Code-switching Between AAVE and Standard English in The Films 'Sorry to Bother You' and 'The Hate U Give'

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Zadar, 2024.

Izjava o akademskoj čestitosti

Ja, **Tena Vajda,** ovime izjavljujem da je moj **završni** rad pod naslovom **Code-Switching Between AAVE and Standard English in The Films 'Sorry to Bother You' and 'The Hate U Give'** rezultat mojega vlastitog rada, da se temelji na mojim istraživanjima te da se oslanja na izvore i radove navedene u bilješkama i popisu literature. Ni jedan dio mojega rada nije napisan na nedopušten način, odnosno nije prepisan iz necitiranih radova i ne krši bilo čija autorska prava.

Izjavljujem da ni jedan dio ovoga rada nije iskorišten u kojem drugom radu pri bilo kojoj drugoj visokoškolskoj, znanstvenoj, obrazovnoj ili inoj ustanovi.

Sadržaj mojega rada u potpunosti odgovara sadržaju obranjenoga i nakon obrane uređenoga rada.

Zadar, 19. rujna 2024.

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1. Introduction

Someone may start speaking in English and say a word or few of Spanish within the course of that sentence or the conversation as a whole. This phenomenon is referred to as code-switching and it is one of the most widely known and researched language contact phenomena (Gardner-Chloros, 2009: 9). However, this was not always the case. The phenomenon attracted interest of researchers only in the last fifty years (Myers-Scotton, 1993). Even after the interest for this type of research arose, many researchers focused on the bilingual aspects of code-switching. The switch from one variety of a language to another, such as a switch in a person's dialect, i.e. monolingual code-switching was often disregarded. However, those switches might happen on more occasions than a person might think. The Black community, for example, switches from African American Vernacular to Standard English on a daily basis. A general misconception is that speakers of AAVE, often times referred to as 'Ebonics' or 'AAE', use it when they are in a familiar setting, surrounded by loved ones or talking to a friend and that the Standard variety is used in a formal setting. This, however, is not always the case. Almost all speakers of AAVE are familiar with Standard English and are constantly switching between the two varieties, very frequently within one sentence (McWhorter, 2000).

This paper aims to first describe the code-switching phenomenon, differentiate it from other language contact phenomena, as well as explain reasons for employing it and the attitudes towards the phenomenon. Secondly, origins of AAVE will be presented and the characteristics of its grammar and phonology will be discussed. In that same section attitudes of AAVE speakers towards code-switching will be mentioned. Finally, the main point of the paper will deal with analyzing instances of code-switching between Standard English and Black English in the films ‘The Hate U Give’ and ‘Sorry to Bother You’. Based on the common misconception that was mentioned previously in the introductory part, the first hypothesis is that speakers of AAVE strictly speak AAVE in informal settings and Standard English in formal settings. The second hypothesis is that the variety a person will speak depends on their interlocutor, i.e. if a person is speaking to another African American they are going to speak AAVE, and if an AAVE speaker finds themselves in front of a White audience they will speak SE. The third hypothesis is that the theme that is discussed dictates the variety that will be spoken. All three hypothesis, and whether or not they turned out to be true or not, are discussed in the section titled Discussion.

2. Code-switching

Lin and Li (2012: 1) and Gardner-Chloros (2009: 9) consider code-switching to be the most researched language contact phenomena. Even though today that might be the case, it was not always so. According to Myers-Scotton (1993: 46) code-switching started to be recognized as a possible field of research only after Blom and Gumperz published their study that can be found in a collection titled *Directions in Sociolinguistics: the ethnography of communication* and edited by Gumperz and Hymes (1972). Until that point, code-switching was treated as a bilingual's inability to express themselves in the language in which they started the conversation.

2.2. Situational and metaphorical code-switching

In their article that was published in Gumperz and Hymes (1972), which contributed to the current interest in CS, Blom and Gumperz examined CS between Norwegian dialects and upon their research coined two concepts: 'situational' and 'metaphorical' code-switching. The former is used to refer to a type of code-switching that occurs when the situation in which the speaker is in determines the code they use, and the latter indicates a code-switch in relation to the topic or subject matter that is being discussed. Therefore, we could say that situational code-switching is closely related and constrained by social norms because it presumes "a direct relationship between language and social situation" (Gumperz and Hymes, 1972: 424). On the contrary, metaphorical code-switching allows a certain degree of freedom considering that some topics could be discussed in either code and thus the use of one code over the other does not necessarily imply a violation of commonly accepted norms, but only, as suggested by Wardhaugh (2006: 104), "adds a distinct flavor to what is said about the topic''.

2.3. Language VS dialect phenomenon

Bullock and Toribio (2012: 2) claim that only bilingual people are able to code-switch and use the term *style shifting* to describe what monolinguals do when switching from one language variety to another. Lin and Li (2012: 1), on the other hand, state that style shifting and code-switching are very similar to one another. Gardner-Chloros (2009: 4) while defining code-switching states that it is a language contact phenomenon that "refers to the use of several languages or dialects in the same conversation or sentence by bilingual people" and later states that monolingual people, just as bilingual, can perform a variety switch, and frequently do that, not by switching from one language to another, but going between dialects and registers.

2.4. Code-switching and other language contact phenomena

It is important to recognize that while code-switching might be the most researched, it is not the only language contact phenomenon. Therefore, it is necessary to differentiate it from notions such as: code-mixing, borrowing and diglossia. When doing so, even researchers seem to disagree since sometimes clear distinctions between the notions cannot be drawn. Gardner-Chloros (2009: 10) refers to Eastman's (1992: 1) words when approaching the issue of distinction: "Efforts to distinguish code-switching, code-mixing and borrowing are doomed".

2.4.1. Code-switching and code-mixing

Some researchers refer to code-mixing when alternation occurs within a sentence and code-switching when the alternation exceeds sentences (Gardner-Chloros 2009: 13). However, this distinction becomes confusing if intra-sentential code-switching is taken into consideration since its definition is code-switching occurring within a single sentence. Bullock and Toribio (2012: 67) offer Muysken's (2000: 1) definition of intra-sentential code-switching, or as he refers to it: code-mixing, as "all cases where lexical items and grammatical features from two languages appear in one sentence." On the other hand, Gardner-Chloros (2009: 13) introduces Meisel's (1989) definition and distinction of the two: code-switching is described as "the pragmatic skill of selecting the language according to the interlocutor, topic, context, etc.", and code-mixing is used when two grammatical systems blend. Auer (2010: 467) defines code-mixing as a subtype of code-switching that occurs within a sentence and it is employed by people who do not have the same grasp of the two languages in question so they switch between the two. Therefore, Auer (2010) further states that the difference between code-switching and code-mixing is that the former is a desired and admired skill that suggests expertise in both codes, while code-mixing exhibits lack of knowledge in both varieties. Wardhaugh (2006: 101) simplifies the distinction by completely omitting it and referring to code-mixing as just another term used for code-switching.

