

EBONICS AND DR. ERNIE ADOLPHUS SMITH
TOWARD A COMPARATIVE AND HOLISTIC PARADIGM IN BLACK LINGUISTICS

By

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ABSTRACT

EBONICS AND DR. ERNIE ADOLPHUS SMITH TOWARD A COMPARATIVE AND HOLISTIC PARADIGM IN BLACK LINGUISTICS

By

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One African-centered linguistic paradigm argues the primary language of most descendants of enslaved Africans in the United States is not English but an African language. The language is called “Ebonics.” Clinical linguist Dr. Ernie Adolphus Smith (1938-) is the most conspicuous figure in the history of the paradigm. The reconstructed life story of Dr. Smith from the perspective of the sociology of knowledge suggests his comparative linguistic paradigm may have been a product of the scientific knowledge formation process by which Dr. Smith interpreted and reconstructed the ideological-political, experiential-practical, and theoretical-scientific meanings of his mother tongue, whites’ language, and other relevant experiences, and may have integrated the reconstructed meanings into his paradigm, in the social, political, and economic contexts of Los Angeles from the 1940s through the 1970s. It also suggests the paradigm attempted to address the arbitrariness and selectivity of the dominant paradigms in black linguistics or linguistics in general, which may have gone through the same scientific knowledge formation process. The crux of this study lies in my proposition that both the mainstream paradigms and the Ebonics paradigm are products of the inherent arbitrariness and selectivity of scientific criteria in linguistics which are in symbolic interaction with human subjectivity.

Keywords: Ebonics, comparative, holistic, sociology of knowledge, life story

Dedicated to Sweet Ernie and Noby
Eiko, Yuinosuke, and Kurumi

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1. A HYPOTHETICAL INTRODUCTION TO THE CONSTRUCTION OF BLACK LINGUISTICS

The formation of sciences, i.e., the construction of specialized discourses in the academy has been influenced by political and economic arrangements in a particular location in a particular time (Errington 2008; Foucault 1980; Stehr & Meja 2005; Mulkay 2005). For example, language sciences have a history of constructing systematic discourses on linguistic codes to classify and stratify them and, consequently or premeditatedly, their speakers or users¹ (Errington 2008). The shifting discourses in linguistics very interestingly have coincided with the elites' or dominant groups' shifting racist or ethnocentric ideas on certain segments of the users of some linguistic codes at each stage of the history of the political and economic power relations. It may be said of linguistics, therefore, that:

science can never be divorced from the laboring, thinking, interacting, individual scientists who employ scientific methods to build up a response to a problematic situation that arouses their interest because of its exceptional properties . . . scientists must see their own scientific actions as a product, at least in part, of their social perspectives. (Manning 1982: 274-275).

It may be suggested that language scientists have produced their knowledge by interpreting, negotiating, and integrating those social and scientific meanings on the linguistic codes and the ethnicized or racialized users which the scientists encountered in their daily lives and/or scholarly works.

It may be safe to say that the elites in power largely determine the society-wide diffusion of a scientific paradigm² to deal with a phenomenon with which they are concerned. This segment of

people has the greatest leverage in the negotiation of what passes for truths in society. In the case of the mainstream Anglicist³ and Creolist⁴ Paradigms and the marginalized comparative linguistic paradigm⁵ or Africological⁶ paradigm in black linguistics, those elites involved directly or indirectly in the development of these paradigms are in the government, major businesses, foundations, universities and colleges, or other educational institutions. The dominance of the Creolist Paradigm today may have been established by a systematic interaction of the elites in the wider range of controlling institutions enumerated above, whereas the comparative linguistic paradigm may have been promoted by the counter-elites mainly in less controlling domains such as universities and colleges and other educational institutions. I postulate that both the dominant paradigms and the marginalized paradigm are the products of a symbolic interaction of some ideological-political, experiential-practical (cf. Rock 1982), and theoretical-scientific meanings which the elites and the counter-elites develop toward their own linguistic codes and others in a particular chain of power structures in a particular polity at a particular time.⁷

The dominant Creolist Paradigm may, whether intentionally, unintentionally, or unavoidably, conform to a certain set of ideological-political needs (e.g., help establish a white state sovereignty called the United States of America in which other groups and their languages are supposed to be subjugated or, euphemistically, “dialectal” to white people and language), experiential-practical concerns (e.g., to experience or imagine a wider language market in which most linguistic communities in the same polity are recognized as English users in the school, the court, and other institutions of power), and theoretical-scientific criteria (e.g., to employ the English writing system to describe linguistic “systems” which sound or look similar to each other at the level of lexicon and interpret them as dialects or varieties of English based on a certain set

of criteria), of mainly white and black elites, whose interests converge (Bell 1980; Chapter 4). To be sure, most of the linguists in black linguistics would not adopt the hidden agenda of the dominant paradigm intentionally. For the matter of fairness, most of their acts may be called “practice,” which “has become a term of art used by social scientists to emphasize the hidden power of habitual dispositions as shapers of much that is “automatic” and prereflective in human conduct, and so of textures of social life which lie beyond the purview of conscious, “rational” thinking” (Errington 2008: 11). On the other hand, the marginalized comparative linguistic paradigm may respond to another set of ideological-political needs (e.g., to express their perspective that the black nation does not accept to join the United States), experiential-practical concerns (e.g., to teach English through an ESL method and to provide black language interpreters in the court, in both cases treating the black linguistic code as a language, such as Chinese, French, Nipponese [= Japanese], Spanish, etc.), and theoretical-scientific criteria (e.g., to compare Ebonics with various West African languages in a much wider spectrum of linguistic and paralinguistic features), of mainly the counter-elites of blacks. Therefore, it might be suggested that each of the paradigms is a result of the process by which both sides of the elites interpret, define, and act toward (1) ideological-political, (2) experiential-practical, and (3) theoretical-scientific meanings of a linguistic code in racialized response to individual situations in a certain political and economic structure in a certain polity at a certain time. Other scholars present similar classifications of the factors for the formation of a scientific thesis or paradigm.

For example, when Władysław Krajewski (1988) discusses the internal and external factors in the development of science (especially, natural sciences), he presents three such classifications, into which the process by which scientists develop their science or paradigm may fit:

1) *Internal*: theory (coherence of scientific theories, their simplicity, etc.)

External: experience

2) *Internal*: theory/experience

External: economics/politics/philosophy/etc./influences from other social groups and institutions

3) *Internal*: theory/experience/relations in scientific community

External: economics/politics/philosophy/etc./influences from other social groups and institutions

Krajewski notes that the third classification “is often used by sociologists of science, and some historians of science” (168). The existing classifications which Krajewski identifies are based on the binary of internal factors and external factors. In its comprehensiveness, the third classification above may be equivalent to my own classification of the factors in the development of science, in that it takes into account “relations in scientific community.” Anthropological linguist Joseph Errington provides a similar bipartite view of linguistics or linguistic work, which may be also similarly adjusted to my tripartite classification. He observes:

One is to regard them [= linguists] as technicians who deployed alphabetic symbols to “stand for” sounds of speech in unfamiliar tongues, and then devised descriptions of the meaningful elements those sounds comprised. The other is to read those texts as the work not of technicians of literacy but members of literate groups whose work was enabled and shaped by their social biographies, their broader investments in larger projects, their membership in certain groups, their broader beliefs, values, and purposes. (2008: 5)

The “scientific” and the “social” into which Ellington divides linguistic work may correspond to my division, i.e., the theoretical-scientific, on one hand, and the ideological-political and the experiential-practical, on the other. Therefore, scholars both in natural and social sciences present a configuration of the factors for scientific knowledge formation similar to my tripartite view of linguistic knowledge formation process.

In this chapter, I shall develop a hypothetical interaction process of ideological-political needs, experiential-practical concerns, and theoretical-scientific criteria in the formation of the two descriptive paradigms, i.e., Creolist and Africological in black linguistics. The first part of this chapter explores how ideological-political meanings of linguistic codes—both for the dominant group and the oppressed group—might provide interpretive frameworks for their descriptive paradigms. The second part of the chapter examines how a chain of institutions and daily lives, in which the use of the linguistic code of blacks is a racializing and stratifying factor, might provide experiential-practical justifications for the two paradigms. The third part focuses on some possible impacts of the disciplinary structure of linguistics upon the selection of descriptive criteria/interpretations and the development of descriptive paradigms. The fourth presents some hypothetical integrative structure on how the three components of ideological-political needs, experiential-practical concerns, and theoretical-scientific criteria might lead to the construction of the two paradigms.

1.1. Ideological-Political Influences on Paradigms

The motive to change the status of a dialect to that of a language (and vice versa) is tied to

political or nationalist meanings (Anderson 2006; Cooper 1989; Fishman 1972), as it is attested to by nationalisms in eighteenth-century United States (Weinstein 1982), in nineteenth and early twentieth century Europe (Anderson 2006; Deutsch 1942; Fishman 1972), and in more recent twentieth century Africa and Asia (Simpson 2008 & 2007, respectively), as well as European and American colonization worldwide. Language has often been tied to nationalist ideology (Fishman 1972; Friedrich 1963), similar to the following one from the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism, which Dr. Ernie A. Smith sometimes quotes to me: “A nation is *a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture*” (Stalin 1953: 307, cited in Dutt 1961: 186, emphasis in original). A common language is implicitly or explicitly mobilized in nationalist movements the world over to create, reinforce, or maintain the three nationalist foci of autonomy, unity, and identity through various political, economic, and other social institutions. Nationalism can be defined as “an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity and identity for a population which some of its members deem to constitute an actual or potential ‘nation’” (A. D. Smith 2010: 9). It involves not only political but also cultural and intellectual efforts. It involves itself with the problems of social justice and distribution of resources, unfortunately on most occasions, primarily among the elites and secondarily among the masses of the same ethnic or racial group. It also extends itself with a cultural construction of the group, which: “[t]ypically . . . include[s] the study of ethnic history and *philology*, archaeological excavations of historic national sites, the erection of buildings and structures, and the holding of national games and sports” (Ibid.: 11, italics added). Philology, later, linguistics becomes one of the cultural nationalist efforts to create, reinforce, or maintain a

common national language (e.g., Vuk Stefanovic Karadzic for Serbo-Croatian in Yugoslavia (Cooper 1989), Henry Sweet for English in England, Ivar Aasen for Nynorsk/Norwegian in Norway, Jonas Jablonskis for Lithuanian in Lithuania, Josef Dobrovský for Czech in Bohemia, Leonard Bloomfield for English in the United States (Haugen 1966), Ueda Kazutoshi for Nipponese in Nippon [= Japan] (Yasuda 2004), Kumaratunga Munidasa for Sinhala in Sri Lanka (Simpson 2007)). Other than more individual or personal forms of language planning, many linguists have been involved in organizational language planning in government ministries, agencies, councils, or institutes. Linguistics concomitantly has helped legitimate the status of and/or helps spread the use of, a linguistic code in political, economic, and other institutions. This language nationalism attempts to become implicit or invisible in language sciences because they attempt to attain scientific objectivity, rationality, legitimacy, non-politicalness, non-ideologicalness, whatsoever. Language scientists do not justify their scientific endeavors explicitly on the grounds of their political beliefs, values, and purposes. For most linguists, their linguistic research just extends their “[t]aken-for-granted “expectations,” “understandings,” and “collective practices” (Errington 2008: 11). It may be hypothesized that such hidden political or nationalist ideologies or agendas⁸ (e.g., a belief that blacks or other groups of color should use English as their mother tongue or one of the major media of communication in the United States, or a belief or resignation that blacks or other groups of color can never have an independent state sovereignty out of or in the United States) in combination with experiential-practical factors (e.g., an experience that whites think they can understand the linguistic code used by those blacks with whom they usually interact, or an experience that both whites and blacks can recognize the predominant vocabulary of black language as English) might influence or underlie

how the scientists look at a linguistic code, as a language or a dialect. Then, they carve out linguistic data in a way to validate the dichotomy of language and dialect, i.e., merely trace around the frame through which they look at it rather than the outline of the nature of a linguistic code (Errington 2008: 7, integrating Wittgenstein 1953: 48).

One of the means of validation is to “describe” a linguistic code in linguistics and language education in a way it can be seen as an autonomous system which represents particular social, economic, and political boundaries of the imagined linguistic community. (The so-called “objective” act of description *per se* involves a process of politically defining and delimiting, viz., “prescribing” a linguistic code with a selection of particular linguistic forms, a particular labeling, and a particular orthography.) On one hand, a certain level of linguistic difference or a relative lack of mutual intelligibility between “languages,” or a certain level of linguistic similarity or a relative presence of mutual intelligibility between “dialects” are established after language planning and research efforts by the government, the language academy, language scientists, the mass media, the school, and even some individuals; on the other, language scientists “describe,” more precisely, “descriptively prescribe” the languages or dialects as they are “natural,” either intentionally or unintentionally indifferent to the social project in which they are situated both diachronically and synchronically. I’m wondering what may have happened to the mainstream opinions of black linguistics today, if earlier scholars had attempted to describe the linguistic code of descendants of enslaved Africans in the United States by employing a distinct orthography and paying due attention to the West African portion of its linguistic structure, i.e., a comparative methodology at a time the assimilation of the slaves’ linguistic code to English may not have progressed so much. In fact, many “described” the mother tongue of the

enslaved Africans, but in a “reduced” or “distorted” form of the English writing system by looking at only an easily identifiable part of the African speaker’s linguistic repertoire in a way they could compare vis-à-vis the English language (cf. Bailey et al. 1991; Harrison 1884; Krapp 1924). They call it “descriptivism,” as shown in the following excerpts:

[L]inguistics proudly declares itself to be a *descriptive* science.
(Haugen 1966: 52, emphasis added)

[L]inguists seek to *describe* human linguistic ability and knowledge, not to *prescribe* one system in preference to another. A parallel point of view is adopted in other scientific disciplines as well. The first concern of all scientists is to describe and explain the *facts* that they observe, not to change them.
(O'Grady et al. 1993: 5, emphasis in original with the last one added)

This is merely a *post facto* statement after prior generations (incl., linguists) indirectly or directly helped establish or “prescribe” the current hegemonic state language systems all over the world, in which elites’ or Europeans’ languages hold their dominant, widespread, and standardized positions in state institutions. It is a liberalist view of science from the perspective of dominant groups, the status of whose languages is usually secured in political and economic institutions.

Back in colonialism, European and American imperial powers established the solid foundation for describing the linguistic codes of oppressed peoples, which helped establish the hegemonic state relationships between the oppressed codes and the oppressors’ codes, as Joseph Errington (2008) observes:

Colonialists produced texts [= grammars, dictionaries, etc.] about languages over four centuries, around the world . . . those texts now represent a significant part of the colonial archive. . . . As a practical matter, linguists worked in zones of colonial contact on the premise that the languages they were describing could be compared and

presented in the image of others more familiar to them. . . . As projects of power, the work of linguistics I call ‘colonial’ here served the ‘direct territorial appropriation of another geopolitical entity, and exploitation of its resources and labor, and *systematic interference in the capacity of the appropriated culture* . . . to organize its dispensations of power’ (McClintock 1992: 1) . . . linguists can be regarded as a small, rather special group of colonial agents who adapted European letters to alien ways of talking and, by that means, devised necessary conduits for communication across lines of colonial power. However different the methods they used or objects they described, they transformed familiar alphabets into visual images of strange speech: their writing systems, or orthographies, were the common beginning point for the work of writing grammars, dictionaries, instructional texts, and so on. . . . Always and everywhere, their written images of alien languages demonstrated underlying comparability: once ‘their’ talk was writable, like ours, resemblances were established between them and ‘us’ . . . the intellectual work of writing speech was never entirely distinct from the ‘ideological’ work of devising images of people in zones of colonial contact. (3-5)

This systematic “description” and appropriation of linguistic codes for colonial and imperial purposes also happened in the African diaspora, including in the United States. In the United States, black language started to be described basically as distant from other nearby diaspora languages, i.e., closer to white language, thus, reinforcing the image of an aberrational part of the latter. It was imagined to be an aberration of English and thus the resemblances were established between black and white language. It was projected onto the English writing system as “reduced” or “distorted.” All this process of linguistic “description” may have served to contain blacks within marginalized roles in white institutions. In other parts of the African diaspora, European and American linguists, directly or indirectly through international organizations such as UNESCO, have systematically interfered in the “description” of and policy-making for the linguistic relationships between newly-born African languages and European languages. The newly-born languages have been consistently “described” in the “deformed” or “reduced” forms of the writing systems of European languages, obviously reflecting the linguists’ images of those whom they describe, e.g., primitive or underdeveloped. Under this world and state system, black

linguistics in the United States may be more tempted to take over the devised method of “describing” the prescribed linguistic relationship between white and black linguistic codes, uncritically through the pre-established dominant epistemology, as dialect-to-dialect rather than language-to-language—a situation that the linguists and others have long constructed as “facts” or “empirical data” through an implicit or unconscious negotiation and integration of their ideological-political, experiential-practical, and theoretical-scientific meanings of the linguistic relationship.⁹

Subjugated linguistic codes designated as or coerced into becoming dialects in the nation-state system may lack enough power, finance, and agency to be described or constructed in a way independent of the dominant paradigms, as dominant linguistic codes possess such to prescribe the linguistic relationships in which they are situated in relation to the dominated codes today. However, linguists and other interested parties need to take into due account the social, political, economic, and scientific oppression of subjugated groups all over the world for centuries. Unless the subjugated linguistic codes are promoted or differentiated *more visibly* now, as elites including linguists acted toward both dominant and dominated linguistic codes in modernization processes of the past, the subjugated codes or their linguistic and paralinguistic features may decline or, albeit not entirely, be assimilated into the dominant linguistic codes. The subjugated codes may remain to be targets of description mostly by creole linguists, dialectologists, or variationist sociolinguists in the academic mainstream. They may be described as dialects or varieties of the dominant codes rather than as languages other than the dominant codes. On the other hand, dominant linguistic codes, which are called “standard language” or just “the . . . language” and don’t need to be as visibly promoted or differentiated as subjugated linguistic

codes called “dialects,” “pidgins,” or “creoles” need to, may have the luxury of being purportedly “described” rather than “prescribed.” For the status of the dominant codes in controlling institutions such as the government, the industries, the media, and the school has already enabled them to *less visibly* be differentiated, standardized, and spread society-wide. Since those groups’ mother tongues, which have already been prescribed, differentiated, and standardized enough, are not threatened any more, most linguists on the dominant sides would argue for descriptivism. They would self-righteously force the *ideology* of descriptivism onto linguists from groups of color. Many of the mother tongues of groups of color, having not had the luxury of being differentiated equally as the dominant languages, are threatened in myriad ways. This dominant ideology of descriptivism was explicitly shown when Einar Haugen, a renowned white linguist and a former president of the Linguistic Society of America (LSA), gave his interpretation of the history of linguistics. He commented:

Prior to the nineteenth century it is safe to say that ALL LINGUISTICS WAS NORMATIVE. . . . The Greek and Latin grammarians were text book writers, who wished to establish immutable norms for the correct writing and speaking of their languages, the *ius et norma loquendi*. . . . In the early nineteenth century linguists began making distinction now accepted between descriptive and prescriptive linguistics.
(1966: 50-51, capitals in original)

I cannot delve into the details of the change in the method of writing a grammar from the pre-nineteenth century era to the present, but I reasonably suspect that their epistemology or ideology behind which they conduct their linguistic work has not shifted so much, and older discourses have been replaced with more sophisticated ones which are more compatible with the ideology of science. In other words, the purportedly “descriptive” work includes many “prescriptive”

roles.

