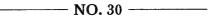# SEIJO ENGLISH MONOGRAPHS

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LINGUISTIC ASPECTS OF JAMAICAN
CREOLE AND BLACK ENGLISH VERNACULAR (I)

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A Variety of Contact Language: Linguistic Aspects of Jamaican Creole and Black English Vernacular (I)

Sugimoto Toyohisa

(1)

Historical Background

The original inhabitants of the Caribbean island of Jamaica were the Arawak people, who had lived on the island for about seven centuries before the arrival of Europeans. In 1509 a Spanish settlement was established and continued until in 1655 a British expeditionary force arrived on the south coast of the island.

By this time, there were almost no Arawaks left in Jamaica. From 1656 onwards English speaking planters began to settle on this island and many slaves were imported from West Africa and from elsewhere in the Caribbean. The planters included Scots, Irish, Welsh and even French, but the British were in the majority. Most of the slaves were brought to the large sugar plantations in Jamaica from West Africa and they seem to have spoken Kwa, Bantu and other African languages. But in the 1770s about a thousand slaves came from Surinam with their owners, because the Dutch expelled the British from there, so Jamaican Creole had a crucial link with Sranan Tongo ('Surinam Tongue'), historically, the native language of about one-third of the inhabitants of Surinam. That is why they have the following linguistic features in

common[1].

1) *Tense and Aspect*
    (Jamaican Creole)

mi a waak	'I am walking'
mi ben waak	'I walked'
mi ben a waak	'I was walking'
mi ben go waak	'I was about to walk'

    (Sranan Tongo)

mi e waka	'I am walking'
mi ben waka	'I walked'
mi ben e waka	'I was walking'
mi ben of waka	'I was about to walk'

2) *The Pronoun System*
    (Jamaican Creole)

	singular	plural
the 1st person	mi/a	wi
the 2nd person	yu	unu
the 3rd person	im	dem

    (Sranan Tongo)

	singular	plural
the 1st person	mi	wi
the 2nd person	yu	unu
the 3rd person	a/en	den

3) *The Copula*
(Jamaican Creole)

Locative Complement:	de	(Kingston de a Jamaica. 'Kingston is in Jamaica.')
Equative:	a	(Mi a di tiicha. 'I am the teacher.')
Adjectival Complement:	(absent)	(Di man taal 'The man is tall.')

(Sranan Tongo)

Locative complement:	de	(Rudy de na oso. 'Rudy is at home.')
Equative:	a	(Rudy a stukaman. 'Rudy is a student.')
Adjectival Complement:	(absent)	(A siki. 'He is sick.')

In the 17th and 18th centuries many slaves escaped into the mountains, where they set up villages and continued to live in quite isolated communities. After the abolition of slavery in 1833, the emancipated slaves moved to mountainous areas. These people and Maroons preserved older forms of Jamaican Creole, which gave rise to the basilect of the Jamaican Post-Creole continuum[2].

Jamaica continued to be ruled by Great Britain until its Independence in 1948. These three centuries of language contact between Standard English and Jamaican Creole in urban areas created the Post-Creole continuum, which has a from of original Jamaican Creole at one end, markedly different from Standard English and the local Jamaican variety of Standard English at the other. The former is called the basilect and the latter the acrolect.

Only the limited rural inhabitants speak the basilect, the broadest creole, as their main code and most Jamaicans speak various intermediate versions, between the basilect and Standard English, namely 'mesolects.' People in urban areas of the island have had more contact with those who speak Standard English and so have been influenced by their speech, which has caused the phenomenon called 'decreolization.' This means that they lost some of the characteristics of Jamaican Creole and climbed the ladder of the continuum nearer to the 'acrolect', namely, Standard English. Black English Vernacular in the United States is another example of the decreolized version of Plantation Creole.

(2)

Some Linguistic Features of Jamaican Creole and Black English Vernacular

The following are some linguistic features of Jamaican Creole compared with those of Black English Vernacular in the United States.

1) Pronunciation (Consonant Variations)[3]

		JC	BEV
/t/ · /d/→ φ	fas'/pass'	+	+
/ð/→/d/	fada/dem/togeddar	+	+
/θ/→/t/	tanks/notting	+	+
/θ/→/f/	nuffin	+	+
/ŋ/→/n/	gwine/bein'/marnin'	+	+
/r/→ φ	gory ('golry') /do ('door')	+	+
/l/→ φ	ems ('elms')	+	+

/w/→ φ	uman ('woman')	+	+
/v/→/b/	sabby/nebber/gib	+	−
/k/→/kj/	cyan' ('can't')	+	−
/t/→/tʃ/	differench ('different')	+	−
/ʃ/→/tʃ/	witch ('wish')	+	−
/s/→/ʃ/	shing ('sing') /youshef	+	−
/v/→/w/	werry/wily ('violet')	+	−
/g/→/gj/	gal/garl/gyal ('girl')	+	−

2) Morphosyntax

a. The Pronoun System

Standard English has distinctive forms of the subjective, the objective and the possessive, but Jamaican Creole has just one form of these.