2.4.2. Code-switching and borrowing

Out of all the other language contact phenomena, researchers seem to disagree the most on where to draw the line in differentiating between borrowing and code-switching. Gardner-Chloros (2009: 12) presents the following perspectives on the topic: code-switching and borrowing cannot be differentiated due to the fact that "loans start off as code-switches and then gradually become established as loans" , the second perspective suggests evaluation of what the speakers themselves consider a borrowing and what an instance of code-switching.

2.4.3. Code-switching and diglossia

Wardhaugh and Fuller (2015: 98) state that the difference between diglossia and situational code-switching lies in the fact that the choice of variety used in diglossia is much more strictly defined by the activity in question as well as the relationship between the participants. Bullock and Toribio (2012: 6) add that the choice of language used in diglossia is "determined by community norms", whereas code-switching occurs based on an individual's choice of how, when and why to employ it. Furthermore, Wardhaugh (2006: 98) explains that "diglossia reinforces differences, whereas code-switching tends to reduce them". Another point worth mentioning is that sometimes while people are code-switching, they cannot even tell that they have done so, while in diglossia people seem to recognize the switch from one variety to another.

2.5. Reasons for code-switching

According to Gardner-Chloros (2009), there are numerous reasons for a person to choose to code-switch from one variety of a language to another. Firstly, often times one variety signifies a certain societal role and the other variety is connected to another role. In these situations, CS is employed to escape potential conflict. Another reason to code-switch given by Gardner-Chloros (2009: 55) is specific to vernaculars (AAVE, for example). In choosing to speak the vernacular, a speaker may try to show "a form of resistance to domination" (Gardner-Chloros 2009: 55). In some cases, code-switching is inevitable and in others it is an option. Gardner Chloros (2009: 58) refers to these situations as "CS due to necessity and CS as the product of choice". The reality is that in the majority of such instances, it is very difficult, even for speakers, to say what was the nature of the reason for switching to a different variety.

2.6. Attitudes towards code-switching

Lin and Li (2012: 1) state that the general opinion on code-switching is negative, not only among the general public, who thinks that code-switching is introduced when a person is unable to articulate themselves in either one of the languages, but also among people who employ code-switching on a day-to-day basis: "One interesting consequence is that where CS is common, pejorative labels tend to be ascribed, e.g. Spanglish, Tex-Mex (Spanish English), Chinglish (Chinese-English), Japlish (Japanese-English)". Gardner-Chloros (2009: 15) further elaborates on this point by stating that the general opinion on CS is that "CS is: (1) thought to be an easy or lazy option; (2) generally disapproved of, even by those who practise it; (3) below the full consciousness of those who use it."

3. African American Vernacular English

African American Vernacular English, often times referred to as AAVE or AAE, is a dialect of English spoken by the African American community. It is a dialect with a rich history and even though it is the most researched American dialect, somehow it is still the least respected one. According to Pullum (1999: 40), "most speakers of Standard English think that AAVE is just a badly spoken version of their language, marred by a lot of ignorant mistakes in grammar and pronunciation, or worse than that, an unimportant and mostly abusive repertoire of street slang used by an ignorant urban underclass". These stereotypes and opinions were prevalent for years within the society and the first person to react against this dominant misconception was Labov. According to Hazen (2010) the change in opinion on AAVE came with Labov's work in education where he managed to prove that AAVE was in fact not a deprived language and that children who speak it are not any less knowledgeable than White children:

> The narratives of the non-standard speakers, often seen by educators as illogical or incoherent, are recast by Labov as clear expressions in a rule-governed system. Using the logical formalizations of the linguistics of the time, he argues for the legitimacy of non-standard English, by showing that African-American students' narratives are in some ways more logical than those of White adults (Hazen, 2010: 34-35).

3.1. History and origins of AAVE

African American Vernacular English began developing in the 17th century with the British colonization of America and the first English settlers in Virginia in 1607 (Rickford & Rickford, 2000: 131). At this time, African Americans were part of each of the colonies but their number in them was not high. In this and the following century, a lot of slaves were brought to America from Jamaica and Barbados and not directly from Africa (Rickford & Rickford, 2000). According to Rickford and Rickford (2000), with the 18th century came a steady increase in the number of Black people in America and the vast majority of them were in the Southern colonies. This trend continued into the next century. According to Best (2006: 8), AAVE came to be for two reasons, slavery and the fact that even after its abolishment, laws that segregated the races were introduced.

There are numerous theories surrounding the origin of AAVE. McWhorter (2000: 157) lists three origins of AAVE: white people speech of the plantation owners, enslaved white

English people and creole languages. Best (2006), Rickford and Rickford (2000) and Baugh and Cable (2002) believe that AAVE developed from creoles. Rickford and Rickford (2000: 131) support this claim by stating that the majority of the Black slaves were brought to America, not from Africa, but from plantations in Barbados and Jamaica, wherein the formation of pidgins and creoles had started. This stance point of the majority of the researchers may come as a surprise given the name of the dialect: African American, because it seems like there is not much African influence on it at all. McWhorter (2000: 157) states that:

> The purported link between Black English and African languages has become a bit of a scam. ….The truth is that the links between Black English and African languages are very broad and very few. … current claims about the African influence on Black English are based on work that is outdated, not to mention sketchy.

3.2. Grammar of AAVE

AAVE behaves just like any language or a dialect and therefore contains features which characterize its grammar, phonology, syntax and semantics. AAVE, just like all the dialects and languages, has peculiar rules that dictate the occurrence of specific words and phrases. The only thing that differentiates AAVE from standard English are its 18 phonological and 6 main grammatical features (Best, 2006: 7). Most syntactic features of AAVE do correspond to syntactic features of other English dialects (Green, 2002: 35).

3.2.1. Zero copula

In AAVE the verb *be* appears in two basic forms, i.e. in its conjugated form and invariant form. The former of the two can appear in one of the following forms: *am, is, are, was, were,* based on the subject it follows and the tense expressed in a sentence. However, this is not always the case. In certain situations, in which the verb *be* takes its present tense forms, *is* or *are*, the said forms are often omitted and the process of doing so is referred to as the zero copula (Rickford & Rickford, 2000: 113). This feature allows speakers of AAVE to say sentences such as ‘She taller than me’ and ‘They older than me’. Since the forms *is* and *are* couple or join the subject (*she* and *they* in the examples used previously) and the predicate (what is said about the subjects – that someone is taller or older) of a sentence, they are referred to as copulas (Rickford & Rickford, 2000: 114).

According to Rickford and Rickford (2000), this AAVE feature proves the systematicity of its grammar and shows that the dialect does in fact follow specific rules. As mentioned before, the only copula forms that can be left out are *is* and *are*; however, there are restrictions to this. Firstly, in cases in which *is* or *are* appear at the end of a sentence or are stressed, they cannot be omitted (Rickford & Rickford, 2000). Therefore, saying *'That's who he Ø!' in place of 'That's who he is!' is not correct (Rickford & Rickford, 2000: 115). Secondly, copulas cannot be deleted when they take their negative form *ain't*.