Returning to the point of argument here, in the case of Ebonics, its users have not been allowed to see their linguistic repertoire in an African-centered way. They have been forced merely to relate the more visible, English part of their repertoire to white language, i.e., one dialect to another dialect. In the nation-state system of the United States, they had and still have to be English dialect users, that is, more covertly subjugated since within the logic of linguistic standardization the users tend to more easily accept to be “standardized” (actually, a euphemism for “subjugated”). Therefore, after centuries of linguistic “prescription” (many would contend it has been “description”), perhaps, to keep black linguistic code in an acceptable distance from white linguistic code, it would be more justifiable now to describe black code users as English dialect users in dialectology or variationist sociolinguistics.

However, we must not forget the centuries of linguistic prescription of Africans primarily by whites. Those linguists who currently study the black code as an African or African American language should have the right to describe and even openly prescribe the language in a way to suit their collective interests both as a legitimate scientific and politico-practical endeavor, as mainstream linguists and other elites of the group which the linguists belonged to and had vested interests in, did in the past. Charles DeBose (2005) argues the linguist can be a language planner, i.e., a *visionary* for the language which they describe. Otherwise, I suspect the descriptivist ideology may function to assimilate more of the existing linguistic features of black language into white language because the former, having no established distinct writing system, is far less standardized and stabilized, although new divergences in black language may continue to be produced in the multiple segregation of most blacks in the assimilation process (cf. Fasold, et al.

1987). On the other hand, white language is probably safe even facing descriptivism since its distinctness has for centuries been produced and reproduced mainly outside of linguistics, i.e., in the mass media, major businesses, the government, and the school—state institutions of power with which language sciences, another institution of power, are on most occasions in tandem (Errington 2008: 12).

This pattern of scientific behavior towards the oppressing-oppressed linguistic relationship, i.e., one kind of cultural (incl., language) nationalism primarily embraced and performed by dominant groups, seems to permeate the current scientific examination of languages and dialects the world over. The descriptivist discourse and practice in linguistics today seems to inadvertently or covertly help reproduce the functional and structural relationship between the oppressing linguistic code and the oppressed linguistic code, and scientifically help reproduce the political and economic relationship of the subjugating group and the subjugated group within a polity.

The interests which derive from the interacting meanings/interpretations of the linguistic, political, and economic relationships in which linguists are situated, may influence the interpretive orientation, i.e., assimilation or differentiation, of the linguists toward the status and corpus of another group's code or their own linguistic code. For example, black linguist Charles DeBose (2005) suggests that "the social location of a scholar can affect the manner in which an issue is experienced, perceived or handled" (41); white linguist Walt Wolfram (2015) observes that "sociolinguists are not exempt from the interpretation of 'facts' in a way that reflects their predisposition, social background, and experience" (339). Linguists may establish particular paradigms to describe another group's code or their own code and implicitly endorse their

ideological-political position on the status and corpus of another group's code or their own code. This interpretive social process of linguistic knowledge formation is represented throughout the following excerpts from several scholars in various fields of inquiry which have developed for generations:

The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e., the class which is the ruling *material* force of society, is at the same time its ruling *intellectual* force . . . each new class which puts itself in the place of one ruling before it, is compelled, merely in order to carry through its aim, to represent its interest as the common interest of all the members of society, that is, expressed in ideal form: it has to give its ideas the form of universality, and represent them as the only rational, universally valid ones.

(Marx & Engels 2001: 92, 94, emphasis in original)

[S]cientists are literally constructing their world rather than merely describing it . . . science is certainly intellectual work with a high degree of personal involvement.

(Krohn 1980: xii, xix)

The knowledge of a thing can only come through an act of judgment involving concept and ideology. (Asante 1980: 51)

[O]bjective truth . . . does not exist, at least in social science and politics. In these realms, truth is a social construct created to suit the purposes of the dominant group.

(Delgado & Stefancic 2012: 104)

Academic disciplines arise neither in a natural nor social vacuum. They emerge in order to serve ranges of interests and purposes . . . discrete conceptual categories are inseparable from the interests and purposes of the ones who construct them.

(Horn 2007, original in 1997: 412)

All research is about power—who has it, who doesn't—and the use of power to shape reality based on research . . . all research is political and derives from a certain ideological stance . . . even the position that asserts that research should be "objective" is itself an ideological position. (Smitherman 2000: 8)

The frameworks of the dominant group tend to become the master frameworks upon which *all* racial actors ground (for or against) their ideological positions.

(Bonilla-Sylva 2014: 9)

[T]he character of the discussion [of African languages, including black language in the United States] has been dictated by those who had political and economic control over the lives of African people [in continental Africa and the diaspora].

(Blackshire-Belay 1996: 16)

All the quotes above point to my proposition that the ideological-political interests of the dominant ethnic or racial group, who is politically, economically, and socially prevailing in a polity, especially, its elites of various professions or institutions of power, may largely determine the dominance of one paradigm over another at least in social sciences including linguistics.¹⁰

The power or ideological-political interests of elites need or create scientific endorsement, part of which is an endorsement from linguistics, to objectify and legitimize their oppressive measures in state institutions against other ethnic or racial groups and their political and economic domination of the other groups. This process constructs various “high-order” discourses in various fields of inquiry to devisualize themselves and be accepted as the universal truth.

One of the relevant interests in language matters is to spread the linguistic code of the dominant group, especially the code of its elites as the only standard throughout the polity. It attempts to achieve both symbolic integration and politico-operational integration (Fishman 1972) of the dominant group, while often hesitantly dragging in minority groups as dialect users under the umbrella of the standard language. In this nationalist and ethnocentrist/racist scheme, the elites of the dominant group, for example, legislators, government officials in the department or ministry of education, litterateur, journalists, linguists, language practitioners, etc. act under such social changes as political independence and economic transformation for the following

language planning activities: the codification (selection of an overarching code, selection of an orthography, compilation of a dictionary, description of the grammar <this is the major domain of linguistics>, etc.), elaboration (expansion of vocabulary, styles, etc.), and/or spread (differentiation and standardization of the overarching code through education and the mass media, etc.) of their code over the code of the masses of the dominant group and the codes of the subjugated groups (cf. Cooper 1989). The distribution of linguistic knowledge and resources through language planning activities (incl., language sciences) may promote the position of one linguistic paradigm over another, which then helps create or reinforce the state authority and authenticity of both the standard language and the dominant group in a plausible manner. Especially, elites other than linguists may take advantage of the authoritative knowledge which the latter construct so that the non-linguist elites exploit the masses and the minorities through linguistic means. Elites, more conscious of their action and, gradually, part of the masses who have partaken of the power with their use of the elites' linguistic code, may come to interpret or define the codes of the masses and the subjugated groups as "dialects," which are apparently under the overarching "language" of the elites. People in general (incl., linguists) may come to develop a "common sense" or a dominant "experiential-practical interpretation" that the former are dialects of the latter. There may emerge a "descriptive" perspective to verify the "prescribed" linguistic relationship and a dominant linguistic paradigm to justify the perspective, invalidating a counter-paradigm. This is a hypothetical process of the generation of a dominant linguistic paradigm, i.e., a hypothetical process by which scientific truths evolve around the power ideology and politics of a dominant ethnic or racial group to control others.

The attempts of those language scholars who belong to or conform to the dominant racial or

ethnic group to define or describe their own linguistic code or the code of an oppressed group may not look so politically loaded that they may appear detached from the nationalist ambitions of the dominant group. Even if the dominant group does not clamor for the promotion of its code and explicitly argue that its code is distinct from others, from the beginning, the prevailing political, economic, and social status of the group has already ensured the spread and dominance of their code as a distinct language mainly through the media and the school. In the case of those scholars from an oppressed group who (have no choice but to) conform to the dominant group's paradigm might have to give some rationale to emphasize the objectivity of their scientific acts as follows:

The present discussion [on Black English Vernacular (BEV)], although rooted in a socially important topic, will stress linguistic concerns. This is not to suggest that the social aspects of BEV are being dismissed as unimportant, merely that they are not of primary concern here. (Baugh 1980: 83)

Therefore, they can argue that their research is “non-political,” “objective,” “ideologically free,” and so forth.¹¹

On the other hand, those language scholars who belong to an oppressed minority group and never conform to the ideas or acts of the scholars of the dominant group may act disclosing their political position more visibly, that their scientific attempts to define or examine their endangered linguistic code may appear ideologically-politically loaded, and, thus, be rejected by the scientific community of mainstream linguists. As physicist, mathematician, and philosopher Philipp G. Frank (1956) puts it: “Every influence of moral, religious, or political considerations upon the acceptance of a theory is regarded as ‘illegitimate’ by the so-called ‘community of

scientists” (3). However, if the subjugated counter-elites do not clamor for the promotion of their code and the differentiation of their code from the oppressor’s code with any scientific weapon at hand, their subjugated political, economic, and social status may allow easier assimilation of their code into the code of the oppressor. Therefore, in the case of the comparative linguistic paradigm, some observers (e.g., Fasold 2005; McWhorter 1997a, b) may evaluate that the counter-paradigm is “ideological,” “political,” “non-linguistic,” “not informed,” or an “illusion,” even making no attempt to examine their own paradigm from the same perspective. In fact, not only the public but also linguists across racial lines voiced their opposition to the paradigm, probably because they shared one historical nationalist meaning that English should be the principal or only language used across racial and ethnic lines and another language nationalist but more experiential-practical meaning that black language is a dialect of English because they put more emphasis on their experience of inter-intelligibility of black and white codes.

I would conclude that every scientific idea on language by linguists reflects some ideological-political position. Majority linguistics can claim its non-politicalness because their majority languages are less visibly or more hegemonically promoted in every state institution of power at the current moment, while minority linguistics may look more political because their minority languages need to be promoted more visibly with little help from the state institutions of power. Hence, action-oriented minority linguistics such as the comparative linguistic paradigm may show a more explicit form of politicalness in the eyes of some, as French linguist Louis-Jean Calvet (1974: postface, followed by my translation) aptly observes¹²:

D’un certain point de vue, la linguistique a été jusqu’à l’aube de notre siècle une

manière de nier la langue des autres peuples, cette negation, avec d'autres, constituent le fondement idéologique de notre <<supériorité>>, de la supériorité de l'Occident chrétien sur les peuples <<exotique>> que nous allions asservir joyeusement. . . . Une linguistique consciente de ces implications politiques ne peut être que militante. C'est aux linguists concernés, dans leurs pays respectifs, dans leurs regions, qu'il appartient d'assumer cette prise en charge, ce combat pour la defense et l'épanouissement de leur langue et de leur culture propres. (From a certain point of view, linguistics was since the beginning of our century a way to deny the language of other peoples, this negation, with others, constituting the ideological foundation of our "superiority," the superiority of Christian West over "exotic" peoples whom we have joyfully subjugated. . . . A linguistics conscious of the political implications cannot but be militant. It is the responsibility of the linguists concerned in their respective countries, in their regions to assume the support, the battle for the defense and thriving of their language and their distinct culture.)

Sociolinguistics, which has become the main discipline for black language research, has been touted as a savior for minority, oppressed, or endangered linguistic codes around the world.

However, looking back at the repetitive nature of racism or ethnocentrism in science and other institutions of power, where one oppressive system or discourse has been deftly replaced with another as a result of *interest convergence* (Bell 1980, see the definition and detailed discussion in Chapter 4), linguists, especially, sociolinguists should be alert to the workings of power and ideology in linguistic knowledge formation and its implementation/application in state or quasi-private institutions such as the administration, the judiciary, the media, the academy, philanthropy, and the school.

1.2. Experiential-Practical Influences on Paradigms

Scientists attempt to transform their experiences into specialized narratives of science (Lambert 1995: vi). Experience is an interactive process rather than a given, i.e., a product of the

interaction of our senses, our conceptual apparatus, and ‘the world out there’” (Longino 1990: 221). The senses and conceptual apparatus provided to constitute the meaning of experience are molded in the actor’s social world, and they influence what to see of “the world out there,” “giving coherence to our experience” (Ibid.). The social world provides, among others, the ideological-political conceptual apparatus and the theoretical-scientific conceptual apparatus, which then influence the constitution of experience. For example, in linguistics, a series of coherent experiences which linguists constitute through their senses and conceptual apparatus in various spheres of their lives may provide an epistemological foundation for the scientific examination of a linguistic code toward which they act, as Thomas Kuhn notes of the relationship between observation/experience and scientific belief (1996) and Lambert (1995), between experience and knowledge. The experiences may determine how they interpret or define the linguistic entity which they attempt to examine, e.g., as a language or a dialect, then influencing what criteria they adopt to delineate it in the defined way and what linguistic features they focus on to construct a linguistic system which they recognize and imagine the entity to be. The foundational experiences by linguists may confer empirical legitimacy and authority on their linguistic research, but, perhaps, only when they are compatible with the imagined linguistic experiences or practices by most of the other linguists, by most of the elites, who execute their power in other state or quasi-private institutions in collaboration with the academy, and by most of the masses.

For the mainstream paradigms in black linguistics, the concepts “racial integration” and “black language as an English dialect or creole,” and the sense “acceptance into the mainstream” may influence the scholars to pay more attention to a coherent belief and value set of

intelligibility, understandability, Englishness of the black language phenomena, consequently, far more similarities between black language and English, which establishes the coherence of their linguistic experiences. In the African-centered paradigm, however, the concepts “national self-determination” and “black language as a national language or an African language” and the sense “segregation in the nonmainstream” may influence the scholars to pay more attention to a coherent belief and value set of non- or mis- intelligibility, non- or mis- understandability, Africanness, wholeness of the black language phenomena, consequently, far more differences between the two languages, which establishes the coherence of their linguistic experiences.

The experiential coherence of black language as mentioned above is practiced at the societal level. In the legislature, judiciary, and executive, only standard “languages” with their own writing systems, except for sign languages, are usually the media for official language services. Linguistic codes which are officially and scientifically recognized as dialects are usually not given overt official language status or services, perhaps, because people may experience far more similarities between the linguistic codes concerned within mainstream contexts and through societal language practices come to perceive and imagine that the dialect and the standard are intelligible to each other without any interpreter. In mainstream businesses, the owners or executives may be the influential guardians of their linguistic experience and practice. The business to government pipeline may channel their linguistic practice into the government language policy (Cooper 1989). Government and private foundations may offer funds to research projects, probably, which support their linguistic experience, practice, and policy (Minamoto 2000). In whole, the linguistic experiences or practices by dominant elites in the public and private institutions may influence the construction of a linguistic relationship in which the

linguistic code of the elites is the overarching “neutral” code called “language” and the linguistic codes of the masses or minorities are the “dialects” of the overarching code, and then, the construction of a scientific paradigm or discourse to legitimize the linguistic relationship.

This sequence of experiential-practical to theoretical-scientific is epitomized by the relationship between white and black language in the United States. Historically, state and private institutions conducted their businesses with enslaved Africans and their descendants in white language, i.e., English, irrespective of whether many of them had a limited or no proficiency of English or little or no literacy skills in English. Naturally, the elites, the masses who saw the businesses between the elites and the slaves, or the masses who did the businesses with the elites might have imagined the primary language of all the descendants of enslaved Africans as English or some kind of English, perhaps, as blacks may have switched to a language which whites understood, consequently, excluding from the beginning an epistemology that it might be described as a language other than English. Today, the school, media, government, and business communicate only in white language to every segment of blacks in every location, except when a politician or a business attempts to attract black voters or customers.