(Jamaican Creole)

	singular	plural
the 1st person	mi/a	wi
the 2nd person	yu	unu
the 3rd person	im	dem

(Standard English)

	singular			plural		
	subj.	poss.	obj.	subj.	poss.	obj.
the 1st person	I	my	me	we	our	us
the 2nd person	you	your	you	you	your	you
the 3rd person	he	his	him			
	she	her	her	they	their	them
	it	its	it			

— 5 —

In Standard English the second person has no distinction between singular and plural but Jamaican Creole has this distinction, namely two different forms: *you* and *unu*. In this respect Jamaican Creole has a more complex system than Standard English as most pidgin and creole languages do.[4]

(Cameroon Pidgin)

	singular	plural
the 1st person	a	wi
the 2nd person	you	wuna
the 3rd person	i	dem

(Tok Pisin)

	singular	plural
the 1st person	mi	yumi/mipela
the 2nd person	you	yupela
the 3rd person	em	al

(Lesser Antillean Creole French)[5]

	singular	plural
the 1st person	mouen	nou
the 2nd person	ou	zòt
the 3rd person	i	yo

b. Plurals

Jamaican Creole has no plural morpheme {S}, and the particle *dem* may be added after a noun, especially one referring to people, to show plural meaning.

aal di animal ('all the animals')

di gyal-dem ('the girls')

Black English Vernacular often omits these plural morphemes, especially when other words or verbs have the plural meaning as follows.

There is five book. ('There are five books.')

Some overcorrections (hypercorrections) are also found like: *feets, childrens*, etc.

c. *Tense and Aspect*

Jamaican Creole has no inflections on verbs defining tense and aspect, but has special tense markers *go/wi* ('future') and *ben* ('past'), and the aspect marker *a* ('progressive'), which can combine with each other. Black English Vernacular also has these kinds of particles which define some aspects and tenses: *de, done, bin, get for,* etc.[6]

(Jamaican Creole)

Mi a waak.	'I am walking.
Mi ben waak.	'I walked.'
Mi ben a waak.	'I was walking.'
Mi ben go waak.	'I was about to walk.'

(Black English Vernacular)

He de go.	'He goes.'
He done go.	'He went.'
He bin de go.	'He was going.'
He get for go.	'He must go.'

In the case of tense markers in Jamaican Creole, some other variants are found like *bin, en, did, di,* etc., and the last two *did* and *di* may be regarded as English-influenced variants. These markers are predicted to appear in the mesolect varieties nearer to Standard English in the Post-Creole continuum. Whichever form they take, they are invariant particles in both Jamaican Creole and Black English Vernacular and cannot be regarded as auxiliary verbs. And in both cases verbs do not have inflections. Moreover, verbs without tense markers often have past meaning as in *He go there yesterday*, where the adverb *yesterday* makes clear that this sentence means 'the past event.' This kind of usage is common to both Jamaican Creole and Black English Vernacular.

d. The Copula

Jamaican Creole uses a distinct word *de* for 'be' when referring to location. This *de* may be derived from the adverb *there*, perhaps converging with substrate forms for locative 'be' such as Twi *de* (Christaller 1933: xxiii)

Mi de a yaad. ('She is at home.')

Kingston de a Jamaica. ('Kingston is in Jamaica.')

Wey him deh now? ('Where is he now?')[7]

But in the case of adjectival complements, this copula is absent as in:

Di kaafi ϕ kuol. ('The coffee is cold.')

Dem ϕ sik. ('They are sick.')

Di ϕ man taal. ('The man is tall.')[8]

Equative 'be' is also a copula in the Latin sense of a word joining a subject and a complement. That is to say, *be* is equative before a

noun phrase in that it means the subject equals the complent, which is quite a different meaning from locative *be*. Equative *be* is expressed by *da* and its variant *a* as in: *Mi a/da di tiicha.* ('I am the teacher.'). "Under English influence, namely 'decreolization', this basilectal *a* beomes mesolectal *iz.* All these forms are found in the closely related creole spoken on Nicaragua's Miskito Coast: *Dat a di fos sang.* ('That's the first song'); *Mi da i anti.* ('I am his aunt.'); *Ai is di straika.* ('I am the harpooner.')" (Holm 1978:268)

In the case of Black English Vernacular, these copulas are often deleted before noun phrases, adjectives, prepositions, negative particles, present participles, *gonna*, etc. According to Labov (1972: 87), deletion occurs in Black English Vernacular in New York City least frequently before a noun phrase, more often before predicate adjectives and locatives, stil more often before -*ing*, and most often before the future form *gonna*. Earl F. Schrock, Jr. did the same research in the speech of blacks of Pope County, Arkansas. Although the frequency of deletion is much lower in the speech of blacks in his study than in that of the New York City blacks studies by Labov, the order of the patterns in which *be* verbs are deleted is the same.

<div align="center">Syntactic Constraints on Be Deletion</div>

Sentence Type	Full or Contracted Forms	Deleted Forms	Percentage of Deletion
S be gonna	2	1	33
S be -ing	81	9	10
S be Locative	73	5	6.4
S be Past Participle	50	3	5.7
S be Pred. Adjective	156	9	5.5
S be Pred. Nominative	139	1	0.7

<div align="right">(Earl Schrock 1986: 208)</div>

Baugh (1980) reexamined the same data as those in New York City and found different results. In the case of *gonna* and *-ing,* the results were the same as Labov's research, but in the other linguistic environments some new information was found. That is to say, in the case of noun phrases, copula *bes* followed by nominals without determiners were not contracted and not deleted, but those followed by nominals with determiners were easily contracted and more often deleted than in the case of *gonna,* or *-ing.* Copula *bes* followed by adjectives were easily deleted but not so contracted, but those followed by locatives were easily contracted but not so often deleted. And the most frequent deletions were found just before adjectives. This characteristic is similar to that of Jamaican Creole, which deletes the copula in the case of adjectival complements as mentioned above. It is not clear whether the constructions without the copula *be* in Black English Vernacular are the 'out-put' of deletion from the constructions with *be* in the deep structure, or those with *be* are the 'out-put' from the process of 'decreolization.' Labov is of the former theory and considers Black English Vernacular as in the process of being more separated from Standard English.[9] But S.Romaine and Rickford are of the latter theory and consider Black English Vernacular as in the process of coming close to Standard English after 'decreolization.'[10]