3.2.2. Invariant *be*

The second basic form the verb *be* takes in AAVE is the habitual or invariant *be*. According to Rickford and Rickford (2000), while being the most widely known feature of AAVE, the invariant *be* is also the least understood feature of the dialect. Rickford and Rickford (2000) attribute this to the fact that the majority of the people who do not speak AAVE think that its speakers use the invariant *be* to replace the SE *is* and *are* at any given occasion and in every environment, but "AAVE is actually more discriminating" (Rickford & Rickford, 2000: 113). Green (2002: 35) states that the similarity between the AAVE verbal marker *be* and the auxiliaries in Standard English, for the majority of Standard English speakers, falsely indicates that this verbal marker employs the same function as the auxiliary verbs. But as Rickford and Rickford (2000) stated, the verbal marker is way more discriminating and therefore can occur in limited environments and have a certain connotation.

According to Green (2002), invariant *be*, as the name suggests, always occurs in its uninflected form and has a habitual or repetitive meaning, i.e. it describes events that occur regularly, as in 'He be eating my food all the time'. In the majority of the cases, the invariant *be* precedes verbs (as is the case in the example) or phrases (AP, NP, PP) and carries the meaning mentioned above - habitual and repetitive – however; there are instances in which invariant *be* precedes prepositions and adjectives which indicate subject's permanent qualities: 'Some iMacs be tangerine.' (Green, 2002: 49).

3.2.3. Preverbal markers: *finna, steady, come*

The preverbal markers that are going to be discussed in this section, although identified as part of AAVE, have not attracted the same amount of interest and research as markers such as invariant *be* (Green, 2002: 70).

Usage of the preverbal marker *finna* suggests that the event introduced is forthcoming. From the example of a sentence given by Green, in which *finna* is used 'I don't know about

you, but I'm finna leave' (Green 2002: 70), we can conclude that *finna* precedes a verb that is non-finite and that the meaning that the person is trying to convey by using *finna* is that they are leaving the place that they are in in the very near future. The sentence with the same meaning in Standard English would sound as follows: 'I don't know about you, but I am about to leave.' (Green, 2002: 70).

The preverbal marker *steady* is used when intensifying and stressing that the persistency of a certain action is the main priority of the speaker. Green's (2002: 72) example 'They want to do they own thing, and you steady talking to them' shows that the preverbal marker *steady* occurs before a progressive verb form and the meaning that the speaker is trying to convey by using *steady* is that their interlocutor is persistently trying to talk to people that are not interested in doing the same thing. The same meaning is SE would be conveyed with a sentence 'They want to do their own thing, and you're continuing to talk to them' (Green, 2002: 72). Another point that Green (2002: 71) notes is that *steady* does not appear before stative verbs because, unlike an action, it is impossible for a state to be "carried out in an intense and continuous manner".

The function of the marker *come* in AAVE is to reflect a speaker's attitude, more precisely to reveal their indignation or rage towards an event that occurred. The example used by Rickford and Rickford (2000: 122) 'He come walkin' in here like he owned the damn place!' demonstrates that the marker *come* is used in front of a verb in the *-ing* form (Green, 2002), and what can be noticed is the speaker's annoyance caused by someone's action. In SE the sentence 'He walked in here as if he owned the damn place!' would express the same thing.

3.2.4. Existential *it*

Existential *it* is a construction in AAVE that indicates that something exists. Therefore, an AAVE speaker instead of using 'there is' or 'there are', uses the AAVE alternative for these constructions: 'it's' or 'i's' (Rickford & Rickford, 2000: 111). This construction consists of the existential element, a verbal linker and a noun (Green, 2002: 81), and the same form (it's) is used for both plural and singular nouns: 'It's / I's a lot of girls' (Rickford & Rickford, 2000: 111). The SE equivalent of this sentence would be 'There is a lot of girls.'

3.2.5. Absence of the third person singular present tense *-s*

Adding an *-s* / *-es* to verbs when they appear after third-person singular subjects and leaving the verb bare for all the other subjects is a common practice and well-known rule in SE. This, however, is not a common practice in AAVE. Rickford and Rickford (2000: 111) argued

that in AAVE, removing the third-person-singular -*s* makes "the rules of English more regular''. The grammatical rules AAVE follows in such instances are simple: the verb does not acquire special endings in any person, singular or plural. Consequentially, frequently an AAVE speaker can be heard saying: 'he go / have / do / don't ' instead of 'he goes / has / does / doesn't' (Rickford & Rickford, 2000).

3.2.6. Questions

When formation of questions is concerned, AAVE speakers follow rules that are the complete opposite of the rules that SE follows. For this reason, an AAVE speaker, when posing a direct question, instead of inverting the subject and the verb, rises their intonation to show that they are posing a question. Direct question would therefore look like this: 'This is ok to eat?', and not: 'Is this ok to eat?' This is also the case with indirect question. AAVE speakers use inversion and omit *if*: 'I asked him could he come with me.' , instead of the SE 'I asked him if he could come with me' (Rickford & Rickford, 2000: 124).

3.2.7. Double negatives

Double negative is, according to Rickford and Rickford (2000), a feature of AAVE which allows the usage of a negative verb (*ain't, don't* or *wasn't*) with a negative noun or pronoun. Things like 'no…man', 'neither', 'nor' are commonly used in AAVE in instances in which SE speaker would say things such as: 'any…man', 'either', 'anything'. However, Rickford and Rickford (2000: 123) claim that this is not a new feature since double negatives were very common in British English and its literature (especially in Chaucer and Shakespeare). Furthermore, people do not have difficulty with understanding the meaning of double negatives and the fact that they cannot be interpreted as positives: 'She wasn't no young lady' is not likely to be interpreted as 'She was a young lady' (Rickford and Rickford, 2000: 123).

3.3. Phonology of AAVE

Just like AAVE grammar, the phonology also follows explicit set of rules. The only thing that differentiates the phonology of AAVE from Standard English are its 18 phonological features (Best, 2006: 7). Contrary to the popular belief about AAVE and the simplicity of its characteristic, "Black English sounds are complex as often as they are simple, just as the sounds in standard English are'' (McWhorter, 2000: 132).

The reduction of final consonant cluster is a feature that appears in both SE and AAVE; what differentiates the dialect from the standard is the extent to which its speakers reduce the clusters (Green, 2002: 107). The most usual context for the deletion of the final consonant is

“before a word begging with a consonant’’ (Baugh and Cable, 2002: 362). AAVE, however, deletes this final cluster even before a vowel: ‘lif’ up’ instead of ‘lift up’ (Baugh and Cable,2002: 163).

AAVE very often produces sounds *t/d* and *f/v* to replace the SE voiced *th* and voiceless *th* sound. Therefore, according to Baugh and Cable (2002: 362) and Green (2002: 118) words such as *that, thin, month, bathe* will have this phonological transcription: [dæt], [tɪn], [mʌnf], [bev] instead of the Standard American English: [ðæt], **[**θɪn]**, [**mʌnθ]**, [**beɪð].

Large numbers of varieties of English are known for the realization of the ng / (ŋ) as *n*. According to Green (2002: 121-122), this is limited only to the -ing suffix and AAVE is no exception to the rule; therefore, the following verbs: *running*, *staying*, *learning* and *thinking* are realized as *runnin*, *stayin*, *leranin* and *thinkin*.

