CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 SYNTAX

Since this study is related to syntax, the writer will define what syntax is. According to Andrew Radford, syntax is concerned with the ways in which words can be combined together to form phrases and sentences (1). William O'Grady explains that the system of rules and categories that underlies sentence formation in human language is called syntax (181).

Thus, C.L. Baker reveals that when we investigate English syntax, we will be trying to determine the rules that dictate how English speakers combine words to make sentences (3). Therefore, it can be said that syntax is the study of sentence structure.

2.2 STANDARD ENGLISH

Peter Strevens defines Standard English as a particular dialect of English, being the only non-localized dialect, of global currency without significant variation, universally accepted as the appropriate educational target in teaching English, which may be spoken with an unrestricted choice of accent (88).

According to W. Nelson Francis, Standard English is that naturally used by most college-educated people who fill positions of social, financial, and professional influence in the community (246). He also explains that as the language of the professional and the learned disciplines, it is called on to express more complex ideas, for which it has developed an extensive vocabulary. Its

grammar, too, is more complex, and it uses longer sentences with more levels of subordination (246).

Therefore, Standard English is the speech variety that becomes widely accepted throughout the English speech community that is used in formal institution such as in school, government, mass media, in the office, etc. Standard English has complex construction of vocabulary, sentences, and grammar in the form of spoken and written.

Standard English is also considered as formal English. Newman P. Birk and Genevieve B. Birk explain that formal English is the English, more often written than spoken, used by highly educated people in formal situation (61). According to Birk and Birk, an important characteristic of formal English is a wide and exact vocabulary, frequently specialized or technical (62).

Furthermore, Newman P. Birk and Genevieve B. Birk state that different degrees of education, and different social circumstances produce varieties of English – that is, differences in construction, pronunciation, and vocabulary (59-60). Francis reveals that value judgments are most likely to be made because of the natural modes of speech of people who differ in education and in the positions they occupy in the social system (244). Specifically, he says that the dialect of educated people who occupy positions of influence and responsibility is commonly called "good English" and that of people lower on the educational and social scale "bad English" (244).

2.3 The Grammatical Features of Standard English

The theory of standard grammatical features is included here to give more understanding about the distinction between Standard English and Black English so that the reader can recognize easily the Black English grammatical features.

According to Guth, verbs change to show changes in time. Such "time changes" are called changes in tense. For example, "Today we work" but "Yesterday we worked" (359). He mentions that verbs also change to show changes in number. The change from "one" to "several" is the change from singular to plural. For example, "One train stops" but "Several trains stop" (359).

He also explains that sometimes the verb even changes when the subject changes. *I* and *we* are 'first person'. *You* is 'second person'. *He, she, it,* and *they* are 'third person'. For example, "I was late" but "You were late" (369). Moreover, he says that many verbs have one form for the simple past. However, many verbs also have irregular forms such as *know* the past form in *knew*. The verbs have another different form for use after the auxiliaries *have* and *be*. For example, "No one knew the answer" but "No one has known the answer" (360). Furthermore, Guth adds that in Standard English, forms like *seen* and *done* cannot by themselves serve as complete verbs. These verbs need auxiliaries or "helping verb" like *have* and *be*. For instance, "I have seen her paintings" (362).

Meanwhile, just as mentioned earlier to reverse the meaning of a positive sentence, we can use the negative pattern. W. Nelson Francis states that in English there are two ways to do it: (1) by including somewhere in the total sentence a negative word such as *no, nobody, nowhere, never, none*; (2) by expressly

negating the verb phrase by means of the function word *not* or its reduced from *n't*. Thus, to negate a verb phrase in English, it is simply by inserting *not* after the first auxiliary in the verb phrase. For example, *he has found none* or *he hasn't found any* (54).

Francis also reveals that one of the standard ways of asking a question in English is to invert, or reverse the position of, the subject and the first auxiliary of a statement (55). For example: "He can come" becomes "Can he come?". Furthermore, it is also mentioned that the dummy *do* as an empty auxiliary can be used to invert with the subject. For instance, "They speak" becomes "Do they speak?" (55).