e. Negation

Negation as a morphological construction is generally realized by incorporating an underlying negative element into a given sentence. In Standard English negative formation is divided into two kinds; sentence negation and word negation. The former negates

the semantic connection of subject and predicate and in this case negation of the sentence is realized by incorporating the negative into the pre-verbal position as in *He doesn't know anything.* The latter negates the meaning of the particular word in the sentence and it is realized by incorporating the negative into an indefinite pronoun, a determiner or an adverb as in *He knows nothing* ; *He was not an ordinary boy*; *He never gets up early.* When an indefinite precedes the verb, the negative is obligatorily attached to the first indefinite, so sentences like *Nobody gave him anything* and *Nothing is given to him by anybody* are both acceptable in Standard English, but the sentence **Anybody doesn't give him anything* is not acceptable. This negative attraction rule also operates with negative adverbs which are inherently negative: *Hardly anyone likes him* (**Anyone hardly likes him*).

Whereas the realization of a single underlying negative element occours only in one place in most Standard English constructions, in White Nonstandard English and Black English Vernacular it may be realized on every indefinite within the sentence.

She didn't say nothing. ('she didn't say anything.') (B165)[11]

He don't know nothin ' bout it. (B154)

These ain't none of them binding one, neither. (E213)[12]

Ain' nobody gi' me not' bu' my mother. (L-MJ-124)[13]

There seems to be no restriction on the number of indefinite pronouns, determiners or adverbs on which it may be realized.

Ain't no way in the world for none of 'em to be no good with a chippy for a mother. (k-350)[14]

Nobody else don' say nothing, neither. (K-195)

William Labov found the following example in his study in New

York City. There is just one negative in the underlying structure
here:

> I ain't gonna sit in no chair and let no crazy lawyer
> tell me no lies about no law that no judge has in no law
> book that no smart politician wrote on nothin' like that,
> nowhow.   (Labov *et.al.* 1968: 273)

In these examples, a single underlying negative element is
realized at four different places in the sentence. These realizations
of underlying negatives at several points in Black English Vernacular
is distinguished from the sentence in Standard English, in that there
are more than one underlying negative elements realized. It is
possible that the negative meaning of the sentence in Black English
Vernacular turns out to be affirmative in Standard English. But this
kind of multiple negation is characteristic of both Black English
Vernacular and White Nonstandard Speech. But it can be found by
statistical research that there are two kinds of differences between
Black English Vernacular and White Nonstandard Speech.

(1) Quantitative differences between the use of multiple negation
by Black English Vernacular and White Nonstandard Speech spea-
kers, are found by statistical study. For example, the basic negative
concord rule for White Nonstandard Speech is optional, but for
Black English Vernacular it is obligatory. The realizations of a
negative on a pre-verbal auxiliary in addition to its realizations on
an indefinite preceding the verb, are also found both in Black
English Vernacular and some dialects of White Nonstandard
Speech:

> Nobody else ain' goin' touch me. (L-BS-48) /No Mojo

di'n' go. (L-GJ-111) /Nobody else don't say nothing, neither.
(K-195)

But Labov (1968, p. 272) suggests that there are two kinds of White Nonstandard Dialect, one in which this type of construction is unacceptable (WNS$_1$) and the other in which it is acceptable (WNS$_2$).

(2) Several types of multiple negative constructions are not found among the white informants. For example, the most important type of multiple negation found only among Negroes is what has been called "inversion" of the negativized auxiliary and negative indefinite in a declarative sentence.

> Di'n' nobody gi' me no dollar coa'. (L-MJ-19) /Ain't nobody can do it but you. (K-154) /Won't nothing surprise me. (E-241)/ Don't nobody be smoking in here. (E-436) /He is the kind cain't nobody please. (E-343)

In SE, a similar kind of inversion in imperative or interrogative sentences (e.g. *Didn't anybody give it to you?*) can be found, but it is not found in declarative sentences.

In addition to these negative inversions, there are other constructions which are not found among White Nonstandard English.

> It wasn't no trick couldn't shun her. (=There wasn't any trick that could shun her.)[15] /It ain't no cat can't get in no coop. (=There isn't any cat that can get into any coop.)[16] /It wasn't no girls couldn't go with us. (=There weren't any

— 13 —

girls who could go with us.)[17]

In these examples, the same types of negative construction operate across clauses. This is a simple transfer of the preverbal negative across clauses. The actual occurrence of this construction is rather infrequent. But in SE, the meaning of the sentence would reverse in each case.