Another important rule of the phonological system of AAVE is the stress in words, especially the initial stress in disyllabic words. According to Green (2002: 130-131), it is common of AAVE speaker to put heavy initial stress in words such as ‘pólice, défine, próduce’.

3.4. Attitudes of speakers of AAVE towards code-switching

One of the more recent attitudes expressed can be found in the song *Meet the Grahams* by the American rapper Kendrick Lamar. In a lyric, directed towards a son of another raper, Lamar says: “Never code-switch, whether right or wrong, you a Black man’’. With this part of the song, as well as in the rest of the lyrics, Lamar is telling this young boy to not be like his father. His opinion on code-switching between AAVE and SE is very clear: people who code-switch between the two are either not proud of being Black and speaking the vernacular, and code-switching between the two is, according to him, unacceptable, no matter the situation or environment.

Arthur (2017) and Duggins (2018), in their respective TEDx Talks, seem to differ a little from Lamar’s views on the matter. Code-switching between AAVE and SE is a part of their everyday life, and especially in encounters with law enforcement, as Arthur states, can be the line between life and death for most African Americans. Duggins looks at code-switching as something she does “not to impress them (people), but to survive in my environment’’.

4. Code-switching between AAVE and SE

There are several reasons why one person might switch from one variety of a language to another, whether that be out of solidarity, the audience in front of the speaker or the topic in question (Wardhaugh, 2006: 104). Furthermore, the motivation behind the switch is usually not noticed by the speaker himself. Most Black people are not only taught to, but also expected to code-switch from AAVE to SE in formal situations, such as: at their workplace, in schools, while talking to law enforcement and so on. This stems from a general consensus that Black English is just Standard English with mistakes; it is illogical, incorrect and incoherent. If Black people want to succeed in this world – they must learn how to code-switch because SE is the language that brings success and stability.

According to McWhorter (2000: 143), middle-class Black people usually speak both AAVE and Standard English and they are regularly switching between the two, frequently in the same conversation. Hearing pure AAVE for a long time is very rare (McWhorter, 2000: 143). However, because of the fact that AAVE does not diverge from SE as much as dialects in a large number of countries do, it is difficult, in most cases, to even notice the switch (McWhorter, 2000). Furthermore, to an observer, the switch from one variety to another is far less noticeable than the switch from one language to another (Gardner-Chloros, 2009: 5).

The characteristic features of Black English, both grammatical and phonological, that were discussed in previous chapters of this paper, are typical of 'pure' African American Vernacular English. Most speakers of AAVE are familiar with the grammar and phonology of Standard English and it is common for them to be "able to switch back and forth between their dialect and one much closer to Standard English" (Pullum, 1999: 52). Therefore, zero copula, invariant be, double negatives, preverbal marker, etc. are features that an AAVE speaker can use in one sentence and omit in the next one. Pullum (1999: 52) states the following example of code-switching: two Black people are talking to each other in the vernacular and as soon as a customer that is White enters the room and poses a question, one of the Black people will respond with a sentence containing different grammatical structures. This time they will use Standard English, i.e. they will switch from AAVE to SE.

According to McWhorter (2000: 147), "as a rule of thumb, the depth of one's Black English correlates with level of education: Black English gets diluted among African Americans with more education and thus more face-to-face contact with whites". However, some members

of the Black community are open to using all levels of AAVE when speaking with other members of their community, even if their educational level is high.

Another issue that occurs when speaking about code-switching is that, unfortunately, not all African Americans are thought to code-switch at home. In her TEDx Talks, O'Quin (2021) states that she was fortunate enough to have educated parents who taught her the importance of code-switching. She further states that they spoke AAVE at home and mainstream American English when going out into the public.

5. The analysis of the films ‘The Hate U Give’ and ‘Sorry to Bother You’

This part consists of the analysis of code-switching between African American Vernacular English and Standard English that occurs in the films ‘Sorry to Bother You’ and ‘The Hate U Give’. This chapter consists of the description of the methodology used to gather instances of code-switching in the films, listing the hypothesis and analyzing and explaining instances and examples of code-switching between AAVE and SE in the films.

5.1. Methodology

The following contains examples and instances of code-switching in the films ‘Sorry to Bother You’ and ‘The Hate U Give’. The tracking was carried out throughout the duration of both films. Once the code-switch was noticed, the scene of the film it was in was played back multiple times, slowed down and carefully examined to the point where the phonological features and grammatical structures could be clearly understood. Additionally, the scripts of both films were used to help with the accuracy.

The following hypothesis will be discussed in the following sections:

1. Speakers of AAVE strictly speak AAVE in informal settings and Standard English in formal settings.
2. The variety a person will speak depends on their interlocutor.
3. The theme that is discussed dictates the variety that will be spoken.

5.2. The film ‘The Hate U Give’

‘The Hate U Give’ (2018) is a film about Starr Carter, a young Black woman, who feels like she needs to live as two different people in order two fit into two separate communities she is a part of – her Black neighborhood and the predominantly White private high school she attends.

5.2.1. Family

Speaking with one’s family is as informal and intimate a conversation gets for that person, and therefore, the hypothesis was that family members would speak to each other in African American Vernacular English. However, it was not always so. Characters would often use SE grammatical constructions, just as much as their AAVE counterparts when speaking to their close family.

In the opening scene of the film, the shot closes into the Carter’s house and we are introduced to the family and join them in a conversation in which Maverick Carter, Starr’s

father, is talking to his kids and warning them and instructing them about how they should act if they ever get stopped by the police.

> Maverick: "Now, when it happens, don't act mad. You gotta look calm. Answer they questions but don't tell 'em nothing extra. Keep your hands out your pockets. You drop something, leave that shit where it's at… Leave that stuff where it's at. My bad. Now, one day, y'all gonna be with me, and you best bet we gonna get pulled over. That don't mean I did something wrong. Maybe I made a mistake driving or maybe I ain't do nothing at all. You gonna see me with my hands like this. On the dashboard… Come on…Now, you keep your hands posted 'cause moving makes the police get all nervous. If I ain't with you, you ask for me. It can get real dangerous so don't argue with 'em, but keep your hands where they can see 'em. This how you gonna act. We straight? Now just because we gotta deal with this mess… don't you ever forget that being black is an honour 'cause you come from greatness. Now, this the Black Panther Ten-Point Program. This our own Bill of Rights. I want you to learn it 'cause Imma ask you about it. Imma quiz you…Know your rights. Know your worth. You understand?"