The dominant sequence from experiential-practical to theoretical-scientific is manifested, for example, in the school’s dealings with black children. Because the language of the black children has been perceived or imagined as within the scale of English, when the children are outside of the range of the linguistic or communicative norms of English, they have been evaluated lower in their English proficiency or thrown into special education classes or diagnosed as having ADHD, dyslexia, etc. These institutional acts are largely the interpretive, nationalist acts of some white intelligentsia to construct scientific paradigms in psychological, educational, and medical

sciences to justify their covert White Supremacy. Better, white linguists in the 1960s and 70s adjusted the pathology model to the culture model, although treating black code as a “deviation” of the standard and calling it a “nonstandard” dialect (See details in Chapter 4). For the African-centered paradigm such as the comparative linguistic paradigm, it is likely that some experiential-practical meanings, e.g., the counter-elite’s own experiences with black code being treated as a pathology in the school, which suggested that it was not a language, thus, not English as well, or the code being largely misunderstood or un-understood by whites, might have provided an epistemological foundation for ideologically-politically resisting the hegemony of English, molding a counter-conceptual apparatus, and thus, theoretically-scientifically interpreting black code as a language other than English within the conceptual framework.

In the experiential-practical area of language education, when black children are monolingual speakers of black code, they have sometimes been provided with “bidialectal” education because the primary linguistic code of the children is perceived to be within the scale of English. However, many scholars (e.g., Baratz & Shuy 1969; Fasold & Shuy 1970; Stewart 1964) who specialized in “non-standard Negro English” or “Black English” especially in the 1960s and 1970s experientially-practically suggested to apply the “bilingual” education method for black children to gain literacy in white code, euphemistically called “standard dialect,” “standard English,” or “school language.” The experiential-practical meaning of bilingualism assigned to black code by the scholars may have been contradictory to their theoretical-scientific definition of the relationship of the two codes as “dialectal” which those scholars adopted. Hence, they devised another scientific definition of black code as a “different linguistic system,” which they seem to have carefully chosen avoiding the use of the terms “dialect” and “language.”

In the case of the African-centered paradigm, it is likely that the innovators' experiential-practical meanings, e.g., the counter-elite's observation of linguistic interferences from black code that may have affected the learning of literacy using the white code in the inner-city, may have provided an epistemological basis for theoretically-scientifically interpreting black code as a language other than English, and thus supporting "bilingual" education in Ebonics and English. The experiential-practical meaning of bilingualism assigned to black code by the scholars was compatible with the scientific definition of the relationship of the two codes as "bilingual" which those scholars adopted and with another scientific definition of black code as a "different linguistic system," which can be interpreted as either language or dialect. With more recent events, when the elites in other institutions of power located the counter-elitist experiential-practical meaning of Ebonics, which contradicted with their own experiential-practical meanings, they soon acted toward the counter-elitist meaning of Ebonics, probably appropriating the established knowledge in the mainstream black linguistics, e.g., a letter to Dr. Ernie A. Smith from Commissioner of Education Ernest L. Boyer in 1977 (See details in Section 5.2.4), Education Secretary Richard Riley's words on Ebonics in 1996,¹³ and State of California, Assembly Bill No. 1206 in 1997.¹⁴ For example, AB1206, in order to prohibit the use of bilingual education or ESL funds for those students whose primary linguistic code is regarded as a dialect of English, specifies that in order to receive bilingual education services the students' primary code shall be neither dialect, idiom, nor language that has a syntax distinct from English, yet can be traced linguistically as derived from English, for example, lexically. This definition may have been appropriated from the existing dominant literature on black language but at the same time, conferred official authority back on the existing dominant scientific conceptualization

and theorization of black language.

Another self-contradictory practice has been seen in the judiciary system. There seems to be no judiciary system in the United States in which black language is a target “language” for official interpretive services. However, there were a few precedents in which a researcher of black language became an expert witness and interpreted the defendant in courts (Smith 1974, 2015; Smitherman 2000). Even some government agency admitted the need for official interpretative services (See details on in Section 5.2.5). These incidences attested to the necessity for such services in black language in judiciary cases, where accurate interpretations or understandings determine the validity of legal proceedings.¹⁵ In fact, under the current law, such services in black language shall be provided, but only if the defendant requests it.¹⁶ This experiential-practical meaning attached to black language in the judiciary system may have provided an epistemological foundation for the African-centered paradigm. However, that the court case documents have been written for centuries only in white language for proceedings involving black defendants may have given a historical rationale for the mainstream linguists to draw on them as historical evidence to interpret black language within the scale of the English language.

Lastly, I shall briefly discuss, probably, the most easily identifiable experiential-practical factor: intelligibility and understandability. Many linguists argue that intelligibility and understandability cannot be a criterion for classifying linguistic codes. However, there exist lots of accounts by linguists and other language specialists who comment that this or that linguistic code is a dialect of their language because they can understand it or this or that code is a language other than their language because they cannot understand it. I believe intelligibility and

understandability provides an implicit but decisive criterion on which the construction of a descriptive paradigm is predicated because the linguist would enter into their research to validate or substantiate their *intuitive* proposition on a linguistic phenomenon. For example, Dr. Ernie Smith comments that back in the 1970s he found white students “didn’t understand” what black children said in fieldwork. Even today there are whites who state they “cannot understand” the language of black youths.¹⁷ On the other hand, mainstream scholars may have had far more of experiences where they “could understand” what black code users were saying before they started their research.

A coherent set of linguistic experiences or practices which the earlier elites and their followers had toward black and white people may have given them an empirical framework for scientifically defining black code as a dialect of English, far less visibly, in a way effective for the maintenance of the existing political and economic structure. On the other hand, another coherent set of linguistic experiences or practices which the counter-elites and their followers had toward black and white people may have given them a different empirical framework for scientifically defining black code as a language other than English, more visibly, in a way effective for the change of the existing political and economic structure. That said, a common interest is found in these two groups: control or distribution of power in one way or another through different theoretical-scientific meanings to which different experiential-practical meanings are attached.

1.3. Theoretical-Scientific Influences on Paradigms

The theoretical-scientific factor can be divided into three major subfactors: disciplines, subjectivity, and methodological criteria and interpretations. The three may interact with each other to produce paradigms in linguistics. Methodological criteria and interpretations may be subsumed under the rubric of disciplines, which attempt to develop their own methodological criteria and interpretations, however, since there are often cases where disciplines may employ methods from other disciplines, disciplines and methodological criteria and interpretations are treated separately.

Disciplines may be one of the strongest indicators for researchers to adopt particular paradigms. Considering the rigid structure of traditional mono-disciplines such as linguistics and sociology rather than so-called inter-disciplines such as sociolinguistics and Africology (even the latter sometimes sound boundary-conscious when they discuss disciplines), and the stronger tendency for the former to insulate themselves, disciplines may have an overarching influence on researchers to assimilate into the dominant epistemology and method within themselves. Another indicator for the well-nigh exclusive selection of the dominant epistemology and paradigm by researchers may be arbitrariness inherent in science. The dominant may tend to emphasize what they considered to be outside of their purview as subjective, political, or wrong, even if a tiny possibility for counter-knowledge might exist, at least, as a hypothesis. However, this exclusivity or selectivity itself is a result of subjectivity and arbitrariness inherent in science. The subjectivity factors such as the scholars' implicit ideology, their need to secure their monetary rewards and status, and their senses of their empirical world may interact with the internal

arbitrariness to produce a set of methodological criteria and interpretations under a set of events and situations.

In the ensuing sections, I shall present a hypothetical picture of how each of the three categories, disciplines, subjectivity, and methodological criteria and interpretations, influence one another to produce paradigms.

1.3.1. Disciplines

‘Authorities,’ ‘disciples,’ and ‘schools’ are the curse
of science; and do more to interfere with the work
of the scientific spirit than all its enemies.
——Bibby (1959)

Scientists (incl., social scientists) acquire “from education a set of standards, tools, and techniques which they later deploy in their own creative work . . . scientific education remains a relatively dogmatic initiation into a pre-established problem-solving tradition that the student is neither invited nor equipped to evaluate” (Kuhn 1972: 83, 84-85). It is “a strenuous attempt to and devoted attempt to force nature [incl., language], into the conceptual boxes supplied by professional education” (Kuhn 1996: 5, brackets added). These critiques were obviously directed against natural sciences, but Kuhn’s statements may be applicable to social sciences too. One logical deduction from the critiques may be that the conventional departments of linguistics and other relevant denominations may not lead to the creation or discovery of a new paradigm which radically goes against the existing dominant paradigms.

In linguistics, with regard to the language of descendants of enslaved Africans in the United

States, it seems the Labovian and other cognate paradigms are still influential all over the United States. Many prominent black linguists in the United States today seem to be under great influence from the University of Pennsylvania school, where white linguist William Labov has taught or the Stanford University school (Labov's students such as John R. Rickford and John Baugh teach or have taught). Most scholars in the dominant paradigms describe the black code as a dialect or variety of English. There are others, such as Geneva Smitherman, who describe it comparatively (Smitherman 1977) and differently from other mainstream scholars, treat it as a language, i.e., *African American Language*, *African American language*, or *African American*, although not to the extent that they call it African. Smitherman was trained under white linguists at the linguistics department of the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Rickford (2000) and Salikoko Mufwene (2013, personal communication), the latter trained at the linguistics department of the University of Chicago, call the way Smitherman describes the black code Afrocentric, but it seems that her approach is still accepted in the mainstream academy, perhaps since she draws on one of the mainstream paradigms to describe it.

Other newly developed interdisciplinary departments such as Africology might produce a counter-paradigm which fundamentally challenges dominant paradigms. Particularly a central perspective employed in Africology, i.e., Afrocentricity seems to permeate counter-paradigms like the comparative linguistic paradigm in black linguistics. There are three such black linguists who adopt a counter-paradigm. One is Robert D. Twigg (1973), who adopted a paradigm which regarded the linguistic code of descendants of enslaved Africans in the United States as part of an African language family called Pan-African Language in the Western Hemisphere (PALWH) but which described only the black code in the same conventional way as the dominant paradigms

did. Currently there is no access to information on what school he graduated from, what he majored in, and what happened to him later. He was an assistant professor at Pan-African Studies, California State University, Los Angeles in the early 1970s, but his whereabouts are unknown thereafter.¹⁸ The second is Dr. Ernie A. Smith, who adopted another paradigm which regarded it as part of an African language family called *Ebonics* and described it in a comparative linguistic way, comparing Ebonics with several West African languages phonologically, syntactically, morphologically, pragmatically, and paralinguistically (Smith 1974 & 1993). He graduated from an interdisciplinary department called “Comparative Culture” at the University of California, Irvine, which had the division of “Black Culture,” equivalent to Africology today. He was trained in linguistics under a white linguist who called the US descendants’ primary linguistic code “Black English” and described it as such, but his dissertation advisors except the linguistics professor were all Afrocentric to the extent that they accepted his Ebonics thesis. Dr. Smith is now a professor in clinical linguistics at Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science in Los Angeles, a historically black university. There is another linguist, Dr. Carol Aisha Blackshire-Belay, who was trained in (creole) linguistics on the linguistic codes of foreign workers in Germany at the Department of Germanic Linguistics, Princeton University (Blackshire-Belay 1989). Later, it seems, especially after she moved to the Black Studies program at Temple University, she might have adopted the comparative linguistic or Africological paradigm to describe the linguistic codes of descendants of enslaved Africans in the diaspora. She regards black language as part of an African language family called Ebonics but seems not to have described it in a comparative linguistic way yet. She was an associate professor at African American Studies, Temple University (1993-1996) and then the chairperson

of African American Studies, Indiana State University (1996-2002).

So far I have suggested that differences in departments, disciplines, or schools may be related to paradigmatic differentiation on the linguistic code of descendants of enslaved Africans in the United States. The entire picture of black linguistics may fit Knorr-Cetina's proposition "Whether a proposed knowledge claim is judged plausible, interesting, unbelievable, or nonsensical, may depend on who proposed the result, where the work was done, and how it was accomplished" (2005: 182). For example, white linguist Ralph W. Fasold's (2005) authoritative claim that he finds no other trained linguists than Dr. Blackshire-Belay in the Africological school, shows "occasionally the negative aspect of specialization shows itself, and innovative "outsiders" to a field of specialization are resisted by the "insiders" (Barber 1961: 600). It may suggest he cannot accept, for example, Dr. Ernie A. Smith's linguistic thesis because of his academic credentials.

1.3.2. Subjectivity

As discussed earlier, language sciences or paradigm-making may be unintentionally or implicitly predicated on language nationalism or political ideology, one area of subjectivity. One's inclination or ideology may be largely a product of one's economic, educational, linguistic, and other experiences in one's empirical world. Ideology and experience may not be easily separated. I suggest linguists pursue their scientific interest largely drawing on their own experiential meanings, and this process may quite unconsciously contain ideological meanings attached to the experiential meanings.

Nonetheless, paradigms in language sciences favor ideologically or politically sterilized discourse for fear that the scientists should be accused that their research is “distorted” by ideological or political concerns (Lambert 1995). Attesting to this ideology-phobia is the following resolution adopted by the Linguistic Society of America in 1997 after the Ebonics Resolution in 1996, which obviously drew on the comparative linguistic paradigm by Dr. Ernie

A. Smith:

The distinction between “languages” and “dialects” is usually made more on *social and political* grounds than on *purely linguistic* ones. . . . What is important from a *linguistic and educational* point of view is not whether AAVE is called a “language” or a “dialect” but rather that its systematicity be recognized.

(Resolution on the Oakland “Ebonics” Issue Unanimously Adopted at the Annual Meeting of the Linguistic Society of America, Chicago, Illinois, January 3, 1997, italics mine)

The claim made by the LSA may suggested that linguistics and education are not political and the distinction between dialect and language is an irrelevant issue for linguistics and education. However, there are an abundance of examples in which linguists inadvertently or sometimes intentionally are involved in glottopolitics. The creator of the resolution, John R. Rickford seems to have suggested that the comparative linguistic paradigm, which provided the basis for the Ebonics Resolution, is political; on the other hand, he refers to Ebonics as African American vernacular English (AAVE), i.e., a “dialect” of English for many years. Despite the phrasing of the resolution, he always makes a political, subjective, arbitrary distinction of defining it as a dialect of English or another language. John H. McWhorter called the comparative linguistic paradigm an “illusion”; on the other hand, he clearly made a “political” statement that Ebonics is a “dialect” of English (McWhorter 1997a, 1997b). Special editions of academic journals, *The*

Black Scholar 27 (1) and (2) and *The Journal of Negro Education* 67(1) treated Ebonics as a “dialect” of English when they discussed the Ebonics Resolution in relation to education and other societal institutions. After Rickford and Rickford’s (2000) *Spoken Soul*, it seems that the mainstream literature has come to pay little attention to the comparative linguistic paradigm, e.g., a major encyclopedic work on black language by Lanehart (2015) presented Dr. Ernie A. Smith’s idea in only a few sentences while it basically addressed the mainstream paradigms. All this reminds readers that “science is a social enterprise, with an organized consensus of men determining what is and is not to be warranted as knowledge” (Phillips 1974: 63). It is quite a subjective enterprise of constructing a selective discourse on a “linguistic system” culled out of a continuous and discontinuous mosaic of communicative means of various visibility. As a lesson to every linguist, it should be remembered that “[t]o be scientific is [to be] openminded” (Kuhn 1972: 80).

As a result of such subjectivity-phobia that often surfaces when defining a linguistic code as a language or a dialect in linguistics, there has emerged one apologetic discourse concerning the treatment of dialects. The apologetic discourse is based on the following general idea in the literature that, as suggested by the LSA statement, all linguistic codes have their own “linguistic systems” and thus they are all equal, never superior or inferior judging from their internal features. O’Grady, et al. (1993) states:

All languages and *all varieties of a particular language* have grammars that enable their speakers to express any proposition that the human mind can produce. In terms of this all-important criterion, then, all varieties of language are absolutely equal as instruments of communication and thought. The goal of contemporary linguistic analysis is not to rank languages on some imaginary scale of superiority. (5, emphasis added)

At a glance, this idea sounds valid since it is true that every linguistic code has its own grammatical system. But, even if “all varieties of language are absolutely equal as instruments of communication and thought,” the linguists’ categorization as seen in “all varieties of a particular language” or their scientific authority may contribute to language policy-making in which language, dialect, style, etc. are not equally treated as instruments of communication and thought. They may need to reconsider why they follow the political, subjective dualism of standard language and nonstandard dialect, implicitly or inadvertently endorsing the government’s political, subjective behavior of ranking linguistic codes on some imaginary scale of superiority. They may need to question their own arbitrariness in employing different methodological criteria and interpretations to describe inter- and intra- language differences, against their own claim that both linguistic differences equally have their own grammatical systems. They may argue that they are just “descriptive” of the societal situations where the linguistic codes which they examine are placed, while contending this or that linguistic code is “linguistically” a dialect or a language based on that research, possibly because the power structure in which the linguists are located may covertly enable them to pursue their scientific endeavors without a visible posture of social and political advocacy and can maintain that they are objective scientists whose research findings are politically neutral (White 1984: 19). They may need to be aware or admit that their produced knowledge, a product from a particular set of criteria and interpretations and its resultant scientific authority on which the knowledge is predicated may be appropriated by state institutions so that the institutions can justify their oppressive practices, and their current and future status financially and professionally hinges on the state institutions. This points to the fact that a linguistic “description” has a “prescriptive”

function. Even after this line of thought, some may attempt to relativize the term “dialect” to refer to the standard language as “standard dialect.” However, it still cannot release nonstandard or nonmainstream dialects from the state-sanctioned hegemonic language system, or it still keeps them in the hierarchical language and social structure, in which the standard language is enshrined. Therefore, linguistics, especially as a social science, cannot detach a linguistic code which linguists attempt to examine from those ideological-political and experiential-practical meanings which constitute the linguistic code, and it is inevitably subject to arbitrary selection of methodological criteria and interpretations to support those meanings.