Negative Paradigm of BEV

In BEV, there are some characteristic negative forms which mark the BEV paradigm. The normal form of the present negative is *don't*. And the consonant cluster simplification rule deletes the final *t*, so *don't* becomes *don'*:

> She don' even speak to me. (MJ-125) /He don' work wid y'all job. (MJ-104) /We don' have homework every evening. (GJ-112) /I don' know. (GJ-143)

Furthermore, in Negro dialect, negative forms of the auxiliary *do* can lose the initial *d* in casual speech. This gives, for example, *I 'on't care* for the Standard English *I don't care*. And *'on't* becomes *'on'* by consonant cluster simplification:[18]

> I 'on' wear no shirts like da'. (MJ-2) /I 'on' know where i's lacoted a'. (MJ-13) /See we 'on' hardly like to go in Sunday Schoo'. (JD-153) /We 'on' ha' nothing do. (JD-82)

In particular contexts the initial *d* is nasalized and *don'* becomes *non'* or *n'on'*. These forms are confined to those cases when the

subject of the sentence is *I*:

> I non' know. (JD-151) /I n'on' know if he's my bes' frien'
> or not. (GJ-142) /A'n 'on' know (= I don't know). (JD-153)/N'on'
> hardly do nofin' on Sundays. (JD-153) /I n'on' know. (GJ-144)

For the negative of *is*, *are*, *am*, and auxiliaries *have* and *has*, the most usual form is *ain't* and its simplified form *ain'*.[19] Although *ain't* is used by educated speakers in casual conversation, the use of *ain't* in this way is one of the clearest and universal markers of nonstandard speech of all kinds.

> I ain' gon beat you. (JD-50) /Da' ain' no cash money. (GJ-3) /You ain't got to know nines. (GJ-86) /No, I ain' been nowhere. (JD-146) /Yes, Mam, Mike ain' got no healf book. (GJ-91)

In these instances BEV follows WNS. But one way in which BEV departs from WNS in the negative is to use *ain't*, as well as *didn't*, for *didn't* with equal frequency.

> Dey didn' even say happy birfday. -Day ain't do not'n'. (MJ-124) /'Cause I took deir ball an' ney *ain'* get'n' i' back. (MJ-4) /an' *di'n* nobody gi' me not'n'...Ain't nobody gi' me not'n' bu' my mother. (MJ-124) /We ain' never go on tri's you know we use to. (JD-84) /If it ain't fall over I would'a got ou' there. (GJ-138)

According to Labov's statistical research of the distribution of *ain't*

for *didn't* by age groups,[20] several hypotheses can be made. First, adults use *didn't* primarily and make very little use of ain't, so it is natural to assume that the older speakers got the more SE *didn't* which they brought into their speech, diluting the original pure BEV. Second, the fact that there is a regular progression with the younger speakers using *ain't* more and more suggests that there is such a homogeneous dialect in the background. But a careful and accountable examination of the data about pre-adolescents and adolescents shows that the former do not use *ain't* more than the latter. From this fact it may be given as a conclusion that a vernacular feature becomes stronger with age, and reaches its fullest use in late adolescence. And this feature is rarely used by adults and very young children, but this is the property of most complete forms among the adolescent peer groups which exemplify the vernacular culture.

The basic negative paradigm of BEV verbs would take the following forms:

SE	BEV
am not is not are not have not has not	ain'(t)
don't	'on'(t)
didn't	ain'(t) didn'(t)
won't is going to	ain'(t) gonna ain' gon'

Negation in Standard English: Negative Attraction

In SE, there are several basic rules concerning negative construction. First of all, quantifiers such as *some* and *a* in a sentence are converted into indefinites in the presence of a negative preverbal particle, so that **That student doesn't have some books* is ungrammatical as an English sentence. In this case, the indefinitite *any* must be incorporated in place of *some*: *That student doesn't have any books.* This rule operates both after and before the *Neg* which is located in the pre-verbal position, so it needs the follwing two sub-rules:

(I)   a.   Neg - X - Quant

         1   2   3 $\rightarrow$ 1   2   Indef + 3

      b.   Quant - Y - Neg

         1   2   3 $\rightarrow$ Indef+1   2   3

Throughout this discussion, the simple notation *Neg* will be used for the sentence-negating *Neg* which is transferred from the type marker to the pre-verbal position. As the restrictions are not placed on X and Y, these two sub-rules apply throughout the sentence.

Once these indefinites are incorporated, the negative is attracted to the first indefinite in the sentence in SE. This process is obligatory if the indefinite precedes the verb:

> Nobody gave me anything yesterday.
> *Anybody didn't give me anything yesterday.
> *Anybody gave me nothing yesterday.[21]

But it is optional if the indefinite follows the verb; so that the following two examples with or without negative attraction, are both acceptable:

> John gave me nothing yesterday.
> John didn't give me anything yesterday.

The basic SE rule for negative attraction therefore can be outlined in the following way:

(II)   X - Indef - Y - [+ neg]
    1   2   3   4   →   1   2 + 4   3
                                     Obligatory if X $\sim$ [+ neg]

In this notation, the symbol $\sim$ means "does not contain." The

feature [+ neg] is contained in adverbial negatives such as *hardly*, *scarcely, rarely, seldom,* and verbs such as *doubt, deny* and predicates such as *a shame, unbelievable.* It is also contained in the pre-verbal particle *Neg.* In general the obligatory characteristic of this negative attraction rule is strongest when the indefinite is in the first position of the sentence.

But there are some exceptional cases in which some items protect the indefinite from the obligatory force of the rule: (1) sentences which are produced by complementizer placement; (2) sentences in which the clause above mentioned is embedded in a matrix sentence.

(1)   For anyone not to give her it is unbelievable.
      That anyone didn't give her it is unbelievable.

These examples seem quite acceptable to many speakers. This fact suggests that the complementizer placement rule must be implemented before the negative attraction rule.

(2)   I deny for anyone not to give her it.
      I deny that anyone didn't give her it.
      I deny anyone's not give her it.

These examples are marginal in their acceptability but they are clearly more acceptable than a sentence such as *I found that anyone didn't give her it.* As far as these examples are concerned, it seems more likely that an indefinite is never allowed to precede the negative than that the first position is the strongest according to its obligatory characteristic.