The script suggested starting this monologue with *Now, when it happen* but the actor decided not to omit the 3rd person singular present tense suffix -s, a very common feature of AAVE, and opted for the SE *Now, when it happens*; however, in the second sentence he opted for the AAVE *gotta* instead of the SE *have to* or *must,* and he did so one more time in the monologue; in the sentence "Answer *they* questions" he didn't use the SE possessive form *their;* in all sentences containing the verb *gonna*, the informal version of *going to*, the copula *are* was deleted in all four instances; the most common negative form of AAVE *ain't* was used twice, and when used the first time in *I ain't do nothing wrong* it was used with a negative pronoun *nothing* yielding a double negative – another common feature of AAVE; lastly, the form *imma,* which is according to People (2023), a variation of the AAVE preverbal marker *finna* meaning *I am going to* was used twice in this passage. Zero copula appears in *this Ø the Black Panther Ten-Point Program* and *This Ø our own Bill of Rights*. As far as the phonological features are concerned, the -ing suffix in *driving* and *moving* is realized as *n* instead of *ŋ* [ˈdraɪvɪn] and [ˈmuvɪn]; *your* is realized the same as in SE as [jɔr] once and the remaining five times the postvocalic /r/ is omitted and it is pronounced as [joː]; postvocalic /r/ is also omitted in the words *over,for, argue, forget, honor, our,* and *understand* [ˈoʊvə], [fɔ], [ˈɑgju], [fɔuˈgɛt], [ˈɑnə], [aʊ] [ˌʌndəˈstænd] but it is pronounced in *ever* [ˈɛvər] and *panther* [ˈpænθər]; *my* is

pronounced as [mɑ] both times; the word *police* does not have initial stress as is common for AAVE; vocalization of postvocalic /l/ happened in *deal* [dɛə] but not in *bill* [bɪl].

In another scene Starr can be seen talking to her father about the film *Harry Potter*. She says: "You the worst person to watch Harry Potter with. The whole time you're like: 'Harry Potter is about gang theory'". In this example, zero copula is used in the first sentence before the superlative *the worst*, but the copula is not omitted in the next two instances where it would be possible for a speaker of AAVE to omit the *are* in *you <u>are</u> like* and *is* in *Harry Potter <u>is</u> about gang theory*.

When Lisa, Starr's mother, is talking to her at a diner, she can be heard saying: "No, no, no…Wait a minute. You don't have time to be mad. You're behind in your school work. You… you ain't ready for your SATs"; What can be noticed first is that when negating the *You <u>don't</u> have time to be mad*, she used the SE negation *don't* instead of the AAVE *ain't*, but used *ain't* in *You <u>ain't</u> ready for your SATs*. She could've easily used *ain't* in both instances since *ain't* replaces both, the SE *aren't* and *don't*, but instead she code-switched.

5.2.2. Friends

When talking to her friends at Williamson, a predominantly White private high school, Starr makes sure she does not use any of the features of AAVE. However, when talking to her friends back home, at Garden Heights, the same rules do not apply. She and her Black friends do not exclusively use Black English constructions when speaking to each other. They often use some Standard English grammar as well.

In the following passage two dialogues between Starr and her friend Kenya will be examined. What a person may notice immediately after reading their conversation is that the two of them come from very different backgrounds and that will be noted in the way they speak and the number of SE constructions they use in their speech.

> Kenya: "I mean, every girl in here is all laid and slayed but you wanna come up in here looking basic as hell."
>
> Starr: "What? Girl, these are the retro Threes… classic and comfortable and watch, you're gonna be wishing that you was wearing them tonight when you limping out of here like a broke-down gazelle."
>
> Kenya: "Man, ain't that my brother hoodie?"
>
> Starr: "Our brother's hoodie, Kenya, yeah."

Kenya: “Yeah, dressed like that, got folks thinking you my girlfriend.”

In this conversation Kenya is the one who uses more structures associated with AAVE and she is the one that can be heard saying things characteristic of AAVE phonology: omitting the postvocalic /r/ in *here*, *brother*, *your* [hɛə], [ˈbrʌðə], [jo:]; both of the girls are pronouncing the -ing suffix as *n* in *looking, limping, thinking* [ˈlʊkɪn], [ˈlɪmpɪn], [ˈθɪŋkɪn], however, Starr uses the SE pronunciation of the suffix in wearing [ˈwɛrɪŋ]. As far as the grammatical constructions are concerned, Kenya omits the copula in *You Ø my girlfriend* but doesn’t omit the copula *is* in *every girl in here is all laid*; she uses the construction *ain’t* to form a negative instead of *isn’t* in *ain’t that my brother hoodie?*; furthermore, in the same construction she omits the possessive -s in brother’s hoodie and indicates the possessive in a way that is characteristic for AAVE - by the juxtaposition of the nouns *brother* and *hoodie.* Starr switches between the two codes much more frequently since she is more familiar with SE. She uses the copula *are* in *you’re gonna* which is very rare to hear in AAVE since it is almost always deleted in constructions with *gonna,* but omits the same copula in *when you Ø limping,* unlike Kenya, she uses the possessive -s in *our brother’s hoodie,* but does another very common thing in AAVE and combines *you*, 2nd person singular, with *was*, the 3rd person singular, instead of *were* in *you was wearing.*

A few seconds later this conversation continues as follows:

Kenya: “Man, you so lucky you go to that private school. You don’t gotta deal with hoes like that.”

Starr: “No, there’s hoes at my school, too. Trust me, hoedom is universal.”

Kenya: “Feel my stink-eye bitch. Feel my stink-eye. Oh, we bout to handle her tonight.”

Starr: “Hold up. We???”

Kenya: “What? What, you too good now to have my back?”

Starr: “You only brought me here to tag team a bitch?”

Kenya: “Ain’t like you had shit else to do. I’m doing your black ass a favor.”

In the continuation of the conversation Kenya uses both *don’t* and *ain’t* to form a negative sentence: *You don’t gotta* deal with and *Ain’t like you had*, using both SE and AAVE formation of negatives, i.e. switching between the two options as well as using *gotta* in place of SE *have to* in the former sentence. Furthermore, she omits the copula in *You Ø so lucky, We Ø bout to handle* and *You Ø too good now to have my back?* As far as the phonological features are

concerned, Kenya omits the postvocalic /r/ in *your* and *favor* [jo:], [ˈfeɪvə]; and Starr simplifies the consonant cluster in the word *hold* [hoʊl]

A little after this conversation, Starr starts talking to Khalil, her best friend who is also African American and speaks AAVE. Here is a part of the conversation they had:

Starr: "But I'm always up at Daddy's store, you the one no one sees anymore."

Khalil: "Yeah, I've been a little busy myself."

Starr: "Mm-hmm. How's your grandma and Cameron doing?"

Khalil: They all right. Grandma's sick though the doctor say she got cancer or some shit. Yeah, she's taking chemo. But really the only thing she worried about is putting a wig on top of her head.

Talking about a girl they've noticed

Khalil: "She turned up."

Starr: "She's going in."

Khalil: "Come on, let me see you turn up like she turn up. See, I would've thought you was into the indie rock or maybe country…"

Starr: "Everyone knows this song."

Khalil: "I mean, I know you be hanging with all the white kids. I'm just saying."

Starr sees Khalil's shoes

Starr: "You obviously making big money if you rocking those."