1.3.3. Methodological Criteria and Interpretations

Method/ology grounds the researchers’ reading of present and future
research events, in ways that allow for/preclude possibilities
——Goodley, et al. (2004)

In her 2005 work, *The Fabrication of Facts*, Karin Knorr-Cetina starts with this statement:

[W]e will take all references to the ‘constitutive’ role of science seriously and regard scientific inquiry as a process of production. Rather than consider scientific products as somehow capturing what is, we will consider them as selectively carved out, transformed and constructed from whatever is. (177)¹⁹

The pivotal point lies in her proclamation that science is a product of “fabrication,” in other words, scientists play a subjective role in constructing science. They may find a similar constitutive role of linguistics in capturing what a linguistic code is, as one white linguist admits on black linguistics:

In reality, . . . facts, data, and evidence are socially constructed notions within linguistics, as they are in other fields of scientific inquiry, and the appeal to facts and data in the construction of a theory of language has been controversial for decades.

(Wolfram 2015: 338)

There comes hard linguistic data, first. The data are selected based on what linguistic code(s) to examine or to compare, what patterns to focus on, and whether the linguistic code(s) is considered as a language or a dialect, probably on the intuitive basis of intelligibility, sociological variables, or other criteria on the basis of which a paradigmatic consistency is pursued (cf., Errington 2008: 10). Various scientific methods may give particular defining names to the linguistic code(s). Linguists may deal with the same set of linguistic data, but when they employ different descriptive paradigms, it may create different interpretations or definitions of the linguistic code(s) they describe. They may attempt to establish some apparently consistent logics or criteria in their own scientific paradigms. However, seen between paradigms, they may reveal some inconsistencies in their logics. This problem emerges when some of those who are in traditional programs, counter-programs, or non-linguistic disciplines, analyze, for example, the Creolist Paradigm, more specifically, the creole linguistic paradigm *per se*.

Creole linguistics deployed whatever non-linguistic and linguistic rationalizations or criteria, such as sociohistorical and linguistic ruptures and hybridization of several “languages,” as if absolute rather than relative, available for distinguishing a newly born African linguistic code with a predominant lexicon of a European linguistic code from a newly born or developing European linguistic code with a predominant lexicon of a European linguistic code. Errington (2008) points out that “[s]trategies of selection, as linguists devised and used them, played indirectly but sometimes crucially into constructions of colonial power and authority” (10). The

central perspective of creole linguistics is lexicocentric because it started from how Europeans experienced and perceived, for example, those “African” linguistic phenomena, “hybridized” codes which were born from the “contact” between European and African linguistic codes in the African diaspora. European linguistics seems to still hold on to the purist thesis that languages in Europe may have developed in a monogenetic manner, however, if we deconstruct the relative difference between language and dialect and integrate them back into the concept “linguistic code,” we may be able to view the sociohistorical development of any linguistic code as a result of “contact” between two or more codes, polygenesis. Creole linguistics suggests that the newly born African codes have European roots, probably based on the conspicuousness of lexicon and seeming intelligibility, although nowadays most of the linguists would state they have “new” or “creole” roots or structure, neither European nor African, even if some of them find African grammars in their substrata. Most of the scholars seem to primarily or merely see the European components of the new codes and do not compare the codes to non-European features which are seen especially in the grammars, only making passing reference to Africanisms in them.²⁰ This dominant practice, widely seen among those language scientists whose primary languages are major state or world languages, fits the description of normal science by Thomas Kuhn. Kuhn (1996) points out, “No part of the aim of normal science is to call forth new sorts of phenomena; indeed those that will not fit the box are often not seen at all” (24).

One of the original intents of creole linguistics was to demystify the purist, essentialist notion of the linguistic genealogy of European languages that had been established by comparative linguistics. However, European linguists took no further action in that direction, instead deploying both linguistic and non-linguistic criteria to justify the differentiation of method to

capture human and linguistic diversity between Europe and non-Europe.²¹ This arbitrary, inconsistent practice, which the Creolist Paradigm accepts for explaining the genesis of the primary linguistic codes of most descendants of enslaved Africans in the United States and beyond is under criticism from the comparative linguistic paradigm.

The comparative linguistic paradigm resonates well with today's mainstream perspective of Africology, i.e., Afrocentricity (cf. Asante 2006), although the clear perspective of Afrocentricity was not spelled out at the embryonic stage of the paradigm. According to Molefi Kete Asante (1980), Dr. Ernie A. Smith's dissertation advisor from the University of California, Afrocentricity is a theory to give an African-centered position of scientific understanding on the experiences of Africans for social change. This idea might be rephrased as follows: Afrocentric *sciences* are founded on *experiences* of African people for the implementation of *political* programs to change societies. In this respect, my view of a linguistic paradigm as a product of the interaction of ideological-political, experiential-practical, and theoretical-scientific meanings fits the Afrocentric theory. The perspective of Afrocentricity offers not only a revolutionary perspective to research on things African but also one situated analysis of the essence of sciences as being political from the side of some black scholars, rather than from the traditional white domain of the sociology of knowledge or science. Afrocentricity locates the African phenomenon in Africa and in the diaspora as an organic whole. This Pan-African way of describing the phenomenon allows scholars to see African continuity and distinctness. The Pan-African methodology aims at establishing the African roots of various black phenomena in the United States—in the 1970s, West African roots and, in the 1980s, Egyptian roots. This African-centered framework of reference informed the comparative linguistic paradigm, although the concept "Afrocentricity"

was not directly attached to the paradigm. In order to establish the African-centered meaning that black language is an African language, the Ebonics paradigm adopted a modified version of comparative linguistics, which was Europe-centered in its origin, so that the genetic relationship of black language can be determined on the criterion of grammar. However, mainstream linguists and non-linguists have been indifferent or intolerant or circumscriptive toward the theory, which has repeatedly emerged in the history of black linguistics, as “[t]he methodological conceptions scientists entertain at any given time constitute a . . . cultural source of resistance to scientific discovery (Barber 1961: 598).

1.4. Tripartite Formation of Paradigms

It may be postulated that both the dominant paradigm and the counter-paradigm in black linguistics are a product of the interpretive social interaction between ideological-political, experiential-practical, and theoretical-scientific meanings of particular groups (cf., Errington 2008: 5). Though scientific discourse would avoid associating science with the ideological-political meanings, every paradigm in black linguistics may be implicitly influenced by those ideological-political meanings. It may not be intentional, but the mere adoption or adaptation by black scholars of a dominant paradigm which white predecessors have established to encompass white and black language under the same overarching language may implicitly lend itself to or give acquiescence to the ideological-political interests of the United States, i.e., the white nation and integrationist black elites. The adoption of a counter-paradigm, on the other, may be more explicitly influenced by the ideological-political interests of the black nation due to their

oppressed status.

There may be experiential-practical bases for the adoption of each paradigm to describe the linguistic code of descendants of enslaved Africans in the United States. For example, whether the oppressed linguistic code that linguists describe appears to function as a separate language or a dialect of English in particular settings such as the court and the school may give them a reason to claim that the code is a separate language or a dialect of English. To leave the status of an oppressed linguistic code as a dialect of an oppressing linguistic code would serve the social, political, and economic interests of the dominant linguistic community who primarily uses the latter. Hence, to elevate the status of the oppressed code from dialect to language in those controlling domains in which the dominant code is the only medium may help fulfill some social, political, and economic goals of the subjugated linguistic community. Not only the counter-paradigm but also the dominant paradigm may have their own experiential-practical meanings or concerns based on which the target linguistic code of description is interpreted as a language or a dialect of another language.

Lastly, there is a scientific issue of choosing which methodological criteria and interpretations to describe black language. Those scholars in the Creolist paradigm are likely to have been trained in black linguistics at the linguistics or education departments in which the innovators or followers of the dominant paradigm teach. Even if there might be a theoretical problem in their paradigm, they may still hold on to the paradigm and add up particular criteria and interpretations to justify it because denial of it means destabilizing the foundation of their research.²² They may attempt to maintain their current mainstream position and not want to be ostracized in the academic mainstream. Their paradigmatic position may implicitly reinforce and

be reinforced by their own ideological-political and experiential-practical meanings. This disciplinary structure may prompt some scholars, trained in interdisciplinary or traditional departments where they don't study under influential linguists who specialize in black language, to adopt a counter-paradigm, which may more explicitly reinforce and be reinforced by their own ideological-political and experiential-practical meanings.

The moment that a particular set of ideological-political needs and experiential-practical concerns coincide with a particular set of theoretical-scientific criteria may be when a particular scientific paradigm emerges. This process of linguistic knowledge/paradigm formation may have been behind the birth of the comparative linguistic paradigm as well as the mainstream paradigms. One of the foundations for the comparative linguistic paradigm may be the innovators' cultural nationalist pursuit to attain independence from or parity with Eurocentric disciplines, ultimately to attain political, economic, educational, and/or other independence from or parity with White Supremacist institutions. Another foundation may have been an experiential-practical claim that the innovators saw black language functioning as a language rather than a dialect of English in some particular contexts such as the school, the court, and daily lives, which then may reinforce the ideological-political meanings which they hold on to. Therefore, both ideology-politics and experience-practice may have provided some foundations for the selection of a particular set of scientific criteria and interpretations for the comparative linguistic paradigm as well as the mainstream paradigms. In other words, theoretical-scientific meanings may be negotiated among the three constitutive factors to reach a particular paradigm. The relationship may be represented as follows:

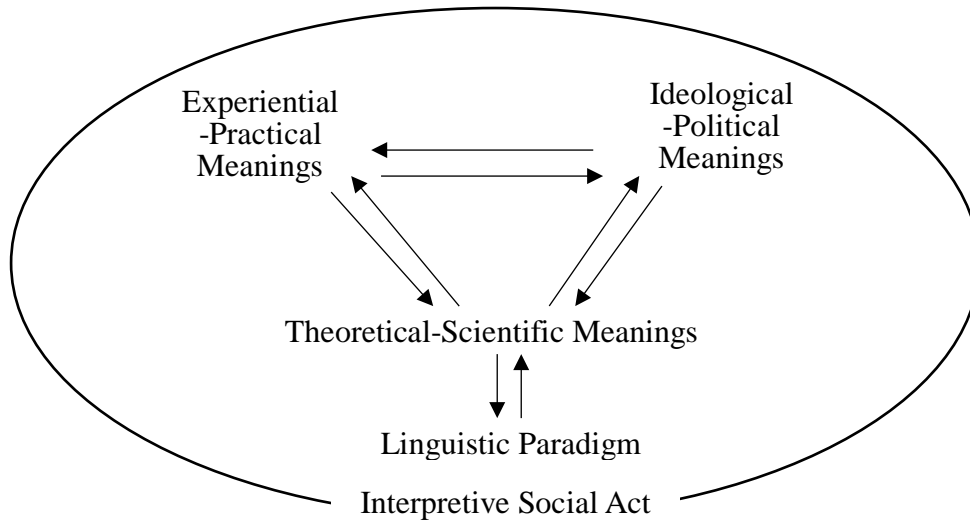


Figure 1. Tripartite Formation of Linguistic Paradigm.

The “procedures and conclusions of science are . . . the contingent outcome of interpretative social acts” (Mulkay 2005: 95), which I have hypothetically divided into three components for the purpose of my dissertation research. This social constructionist analysis might hopefully show that not only the comparative linguistic paradigm is a product of human subjectivity in power relationships of language by linguistic and non-linguistic counter-elites but the mainstream paradigms are also products of subjectivity in such relationships by linguistic and non-linguistic elites. I do not argue that human subjectivity makes those paradigms invalidated as a non-science, but that they are valid human sciences because I suggest it is subjectivity that may be one of the guiding factors for science, particularly, linguistics.

1.5. Life Story Study on Dr. Ernie Adolphus Smith

Linguistics or linguistic paradigms cannot be purely scientific in that they develop as a

product of the interaction of ideological-political, experiential-practical, and theoretical-scientific meanings. If researchers attempt to grasp the interpretive, constitutive, additive nature of each descriptive paradigm in linguistics, they should investigate the interpretive, constitutive social act of constructing each paradigm, in which politics such as racism and nationalism plays a part. In this sense, the sociological investigation of one of the descriptive paradigms in black linguistics, e.g., a counter-paradigm, sometimes called the comparative linguistic paradigm or the Africological paradigm, in relation to the mainstream paradigms may contribute to understanding such a constitutive process usually elided in scientific discourse. The selection of this paradigm, especially the one developed by Dr. Ernie A. Smith comes from my own interest in the paradigm and my own hope to place it in the healthy paradigmatic competition with the mainstream paradigms. If this kind of research is realized, scholars might gain important insight on how to crack open the obdurate practice and discourse of linguistics (armored with objectivist and descriptivist ideology) and find a new venue for developing a new paradigm for describing linguistic codes called “pidgin,” “creole,” or “dialect.”

However, there is only a scant amount of research on the social construction of black linguistics from the perspective of the sociology of knowledge: a theoretical-scientific constitution of the mainstream black linguistics (Wolfram 2015), a politico-ideological nature of black linguistics (Fasold 2005), and a comprehensive, social constructionist nature of black linguistics (DeBose 2005). The last one presents a comprehensive view of black linguistics as a social constructionist, in this work, language planning endeavor. His book, as the title shows, takes an unconventional approach to viewing linguistics not only as a descriptive act but as a prescriptive act. Linguistics socially—academically—constructs a linguistic reality. It is involved

in the description and development of form and function of a language variety. Therefore, black linguistics is defined as a site of status and corpus planning for African American language (See details in Chapter 2). However, the three social constructionist works are highly theoretical and present no case study of the construction process of either of the paradigms.

There has been no case study on the construction of the comparative linguistic paradigm from the perspective of the sociology of knowledge. To be sure, there are some autobiographical essays (Smith 1974, 1975, & 2002), one such presentation (Smith 2015) delves into the life story of Dr. Ernie A. Smith at various stages of his life. The first three provide some personal information on Dr. Smith's position on the use of Ebonics in the black community and the larger society. It gives some implicit clues to understanding why he arrived at his Afrocentric linguistic theory. However, it offers only part of the background information for understanding the interpretive, constitutive process of the formation of his paradigm. The most recent work is a presentation on his scholarly life at the University of California, Irvine and gives us important information on how he chose linguistics after he considered becoming an Egyptologist or Kemetologist and particular academic careers fulfilled. Therefore, in order to understand the formation process of the paradigm, I shall reinforce the contents with the following foci:

- (1) What ideological-political concerns existed before and during the formation of the counter-paradigm;
- (2) What experiential-practical concerns, in addition to the problems of some black children being diagnosed as verbally crippled and teaching English literacy to black males in the inner-city, may have contributed to the formation of the paradigm;

- (3) What theoretical-scientific process the paradigm went through, addressing the existing dominant discourse in black linguistics; and
- (4) How all these three components may have interacted.

If linguists attempt to understand the interpretive, constitutive process comprehensively by which the comparative linguistic paradigm emerged in the interaction of ideological-political, experiential-practical, and theoretical-scientific meanings, they may need to further examine various aspects of one of the advocates' life, in this case, Dr. Smith's life, drawing on the existing literature. Therefore, in this dissertation, I shall focus on Dr. Ernie Adolphus Smith (1938-) as an important figure in the history of black linguistics, when necessary, incorporating the life stories of other linguists, who embraced or embrace the paradigm or a near-Africological paradigm, so as to further understand the comprehensive formation process of the paradigm. I shall reconstruct the formation process by which Dr. Ernie A. Smith came up with, developed, and applied the comparative linguistic paradigm in response to the racialized social, political, and economic contexts in and beyond Los Angeles particularly from the 1940s through the 1970s. The study is intended to get a glimpse of an integrative structure of meanings, experienced and internalized by an individual, which produced the paradigm. I hope that this work will establish that the counter-paradigm is one of the legitimate scientific methods in black linguistics and may be a viable alternative to fulfill the ideological-political and experiential-practical needs of many descendants of enslaved Africans, esp., their underclass in the United States.