In addition, Quirk *et al.* declare that nouns and most pronouns in English have only two case forms: Common case (*children, someone*) and Genitive case (*children's, someone's*). However, the five personal pronouns *I, we, he, she, they,* and the *wh*-pronoun *who* have a further distinction between Subjective and Objective cases (336).

Table 1. Personal pronouns with subjective, objective, and genitive case forms

Subjective	I	we		he	she		they	who
Objective	me	us	you	him	her	it	them	who(m)
Genitive determinative independent	my mine	our ours	your yours	his	her hers	its	their theirs	whose

They add further that the genitive forms of the personal pronouns are, in accordance with grammatical tradition, called Possessive pronouns (336). Moreover, Baker states that the standard reflexives must be accounted for by the decidedly more complicated two-part rule (27). The rules are:

a. to make a first or second person reflexive pronoun, use the appropriate possessive form and attach it to *–self* (singular) or *–selves* (plural).

b. to make a third person reflexive pronoun, use the objective form and attach it to *–self* (singular) or *–selves* (plural).

2.4 BLACK ENGLISH

Chaika explains that the term Black English is commonly applied to dialects spoken by African Americans all over the United States and Canada (299). Meanwhile, according to Peter Strevens, Black English is a dialect of English which is identifiably different in grammar and vocabulary from any other form of English, and which also has its own linked accents (38).

Traugott and Pratt state that Black English (BEV) originally derived from other languages in contact with English (325). They explain that Black English is a logical and cohesive system even though it is very different in surface structure from Standard English (SE) (326). Traugott and Pratt add that BEV refers to the type of language spoken by Black Americans in large urban areas, it appears appropriate to consider BEV as primarily an ethnic variety, but one that has been largely assimilated into the mainstream of English (326).

Therefore, BEV is one of English varieties that is used by Black Americans in large urban areas and it has its own pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. It is also considered as an ethnic dialect that has a rational and cohesive system.

According to Whatley, the work of Labov *et al.* (1968) had shown that the vernacular (sometimes referred to as street talk) of Blacks had distinct rules of its own and was not, as had been the common misconception, a mass of random errors committed by Blacks trying to speak English. However, as a dialect of American English many of its features and patterns are quite similar to those of Standard English (99-100).

2.5 THE GRAMMATICAL FEATURES OF BLACK ENGLISH

2.5.1 Black English Syntax

According to Traugott and Pratt, there are five major characteristics of syntax in BEV (331-334).

2.5.1.1 Verbal Auxiliaries

Traugott and Pratt state that one of the factors most characteristic of BEV is the system of verbal auxiliaries. Most interesting is the way in which time relations are expressed. In SAE only adverbs, not tense-marker, distinguish something that has happened a long time ago from something that has happened very recently. In BEV, however, the distinction can be made by auxiliary verbs (331). Thus there is a contrast between:

1. BE　He done gone.　　　SE　　He has recently gone.

2. BE He bin gone.   SE   He has been gone a long time.

Moreover, Traugott and Pratt explain that it is similar to SE that adverbs like **right now** and **often** distinguish state of affairs that are momentary from those that recur at intervals. In some varieties of BEV, however, the first meaning is expressible by an inflected form of the verb **be** (e.g., **am, is, are**), while the second is expressible by an uninflected one. Since the latter **be** never changes according to person or number, it is often called "invariant be" (332). Examples are:

3. a. BEV   She's tired.   SAE   She's tired (right now).

4. a. BEV   She be tired.   SAE   She's (often) tired.

Furthermore, Traugott and Pratt say that the invariant **be** is most often used in the context of adverbs like **sometimes, often, always, and whenever,** which clearly indicates its iterative nature, as in:

4. b. Sometimes she be angry.

c. Whenever she be tired she be cross.

but it is not limited to adverbial contexts (332).