In this string of conversation Starr, even though she does not omit the possessive -s in *daddy's store*, in the sentence right after it she omits the copula *are* in *you the Ø one no one sees anymore*. However, the present simple 3rd person -s on *sees* is still there. She omits the copula again in the last two sentences *You Ø obviously making big money* and *You Ø rocking those,* but uses the copula in *She is going in*. Khalil omits the copula in They *Ø all right,* She *Ø worried about, She Ø turned up,* but does not in *Grandma's sick* and *She's taking chemo.* He does not use the 3rd person singular present tense -s in *The doctor say she got cancer* and *Like she turn up;* Furthermore, he uses *was* instead of *were* in *You was into indie rock;* Lastly, he uses the

invariant *be* in *You <u>be</u> hanging with all the white kids*, meaning she hangs out with them regularly in school.

5.2.3. Law enforcement

Another interesting instance in the film shows Starr noticing that she forgot to code-switch to Standard English while being examined by the police about Khalil's murder, and immediately correcting herself. When she was asked a question, she responded with "Nah", a variation of the word *no* frequently used in the Black community (Peoples, 2023). She then continued with a cough and "I mean… no", knowing that that was the only way she was going to be taken seriously by the detectives.

In one of the last scenes of the film, Starr can be seen talking at a march/rally similar to the one that happened a few years ago for the Black Lives Matter initiative. In the scene she is seen talking through a megaphone to the protestors in front of the police. This time around, she is not that concerned about being taken seriously by the police, but is rather interested in getting the attention of her fellow protestors. In her speech she is 'obeying' the rules of SE pronunciation, but uses AAVE negative *ain't* instead of the SE *isn't*, and using the contraction *y'all* instead of *you all*.

> Starr: "My…my name is Starr! And I'm the one who saw what happened to Khalil! I am the witness, but so are y'all! We are all witnesses to this injustice! We see it all and we will not stop until the world sees it to! We will not stop protesting! Everybody wants to talk about how Khalil died. This ain't about how Khalil died. It's about how he lived. Khalil lived. His life mattered."

5.3. The film 'Sorry to Bother You'

'Sorry to Bother You' (2018) follows the story of a young Black telemarketer Cassius Green on his pursuit of wealth. Through his journey he encounters certain obstacles but manages to find the secret to professional success, which in the end won't matter to him since it will cost him losing the support of the people closest to him.

5.3.1. Work place

Cassius talks to his colleagues at work in SE, he also talks to his costumers in SE, but somehow that is not working. After a few unsuccessful calls in his new workplace, which were closely monitored by an older and more experienced African American work colleague, Cassius was approached by him. After having a little giggle about the situation, Langston decided to give Cassius a few words of advice:

Langston: “Hey, youngblood. Lemme give you a tip. Use your white voice”.

Cassius: “Man, I ain’t got no white voice”.

Langston: “Oh, come on, you know what I mean. You have a white voice in there, you can use it. It’s like when you get pulled over by the police”.

Cassius: “Oh no, I just use my regular voice when that happens. I just say ‘Back the fuck up off the car and don’t nobody get hurt!’ ”

Langston: “I’m just trying to give you some game. You wanna make some money here? Then read the script with the white voice”.

Cassius: “Well, people say I talk with a white voice anyway, so why it ain’t helping me out?”

Langston: “Well, you don’t talk white enough. I’m not talking bout Will Smith white. That ain’t white, that’s just proper. I’m talking about the real deal.”

Cassius *holds his nose*: “Okay, so like, Hello Mr. Everet. Cassius Green here. Sorry to bother you…”

Langston: “Nah, man. Look, you got it wrong. I’m not talking about sounding all nasal. It’s like, sounding like you don’t have a care. Got your bills paid. You happy about your future. You about ready to jump in your Ferrari out there after you get off this call. Put some real breath in there. Breezy, like… I don’t really need this money. You’ve never been fired. Only laid off. It’s not really a white voice. It’s what they wish they sounded like. So, it’s like what they think they supposed to sound like. Like this, youngblood: ‘Hey! Mr. Kramer! This is Langston from Regalview. I didn’t catch you a bad time did I?’ ”

Phonologically, Langston omits the postvocalic /r/ in *your, here, there* and *over* [jo:], [hɛə], [dɛə], [ova:], and as can be seen in the phonetic transcription, in the word *there* he also pronounces *th* in *there* as *d*, another known feature of the phonology of AAVE; Furthermore, he pronounces the -ing suffix in *trying, talking* and *sounding* as *n* [ˈtraɪɪn] [ˈtɔːkɪn] [ˈsaʊndɪn]; Cassius omits the postvocalic /r/ in *regular* [ˈrɛgjələ] but does not do that in the word *car,* which is a very common word to drop the postvocalic /r/ in; in helping, the -ing suffix is pronounced as *n* [ˈhɛlpɪn]. Speaking of grammatical structures used in the passage, Langston used *ain’t* to form a negation in *That ain’t white*, but used the SE *I’m not* instead of AAVE *ain’t* in *I’m not*

talkin' bout Will Smith white and *I'm not talking about sounding all nasal*, and *It's not* in *It's not really a white voice.* Furthermore, he omitted the copula in *You Ø happy about your future, You Ø about ready to jump in your Ferrari* and *So, it's like what they think they Ø supposed to sound like.* Cassius used the AAVE negative *ain't* instead of *don't* in *I ain't got no white voice*. Furthermore, he used the word *no* after it forming a double negative with *ain't…no*, and he used a double negative once again in *don't nobody get hurt*.

5.3.2. Family and friends

In a scene where he is driving with two of his friends and his girlfriend, they pass by their old high school friends and are talking about them. Cassius says how they, even though they were stars in high school, now have no ambition and money. The following conversation was held between him and his best friend Salvador, another speaker of AAVE:

> Salvador: "Man, what the hell you talking about? I mean, they're friends."

In these two sentences Salvador switched between AAVE and SE by omitting the copula in *what the hell Ø you talking about,* and saying the *are* in *they're friends.*

Not long after the scene mentioned above, the same group of people is in a bar and talking about spaghetti.

> Salvador: "I'm just saying, if you don't cook the spaghetti in the sauce with the cheese in it first- that's some White shit."
>
> Cassius: "That's some bullshit. You don't get to decide what's Black and what's White"
>
> Salvador: "Well, that's how Black folks do it, man."
>
> Cassius: "No, I'm Black."
>
> Salvador: "We talked about that man. You kind of Black. You Lionel Richie Black."
>
> Cassius: "Fuck it. Spaghetti is White anyway. It's from Italy."
>
> Salvador: "Hell no! Italians ain't White!"

In this conversation Salvador is pronouncing the -ing suffix in saying as *n* [ˈseɪn]; he uses the AAVE ain't in *Italian's ain't White*, but uses *don't* in *if you don't cook the spaghetti.* Furthermore, he omits the copula in *You Ø kind of Black* and *You Ø Lionel Richie Black*.

In a scene we see Cassius speaking to his uncle, who is also his landlord. We can see that he code-switches too:

Sergio: “Even if you have all the money, that little four months’ rent ain’t gonna help me. I owe too much. I got word- if I don’t have a boatload of money by next month- which I won’t, the bank is taking this shit. You should look for a new place.”

The negation in *that little four month rent ain’t gonna help me* is realized by using the AAVE construction *ain’t*, while in *I don’t have a boatload of money*, with the SE *don’t*; in the word *four* he drops the postvocalic /r/ [fou], and the word *months* is pronounced as [mʌnfs].