1.6. Scientific, Practical, and Political Significance of the Study

There are only a few studies that examine an ideological-political and/or experiential-practical formation of linguistic paradigms from the perspective of the sociology of knowledge in linguistics and beyond. They deal with comparative linguistics (e.g., Gauger 2010; Poliakov 1971), creole linguistics (e.g., DeGraff 2001; Maroldt 2010; Meijer & Muysken 1977), structural linguistics to generative grammar (e.g., Newmeyer 1986), and black linguistics (e.g., DeBose 2005; Fasold 2005). In the area of black linguistics, however, there seems to be no case study with the breadth and depth of this dissertation research within the framework of the sociology of knowledge. Therefore, my dissertation on one of the paradigms in black linguistics—the comparative linguistic paradigm or the Africological paradigm—might successfully open a new venue in this respect, i.e., help develop a close and reasonably full familiarity with the ideological-political, experiential-practical, and theoretical-scientific formation of a descriptive paradigm in black linguistics. I hope it will provoke, suggest, anticipate a proposition such as my own preliminary hypothesis that a paradigm in linguistics is a product of the inextricable interaction of ideology-politics, experience-practice, and theory-science. I also hope it will present a clearer picture of what the Ebonics paradigm is and how different it is among the supporters of Ebonics to complement some inadequate understandings seen in the literature (e.g., Baugh 2000). Ultimately, this endeavor is expected to relativize all the existing paradigms that are contesting to claim their absolute legitimacy, encourage and facilitate paradigmatic competition (Horn 2007[1997]: 416), and, as Foucault (1980) suggests, ascertain “the possibility of constituting a new politics of truth . . .” and detach “the power of truth from the forms of

hegemony, social, economic and cultural, within which it operates at the present time” (133).

Beyond the confines of linguistics, currently, there exist some educational programs in which the language of descendants of enslaved Africans in the United States is treated as a legitimate “dialect” of English (e.g., Los Angeles County, CA and DeKalb County, GA). On the other hand, to the best of my knowledge, no program seems to exist in which the language is treated as a legitimate “language” other than English. Certainly, there once was a language learning class conducted by a public school teacher, Ms. Carrie Secret in Oakland, CA, in which the language of the US descendants was treated as an independent language and outstanding academic achievements were reported. Yet it was discontinued soon after the 1996 Ebonics Resolution adopted by the Oakland School Board, which largely drew on the success of Ms. Secret’s class and, probably, the linguistic hypothesis of Dr. Smith. Therefore, it is a deeper understanding of the comparative linguistic paradigm, especially, the integrative relationship between ideological-political, experiential-practical, and theoretical-scientific meanings in the paradigm through my life history study that might offer some valid reasons for reviving a program similar to Oakland’s and improving the still dismal academic results of especially black male students.

Lastly, an entity called “language,” such as English, Japanese, Spanish, and Swahili, implicitly refers to the linguistic code of the dominant group and class, not the linguistic code of the subjugated group and class. Only the code of the former group and class is granted the status of language in public or official settings while other codes “related” to the language are relegated to the status of “dialects” of the language. In this way, our “language” policy and planning implicitly and explicitly oppresses the stigmatized “dialects,” many of which may have the right to be called “language” theoretically-scientifically, experientially-practically, and ideologically-

politically. It is this prevalent glottopolitics that may explain the white-black linguistic relationship in the United States. Therefore, I hope that my life history project might offer positive steps toward realizing the very basic human right of a truly democratic society that a person, a group, or a subgroup of the group can possess their own language that they can define and describe by and for themselves, not a dialect of another language that the guardian elite of the language imposes a definition and description of by and for themselves. This self-defining right should be indispensable as a first step for realization of linguistic and other human rights, as dominant European nations have imaginatively established and still arduously attempted to protect them, and as even a German scholar, Janheinz Jahn made a strong statement in this direction about a neo-African culture, incl., black language in the incipient stage of the civil rights movement (Section 5.3.4.2).

1.7. Structure of the Dissertation

The main narrative structure and flow, i.e., the temporal and causal structure, of this dissertation is primarily based on Smith (1974, 1975, 2002). The categories or concepts employed are designed to reflect the ways in which language intersected with other aspects of Dr. Smith's life story: family background; schooling; higher education; work; community efforts. They are arranged considering temporal and causal organization of events considered significant.

As explicated in the present chapter, "A Hypothetical Introduction to the Construction of Black Linguistics," this dissertation is arranged to explain a wider social construction process of one of the descriptive paradigms in black linguistics, the comparative linguistic paradigm or the

Africological paradigm, focusing on how white racism, black nationalism, and other meanings interacted with the development of black linguistics. Chapter 2, “Social Constructionist Research on Black Linguistics,” gives a detailed account of the dimensions of the social construction process of black linguistics upon which social constructionist studies have been focused. A few autobiographical works are included here because they imply the existence of the three constitutive dimensions, which this doctoral research considers for analyzing linguistic knowledge/paradigm formation. Chapter 3, “Life Story and Sociology of Knowledge,” explains the perspective and method I used and why the perspective and method are appropriate for examining the social construction process by which descriptive paradigms in black linguistics emerged. Chapter 4, “Politics of Truths in Black Linguistics,” presents a general picture of how racism/racialization and black linguistics have shifted in terms of interest convergence and divergence, leading up to the comparative linguistic or Africological paradigm. Chapter 5, “Formation of the Comparative Linguistic Paradigm,” describes the comprehensive formation process of the paradigm from the three dimensions: the ideological-political, experiential-practical, and theoretical-scientific factor. Section 5.1, “Ideological-Political Factor,” delves into how language consciousness/ideology and nationalist ideology developed and influenced each other. Section 5.2, “Experiential-Practical Factor,” examines in what ways black language was treated in real-life settings such as the school and the court. Section 5.3, “Theoretical-Scientific Factor,” offers a detailed account of how an epistemological revolution like Afrocentricity may have provided another perspective which selected another set of scientific criteria or interpretations to define black language. Chapter 6, “Ideology-Politics, Experience-Practice, and Theory-Science in Interaction,” attempts to construct an integrative understanding on the

interpretive process by which ideology-politics, experience-practice, and theory-science interacted with each other, leading up to the emergence of the comparative linguistic paradigm and, analogously, other paradigms. Chapter 7, “Concluding Suggestions,” emphasizes the importance of a holistic and an action-oriented approach to understanding a linguistic system to move from the current hegemonic subjugation toward the self-determination or the full realization of the human rights of a linguistic community.

2. SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONIST RESEARCH ON BLACK LINGUISTICS

DeBose (2005), Fasold (2005), Wolfram (2015), yet not Smith (1974, 1975, 2002), clarify their take that linguistics is a social construction as are other sciences. In this regard, it is possible to exclude the three works of Smith from the literature review, yet as he intended or not, his life story works provide a lot of information on his personal and professional experiences until the time an ethnolinguist/comparative linguistic paradigm was born, i.e., a whole ideological-political, experiential-practical, and theoretical-scientific formation process of the paradigm. Therefore, I decided to include Smith's works as part of the social constructionist research on black linguistics. This chapter is divided into the following four conceptual foci, which represent each of the existing literature in this area: (1) implication, (2) ideology-politics, (3) theory-science, and (4) triangular interaction of ideology-politics, experience-practice, and theory-science. I shall discuss each of the four authors under the four conceptual headings in view of what they aim for and what the existing literature might suggest for future research on the sociology of black linguistics.

2.1. Implicational

The three factors—ideological-political, experiential-practical, and theoretical-scientific—that I identified to constitute the body of the dissertation were isolated out of the three life story works (Smith 1974, 1975, 2002), because they may be the significant integral factors in the life experiences Smith finds leading up to the Ebonics paradigm. This tripartite

division of the factors is completely my own interpretive act from the perspective through which I hope to investigate the social construction process of the comparative linguistic paradigm.

Smith's autobiographical work, brief and condensed, started with a chapter in his dissertation (1974). Smith (1975) is an extended version of the dissertation chapter with some details removed. Smith (2002) is a revised version of Smith (1975). They show how his consciousness of the difference between black and white language was built through excruciating racism and discrimination from his childhood and his street businesses in his adolescence and how the event in 1970 finally resulted in his lifelong scientific endeavor to study black language. Spending years in colleges from 1959 through 1967, he honed his proficiencies in white language, while he identified with various black nationalist causes and became a renowned black nationalist. This language awareness process can be defined as not only ideological-political but also experiential-practical because language use allocated different racial or class groups into different life courses. He experienced a nationalist process by which he developed an antagonism toward white language and leaned toward black language, while embracing black nationalist thoughts. One experiential-practical event happened in 1968: he noticed many black males had an issue of illiteracy in English possibly due to the interference of their mother tongue. This turned into a scientific interest in literacy especially when he entered the graduate program in Comparative Culture, University of California, Irvine. Here he met a linguist who studied black language and the linguist helped him to be acquitted of a misdemeanor charge with her linguistic testimony. Impressed by the scientific power of linguistics to explain the legitimacy of his language, he decided to enter the field. It is emphasized throughout the three works that language always played a pivotal role from his early childhood through the beginning of his linguistic study at UC

Irvine. It seems to me that certain ideological-political, experiential-practical, and theoretical-scientific meanings may have interacted to produce the particular meaning of black language, viz., Ebonics in Dr. Smith's scientific efforts.

2.2. Ideological-Political

Ralph W. Fasold (2005) discusses the ideological nature of the entire black linguistics. The crux of this study is that it views linguistics as a social construction. The author finds some ideological-political rationales behind social constructions of black language by both linguists and non-linguists and presents the following classification:

Table 1. Ideology and Social Constructions of "Ebonics."

Social group	Ideology	Construction of "Ebonics"
Non-linguist European Americans and African Americans	African American inferiority or lack of opportunity, due either to poverty or to race	Broken English
Present-day mainstream American linguists	U. S. society as a mosaic of more or less distinct ethnicities	AA(V)E as an orderly, grammatical dialect of English
Mid 20th-century American dialectologists	Integrationist, assimilationist, egalitarian	So-called "Black English" as a dialect of disadvantaged southern Americans of both races
Afrocentric scholars	Unity of the African Diaspora, opposition to Europeans (in the broad sense)	Ebonics as a separate language (or perhaps language family) of abstand

This may be a tentative categorization and characterization, but it provides a comparative device for categorizing and elaborating the relationships between political ideologies and scientific

constructions of black linguistics in the dissertation (esp., Chapter 4). It might be one way of elaboration if the category of ideology particularly for the present-day mainstream American linguists is bifurcated into overt and covert ideology: “U. S. society as a mosaic of more or less distinct ethnicities” and “integrationist, assimilationist, egalitarian,” it may explain the linguists’ relative lack of activity in promoting rather than just recognizing the use of black language.

The author sounds critical only of the African-centered paradigm. If the writer attempts to develop a social constructionist argument in a fair manner, he needs to be aware that the mainstream construction of linguistic science is as social constructionist as the Afrocentric counterpart. Viewed from the vantage point of the Afrocentric school, the mainstream paradigms should also be critiqued as much. However, he directs criticism exclusively against the Afrocentric paradigm. Moreover, there are some misunderstandings or flaws in his arguments. First of all, the author argues that most advocates of the Afrocentric paradigm are not trained linguists. He is right in that most of the advocates are non-linguists such as psychologists, historians, speech specialists, or education scientists. However, if he limits the advocates to linguists, he can find only a few people such as Carol A. Blackshire-Belay and Ernie A. Smith. As far as I read their dissertations and others, they all may be called trained linguists or may not be brainwashed in European linguistics. Second, the author argues, “it is my contention that linguistic science, since there are no principled criteria by which such a notion as “language” can be defined, cannot claim authority in constructing what is or is not a language” (700). I suggest a caveat against this repeated liberalist, Eurocentric argument. The Afrocentric school argues Ebonics is not a dialect of English but a language other than English not by linguistically defining the distinction between dialect and language but, as European predecessors did on their

developed and imagined national languages, based on their finding that not only Ebonics in the United States but also a variety of Ebonics in other parts of the African diaspora share a grammatical continuation to West and Niger-Congo African languages, the newly born African languages in the diaspora comparative-linguistically belong to an African language family, not the West-Germanic language family. That's why US Ebonics is not a dialect of English. Third, the author believes the meaning of grammar the Afrocentric school refers to is restricted to syntax, but it's not. What they mean is a whole grammatical complex of morphosyntax, phonology, phonetics, and semantics (e.g., Nehusi 2001; Smith 1974). Fourth, the author critiques the paradigm by stating that linguistics traditionally does not include discourse styles and "paralinguistic" features. It is worth mentioning a historical fact that such a narrow definition of a linguistic code that Fasold touts as the standard is a Eurocentric social construction of a communicative code called language. Fifth, he treats Ebonics as a case of an *Abstand* language. But the fact is, even an *Abstand* language is a product of social construction. The binary opposition of *Ausbau* and *Abstand* (Kloss 1967) is an arbitrary matter of degree of difference and timing. Linguists should be advised to understand all languages are products of both *Abstand* and *Ausbau* processes (cf. Cooper 1989).

2.3. Theoretical-Scientific

Wolfram (2015) views sociolinguists as "ideologues." He observes, "sociolinguists . . . justify their ideologies on the basis of rigorous, specialized expertise in the analysis of language as a kind of scientific inquiry" (339). He focuses on the theoretical-scientific procedure of the

mainstream black linguistics and critiques it in the following four respects: (1) too much focus on morphosyntax and phonology, (2) inadequate attention to a whole complex of variation factors such as basilect-acrolect continuum, regionality, social stratification, setting, age, other sociopsychological factors, and (3) inadequate attention to diverse trajectories of change.

The constructive nature of the mainstream black linguistics in terms of linguistic structure is extensively discussed in this work, but it does not address the scholars' well-nigh exclusive focus on the English part of the data, which would be a point of controversy for the Ebonics school. This work may be a good starting point in the area of theory-science. I hope this line of argument will be extended to the history of black linguistics, its disciplinary structure and training in higher education, professional networks, etc., drawing more on the established literature of the sociology of science.

2.4. Ideological-Political, Experiential-Practical, and Theoretical-Scientific

DeBose (2005), as the title *The Sociology of African American Language: A Language Planning Perspective* shows, takes an unconventional approach to view linguistics not only as a descriptive but prescriptive act. Linguistics socially, scientifically constructs a linguistic reality. It is involved in the description and development of form and function of a linguistic code. In this vein the author defines black linguistics as a site of status and corpus planning for African American language. Black linguistics is defined as an act of social construction of linguistic knowledge and reality, which places the work within the sociology of knowledge. The language planning for African American language which DeBose discusses may be summarized as:

Overarching Policy Options:

1. Standard English hegemony
2. Acquiescence to Standard English hegemony
3. Full recognition of African American language/resistance to the hegemony of Standard English/cultural revitalization

Status Planning:

1. Allocation of African American language to a rule-governed variety
2. Allocation of African American language to a language or a dialect
3. Labeling for African American language
4. Allocation of African American language to a medium of education, a school subject, an official language, etc.

Corpus Planning:

1. Decision on whether or not African American language has the same system of rules as other varieties of American English
2. Selection of linguistic features for inclusion in the system of African American language
3. Selection of particular names for features selected for inclusion in the grammar of African American language
4. Selection of an orthography for African American language

In view of the tripartite division of ideological-political, experiential-practical, and theoretical-

scientific meanings, all the overarching policy options and options 1 to 3 in status planning may be defined as ideological-political interests, because they are relevant to asserting a national self-determination and constructing a collective symbol or identity around which to mobilize a nation for the attainment of collective human rights. Option 4 in status planning would rather be concerned with experiential-practical meanings because functional allocation of a language influences the spread of it in societal domains where members of a nation can achieve political, economic, and other ends through their national language. Those ideological-political and experiential-practical decisions influence scientific interpretations or decisions as listed in corpus planning. Therefore, the policy decisions discussed in the work are closely related to the tripartite division of the social construction process of a linguistic paradigm in my research.

The ultimate goal of the language planning objectives that DeBose presents is to elevate the status of African American language to the extent that the general public recognizes the legitimacy of African American language and views it as a language in its own right as some linguists do. The most appealing in his language planning perspective is that linguists standardize African American language, extending the functional allocation of the language into public domains and increasing the distinctiveness of the language with a distinct orthography. Other than specifying “what” black linguistics does, the author specifies “who” does it, i.e., casts linguists as “visionaries” who construct a linguistic narrative on African American language. What differentiates those visionaries, i.e., what “can affect the manner in which an issue is experienced, perceived or handled” is “the social location of a scholar” (DeBose 2005: 41). This perspective provides the basis for my research, which attempts to differentiate the social construction processes of the comparative linguistic paradigm and the mainstream paradigms

based on the social locations of scholars. It is his recognition of the subjects' agency and engagement in linguistics beyond the dominant "description" ideology in science that is compatible with my own definition of what minority as well as majority linguistics as an interpretive social act is supposed to be or is actually doing.

Similar to the comparative linguistic paradigm, DeBose supports a language as right orientation and a policy of resistance to the hegemony of Standard English. He suggests that the linguist attempts to describe African American language not as a list of distinctive features but as an autonomous system "seeks to make explicit the distinctiveness of [African American language] at all levels of linguistic analysis" (DeBose 2005: 210). He finds the nomenclature "creole" stigmatizing, as do other creole linguists in the Caribbean including Mervyn C. Alleyne (personal communication, August 3, 2016). However, the author contends that a labeling which people give to their language should be determined by the people and "English" would be the likeliest candidate. On the other hand, it might be an alternative to deconstruct the existing hegemonic belief on African American language in the African American communities and beyond. This pioneering theoretical work may give a rationale for redefining black linguistics and a clue to a scientific revolution therein. It informs us that black linguistics can be prescriptive as well as descriptive, i.e., what linguists actually engage in is constructing a linguistic reality.