In order to include these exceptional cases and to keep a consistent approach to the obligatory condition of this rule, it would be necessary to make a proposition that the extraposition rule operates obligatorily before negative attraction. Then, as a result, the negative predicate precedes the indefinite:

It's unbelievable that anyone didn't give her it.

The third part of the SE rule is to transfer the negative to a following indefinite.

(III)   Neg - X - Indef
          1   2   3   →   2   1 + 3   X [~ Indef
    John didn't give me anything. → John gave me nothing.

This rule has several characteristic factors. (1) This rule is optional, (2) and applies only to the pre-verbal particles. (3) This rule is not general to all of SE: it is often unworkable in colloquial speech because the sentences produced by this rule are scholastic and literary in nuance. These are characteristic of a dialect which may be called Standard Literary English (SLE), as opposed to Standard Colloquial English (SCE) which does not apply this rule and preserves the negative in the pre-verbal position.

Negation in White Nonstandard Speech: Negative Concord
In WNS, some rules which are characteristic of SE as mentioned above are maintained and amended in several areas, and a new rule (i.e. Negative Concord) which is not acceptable in principle in SE also appears. As s whole, the series of rules which are characteristic of WNS are simpler and more general than those of

— 20 —

SE, that is to say, the range of variability in negative construction is wider.

Negative Attraction in SE is the process by which the negative is attracted to the "first" indefinite of the sentence — obligatorily before the verb, optionally after it as in *Nobody else says anything* or *John says nothing to anybody.* On the other hand, the nonstandard equivalent of this statement must be amended to follow the rule that the negative is attracted to "every" indefinite and moreover the negative can be despersed pleonastically throughout the sentence. But in this case, it is necessary to preserve the same conditions as in SE: obligatorily before the verb, optionally after it.

Consequently in order to explain the WNS sentence *She didn't say nothing no more,* it is necessary to set up a new rule about Negative Concord. The distinction between Negative Concord and Negative Attraction is that the negative remains in the original place when it is transferred, that is, it multiplies itself. The following notation shows this :

(IV)　　[+ neg] - X - Indef
　　　　　1　　 2　 3　 →　 1　 2　　1 + 3

This rule is obviously simpler and more general than (III) regarding two points.

(1) There are no restrictions that X must not contain any indefinites, because the negative can be attracted to every indefinite, as mentioned above, and dispersed pleonastically throughout the sentence.

I don't have no skin on my face no more. (E-57)

(2) The more general feature [+ neg] (as compared with *Neg* in (III) is used here. This means that the following examples can be produced from this Negative Concord rule.

> Most Fridays, we hardly do nothing. /I wonder how come nobody said nothing to me about it. (E-65)/I never did nothing to you. (K-215) /But none of us got no true flag. (E-318)

W. Labov indicates two more points which separate WNS from SE:

(1) "As far as the scope of negative concord is concerned, there seem to be no restrictions on sentence boundaries, and it can be extended to include all indefinites within the surface sentence limits...."[22]
>   ex. I don't like the way none of you did that.

(2) "Furthermore, it seems possible to extend negative concord indefinitely....
>   ex. I ain't gonna sit in no chair and let no crazy lawyer tell me no lies about no law that no judge has in no law book that no smart politician wrote or nothin' like, nohow."[23]

Some of the WNS speakers use the following sentences which are of a different nature and cannot be produced by the rules which have been described above.

> Nobody don't know it no more.
> Nobody might not surprise no one.

No Mojo di'n' go nowhere.

These examples show that the negative can appear in the pre-verbal position again as well as be incorporated into the preceding indefinite, and that this negative can be retained transferring to the following indefinites. These sentences will not be produced by (IV), because after the application of the negative attraction rule, the *Neg* is removed from the pre-verbal position, so that it will not be transferred back again by (IV). The most appropriate solution is to develop the negative concord rule (IV) further by including the pre-verbal position, or tense marker, into the same position of the indefinete. This amendment would be shown in the following way:

$$
\begin{array}{ccccccc}
 & & [+\text{T}] & & & & \\
(\text{IV'}) & [+\text{neg}] & -\text{X}- & \text{Indef} & & & \\
 & 1 & 2 & 3 & \rightarrow & 1 \quad 2 \quad 1+3
\end{array}
$$

In this notation, the negative feature is distributed to either a tense marker or an indefinite. And it is necessary to add the restriction that if 3 is $[+\text{T}]$ then X $\sim$ #.[24]

Such an extension of this rule may not be entirely desirable when considering whether this rule contains all the variations of negative construction in WNS, because WNS does not have a homogeneous grammar but a more complicated one. But it is apparent that the scope of the single underlying negative is wider in WNS in comparison with in SE, and in view of a further development of this rule in BEV, this amendment seems to be the

right solution.

Negation in Black English Vernacular : Negative Concord

In BEV a wide variety of negative sentences are found from very ordinary uses of (IV) to others which somehow seem to carry the principles further. Some of them are impossible to explain using the negative construction rules mentioned above. The negative concord rule (IV) seems to be applied very frequently.

> I 'on' know nofin' about school. (L-AP-160) /No, I ain' been nowhere. (L-JD-146) /But dey wouldn' 'low no little children in nere. (L-MJ-119) /I migh' not play no more baseball. (L-MJ-105) /Den, you won' have to pay nothin'. (L-JD-81)

In the following examples, Negative Concord builds up with a regular rhythm which seems to go beyond SE and even most WNS.