We can also see Cassius code-switch between the two varieties when talking to his girlfriend:

Cassius: “Power Callers ain’t on strike!”

Detroit: “They should be! I’m tired of talking about this. You’re crossing the picket line. I can’t ride with you.”

Cassius: “Oh, but you was riding fine when …”

Detroit: “No more. ”

Cassius: “What are you saying’? You’re asking me to quit the fattest job I’ve ever had.”

Detroit: “It’s not fat. It’s morally emaciated. You sell fucking slave labor.”

Cassius: “What the fuck ISN’T slave labor?”

In the first sentence he uses the AAVE negative form *ain’t* instead of *aren’t*: *Power Callers ain’t on strike,* but in the last sentence he uses *isn’t* instead of *ain’t*: *What the fuck isn’t slave labour.* He also uses the singular verb *was* with the 2nd person singular subject *you* in *but you was riding fine.* In the same sentence he pronounces the -ing suffix in *riding* the standardized way [ˈraɪdɪŋ]. However, he pronounces the -ing in *saying* and *asking* as *n* [ˈseɪɪn] [ˈɑːskɪn]. Detroit, opts for the AAVE way of pronouncing *talking* and the SE way of pronouncing *crossing* [ˈtɔːkɪn] [ˈkrɒsɪŋ].

After not seeing each other in a while, Salvador and Cassius finally see each other again, but something is different. Cassius forgot his friends in his pursuit of wealth.

Salvador: “Long time, no hear. Is the reason you don’t call me no more because you’re a sellout, or because you just a star?”

In this string of conversation Salvador used the *don't* instead of *ain't* in you *don't call me no more*; he deleted the copula in *You Ø a star,* but left it in *You're a sellout*.

6. Discussion

Upon googling code-switching between AAVE and Standard English, many articles will come up claiming that it is the term that refers to switching between the two varieties, depending on where you are and who you are speaking to (Villines, 2024; Yadav, 2023; Wahington-Harmon, 2024). Furthermore, a person might speak Black English to another African American and switch to Standard English when speaking to a White person (Villines, 2024). Another example of code-switching between AAVE and SE that Google might offer is a person strictly using AAVE when at home and talking to their family members and switching to SE in a formal institution such as school or place of work (Yadav, 2023). Consequently, the first hypothesis was that AAVE is spoken at home and SE is employed once a person leaves a familiar and informal space. Pullum (1999) and McWhorter (2000) claimed that hearing long sequences of 'pure' AAVE is incredibly rare and that most African Americans code-switch between the two varieties on a daily basis and in almost every conversation. This is clearly shown in instances and examples when Starr is speaking to her mother and her father and when they are speaking to her and her siblings. Even though they are all family, they are in an informal setting and are talking about something intimate, they often do not only use AAVE to communicate, but often code-switch between certain features of AAVE and their Standard English counterparts. The same can be said about Cassius and his family. In their conversations features of both varieties can be heard.

The second hypothesis was that the variety a person is going to speak will depend on their interlocutor. This turned out to be true in the sense that the extent to which a person spoke AAVE and employed its features depended on the extent to which their interlocutor was doing so. For example, when speaking to Kenya and Khalil, Starr was more inclined to employ phonological and grammatical features of AAVE, such as the zero copula, simplifying consonant clusters, saying *you was* instead of *you were, gotta* in place of *going to* and so on. She does the same thing while speaking to her dad, but she can be heard leaning more towards the Standard variety, i.e. using only a few of AAVE features, when speaking to her mom. This is not a new finding since McWhorter (2000: 147) stated that "as a rule of thumb, the depth of one's Black English correlates with level of education: Black English gets diluted among African Americans with more education and thus more face-to-face contact with whites". And what we can find out while watching the film is that Starr's father and Black friends grew up in a predominantly Black neighborhood, went to a school in that same neighborhood and basically spend their day-to-day lives there, having basically no contact with White people. Starr and her

mother, on the other hand, even though they live in that same neighborhood, have contact with White people and the Standard variety daily, Starr in her predominantly White high school and her mom at a hospital where she works as a nurse. However, according to McWhorter (2000), some members of the Black community are open to using all levels of AAVE when speaking with other members of their community, even if their educational level is high. This is exactly what Starr and her mother do when speaking to their family and Black friends; in a way they mimic their interlocutor's extent of AAVE. The same thing happens in the film 'Sorry to Bother You'. When a speaker of AAVE is speaking to another speaker of AAVE they employ around the same amount of AAVE features as their interlocutor. Therefore, when speaking to his uncle Sergio or his friend Salvador, who when code-switching use AAVE features a bit more than SE features, Cassius does the same thing. However, when speaking to his girlfriend Detroit, who is more inclined to use SE features, but still includes some of the AAVE ones, Cassius also uses SE features more frequently, mirroring her speech patterns. When encountering Langston, another speaker of AAVE, at his place of work, Cassius also uses around the same amount of AAVE features as Langston.

The last hypothesis was that the variety choice will be dictated by the theme discussed. The reality is that it was not necessarily the topic in question that dictated the variety, but rather the person's attitude towards what was being said and the manner in which they expressed their opinion on the topic. For example, when Starr's mom was speaking to her at the diner and said "No, no, no… Wait a minute. You don't have time to be mad. You're behind in your school work. You…you ain't ready for your SATs", the topic hasn't changed in the last sentence when she used the AAVE negative form *ain't,* but rather her attitude changed and by using AAVE, the variety that is tied to a degree of intimacy, she in a way emphasized her concern about the topic and the importance of the fact that Starr should start studying because she is running out of time. Another example that shows the use of AAVE to achieve a jocular effect without a switch in topic is shown in the conversation between Cassius and Langston. When discussing what a White voice is, Langston tells Cassius that it is the 'voice' he uses when he gets pulled over by the police, to which Cassius replies "Oh no, I just use my regular voice when that happens. I just say 'Back the fuck up off the car and don't nobody get hurt!'". He uses SE grammatical and phonological features up until the point where he mocks the way Black people act when getting pulled over by the police and uses AAVE phonological and grammatical features.