Thus far, I have presented the existing literature on the social construction of black linguistics. It may be said that among the works discussed here, DeBose (2005) presents the most comprehensive account of the language planning process by which black linguistics has been

constructed, giving a critical clue to understanding what linguistics is and what the linguist is. The work is not so inclusive as directly discussing the Ebonics paradigm or the comparative linguistic paradigm; however, most importantly, DeBose provides a *future* process by which black language and black linguistics may be constructed both as a scientific and practical endeavor. It is in this regard that I, a future scholar in linguistics and language planning studies, find a venue, where black linguists and others may be able to have legitimate agency to redefine “language” and “linguistics” and set paradigmatic competition in motion for their own collective interests, which is accompanied with scientific rigor, and black linguistics and the black community may become integral to each other ideologically-politically, experientially-practically, and theoretically-scientifically.

3. LIFE STORY AND SOCIOLOGY OF KNOWLEDGE

Since the beginning of my research, I have been interested in why and how the Ebonics paradigm which Dr. Ernie A. Smith supports today was born. I read every work on the paradigm I found at the library and got from Dr. Smith, but I found no definite answer to my question. I found linguists and other scientists usually do not disclose personal meanings by themselves such as why and how their researches started. As my coursework progressed, I came to be aware that without more structured and in-depth interview with Dr. Smith, I would not be able to get into the heart of the why and how, and, fortunately enough, the method which I learned at Hitotsubashi University, Tokyo, again came to my attention as a viable strategy to tackle with my research question. I also needed to conduct a critical, deconstructing review of the existing literature in black linguistics so that I could gain an understanding of part of the why and how. It was the methodological combination of life story and the sociology of knowledge that may allow me to get some scholarly familiarity with the why and how. In the ensuing sections, I shall explain how the entire methodology may be combined to answer the question.

3.1. Perspective and Methodology

Critics will always be able to dispute whether I have presented the ‘real story’, but arguably this does not actually matter. For me, the hallmark of life story research is that it should prompt positive social change. . . . Arguably it is vital that life story researchers make no attempt to tidy their theoretical baggage out of their writing. We cannot erase our personal commitments from life story research, nor can we feign objectivity. Nevertheless we can offer life story research as offering a way in to different ways of ‘making the familiar strange’ and contesting normative assumptions. —Goodley, et al. (2004)

I employed a microsociological method called life story interview, conducted semi-structured, in-depth, and multi-shot interviews with Dr. Ernie Adolphus Smith (Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science), and reconstructed his life story, while examining some life stories of other linguists and incorporating the latter's life stories for a theoretical purpose. This dissertation research falls within two major established methods of data collection: sociology and historiography. It is sociological in that it produces an informed knowledge on the social constructionist nature of linguistic paradigms, in this study, the comparative linguistic paradigm and thus contributes to a sociological generalization of an exploratory nature in the sociology of knowledge, especially, the sociology of linguistics. It is historiographic too in that it can be interpreted as a synthetic account to exemplify a historical hypothesis that the comparative linguistic paradigm was a product of various factors during the modern black nationalist era from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s,¹ which very few in academia have attempted to record as an important development in the history of black linguistics, Black Studies, and black nationalism (cf. Wieviorka 1992).

The major reason for selecting life story method is that “[r]ather than being a problem, subjectivity, the manner in which the respondent perceives his/her situation and activities in social structures and networks, is the very stuff of analysis” (Miller 2000: 129). Whatever objectivist mantra researchers may deploy, especially the social sciences (incl., linguistics) exist largely within the realm of subjectivity (Delgado & Stefancic 2012: 104). Hence, this research positioned the subjective meanings of the social construction process of the comparative linguistic paradigm as significant, i.e., it explored and inspected the interpretive life experiences of Dr. Ernie A. Smith and other Africological linguists in their own empirical, historical settings.

Life story interview allowed me to dig up, especially, an implicit or inherent ideological-political component of a scientific theory in the empirical world (McCall & Wittner 1990: 46). It more accurately captures those ideological-political, experiential-practical, and theoretical-scientific meanings, concepts, or categories that Dr. Smith and others adopted to understand and address linguistic phenomena and issues around them. It also allowed me to employ those meanings, concepts or categories over those of the dominant discourse or mine in the dissertation. Finally, I hope my life story research might help Dr. Smith and similar others order, sort, and explain, i.e., render consistent their long lives despite ruptures and shifts.

The life story method that I have adopted herein, which initially draws on the existing written works of the storytellers (i.e., Dr. Smith and other linguists), could give a sociologically more informed account of the social construction process by which the comparative linguistic paradigm or the Africological paradigm came into being in relation to the larger racialized social structure and social change. It delves into and reconstructs the interpretive, social constructionist process by which acting individuals such as Dr. Smith encountered and interpreted the dominant ideological-political, experiential-practical, and theoretical-scientific meanings which the larger society adopted to deal with the language of descendants of enslaved Africans in the United States and by which they reconstructed the existing meanings and put into action the reconstructed meanings in their scientific endeavors. Therefore, this study does not only take into account socio-structural factors but also interpretive processes of particular situations that trigger particular behaviors, in that “structural features, such as ‘culture,’ ‘social systems,’ ‘social stratification,’ or ‘social roles,’ set conditions for their action but do not determine their action. People—that is, acting units—do not act toward culture, social structure or the like; they act

toward situations” (Blumer: 87-88).

Lastly, it must be noted that there exist several constraints, which may sometimes be found to be flexibilities or even consistencies, in the life story interview approach. First, “[m]emory recall is malleable; the past is being constantly rewritten by the subject as some events fade and others grow in significance” (Miller 2000: 133). In fact, Dr. Smith’s accounts sometimes shifted. For example, he recognized the existence of a black nationalist linguistic ideology that the language of descendants of enslaved Africans in the United States is an African language before he entered the doctoral program of the University of California, Irvine, but he also stated that the linguistic idea was formed after entering the program. This might be a memory fluctuation. Second, “[t]he respondent . . . may choose to omit material that they do not wish the interviewer to know about or choose to lie deliberately” (Ibid.: 140). Indeed, the storytellers suggested that there were things that could not be shared easily. It is justifiable because of their privacy and protection issues. Third, “[n]arratives select the elements of the telling to confer meaning on prior events—events that may not have had such meaning at the time” (Ibid.: 141-142). Therefore, it should be remembered that all life stories are given coherent meanings *ex post facto*.

3.2. Storytellers

The storytellers were chosen on the major criteria that: they experienced or engaged in black nationalist movements in the 1960s and 1970s, were trained in linguistics, and developed an Afrocentric linguistic paradigm in which the primary languages of descendants of enslaved Africans in the United States and other parts of the world are described as a grammatical

continuation of West and Niger-Congo African languages or West African languages. These people acted toward Ebonics or newly born African languages as languages other than European languages as a scientific concern and relate the languages to political, economic, and/or educational concerns in diasporic African communities.

The dissertation focuses on the life story of Dr. Ernie A. Smith, a linguist who developed the comparative linguistic paradigm, which views the language of descendants of enslaved Africans in the US as an African language. I chose Dr. Smith as a principal figure in the history of the comparative linguistic paradigm, thus, the main storyteller, because he is the only linguist who actively presents a comprehensive and comprehensible account of Ebonics within the comparative linguistic paradigm in the United States; he was the linguist who gave a linguistic definition of Ebonics when the term “Ebonics” was coined by a black psychologist in 1973 in St. Louis; and he was an influential person in the nationally known 1996 “Ebonics Resolution” by the Oakland School Board. The data from other storytellers were inserted in a way that their life story data enrich, i.e., either affirm or contradict Dr. Smith’s life story and contribute to a finer theorization of the formative process of linguistic paradigms.

I admit that saturation may not have occurred in this research, since I conducted multiple in-depth interviews only with Dr. Smith. In-depth life story interviews with others and their analysis remain to be done, employing the developed tool applied in the present case with Dr. Smith. Moreover, for the purpose of generating a theory more comprehensively on how a linguistic paradigm is constructed in linguistics, the social constructionist process by which the mainstream paradigms were constructed needs to be examined; however, since the main purpose of my dissertation attempts to give a comprehensive and comprehensible account of the process by

which the comparative linguistic paradigm was born in US black linguistics, the data from the mainstream linguists will be collected, analyzed, and incorporated into the data from the Africological linguists for refining my current tentative theory after completing this dissertation.

3.3. Data Construction and Protection

I employed implied consent for Dr. Ernie A. Smith. When I first interviewed Dr. Smith in December 2010, I had contacted him via e-mail from Nippon, explained why I hoped to interview him and questions I planned to ask him, and told him that I would visit him from Nippon. At that time, because I had no idea or information of an Institutional Review Board (IRB) nor of informed consent as shown Appendix A, I did not explain anything about the confidentiality and anonymity of the data which I gained from the interview. I basically recorded that interview and used the data for my MA thesis at Hitotsubashi University, Tokyo. Since then, Dr. Smith and I have come to know each other through e-mail correspondences, conferences, interviews, an internship, and private visits. Under those circumstances, implied consent was appropriate. But it has to be noted that the implied “consent” did not meet informed consent sufficiently. I may have made Dr. Smith uneasy or uncomfortable over my research purpose or “intention,” because while I interviewed him, I started to learn from scratch the information and ideas in Africology, qualitative methods, sociology of knowledge, and linguistics, except for basic knowledge on black linguistics. Consequently, the structure and contents of the dissertation research underwent drastic changes in the course of interview, particularly because I didn’t explain those changes in an appropriate manner and at appropriate timings.

Data gathering was conducted from December 2010 through November 2016 mainly in Los Angeles. An estimate of the number of hours we spent recording our sessions is over a hundred. Interviews were mostly conducted at the storyteller's home because diaries, photos, letters, documents, and other memorabilia tied to life story interview questions were expected to be at his home. The interview questions were semi-structured (See Appendix A). For I had already developed some categories or concepts due to my prior study of the existing literature by the linguists and my prior interviews with Dr. Smith—e.g., racism (incl., linguisticism) and nationalism—stemming from a broad question, yet not a refined hypothesis: how a comparative linguistic paradigm was born in the 1970s under the influence of black nationalism.¹ The interviews became more-structured as they proceeded, because the initial exploratory questions produced unexpected answers and further questions and presented insights or clues for changing the predetermined categories or concepts, thus creating more on-target questions. Concerning the storytellers other than Dr. Smith, I compared the life story data of Dr. Smith to those of the other storytellers to generate additional material relevant to the concepts or categories and the structure developed for Dr. Smith's life story. The interview data were gathered and organized around the categories or concepts of racism and linguistic discrimination, race and social structure, nationalism, community ombudsperson efforts (often called "activism"), and language sciences (See Appendix C), to show how the comparative linguistic paradigm was ideologically-politically, experientially-practically, and theoretically-scientifically mobilized to challenge the White Supremacist social and linguistic status quo. The diaries, photos, letters, documents, and other memorabilia were collected and used to support the interview data, i.e., "help provide structures and sites for reclaiming the past" (Plummer 2001: 241). Since this method requires

greater firsthand immersion in the social worlds of those storytellers. I established an intensive, three-week-long non-participatory observation as an intern at an ombudsperson organization in South Central Los Angeles, in which Dr. Smith is a member. Lastly, in this exploratory research, anecdotal data (e.g., Jackson, Williams, & Smitherman 2011; Troutman, personal communication, date unrecorded) were also used when I started it and developed core categories.

During data-collection, the developing categories and the relationships between the categories were constantly adjusted or changed to ground them to the data. What kinds of data were to be collected were not strictly determined at first but constantly changed and narrowed as I acquired more information and better understanding on the phenomenon. The grounding changes were also made based on other data such as Dr. Smith's personal essays and poems, an observation of his ombudsman efforts (See my observation report in Appendix B), and my e-mail correspondences with him (See the list of categories or concepts I inducted from the correspondences in Appendix C). By the spring of 2016, I developed a tripartite *gestalt*, which informed the formation of the comparative linguistic paradigm: nationalist (later, ideological-political), practical (later, experiential-practical), and scientific (later, theoretical-scientific), and thus, refined the preexisting sets of categories and rearranged them in that order as seen in the structure of the present dissertation. I stopped the data-collection at the moment that "the collection of new empirical material does not add significantly to the process of concept generation" (Miller 2000: 120); however, this research may not have reached such a saturation since I didn't conduct in-depth interviews with others. Finally, I have to admit that the whole data-gathering process was often difficult and demanding mainly due to my own unpreparedness.

Most of the data are raw interview data recorded using an IC-recorder in the MP3 format,

which were soon downloaded in encrypted digitized form onto my computer and, as back-up, an external drive stored in my study, and a networked computer at my parents' home in Nippon. The transcribed and edited data from the IC-recording are in Word format. The data are arranged using headers in the Word format by theme/category, date of recording, and place of recording for current and future research use.

3.4. Analytical Tools for Linguistic Knowledge Formation

The principal goal of this research is to attempt to understand one particular case, one particular process of knowledge formation or scientific paradigm formation by which one particular individual, Dr. Ernie A. Smith came up with his linguistic paradigm, while at appropriate points of the dissertation paying attention to some similarities and differences and some influences between Dr. Smith and other Africological linguists. As another important goal of this research, some tentative theory might be made for the sociology of linguistics, understanding linguistic knowledge formation process. However, this research does not attain reliability. It is not certain if similar findings would be obtained when other researchers interrogate the life story of Dr. Smith. For instance, a black journalist who interviewed Dr. Smith constructed a completely different story from mine on one question which I also asked him (cf. Section 5.1.2 and *Our Weekly*, February 26 – March 4, 2015, page 13). In short, the relationship between the interviewee and the interviewers and the difference in the descriptive and analytical perspectives of the interviewers may largely change the nature of a story which the interviewee tells and the interviewer reconstructs. That said, life story would be valid for this study since its

aim is to explore the subjective meanings and the relationships between those meanings of the storyteller and grasp the often invisible, intricate workings of the formation of a scientific paradigm. The verification may be strengthened after comparing the reconstructed story with other forms of records. The verification is also justifiable because the primary purpose of this research is to develop one plausible account of the development of the Africological paradigm by one individual from one vantage point “as if it were utterly novel; as if its connections with other events were as yet undemonstrated; and as if its developments were as yet uncharted” (Rock 1982: 41). At the same time, it takes life story “as a way of building up some wider sense of theory” (Plummer 2001: 159) for linguistic knowledge formation.

There is one principal analytical device employed in the present dissertation: sociology of knowledge. The aim of the dissertation through this analytic tool is to attempt to reconstruct and understand the comprehensive process of scientific knowledge construction, i.e., linguistic paradigm formation and the workings of linguistic knowledge in state power structure. My understanding of the relationship between linguistic knowledge and state power largely draws on the following excerpt from Michael Foucault (1980):

We should not be content to say that power has a need for such-and-such a discovery, such-and-such a form of knowledge, but we should add that the exercise of power itself creates and causes to emerge new objects of knowledge and accumulates new bodies of information. . . . Knowledge and power are integrated with one another, and there is no point in dreaming a time when knowledge will cease to depend on power. . . . It is not possible for power to be exercised without knowledge, it is impossible for knowledge not to engender power. (51-52)

The ultimate aim of my dissertation is to provide discursive tools for deconstructing the existing scientific paradigms and placing a counter-paradigm in sound paradigmatic competition to

contribute to any social change in the obdurate power structure. For a scientific knowledge is a specialized discourse. Therefore, in the course of analysis, the method of *discourse analysis* is employed as another tool as specified in the following excerpt:

Discourse analysis deals with conflicting, subjugating and institutionally founded discourses that posit particular versions of self, personhood and subjectivity. Discourse analysis may allow us to make sense of the ways in which human beings are shaped and moulded, via the power of discourses, in given social and cultural backgrounds. . . . Discourse analysis is a resistant approach to analysis: resisting static, structuralist and immovable views of discourse while embracing resistant performative acts of human subjects. (Goodley, et al. 2004: 114, 116).

The analytical tool is not merely to demonopolize the dominant governing discourses, i.e., the Ebonics-as-a-dialect-of-English discourse but understand the subjugated discourse, i.e., the Ebonics-as-a-language-other-than-English discourse in black linguistics. It also relativizes those competing scientific discourses as subjective which inevitably contain an arbitrary element, because they do, explores a venue for resistance to the subjugating discourses, and seeks any change in the insurmountable state power structure in which Ebonics is currently situated.

