

Title : A SURVEY OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' UNDERSTANDING
OF AFRICAN AMERICAN VERNACULAR ENGLISH
IN HIP HOP SONGS

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Abstract

Purposes of the Study

The crucial purposes of this study were: (1) to investigate students' attitudes toward hip hop songs, and (2) to examine English major students' understanding of African American Vernacular English (AAVE) features in popular hip hop songs. AAVE features in the study consisted of AAVE slang words and grammatical features.

Methodology

The subjects were 77 English majored students (32 freshmen and 45 juniors) in the academic year 2005 at Naresuan University. The instrument used to collect the data was a questionnaire divided into 3 sections; 1) a checklist for the personal data of the subjects and 5-point rating scale questions as a judgment test on the importance of learning English from hip hop songs, 2) a matching test on AAVE slang words, and 3) a true-false test on AAVE grammatical features. The study employed percentage, arithmetic mean values, standard deviation, and t-tests for data analysis.

Findings

The findings indicated that most of these English majored students realized that besides Standard English, it was important to know other English dialects for efficient communication. In addition, they appreciated learning through songs, including hip hop songs in the study. However, the results showed that the students had limited knowledge of AAVE grammatical features, especially AAVE slang words. The statistic

results (t-tests) also showed that there was a significant difference between responses regarding AAVE grammatical features by freshmen and those by juniors.

