language And Literature*, 15(1), 67–72. <https://doi.org/10.15294/Lc.V15i1.25965>
- Astuti, P. P. (2018). The Use Of African-American Vernacular English (Aave) In Logic’s Everybody Penggunaan Bahasa Inggris Vernakular Afrika-Amerika Dalam Album Everybody Karya Logic. In *English Language & Literature Journal* (Issue 7).
- Bajri, I. A., & Mishiming, J. S. (2022). Sociolinguistic Study Of The Identity Of African American Sitcom. *Scholars International Journal Of Linguistics And Literature*, 5(5), 160–167. <https://doi.org/10.36348/Sijll.2022.V05i05.002>
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research Design, Qualitative, Quantitative, And Mixed Methods Approaches*. SAGE.
- Foster, E. Y. (2020). *Not Talking Black: African American Vernacular English And Dialect Based Smothering*.
- Genius. (2021, September 2). *BIG30 - King Of Killbranch Lyrics And Tracklist*. <https://genius.com/albums/big30/king-of-killbranch>
- King, S. (2020). From African American Vernacular English To African American Language : Rethinking The Study Of Race And Language In African American’s Speech. *Annual Review Of Linguistics*.
- Kongsatt, R., Chaisuwan, T., Chaokuembong, K., Thalee, P., Suebtaetrakoon, A., Th, K., Th, C., & Th, P. T. (2023). An Investigation Of The Grammatical Feature Usage Of African American Vernacular English In Justin Bieber’s Songs. In *Journal: Language Education And Acquisition Research Network* (Vol. 16, Issue 2). <https://so04.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/LEARN/index>
- Naufal, M., & Fadhli, F. (2023). *A Study Of African American Vernacular English In Movie 8 Mile*.

- Pamangin, R. R., Arifin, M. B., & Setyowati, R. (2023). *An Analysis Of African American Vernacular English Grammatical Features In Shark Tale Film* (Vol. 7, Issue 2).
- Peoples, A. (2023). *AAVE: Dismantling Standard American English (Part 1)*. [Www.Sjsu.Edu/Writingcenter](http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter)
- Smith, M. E. (2020). *African American Vernacular English And Its Presence In The American Education System*.
- Suyudi, I., Prasetyo Wibowo, A., & Chanafiah Pasha, L. (2023). *Grammatical Analysis Of African American Vernacular English In The Eminem Show Album: A Linguistics Perspective*. 9(1). <https://doi.org/10.31332/lkw.v0i0>
- Wolfram, W. (2004). *The Grammar Of Urban African American Vernacular English*.
- Yannuar, N., Fajriyah Priambarini, A., Wahyu Widodo, H., & Febrianti, Y. (2023). African-American Vernacular English As Hip-Hop Artist Identity In Indonesian Rapper Ramengvrl's Songs. *Kne Social Sciences*. <https://doi.org/10.18502/kss.v8i7.13231>