Thomas S. Kuhn (1996) presents a succinct definition of the social construction process by which scientific discourses emerges, which I attempt to elucidate in this study:

The early developmental stages of most sciences have been characterized by continual competition between a number of distinct views of nature, each partially derived from, and all roughly compatible with, the dictates of scientific observation and method. What differentiated these various schools was not one or another failure of method—they were all “scientific”—but what we shall come to call their incommensurable ways of seeing the world and of practicing science in it. Observation and experience can and must drastically restrict the range of admissible scientific belief, else there would be no science. But they cannot alone determine a particular body of such belief. An apparently arbitrary element, compounded of personal and historical accident, is always a formative ingredient of the beliefs espoused by a given scientific community at a given

time. . . . Normal science . . . often suppresses fundamental novelties because they are necessarily subversive of its basic commitments. Nevertheless, so long as those commitments retain an element of the arbitrary, the very nature of normal research ensures that novelty shall not be suppressed for very long. Sometimes a normal problem, one that ought to be solvable by known rules and procedures, resists the reiterated onslaught of the ablest members of the group within whose competence it falls. . . . Competition between segments of the scientific community is the only historical process that ever actually results in the rejection of one previously accepted theory or in the adoption of another. (3-5)

The arbitrariness or interpretivity of a scientific paradigm may derive from, as I postulate in Chapter 1, the interpretive social act of negotiating ideological-political, experiential-practical, and theoretical-scientific meanings. It is because of the very arbitrary or interpretive nature that paradigmatic competition, one of the tenets of Afrocentricity, between paradigms which give different interpretations of and solutions to a problem may occur. I suggest that this phenomenon of interpretive nature has been happening in black linguistics since an all-out pursuit for paradigmatic formation and problem-solving for much of the black community began in the 1960s and 1970s. To be sure, the paradigmatic competition seems to have subsided since then and the late 1990s; however, a higher awareness of the inevitable arbitrariness or interpretivity of the existing paradigms in black linguistics through this social constructionist work of mine might help secure some legitimate place for the comparative linguistic paradigm in linguistic circles and, hopefully, attain more self-determination on the part of blacks for defining and solving a phenomenon or problem even in the racialized power structure of the United States. Therefore, it is imperative that the tripartite nature of linguistic knowledge formation process be understood from the microscopic analysis of the interaction of meanings at the individual level and that theory become more congruent with practice in black linguistics so that the former could better serve the black underclass. I wish future research of my own or others will add to and correct my

doctoral research.

4. POLITICS OF TRUTHS IN BLACK LINGUISTICS

Predators can and do use dialect differences to exploit and oppress, because ordinary people can be made to doubt their own value and to accept subservience if they can be made to despise the speech of their fathers. —James Sledd (1969)

This study explores, reconstructs, and reinterprets the social construction process by which Dr. Ernie A. Smith faced and negotiated the meanings surrounding his mother tongue in the black community and beyond, and arrived at his comparative linguistic paradigm. Before entering into discussion, I shall trace the history of black linguistics as the scientific contexts leading up to the formation of the Ebonics paradigm.

In popular discourse, the primary language of most of the descendants of enslaved Africans (known as African American English, African American vernacular English, African American Language, or Ebonics) has been very often a target of mockery or denigration for centuries. Indeed, it is one of the most stigmatized languages in the United States today (Milroy 1999). Even in the academic discourse of linguistics, denigrating remarks of a biological nature were leveled at it from the late 19th to the early 20th century in the aftermath of the *de facto* abolition of slavery. Into the latter half of the 20th century, the former irrational, unscientific narrative on black language was replaced with a rational, scientific narrative reflecting the political atmosphere then. Psychologists and sociologists tried to explain the linguistic distinctiveness of black language as a mental deficit or a cultural deprivation (e.g., Bereiter & Englemann 1966; Bereiter, et al. 1966; Bloom, Davis, & Hess 1965; Carson & Rabin 1960; Deutsch 1963, 1965, 1966; Hess & Shipman 1965; Jensen 1968; Shuey 1966). The primary language of most blacks

was (occasionally, it is still so) measured as an anomaly against the reference of standard (mainly, white upper- and middle- class) English.

However, the rapid growth of linguistic research on the language from the mid-1960s and early 1970s apparently heightened awareness in academic circles that it is not a deficient but rather a different dialect of English or a deviation from standard English. Linguists demonstrated the systematicity of black language as a counterargument against the deficit hypothesis deployed mainly in psychology and sociology (e.g., Baratz & Shuy 1969; Brooks 1964; Dillard 1972; Fasold 1969; Fasold & Shuy 1970; Goodman 1965; Labov 1967, 1969; Labov et al. 1968; Leaverton 1971; McDavid, Jr. 1964; Pederson 1964; Piestrup 1973; Stewart 1964; Williamson 1961; Wolfram 1969). However, despite the efforts by the linguists, most of whom were white, “the character of the discussion [of African languages, including Ebonics in the United States] has been dictated by those who had political and economic control over the lives of African people [in continental Africa and the diaspora]” (Blackshire-Belay 1996: 16). The legitimacy and rights of black language was (and are) established vis-à-vis standard English or white language within the ideological or hegemonic framework of English monolingualism. Language rights were (and are) inequitably allocated to black language users and white language users in the state-sponsored dialectal structure, which is a case of *linguicism*¹ (Skutnabb-Kangas 1988, 1998). As an illustration of such uneven distribution of power through linguistic difference, it is often said that black language is an *equal* dialect to white language but is *inappropriate* for *formal* purposes. This self-contradictory, hegemonic discourse of *bidialectalism* seems to have worked way better for state institutions than the often counter-hegemonic discourse of *bilingualism*.

I postulate that the historical shifts in the dominant linguistic discourse on black language has

long been a function of “interest convergence” (Bell 1980) between whites and blacks. Interest convergence postulates that “[t]he interest of blacks in achieving racial equality will be accommodated only when it converges with the interests of whites,” on condition that the interest of blacks does not threaten “the superior societal status of middle and upper class whites” (Ibid.: 523). At almost the same time that white institutions demand additional labor force for which only whites cannot fill, blacks are allowed a certain quantity and quality of freedom or human rights. A limited number of blacks are linguistically, psychologically, educationally, etc. screened to get into the limited number of political and economic positions in which whites have to rely on minority groups to attain their goals or maintain the status quo. This is, I suspect, a system of interest convergence achieved through negotiating the meanings of, among others, linguistic codes.

This chapter will briefly review the entire literature through one common thread: how racism and linguistic paradigms have intersected to construct different, more specifically, additive scientific discourses on black language with superficial changes, while maintaining the basic structure of black linguistics. It will discuss how the dominant linguistic paradigms on black language today may have been a result of, as Bell’s interest convergence theory (1980) suggests, convergence of blacks’ interests with the interests of whites, who have political and economic control over the lives of the former. Critical Race Theory (CRT) (Delgado & Stefancic 2012) encapsulates this position on black linguistics as follows: “objective truth . . . does not exist, at least in social science and politics. In these realms, truth is a social construct created to suit the purposes of the dominant group” (104). Based on Bell’s interest convergence theory as part of CRT, I shall discuss how neo-racist the successive dominant scientific discourses on the black

and white linguistic relationship may have become as a result of interest convergence between the two linguistic groups, and, lastly, how counter-racist the comparative linguistic or Africological paradigm has become as a result of interest *divergence*.

4.1. Historical Trends

4.1.1. First Phase

The configurations of racism in linguistic research on black language may have corresponded to changing political and economic climates of different phases in history. According to Smitherman (1988), scientific interests in African slaves' behaviors emerged when the North and the South vied for political and economic dominance in the mid-nineteenth century. Especially the South, facing the liberation of enslaved Africans and a threat to their established lavish slave economy, attempted to establish the cultural "deviancy" or "inferiority" of African people premised on biological determinism. The known earliest example of scientific racism against black language appeared in the late nineteenth century.

4.1.2. Second Phase

Such biological racism seems to have subsided in the early 1940s, when "[t]he educated classes subscribed to ethnocentric theories that proclaimed the biological inferiority of those Europeans whose origins were not in Northern Europe" (Gold 2010: 67) and the US army started to enlist

Africans in increasing numbers in the later phase of World War II (Delgado & Stefancic 2012; Murray 1971). When the Second World War ended, the government needed to provide returned black soldiers with some tangible “rewards.” I suppose the legitimacy of black language was one of them. It appears that outright racism disappeared from the literature around the mid-1950s. For another example of “reward,” many of them entered college, and “joined” white institutions, but in a “separate but equal” way. As long as the white establishment had to accept some blacks in their institutions, at the same time, they may have needed to establish a system to segregate most or all of the blacks outside of the white boundaries. One notable example was the housing segregation which private and public interests both overtly and covertly enforced through comprehensive tactics especially after the end of WWII (Delgado & Stefancic 2012: 120-121). Very interestingly, the housing “policy” to cleanse blacks from white neighborhood resonated with the school “policy” to segregate blacks from whites by means of separate schools and classes. For the latter, a disproportionate number of blacks were tracked into special classes for low IQ or psychological reasons (incl., linguistic).

4.1.3. Third Phase

It seems especially from the Korean War, then, the Vietnam War came an era when a scientific form of racism and a racist form of science could not be tolerated and thus a more scientifically justifiable rationale was deployed for more covertly continuing to place Africans in a lower-socioeconomic class or the underclass (Wilson 1987). For example, during the civil rights movement (at around the Korean War) and the modern black nationalism era (at around the

Vietnam War):

social scientists attempting to account more generally for problems endemic to African American communities . . . as grounded in *social pathology* or *cultural deprivation* . . . line[d] up against proponents of a distinctive African American culture in which differences from general American culture may be accounted for in part by retentions from the ancestral cultures of African slaves. (DeBose 2005: 44)

In the next sections of this chapter, I shall discuss some biological/evolutionist arguments against black language as the beginning of scientific racism against blacks. For a second phase, I shall delve into the status of black language in American dialectology, which I suppose was developed for the long-term purpose of examining how far the English language spread throughout the United States and denying and rectifying any unacceptable linguistic variation or aberration assumedly within the English language. We will see a third phase where two strands of research on black language derived from the second phase and another diverted from one of them.

4.2. Racist Scholarship by White Scholars

The earliest denigration of black language in the academia dates back to the late nineteenth century and continued to the early 1940s (e.g., Bennett 1909; Crum 1940; Gonzales 1922; Harrison 1884; Krapp 1924). It was after the *de jure* abolition of slavery was announced in the United States but still outright racism against Africans was prevalent. The racist way that black language, which is supposed to have been far more different from white language, was described, was perhaps inherited from the creole linguistic way that pidgin or creole languages, close in visibility to European languages, had been described by typical European linguists in other parts

of the African diaspora since the late 19th century and earlier (cf. Hancock 1980: ix). “The scholar who accepts the theory of Negro inferiority tend[ed] to explain any apparent differences between Negro and white speech on the basis of the Negro’s childlike mind or imperfectly developed speech organs” (McDavid & McDavid 1951: 5). For example, in the late nineteenth century, linguist James A. Harrison (1884) asserted that:

much of his [= an African’s] talk is baby-talk . . . the slang which is an ingrained part of his being deep-dyed as his skin . . . the African, from the absence of books and teaching, had no principle of *analepsy* in his intellectual furnishing by which a word, once become <sic.> obscure from a real or supposed loss of parts or meaning, can be repaired, amended, or restored to its original form. (233, italics in original)

The author attributed the production of black language to the physical character of Africans and the psychological or intellectual inferiority. He claimed that the African are too intellectually inferior to reproduce white language. His description of the language was full of exoticization, mystification, and beastification done to non-European worlds. Into the early twentieth century, Latino journalist Ambrose Gonzales (1922) believed Africans’ technical inadequacies and physical features (e.g., Africans’ lips) caused the reduction in their ability to speak English.² Then, another linguist George Phillip Krapp (1924), a professor at Columbia University developed a less overt yet nuanced argument as follows:

In one very important respect . . . the Negro is not a foreigner and an outcast: his language is finally and completely English. . . . The Negroes, indeed . . . have retained not a trace of any native African speech. . . . The native African *dialects* have been completely lost . . . it [= an archaic pronunciation of American English] has lingered in the Negro speech simply because the Negro, being *socially backward*, he held on to many habits which the white world has left behind. . . . In one group of Negroes [= Gullahs], probably the most *primitive* alive today in their cultural development, clear traces of it [= *infantile* English] still survive . . . the only Negro speech that had any

literary tradition in Irving's day was the *barbarous dialect* that survives now in Gullah. . . . Negro English [is] no longer a *grotesque mutilation* of the English language. (190-195, italics added)

The author made an unfounded claim that the current language of Africans in the United States “retained not a trace of any native African speech,” probably because linguists back then (surely today's linguists too) did not learn African languages and did not look at the African components of the linguistic repertoire of the slave community and/or because they did not have a concept of code-switching, which the African community should have done depending on settings or interlocutors. The writer's usage of the concept “dialect” as seen in other writings on the languages of Africans by Europeans (e.g., UNESCO 1953: 25) may show his condescending or denigrating attitudes toward African languages and African varieties of English, because he shifts from “dialect” to “English” when he refers to a “Negro” dialect of English in the mainland, which had become “finally and completely English.” Moreover, he placed Africans on a Darwinist evolutionary scale, equating social backwardness or primitiveness to a “barbarous dialect” or a “grotesque mutilation” of English.

In the 1940s, theologian Mason Crum (1940: 113) made a similar racist claim that Africans produced degenerated English because of their cultural and linguistic primitiveness. In the 50s and 60s these race-inferiority narratives on the language of enslaved Africans and their descendants seems to have transformed into more sophisticated ones, which allowed scientists to more easily evade charges of racism. The earlier discourse did not completely disappear (Clement & Johnson 1973: 1-2).

4.3. Conservative Scholarship by White Scholars

The linguistic arguments on black language in the 50s started to avoid prior judgmental comments. Already in the 1950s, dialectological linguist Raven I. McDavid, Jr. (1950) and Raven I. McDavid, Jr. and Virginia Glenn McDavid (1951) examined in detail the racist narratives on black language made by mostly southern white scholars who were mostly non-linguists. They made a balanced argument on the origins of black language. However, the former inadvertently made a myopic and ethnocentric criticism when the author said, “The arrangement [of *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*] suggests that its purpose is not primarily linguistic” (McDavid 1950: 326). The statement suggests that black linguist Lorenzo Dow Turner’s work (1949) is less linguistic and thus cannot establish a linguistically valid argument to support any linguistic paradigm which draws on the work. The argument that Turner’s work did not follow the expected order of the author’s or his fellow linguists’ disciplinary practice may be ethnocentric. Turner’s work was justifiably designed and arranged to demystify the racist notions surrounding Gullah and deconstruct Eurocentric linguistics (incl., McDavid’s) which looked (still looks) at only structures which they could easily identify without little or no knowledge of West and Niger-Congo African languages. Turner did this work by himself with an unprecedentedly extensive knowledge of West African languages. His work may be worth hundreds of linguists’ work. If McDavid had expected a comprehensive grammar book, it would have been other future linguists’ collective work drawing on Turner rather than imposing such an onerous task on him alone. Or it would not be possible forever without colonialists,’ imperialists,’ or state-nationalists’ organized, abundant, extensive support, to which their economic, political, and

religious interests have allowed other languages access. By saying “linguists want to know what Gullah is like as a language” (332), McDavid indirectly or inadvertently undervalued the comprehensiveness of Turner’s work. It might have been generous if he had delineated what linguistic criteria and data are necessary for a linguistic code to be viewed as a language.

McDavid’s way of discussing prior racist remarks on black language was just a *description* rather than a *criticism*. Then, his linguistic criticism was turned to refuting the Africanness of Gullah, unfortunately, without his own counter-evidence. Therefore, even those linguists who attempted to be neutral interpreted Turner’s work Anglocentrically and construct an Anglocentric meaning of the work and Gullah. Concerning other varieties of black language, McDavid suggests they are full of errors. Black language was allowed no “autonomy which structuralism so freely accorded to exotic languages and dialects in other parts of the world” (Bailey 1965: 171, commenting on Mencken 1963: 475). He viewed it as a “broken” English, peeling off just one layer from the multiple semantic layers of black language, which associated it with the physical or biological nature of Africans. It seems that he did not view it as a structural entity called “dialect” or “language.”

Another dialectologist Hans Kurath (1949) commented, “By and large the Southern Negro speaks the language of the white man of his locality or area and of *his level of education*. But in some respects, his speech is *more archaic or old-fashioned*; not un-English, but *retarded* because of less schooling” (6, emphasis added). This might be a precursor for the notion that black language is basically a continuation of British dialects in old days. Kurath referred to the “Negro” part of English as “retarded,” a *developmental* notion, which was to appear as the dominant interpretation of black language in psychology and sociology concentrated in the

1960s. The author may have thought African languages or linguistic features were erased in the speech of the majority of blacks except in Gullah.

A similar line of argument was developed by linguists Donald J. Lloyd and Harry R. Warfel, who claimed, “Negro speech in America is not a distinct entity,” although they recognized the scant existence of African words (1956: 17-18). As the former two studies discussed above did not, neither did the authors recognize black language as a dialect of English or another language. It is worth pointing out that the linguists’ arguments leaned toward making sure whether African linguistic patterns “disappeared” from black language rather than whether such linguistic patterns “continued” in the language.

4.4. Neo-Racist Scholarship by White Scholars

Against the historical trends in the 1960s, most sensitive to the civil or human rights of blacks, there emerged a tendency “to treat African American students as affected by speech pathologies and learning disorders that inhibit their academic performance” (DeBose 2005: 162). The dominant paradigm in psychology, sociology, and health largely contributed to a disproportionate placement of black students in speech therapy classes (Taylor 1969: 11). “The deficit-pathology orientation . . . as a dominant theme of academic study of peoples of African descent throughout the twentieth century continues to influence state and federal policies”³ (DeBose 2005: 160-161).