Lastly, this discussion will deal with the question of whether the examples that were analyzed and discussed were instances of code-switching between the two varieties or instances of code-mixing. The definition of code-mixing suggested by Muysken (2000: 1) was presented in the theoretical part of the thesis and it is defined as "all cases where lexical items and grammatical features from two languages appear in one sentence". This is what happens when characters in the films switch from AAVE to SE. They use grammatical features of both varieties, often times in the same sentence. The issue is that other researchers attribute the same definition to a different concept: intra-sentential code-switching (Gardner-Chloros, 2009 and Bullock and Toribio, 2012). Auer (2010) defines code-mixing as a subtype of code-switching that occurs within a sentence and it is employed by people who do not have the same grasp of the two languages in question so they switch between the two. But if the examples of code-switching that were analyzed and examined in the previous chapter are closely examined it can be noticed that the reason why characters use AAVE and SE interchangeably is primarily not because they do not have grasp of either one of the varieties. This can be supported by the fact that, for example, a person will omit the copula in one sentence and then use it in the next, or even in that same one, as Salvador did in "Is the reason you don't call me no more because you're a sellout or because you Ø just a star". In this he shows that he is perfectly capable of using the copula but decided to omit it the second time around to achieve some sort of a reaction from Cassius and also to express his annoyance. Furthermore, McWhorter (2000) refers to this occurrence as code-switching and not code-mixing. He offers an informal dialogue between a couple of people and later comments on the features that were used in the dialogue and points out that the same person uses an AAVE feature in one sentence but uses its SE counterpart just a few seconds later. McWhorter (2000: 148) comments on the matter: "Code-switching is not an indication that the speaker knows neither language well enough to speak in it for longer than a sentence or two. The switching is not a matter of desperation, but of expressing bicultural identity…" Lastly, McWhorter (2000), who specializes in the field of African American vernacular and is as African American himself, refers to the concept as code-switching. The cast of the film 'The Hate U Give' in interviews, when they comment on the subject and their introduction to the concept as little kids and what it means for them, refers to the concept as code-switching. They are all speakers of AAVE and they refer to what they do when switching between the two varieties as code-switching. It was previously mentioned when differentiating borrowing and code-switching that one of the perspectives suggests evaluation of what the speakers themselves consider a borrowing and what an instance of code-switching (Gardner-

Chloros, 2009). Therefore, if the same was to be done for differentiating code-mixing and code-switching, the comments made by the cast in interviews and McWhorter show that they consider themselves to be code-switchers.

7. Conclusion

Code-switching is a widely researched language contact phenomenon and it refers to a switch in a person's code, i.e. language or variety, within a single string of conversation. The interest among scholars for code-switching arose after Blom and Gumperz (1972) published their study on code-switching between two dialects of Norwegian. Even though the phenomenon was known to researchers for quite a while, it only started gaining popularity within the second half of the 20th century and throughout this period, the focus was put on bilingual code-switching, while monolingual code-switching was disregarded (Myers-Scotton, 1993). Monolingual code-switching occurs when a person switches from one variety of a language to another variety of that same language. This occurrence is very common for people in the Black community who speak African American Vernacular English, a dialect of English, and Standard English. African American Vernacular English or AAVE or AAE is a dialect spoken by African Americans that has a rich history and grammatical and phonological rules that differ from those of Standard English. Therefore, even though, AAVE is the most researched American dialect, it is the least respected dialect (O'Quin, 2021). For this reason, Black people who speak both the vernacular and the standardized version of English often code-switch between the two depending on where they are, who they are talking to and what the nature of the topic discussed is. The common misconception about code-switching between AAVE and SE is that AAVE is used when a person is speaking to another speaker of AAVE, when they are in an informal and familiar setting and when the conversation is intimate or has a jocular manner. Standard English is the variety African Americans speak when they are in a formal setting and speaking in front of an audience that is not familiar with AAVE. However, even in a familiar setting it is rare to hear a person speak 'pure' African American Vernacular English, i.e. using only its grammatical and phonological structures for a long period of time. Many times they use AAVE structures and SE structures within the same sentence or conversation. Examples from both films show that that is the reality of code-switching between AAVE and SE in the Black community. Starr, her mother and her father, just like her African American friends, speak to each other not exclusively in that variety. Often times they use SE constructions just as much as they use their AAVE counterparts. The same was shown in the film 'Sorry to Bother You', where Cassius and his friends can be heard switching between the two varieties when speaking to each other, and not exclusively sticking to AAVE. The films show the reality of code-switching between AAVE and SE in a day-to-day setting. Many Black people consciously switch to SE when they find themselves in a formal setting and in front of

a White audience, but not many are aware that often times they do the same when speaking to a friend or a family member in a very informal and intimate setting.

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9. Summary: Code-switching Between AAVE and Standard English in The Films 'Sorry to Bother You' and 'The Hate U Give'

This paper focuses on analyzing instances of code-switching between African American Vernacular English and Standard English in the films ‘The Hate U Give’ and ‘Sorry to Bother You’. The first part of the thesis is concerned with code-switching as a product of language contact phenomena, the distinction between code-switching and other language contact phenomena, as well as reasons for employing it and attitudes towards it. What follows is an overview of the evolution of AAVE, its linguistic characteristics and attitudes of its speakers towards code-switching. The crucial part of the paper deals with analyzing instances of code-switching between AAVE and SE in the films. The first hypothesis that stated that speakers of AAVE strictly speak AAVE in informal settings and Standard English in formal settings turned out to be incorrect because characters in both films switched between the two varieties in informal settings. The second hypothesis was that the variety a person is going to speak depended on their interlocutor. This turned out to be true in the sense that the extent to which a person spoke AAVE and employed its features depended on the extent to which their interlocutor was doing so. The last hypothesis was that the variety choice will be dictated by the theme discussed. The analysis suggests that it was not necessarily the topic in question that dictated the variety, but rather the person’s attitude towards what was being said and the manner in which they expressed their opinion on the topic.

Key words: code-switching, African American Vernacular English, Standard English, ‘The Hate U Give’, ‘Sorry to Bother You’

10. Sažetak: Prebacivanje kodova između afroameričkog vernakularnog engleskog i standardnog engleskog u filmovima 'Sorry to Bother You' i 'The Hate U Give'

Ovaj se rad bavi analizom primjera prebacivanja kodova između afroameričkog vernakularnog engleskog i standardnog engleskog u filmovima 'The Hate U Give' i 'Sorry to Bother You'. Prvi dio rada bavi se fenomenom prebacivanja kodova, kao rezultata jezičnog kontakta, razlikovanjem tog fenomena od ostalih fenomena jezičnog kontakta, kao i razlozima njegove uporabe i stavovima prema njemu. Ono što slijedi je pregled razvoja afroameričkog engleskog, njegovih lingvističkih karakteristika i stavova njegovih govornika prema prebacivanju kodova. Ključni se dio rada bavi analizom primjera prebacivanja kodova između afroameričkog engleskog i standardnog engleskog u filmovima. Prva hipoteza koja je tvrdila da govornici AAVE-a isključivo govore AAVE u neformalnom okruženju, a standardni engleski u formalnom okruženju pokazala se netočnom jer su likovi u oba filma u neformalnom okruženju prebacivali kodove između dva jezična varijeteta. Druga hipoteza bila je da varijetet koji će osoba odabrati ovisi o njegovom sugovorniku. Ovo se pokazalo točnim u smislu da je mjera u kojoj je osoba koristila AAVE i njegove značajke ovisila o mjeri u kojoj je to radio njen sugovornik. Posljednja hipoteza bila je da će izbor varijeteta biti uvjetovan temom o kojoj se raspravlja. Analiza ukazuje na to da nije nužno tema diktirala varijetet, već stav osobe prema onome što je rečeno i način na koji je osoba izražavala svoje mišljenje o temi.

Ključne riječi: prebacivanje kodova, afroamerički vernakularni engleski, standardni engleski, ‘The Hate U Give’ , ‘Sorry to Bother You’