> N'on' hardly do nofin' on Sundays. (L-JD-153) /I ain' never heard nobody beg like that. (K-158) /and ain't never been to nobody's engineering school neither, ... (E-177) /And that's the reason I didn't never say nothing 'bout my feef. (B-69) /I ain' know nothin' abou' no stolen money. (L-JD-44)

Application of the negative construction rule (IV') which is characteristic of some of the WNS speakers (i.e. WNS_2) is found frequently — that is, the negative is freely re-transferred to the pre-verbal position. In this respect, it can be said that BEV falls in the

class of WNS$_2$.

> Nobody else ain' goin' touch me. (L-BS-48) /Nobody else don't say nothing, neither. (K-195)

As far as Negative Concord is concerned, it seems that BEV is equivalent to WNS$_2$ so far, except for a slight qualitative richness. But a careful statistical examination of this rule in BEV enables us to conclude that its application is close to having categorical status. The following table IV shows the actual number of applications of the rule compared with the total number of indefinites where the rule might have been applied. Here, three BEV-speaking children (MJ; JD; GJ) show a full percentage (100%) of Negative Concord respectively. But white MG who used SE did not apply the rule at all.

<u>Use of the Negative Concord Rule</u>
<u>by BEV-speaking Children and a SE Speaker</u>[25]

Informants	i	ii	iii
MJ	16	16	100
JD	12	12	100
GJ	10	10	100
MG	0	4	0

i: The number of applications
ii: The total number of indefinites where the rule might have been applied
iii: The percentage of applications

As we have seen, WNS can use the negative concord rule quite freely — but it is essentially variable for all white speakers. On the contrary, it can be seen from this table that BEV speakers use it categorically. Thus BEV differs from WNS in a most important way. The difference between a variable rule and a categorical one is fundamental. This fact suggests that BEV is a system in itself, though closely related to the other English dialects.

Another sub-section of the negative concord rule is the transfer of the negative across the clause. This section is divided into two categories.

(1) One is the transfer of the negative to indefinites outside of the clause.

> Nobody else don't say nothing, *neither.* (K-195) /I couldn't find no work, or *nothin'.* (E-48) /I feels like I don't have no skin on my face, *no more....* (E-57) /Niggers just ain't no good, *no way.* (C-109)

In these examples, the negatives are incorporated into the appositional *either, anything, anyway* and *any more,* which evidently stand outside of the central clause — that is, they are separated by sentence boundaries in the underlying representation. And other examples where the negatives are transferred more widely to indefinites, are also found in my data.

> I ain' think i' was hardly nofin' to do in Wagon Wheel. (L-JD-83) /I don't give a damn what nobody says. (E-177) /I know that they ain't none of 'em got no true flag.... (E-318) /You don't feel like you got no fever. (K-358)

(2) The other category is the transfer of the negative to pre-verbal positions outside the clause as in *It wasn't no girls couldn't go with us* (= SE: There weren't any girls who could go with us.) This is a further extension of the negative concord rule which is hardly possible in WNS. For SE and WNS speakers, such a negative would inevitably refer to a second underlying negative in the deep structure, and so reverse the meaning. The actual occurrence of this construction among BEV speakers is rather rare in my research. But Labov and his colleagues found several examples in their study of BEV in New York City.[26]

> It ain't no cat can't get in no coop. (= There ain't any cat which can get in any coop.) /When it rain, nobody don't know it didn't. (= ....nobody knows it did.) /It wasn't no trick couldn't shun her. (= There was no customer who could shun her.)

These examples suggest that this kind of negative construction differs from other dialects in its deep structure. If dialects do not differ radically in their deep structure, how can it be that a negative in one is a positive in another? But judging from a series of extensions of negative rules (from SE to WNS, and to BEV), it seems plausible to consider that the apparent contradiction of these examples is not a difference in logical operation in deep structure among dialects, but only a slight readjustment of the conditions on a transformation.

Negative Inversion

Another important type of multiple negation remains in

BEV which is found only among Negroes and is what has been called "negative inversion." This process is the reversal of the negativized auxiliary (i.e. the tense marker) and the negative indefinite (i.e. the subject), which is characteristic of the question form in SE.

The "negative inversion" occurs in declarative sentences such as : *Didn't nobody gi' me not'n'* (L-MJ-124) (= SE *Nobody gave me anything*). This construction has an affected or emotive meaning. In this respect, it is quite different from the normal WNS from: *Nobody didn't give me nothing.*

This example can be dealt with quite concisely by relating the sentence to the form: *Nobody didn't give me nothing.* But in the following examples, two ways of interpretation are possible.

> Ain't nobody studyin' you or your mama, neither. (Co-95)
> /Ain't no devil living in that house. (K-350) /Ain't nobody
> gonna' move on nobody today. (K-147) /Ain't nothing going to
> happen. (C-115)

As far as the formal structure and derivation is concerned, it is possible to releate them (e.g. *Ain't nobody studyin' you or your mama, neither.*) to sentences of the form *Indef* [+ neg] - *Aux* + *n't* - *MV* (e.g. *Nobody ain't studyin' you or your mama, neither.*) or to sentences with two original clauses of the form *It ain't nobody studyin' you or your mama, neither.* with the dummy *it* (= SE : 'there'). There are also many other examples where other predicates appear after the indefinite, as in the following sentences.

