

We Ain't Wrong: Why Black English Should be Considered Proper

In *Oxford Languages*, “Black English” (also known as AAVE- African American vernacular English, AAE- African American English, and, Ebonics) is defined as “any of various nonstandard forms of English spoken by black people, especially as an urban dialect in the US.” And that’s what it is. This way of speaking dates back to the 17th century when the Atlantic slave trade brought African people to the southern colonies. A thing to note is that, around the 17th century, the first wave of English speakers arrived in the northern colonies due to the British colonization of the Americas, meaning Standard American English was also developing. These two separate dialects of English were developed at the same time. Even though some people see Black English as a “wrong” way of speaking, it should be considered proper English. This is because, as said before, it developed at the same time Standard American English did, people who use this dialect at home as their main form of communication should not feel the need to change the way they speak, and people from all over the world have different dialects and accents.\

AAVE (African-American Vernacular English) was first used and developed in the 17th century in the southern colonies, similarly so was SAE (Standard American English). One difference, though, is that SAE was adopted in the northern colonies. The northern colonies consisted of the states that are now New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut. The southern colonies were Maryland, Virginia, North, and South Carolina, and Georgia. Knowing a little bit of knowledge on this topic it could be noticed quickly that the four

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northern states named were the first four that completely abolished slavery in the 1800s, while the five southern states allowed it. This is being brought up because it identifies the fact that the southern states were very dependent on enslaved African-Americans and had a very large population of Black people meaning there was a heavier use of AAVE compared to the northern colonies which were not as dependent on enslaved African-Americans and had a larger population of white people and involved English colonizers (who the English language derives from). Based on what was said, the SAE was only considered "Standard" because English colonizers and white Americans said so, not because it's what was spoken everywhere.

Black English is mainly spoken in home settings and is sometimes used outside of the home, too. Many Black people use Standard American English when in public spaces with a majority of White people, or sometimes when just communicating with a white person. An article from *Britannica* describes it well by saying, "For some, this is a way of advancing one's career in predominantly white professions, but for others, it is a means of survival against police brutality and the violent repercussions of systemic racism." Which, is very true. People should not have to change the way they speak to have a certain job or even survive, especially children. Black English, for many years, has been looked down upon by educators. Many Black people can probably recall being told "ain't, ain't a word" in a classroom when they were young, usually with little to no explanation. When a younger person is corrected of the speech they usually use at home with nobody telling them why, there's a chance that child will grow up to be very self-conscious with the way they have spoken up until that moment. And no child should ever feel that way.

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With that being said, one must acknowledge that people speak differently all over the world. Lots of people in and out of the U.S. grew up speaking different lingoes, and a lot of them don't feel the need to turn it off. In Canada, the two languages spoken are French and English and schools offer studies in both languages. China has a long list of different dialects used in their country and they have one main language used, which is Mandarin. It is adopted as a second language by people who speak other dialects, such as Mandarin, Cantonese, Hakka, Tong Shan, and a few others. The thing that ties it all together is that someone who speaks other dialects of Chinese will not be denied a job or be considered less educated. They understand that people talk differently and that someone who talks one way is not superior to another.

So, in conclusion, these two distinct varieties of English were created concurrently. Even though some consider Black English to be the "wrong" way to speak, it should still be deemed as proper English because, as was previously mentioned, it was developed at the same time as Standard American English. People who use this dialect as their primary form of communication at home should not feel the need to change the way they speak, and people from all over the world have different dialects and accents. Based on what was written, people can tmake an effort to better understand what AAVE is and try to better understand why it shouldn't be seen as unacceptable.

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