Traugott and Pratt also reveal that there is another invariant **be** with quite a different function (that of expressing intention), as in:

5. a. He say he be going.

This is derived from:

5. b. He say he will be going.

Indeed, many White speakers do not understand iterative **be** unless they know BEV well. The iterative **be** seems to have its origins in the pidgin and Creole languages spoken by Black slaves in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (332).

2.5.1.2 Absence of Copula

According to Traugott and Pratt, in BEV, the inflected *be*-verb (frequently called a "copula") is not often present in surface structure if it signals present tense. The form **She's tired** given in 3a is somewhat formal (332). More often the form is:

3. b. She tired.

especially in the casual speech. Traugott and Pratt mention that this "zero copula" occurs where phonologically reduced forms of inflectional **be** occur in SAE; thus:

6. a. BEV   She hungry.   SAE   She's hungry.

   b. BEV   I leaving.   SAE   I'm leaving.

   c. BEV   That where he is.   SAE   That's where he is.

This suggests that the BEV system essentially parallels the SAE system in this respect. But, because phonological reduction has been carried further, the form disappears in surface structure (333).

In addition, Traugott and Pratt state that in BEV, the past tense form appears in surface structure but often not the present. This is presumably because the present can be inferred from the speech situation, whereas the past cannot be inferred (333).

2.5.1.3 Multiple Negation

According to Traugott and Pratt, multiple negation is particularly common in BEV. In other dialects, multiple negation is largely used for emphasis, as in:

8. Nobody don't like a boss hardly.

For such speakers it is optional. However, for some speakers of BEV it is obligatory (333). They also explain that multiple negation is so fundamental to BEV syntax that it can affect not only the main clause but even spread to subordinate ones:

9. We ain't askin' you to go out and ask no pig to leave us alone.

It should be noted that in these two examples there is one underlying negative which spreads in surface structure to all indefinites (some, ever, and so forth) (333). Traugott and Pratt say that the rule about two negatives make an affirmative (just as two minuses make a plus in mathematics) does not apply in BEV (334).

2.5.1.4 Question Transformation

Traugott and Pratt reveal that the question transformation in BEV is for many speakers considerably simpler than in SAE. In yes-no questions there is frequently no auxiliary verb shift, and "He left?" rather than "Did he leave?" is typical. Yes-no questions indicated by intonation and not by word order shifts are of course characteristic of spoken English of all varieties, therefore such question forms in BEV are notable only for their frequency (334). Traugott and Pratt

describe that content questions tend to remain in the underlying Subject-Auxiliary-Verb order, with only the question word in initial position, as in **"Where the white can is?"** However, those speakers who do use auxiliary inversion in questions generalize it to subordinate as well as main clauses: **"Where did he go? I want to know where did he go?"** This, too, is a feature of casual spoken English in general (334).

2.5.2 Other Grammatical Features of Black English

There are two features that do not belong to Traugott and Pratt's theory. These features are also common in Black English. These features are added to make the reader easier to understand Black English grammatical features.

2.5.2.1 'Ain't'

According to Chaika, BEV also uses 'ain't' as an auxiliary in the sense of *didn't*, as in "I ain't do nothing". Nonstandard white varieties also use 'ain't', but in the sense of *isn't* (301). Meanwhile, Whatley says that the use of 'ain't' as a single past negative, as in the sentence just cited "I ain't see" for "I didn't see", is pretty well limited to BEV, although the use of 'ain't' for *isn't* or *hasn't* is common to many kinds of nonstandard English (103). Therefore, 'ain't' can replace *is not, am not, are not, was not*, and *were not*. Moreover, 'ain't' can also substitute negative modal auxiliaries and negative auxiliaries.

2.5.2.2 Pronoun

According to Guth, nonstandard uses two kinds of pronouns. The first is the "pointing" kind (demonstrative pronouns). For example, *them books*. The second is the "pointing back" kind (reflexive pronouns). For instance, *hisself, ourself* (366-367).

CHAPTER III.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

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