Ain't none of this no good. (Co-140) /Ain't nothing wrong with me. (C-111) /Ain't no colour in her face. (E-58) /Ain't nothing upstairs to eat. (C-91) /Ain't no reason to go around looking like that. (C-71) /Ain't nothing cheap in this town no more, not even the necessities. (K-294)

And the next examples have strong evidence for having derived from sentences with the dummy *it*, because the modal auxiliary in each sentence demonstrates the two original clauses.[27]

Ain't nothin' we can do. (K-53) /Ain't nothin' I can do but let whatever is gonna happen. (E-159) /Ain't nobody can do that. (B-36) Ain't nobody can do it but you. (K-154) /Wasn't nobody could help her no way what with all them north'n black jittybugs upstairs killin' ev'ythin' white n' male n' uniformed they could see. (Co-7)

Furthermore, in the following sentences the tense marker is also retained after the indefinite, pointing to a second clause just like the above examples.[28]

Ain't nobody in Brooklyn *got* friends. (K-294) /Ain't nobody in ne house *gave* me not'n'. (L-MJ-124)

But with these two kinds of evidence which point to the *it*-deletion, it is impossible to neglect the relationship between the ambiguous cases mentioned above and the following sentences.

Di'n nobody gi' me not'n'. (L-MJ-124) /Didn't nothin' go

right. (Co-138)

These are obviously negative inversions because it is impossible to explain these constructions by the *it*-deletion.

Moreover, in BEV *ain't* is also used for *didn't* about half the time, as was mentioned in section 3. 2. 1, so that there may well be a certain number of examples where the *ain't* for *didn't* is used, as in the following conversation between MJ and MG.

> MJ: ...An' my birfday was on ne firs' day school starte'. An' *di'*
> *nobody gi' me not'n'.*
> MG:[o:w], your birthday was on [ə:]
> MJ: Wednesday.
> MG: Wednesday.
> MJ: *Ain' nobody gi' me not'n' bu' my mother.* (L-MJ-124)

As has been observed so far, one characteristic feature of the negative sentences considered in this section is that the 'negative indefinite' follows the negativized auxiliary in every case. One scholar explains that the above-mentioned cases are derived from two clauses, but such an explanation does not answer the question why it is deleted *only* before the 'negative indefinite'. According to this explanation, it should also be possible to drop the dummy *it* in such a sentence where the indefinite is not involved as *It ain't my book*. Of course *Ain't my book* is acceptable in casual and rapid speech style in WNS. But the negative construction discussed here is quite different in meaning from this, that is to say, it has a more "emphatic," "excited" and "strongly affective" meaning.

Moreover, there are some other cases where the explanation of

deriving from two clauses is not possible: (1) in the case where *don't* indicates that the tense marker has been moved to the beginning of the sentence; (2) in the case where *cain't* or *won't* is used for the negativized auxiliary in the same way as *don't.*[29)]

(1) Don't nothing bother you (L-MJ-98) /Don't nobody else get pai' but you, righ'. (L-MJ-101) /Don't nobody stay in my house and don't work. (K-39) /Don't no Indian scout make all that racket when he runs. (K-265)

(2) Cain't nobody do nothing with him. (F-396) /He's the kind cain't nobody please. (E-343) /Won't nothing surprise me. (E-241) /Won't nobody speak to me, though they looks at me like I'm some new kinda cotton pickin' machine. (E-58)

Now it is possible to summarize the various facts mentioned above, which support the two opposing interpretations of this construction.

(1) In cases where forms other than *ain't*, for example *don't*, *didn't*, *cain't*, *won't* etc., are used for the negativized auxiliary as in: *Don't nobody stay in my house; Didn't nobody gi' me nothin'; Cain't nobody do nothing with him; Won't nothing surprise me*, the Negative Inversion can explain the prosess.

(2) In cases where *ain't* is used for the negativised auxiliary, two interpretations are possible. First, when *ain't* stands for the copula, the interpretation of *it*-deletion is available. For example, the sentence: *Ain't nothin' we can do* admits no other explanation. Moreover, the sentence: *Ain't nobody in ne house gave me not'n'* shows two tense markers. Also, when *ain't* stands for *didn't* or *hasn't, It ain't*

cannot account for this. These facts enable us to conclude that negative inversion is a productive process in itself in BEV negative construction and that *it*-deletion is used with some sentences beginning with *It ain't...*, producing a close resemblance to negative inversion.

Summary

On the whole, in English the negative is obligatorily attracted to the first indefinite if it precedes the verb (**Anybody didn't give me anything yesterday* → *Nobody gave me anything yesterday*) and optionally to the first indefinite after the verb (*John gave me nothing yesterday*). If the negative construction of SE alone is considered, it is possible to describe a rule which takes the initial negative as a feature of the sentence and transfers it directly to the various positions with the conditions indicated, because the negative appears only once in a sentence. But in order to describe the negative construction of various English dialects, it is appropriate to use three destinct rules after the negative is placed in its formal pre-verbal position, as Labov indicates.[30] The first is the categorical rule of Negative Attraction (II) (mentioned above) which is obligatory for all dialects. The second is the optional rule of negative transport (III), which produces scholastic sentences (*John gave me nothing*). And the third is the rule of Negative Concord (IV), which is optional for white nonstandard dialects only, and performs the emphatic function in WNS (*John didn't give me nothing no more*).

In some nonstandard white dialects (WNS$_2$), there seem to be two kinds of extensions of the rule. (1) After application of the nega-

tive attraction rule (II), it is possible to transfer the negative back to the pre-verbal position without eliminating the original negative attracted to the preceding indefinite (*Nobody didn't give me nothing*). This problem can be solved for the most part by amending the rule (IV) to the rule (IV'). (2) The negative concord rule (IV) also applies without regard to clause boundaries (*John didn't give me nothing I wanted no more*).

