

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter explains the methodology of the study on university students' understanding of African American Vernacular English which has its own grammatical structures and is different from Standard American English. It contains the information about the participants, the instruments used, procedures, and data analysis. Included songs in this study were the songs from the hip-hop album which were made available to the public and recorded on CDs in the year 2005.

Population and Design

Population

The subjects of this study were 180 English major students at Naresuan University. There were 36 freshmen and 54 juniors who were enrolled in the second term of the academic year 2005. By applying a quota sampling, the target subjects of this study were 32 freshmen and 45 juniors, based on the table of selection of sampling from R.V. Krejcie and D.W. Morgan (Wiseman, 1999. p.521). It should be noted that the researcher originally intended to investigate an influence of the number of years of English study on knowledge of AAVE, using the first year students and the fourth year students. Nevertheless, at the time of data collection the seniors were in a professional training program and could not be reached. Thus, the researcher chose to use information obtained from the first and third year levels.

Construction of the Instrument

To minimize problems of ambiguity and misinterpretation, the questionnaire used in this study was written in English. It was specifically designed in accordance with the purpose of the study. In constructing the questionnaire, the researcher went through the following steps:

First, the researcher studied documents related to AAVE and EFL teaching and learning through songs, especially hip hop songs from journal articles, and online documents.

Second, the researcher constructed the questionnaire by using information obtained from related literatures. All items were developed by using Wiseman's questionnaire formats (Wiseman, 1999). The questionnaire consisted of three sections as follows:

In part one, the participants were asked to rate their attitudes toward the use of song and hip hop song in learning English. This part was designed to answer research question1: "What are the views held by students at Naresuan University towards the appreciation of hip hop?" An example of the questionnaire part 1 is demonstrated below.

Part 1 Students' views: Circle the number that best describes you. Your response to each of questions should be: 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = moderately agree; 4 = strongly agree; 5 = extremely agree.

	<u>Low</u>				<u>High</u>
1. I like to listen to English songs.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I like to listen to hip-hop songs.	1	2	3	4	5
3. English songs have an influence on learning English.	1	2	3	4	5

(See a complete questionnaire in Appendix A)

In part two, the participants were asked to do a matching test which contained AAVE slang words that frequently appeared in top hit 50 hip hop songs, based on the Billboard chart 2005. All slang words meanings were taken from the online Rap Dictionary and the online Webster Dictionary. This part was to answer research question2: "To what extent can students at Naresuan University identify AAVE slang words in popular hip hop songs?" An example of the questionnaire part 2 is demonstrated on the next page.

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Part 2 Knowledge of AAVE slang: Match the statements/words on the left with their created or coined words on the right. Write the letter on the space provided before each number. Answers may be used only once (with the possible exception of "none of the above").

- | | |
|---|----------|
| _____ 1. A term of endearment, like baby | A. Boo |
| _____ 2. Fake person, weak individual | B. Crunk |
| _____ 3. Derogatory term for homosexual man | C. Chill |

(See a complete questionnaire in Appendix A)

In part three, the participants were asked to do a true-false test which contained AAVE features adopted from Ibrahim's research and utterances adapted from the top 50 positions out of hip hop songs listed on the Billboard chart in December 2005. The main measurement of what is popular is set by Billboard (Biagi, 1994). The lyrics were taken from the Internet www.absolutelyrics.com. This part was designed to answer research question 3: "To what extent can students at Naresuan University identify AAVE grammatical features in popular hip hop songs?" Below is an example of the questionnaire part 3.

Part 3 Knowledge of AAVE grammatical features: Read each statement carefully. Write a plus (+) sign if the statement is true and write a zero (0) if the statement is false. Write your answer on the blank provided before each number.

- _____ 1. "The princess is here. She's here, Ciara. This be it" From this utterance, "This be it" has the same meaning as "This is it" in Standard English.
- _____ 2. "There ain't nothin to it," has the same meaning as "There is not nothing to it" in Standard English.
- _____ 3. "I ain't got nothin'" has the same meaning as "I have got nothing" in Standard English.

(See a complete questionnaire in Appendix A)

After the questionnaire design was completed, it needed to be evaluated for its validity and reliability.

Validity and Reliability of the questionnaire

The questionnaire was submitted to five experts in the field of teaching English to check its content validity and clarification. Four of the five experts were professors of English in the Humanities Faculty, Naresuan University, Phitsanulok. They were Dr. Tamrongrak U-nakarin, Dr. Narat Karnpracha, Mr. Arthur Ian Simpson, and Mr. Helmer Barimbao Montejo. The other expert was Dr. Tuanthong Chaokeeratiphong, a professor of English in the Humanities Faculty, Rajabhat University, Kamphaengphet. Based on the Index of Item – Objective Congruence (I.O.C) (Sutheera Thurathum, 2004), the experts were requested to rate each item with a score of 1 (an item is appropriate), 0 (not sure that an item is appropriate) or -1 (an item is not appropriate). All the scores for each item were then calculated to find a mean value. Only the test items with a mean value of 0.8 or more were used for data collection. According to the I.O.C criteria (Appendix B), all test items could be used.

After that, the questionnaire was re-checked and revised, based on suggestions from the advisor and the experts. To ensure the satisfactory quality and the reliability of the AAVE content questionnaire, the investigator tried it out in a pilot study, using 30 undergraduate students at Rajabhat University, Kamphaengphet. The students were informed the objectives of each part and they could understand all the questions on their own. The pilot study took thirty minutes. After the questionnaires were completed, the students were asked about a problem that occurred while doing the questionnaire. They said that questions in part 2 of the questionnaire were difficult because most slang words were unfamiliar to them. Then, the questionnaire was used with the subjects at Naresuan University. A copy of the questionnaire used in this study is reproduced in Appendix A.

Procedures

After the instruments had been designed, measured for validity and reliability, and pilot tested, they were employed with the target group. The distribution and collection of data followed these steps:

1. The researcher took a cover letter from the Dean of the Graduate School of Naresuan University, Phitsanulok to the professors of English of the same school, requesting permission to collect the data.

2. The researcher explained to the participants that results of the test would be presented overall, and their personal data would be classified.

3. The participants were informed of the objectives of each section in the questionnaire, and were asked to do it in thirty minutes, as Wiseman (1999) stated that the participants should not take more than thirty minutes for all the test items.

4. All English majored students in year 1 and 3 were given the questionnaire, and they all completed them within the expected limit of time.

Data Analysis

The data from the completed questionnaires were transcribed and computed using the computerized Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The statistic values used included frequency, percentage distribution, mean, standard deviation, and t-values.