On the other hand, BEV shares all these properties of the negative concord rule (IV') and, moreover, the categorical (100%) use of the rule (IV) shows that the rule is not variable (as in WNS), but obligatory in BEV within the same clause. This means that the emphatic function of negative concord is entirely lost in BEV. In order to supply this emphatic function, there exist two kinds of extensions of negative rules. (1) It is possible to transfer the negative to the pre-verbal position in a following clause (*John ain't give me nothing I ain't want no more*). This is just an extension of the rule (IV). (2) Negative inversion is a characteristic construction of BEV negation which is not used by other dialects (*Ain't nobody give me nothing*).

<div align="center">«NOTES»</div>

1) Mark Sebba. 1997. *Contact Languages: Pidgins and Creoles.* London: Macmillan Press Ltd. pp. 153-209.
2) Mark Sebba (1997 : 221) compares the continuum to a ladder.
   "We can conveniently visualise the continuum as a ladder. At one end, we find a form of Jamaican Creole which is markedly different from Standard English in a whole range of ways : This variety is now

called, in 'continuum' terminology, the basilect — the 'lect' (variety) at the base of the continuum. This is therefore the 'bottom rung' of the ladder, reasonably accurately reflecting the fact that the basilectal Jamaican Creole is likely to be used by those who are economically worst off, and have least access to education. Basilectal Jamaican Creole, like any 'pure' language, is necessarily something of a theoretical construct. Since every speaker is likely to 'command a span of this continuum', as De Camp puts it, it is unlikely that any speaker will use the basilectal form of the creole all the time. Nonetheless, Jamaicans probably have an intuitive feel for what the basilectal forms are, even if they do not use them."

3) These are standard aspects of Jamaican Creole and Black English Vernacular, which contain various speakers who range from basilect speakers to acrolect ones. The composition of these items may be different from speaker to speaker in each variation.

4) Loreto Todd. 1974. *Pidgins and Creoles.* London : Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. p. 16.

5) John Holm. *Pidgins and Creoles: Volume I Theory and Structure.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 201.

6) Sebba, *op. cit.* (1997), p. 209.

7) *Ibid.,* p. 209.

8) *Ibid.,* p. 209.

9) William Labov. 1969. "Contraction, Deletion, and Inherent Variability in the English Copula." *Language.* 45 : pp. 715-762.

10) Susan Romaine. 1998. *Pidgin and Creole Languages.* London: Longman.

11) In this section, data collected from several texts are used.(B-165): Bambara (1971: 165). (Tone Cade Bambara, ed. 1971. *Tales and Stories for Black Folks.* New York : Doubleday and Company, Inc.)

12) (E-213) : Ellison (1965 : 213). (Ralph Ellison. 1965. *Invisible Man.* Harmondsworth : Penguin Books Ltd.)

13) (L-MJ-124) : Loman (1967: 124). (Bengt Loman, ed. 1967.

Conversations in a Negro American Dialect. Washington, D. C. : Center for Applied Linguistics.)

14) (K-350) : King (1965 : 350). (Woodie King, ed. 1965. *Black Short Story Anthology.*)

15) William Labov, Paul Cohen, Clarence Robins and John Lewis. 1968. *A Study of the Non-standard English of Negro and Puerto Rican Speakers in New York City.* vol. I Cooperative Research Project No. 3288. Office of Education, U .S. Dept. of Health, Education and Welfare. p. 283.

16) *Ibid.*, p. 282.

17) Walter A. Wolfram. 1969. *A Sociolinguistic Description of Detroit Negro Speech.* Washington, D. C. : Center for Applied Linguistics.

18) The following facts are found from my data :

   (1)   The form '*on*' is confined to cases where the subject of the sentence is the first person. Only one exception is found in my data : *You 'on' know what you talkin 'abou'.* (L-GJ-3)

   (2)   This fact is held in common by each of the four informants (GJ, JD, MJ, BS).

   (3)   White (MG) and black (PJ) adults never use this form.

19) Another form $\emptyset + not$ is also found in my data.

20) Labov, *op. cit.* (1968), p. 256.

21) The application of these rules is obligatory for BEV(Black Engulish Vernacular) speakers as well as SE (Standard English) and WNS (White Non-standard) speakers.

22) Labov, *op. cit.* (1968), p. 272.

23) *Ibid.*, p. 273.

24) Without this restriction, the rule would produce the following sentences : -

   [WNS]   *I *don't* like the way *none* of you *didn't* do that.

   (= I don't like the way any of you did that.)

   Such a sentence does not appear in WNS.

25) This table is made on the basis of the data which was collected from

B. Loman *op. cit.* (1967).

26)   Labov. *op. cit.* (1968), pp. 273-84.

27)   In my data, the following example is found, which shows that there are two clauses in these sentences. *"There ain't,"* said calmly, evenly, *"nothing we can do, is there?"* (B-52)

28)   Other examples where the dummy *it* or *there* is obviously deleted, are also found in my data.

    (1)   Ain't none of your business, Clyde. (K-83)

    (2)   Ain't no telling how many mornings you leave outta here with the same drawers you had on the day before. (K-358)

    In SE, in the case of (1) *it* would be used and *there* would be employed in the second example (2) in the first position of each sentence.

29)   Except for *cain't,* the range of modals which can be used seems to be limited. Labov (1968 : 286) referred to this point on the basis of his data: "From the emphatic and affective nature of negative inversion, we would infer that *may, might, would and should* are not *likely* to be used. We find one case of *won't : Won't nobody catch us.*"

30)   William Labov. "The Study of Language in its Social Context," *Advances in the Sociology of Language*, ed. Joshua A. Fishman (The Hague : Mouton, 1971), p.190.

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