A more liberal (Taylor 1969), scientific, sophisticated narrative in the civil rights and black nationalism era, i.e., the cognitive or cultural deficit arguments on black children were widely

accepted among speech pathologists, educational sociologists, and educational psychologists⁴ (e.g., Bereiter & Englemann 1966; Bereiter, et al. 1966; Bloom, Davis, & Hess 1965; Carson & Rabin 1960; Deutsch 1963, 1965, 1966; Hess & Shipman 1965; Jensen 1968; Shuey 1966). As a most often-quoted example, educational psychologists Bereiter, et al. (1966) claimed concerning the language of black children that:

[o]ur estimation of the language of culturally deprived children agrees . . . with that of Bernstein⁵, who maintains that this language is not merely an *underdeveloped* version of standard English, but is a basically *non-logical* mode of expressive behavior which lacks the formal properties necessary for the organization of thought. (112-113, italics added)

The language of most blacks was “underdeveloped” and “non-logical,” suggesting that the language of most whites is developed and logical, as the aforementioned scholars claimed. The black-white language binary was placed on a *developmental* scale. As already mentioned, this developmental argument, quite interestingly, was preceded by dialectologist Kurath (1949). Black language became a psychological or medical issue due to certain sociological conditions. During this period, much of the research was focused on IQ and other standardized test results of black children, and those tests were based on the cultural values and norms of, mainly, middle-class whites and phrased in their language, which, analogously, was developed under certain sociological conditions (cf. White 1984). In that sociohistorical environment and atmosphere many scholars discussed the language *deficits* of the *culturally deprived* child from *lower-class* homes. Reflecting the liberalist trend that just avoiding referring to the concept “race” justified their underlying racist thoughts and behaviors, much of the research relied on the non-racial terms. The arguments were obviously based on class, but since most descendants of enslaved

Africans lived in lower- or under- class areas, it can be reasonably suggested that the color-blind discussions were designed to avoid the accusation of racism. This scientific racism, the deficit thesis appeared to have died out after sociolinguistic research on black language reached its first apogee in the mid-1960s through the 1970s.

Yet in 1983, a few years after the 1980 presidential election of Ronald Reagan, education specialist Thomas J. Farrell presented the cognitive deficiency thesis with an example of the way the verb “to be” is used in the black community:

The non-standard forms of the verb “to be” in. . . . *Black English* may affect the thinking of the users. . . . Black ghetto children do not use the standard forms of the verb “to be.” . . . Many of those same black ghetto children have difficulty learning to read, and they do not score highly on measures of *abstract thinking*. . . . I am hypothesizing that learning the full standard deployment of the verb “to be” is integral to developing Level II thinking because the deployment of that verb played a part in the development of *abstract thinking* in ancient Greece.

(477, 479, italics added)

First of all, this argument is a repetition of one of the most quoted claims by Bereiter et al. (1966). The author seems to have accepted the dominant paradigm in linguistics since the mid-1960s which argues black language is a “dialect of English,” which is a linguistic systematicity thesis. Dividing language and thought and bringing the contradicting paradigms in linguistics and sociology/psychology up to a complementary relationship, he suggested that the “nonstandard” (a euphemism for black or African in this context) way of using the verb “to be” obstructs abstract thinking, which is a cognitive deficit thesis. But such a linguistic difference has nothing to do with whether abstract thinking exists or not because the abstract thinking is merely one type of such thinking, representing a certain set of meanings associated with the white

middle-class use of the verb “to be.” The usage of to be in black language, on the other, follows a distinct system of morphosyntactic and semantic rules, realizing another type of abstract thinking (See a comprehensive description in DeBose 2015; Green 1998).

Since then, there seems to have been no deficit discourse on black language, at least in written form.⁶ Today most informed intellectuals would say African American English or “nonstandard” English is equal to any other dialect (incl., standard) spoken around the United States. It is indeed remarkable progress looking back at those outright racist remarks in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century. We may be tempted to conclude that linguistic racism has been gone at least among the intelligentsia, but the former *outright* racism and then the latter *scientific* racism have just turned into a *more invisible, sophisticated, scientific* one, retaining one conceptualization of black language: a deviation of standard English, with an additional meaning of being to be covertly eradicated. The new discourse may have contributed to maintenance of the status quo in which black language was still interpreted within the state-sponsored nationalist language ideology. Language sciences helped deny the language access to public areas such as the mass media (except hip hop or literature, i.e., domains of the humanities rather than social sciences), politics, nonracial business, and education.

4.5. Liberalist Scholarship by White Scholars

In the 1960s, the low achievement level in literacy among black students was a pressing concern for some linguists because the students’ problems had been addressed as deficits such as dyslexia (Baratz & Shuy 1969). White scholars may have been supposed to express their

opinions on blacks in a non-racist/racialized way, for example, use of “non-standard dialect” and “standard English” to refer to “black dialect” and “white dialect” respectively, and criticize racist remarks or, sometimes, color-blind ones after the enactment of various anti-discrimination decisions and laws, e.g., *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* in 1954, Civil Rights Act of 1964, Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974, under particular political, diplomatic, and military circumstances. This series of events occurred especially after the Korean War (1950-53), although the connection between the events and the war is not clear at this stage. This second stage was characterized by attempts to rectify or alleviate the deficit status of black language propagated mainly by white linguists, psychologists, and sociologists in earlier years.

Under the administration of President Lyndon B. Johnson, which launched the War on Poverty in 1964 (practically, a war on *black* poverty), when US involvement in the Vietnam War (1955-1975) peaked, federal funds started to be distributed for research on black language (Jackson, Williams, & Smitherman 2011: 106).⁷ This financial factor may have been an important impetus for the establishment and domination of the paradigms adopted or developed by white language scientists (e.g., Baratz & Shuy 1969; Brooks 1964; Dillard 1972; Fasold 1969; Fasold & Shuy 1970; Goodman 1965; Labov 1967, 1969; Labov et al. 1968; Leaverton 1971; McDavid, Jr. 1964; Pederson 1964; Piestrup 1973; Stewart 1964; Williamson 1961; Wolfram 1969).⁸ One of the earliest federal government-sponsored linguistic research projects, which examined the language of black youths in the inner-city of New York, was conducted in 1965 by Labov et al. (1968). What it emphasized was the *systematicity* of black language. The *system* argument attempted to demystify the *deficit* hypothesis widely accepted in psychology, speech, and sociology. However, this linguistic systematicity for black language was placed not within

the concept of *language* but *dialect*, i.e., “an integral part of the larger sociolinguistic structure of the English language” (Labov 1969: 1). This structural demarcation of black language as a dialect of English was based on the transformational-generative argument that white and black language “are both based upon the same deep structures and used to convey the same underlying logical propositions” (Labov 1969: 46-47; Smith 1974: 18).

It has been one of the several attempts to linguistically/scientifically distinguish between language and dialect, although linguistics usually denies any interest or involvement in the act of distinguishing between language and dialect as a non-linguistic or socio-political concern. The *systematic dialect* discourse, however, did not give black language any substantive shift in the linguistic, political, economic, and educational status of the language: the applied concerns of these linguists were based on the premise that “the fundamental role of the school is to teach the reading and writing of *standard* English” (Ibid.: 1, italics added). In this argument, black language was still placed in a *nonstandard* position relative to standard English, using one close sociolinguistic conceptualization, a *low-high* diglossic dichotomy. The term “nonstandard” had (and has) a stigmatizing effect deriving from popular use. The argument was a typical submersion-type or subtractive type of the code-switching narrative. Those predominantly white linguists who studied the language of slave descendants in the 1960s and 1970s recognized it as a *different linguistic system* (Smith 1974: 23-24) or attempted to address the issue in an *English as a second language* manner, which suggested black language is the first language and English, a second language. However, all of them treated the black language as “urban Negro dialect,” “non-standard Negro dialect,” “Negro non-standard English,” “non-standard Negro speech,” “Negro dialect,” or “Black English.” Their linguistic labeling still may still have implied the

deficit model to varying degrees in that these labelings mean a marked aberration from white language called just “English,” which is unmarked. It may be said that the research by predominantly white linguists contributed to the upliftment of black language as a *systematic nonstandard* dialect rather than a *deficit* dialect. However, the deficit model and the difference model were common in the following respect: the former promoted the eradication of black language *by action* while the latter did so *by silence*, i.e., they didn’t make any recommendation to protect or even promote black language (See Section 5.2.4 for detailed discussion). They may have implicitly acted within the framework of whites’ language nationalism, which posited that “American” citizens would strive to have the (elite) white language, what they call, “standard English” as their primary (target) language in the English-speaking state of the United States.

At this third stage of liberalist scholarship, we saw a new evolution or concession from the former approach: the *theoretical* or *scientific* exchange of *primitiveness* or *illogicality* for *systematicity* within the scale of the English language, while the *ideological-political* and *experiential-practical* maintenance of the users of black language at the lowest stratum of the society. All the linguistic features of black language were compared and contrasted against standard English or just English, which was obviously meant to be white language (e.g., Labov 1969). The white linguists from the 1950s onward would deny this, but among what might have been foundational to their scientific endeavors is a nationalist, imperialistic, or hegemonic ideology that any language which sounds or looks similar to their language should be incorporated into the greater English complex whether the former is judged to be close or distant, in addition to their intuitive, experiential belief that it sounds and looks like part of their language. They interpreted the linguistic situation in the United States monolingually as

“English-speaking North America” (McDavid & McDavid 1951) and have constructed the *Linguistic Atlas* since the 1930s, as many nation-states have done.

I suspect that the same white language nationalism may have been directed at *creole* in relation to dialect. Creoles were considered somewhat distant from both *lexical* and *grammatical* source languages (e.g., Holm 2000) and, sometimes, considered to have an African substratum, i.e., be close to *grammatical* source languages in Africa (e.g., Alleyne 1971, 1980⁹; Taylor 1971); however, black language varieties were considered part of the English language on a *creole–dialect–standard* continuum. Therefore, interestingly enough, creolistics, dialectology and traditional linguistics, inadvertently or covertly, may have conspired to construct a greater language area, i.e., “English-speaking” and “English-based” (e.g., Bailey & Shuy 1973). In the embryonic stage of black linguistics and US sociolinguistics in general, in the 1970s, these three areas merged into sociolinguistics interpreting the black varieties with their lexicon predominantly English as the “gradience” or “variation” in the English language. They liberated those linguistic codes in a certain liberalist way as the following excerpt shows:

It was clear that ‘gradience’ had to be described and that models based on the omnipresence of discrete oppositions were inadequate for the job . . . it was also clear that linguistic variation was closely associated with the social context and topic of conversation. . . . Uneasiness with strictly homogeneous monolectal grammars was being voiced . . . and steps were being taken toward polylectal or polysystematic formulations. . . . I am happy to be rid of static, homogeneous models and to be rid of the fudges represented by ‘my dialect.’ (Bailey 1973: xi, xiii-xiv)

They gave stigmatized linguistic codes like black language some freedom (“lectal” freedom, but not “lingual” freedom), indeed, but they were always bound to the English-speaking national and international power system and the prevailing monolingual nationalism. With the gradience or

variation theory, many may assume that both black and white language may be deconstructed into polysystematic formulations and placed on an equal foot, but it needs to be noted that while whites' language is deconstructed but still allowed to remain in their own overarching linguistic boundary called "standard English" or "English," blacks' language is deconstructed but not allowed to have their own overarching linguistic boundary called, e.g., "Ebonics." In this way white linguists and their beneficiaries in state institutions could covertly place blacks who used an English dialect or an English Creole on an *evolutionary* scale of creole-dialect-standard in that order. On the other hand, during this period, black linguists were not prominent, but it is notable that already in the pre-sociolinguist stage, Juanita Virginia Williamson (1961) attempted to outline possibly *as a distinct variety* some linguistic features characteristic of blacks in an area other than the Sea Islands, i.e., a transition from her dialectologist predecessors to future sociolinguists.

During this period and earlier, some considered the genesis of black language as from British dialects—Anglicist Paradigm (e.g., Krapp 1924, Labov et al. 1968). This had been a paradigm embraced among predominantly white scholars since the late 19th century. Most works in this camp were tied to the variationist tradition. One of the criteria adopted by this method is to look at "shared underlying grammars in the communities in question" to draw a linguistic boundary. Another criterion was to focus on "morphosyntactic variables rather than phonology or discourse" (Herk 2015: 25). Comparison of black language was made with dialects of English and creoles, but hardly ever with West and Niger-Congo African languages. Later, a modified paradigm emerged, whose research procedures were similar to the Anglicist Paradigm, but it was adopted by an increasing number of scholars in the second half of the twentieth century,¹⁰ who

considered black language as wholly or partly a decreolized variety of a former English Creole—Creolist Paradigm (e.g., Bailey 1965; Dillard 1972; Smitherman 1977; Stewart 1967). The Creolist Paradigm looks at shared *distinctive* grammatical features of black language and creole languages across African diaspora communities and focuses on morphology and syntax rather than phonology (Herk 2015: 24). The Creolist Paradigm may have been another concession from the earlier dominant paradigm because it allowed black language historical distinctiveness or stronger Africanness as a former creole English or, in the case of Gullah, a non-canonical African continuity in the substratum *within the framework of creole linguistic criteria and interpretations* but still did not allow it an African canonical belongingness *within the framework of comparative linguistic criteria and interpretations*, creolistically keeping it in the greater English area.¹¹

4.6. Interest Convergence by Black Scholars

At the fourth stage, especially since the black nationalist era from the late 1960s to the early 1970s, black and Caribbean scholars (e.g., Bailey 1965; Baugh 1979; Rickford 1974; Smith 1974; Smitherman 1977; Spears 1978; Taylor 1969; Twiggs 1973) started to join black linguistics. Most of them found some possible connection of black language to West African languages, whatever paradigm they employed to describe it. It is important to point out that the study of black language by the African scholars may have strongly been tied to the black nationalist movement, “which asserts that black people have a legitimate culture and history and that these factors should play an important role in the development of black control of black communities” (Taylor 1969: 1).

John Baugh, John R. Rickford, Orlando L. Taylor, and others appear to have basically followed the conceptualization and theorization of black language by white predecessors. They mostly adopted or adjusted the terms which their predecessors like William Labov adopted, such as “Black English Vernacular or Black Vernacular English,” “African American Vernacular English,” and “African American English” (e.g., Baugh 1980; Rickford 1999; Spears 1982). They, probably as most laypersons would do, might have seen their own language experiences and meanings in the black and Caribbean communities as a given in the nature of the empirical world, not as a product of processes and interaction. It may have been the way they viewed black language as a dialect of English from the beginning or possibly they didn’t question whether it is a dialect of English or not before they started their research, and they just used language labelings which denote a dialect of English. Especially, John Baugh and John Rickford probably *extended* their mentor’s, i.e., Labov’s Anglicist position, reflecting the black nationalist climate to include a possibility that some of the grammatical features of black language derived from former English creoles, which is the Creolist Paradigm. They may have searched for something different from English and, perhaps, closer to West African languages, which may make black language look more distinctive or autonomous than does the Anglicist Paradigm, in which the predominant grammar is of English-origin. The Creolist thesis may have been more acceptable to those black scholars with a higher awareness of the racist nature of the United States who were the descendants of enslaved Africans in the United States and other parts of the diaspora and searched for something that fulfilled part of their nationalist needs, while adopting their white predecessors’ methodology and seeking to be accepted in the academic whitestream. This may have been another concession of additive nature from the earlier period.

On the other hand, there were other Creolist language scientists who diverged from their Creolist counterparts mentioned above, that is, Lorenzo Dow Turner (1949), Beryl Loftman Baily (1965), Geneva Smitherman (1977), and Molefi Kete Asante (1990). Lorenzo Dow Turner (1949) attempted to debunk earlier myths on Gullah and other varieties of black language. While he described Gullah as “a creolized variety of English,” he might have, as his method was indeed comparative linguistic rather than creole linguistic, indirectly pointed to the possibility that Gullah may belong to an African language family seen from a grammatical perspective. Beryl Loftman Bailey (1965), a Jamaican native, suggested that “Negro English” be examined as a system in no comparison with standard English and even that “the Southern Negro ‘dialect’ differs from other Southern speech because its deep structure is different, having its origins as it undoubtedly does in some Proto-Creole grammatical structure” (172). Bailey pushed one step ahead and contend the deep structure of black language is different from that of English and grammatically dates back to a creole. While employing various names which directly or indirectly referred to black language as a dialect of English, Geneva Smitherman (1977) presented an extensive comparative account of black language and West African languages, taking on a more Afrocentric and comparative linguistic flavor. Especially Molefi Kete Asante is an interesting case because while he currently adopts Afrocentricity (Asante 1980) as a framework of reference for examining the history and behavior of the descendants of enslaved Africans in the United States, he employed the term “African American English” in the title of his 1990 work, found Ebonics more appropriate for the name, and adopted the Creolist Paradigm.¹² As one noticeable intersection of Afrocentric epistemology and the Creolist Paradigm, Smitherman and Asante suggest that a holistic approach be taken to the study of black

language, i.e., to describe it as a whole of verbal and nonverbal behaviors (Asante 1990; Smitherman 1977).¹³ The neo-creolists started to interpret those linguistic features, which prior linguists had taken as deficiencies or differences, as African or more than American, as well as American.

Smitherman later shifted from the traditional approach of treating black language as a variety of English to describing it as African American *Language*. She and others attempt to “bypass some of the problematic implications of ‘English’ within the socioculture and history of African slave descendants in the United States and the contested connections of their language variety to the motherland and colonization and encompass rhetorical and pragmatic strategies that might not be associated with English” (Lanehart 2015: 3). This rationale is understandable because the term “African American Language” seems to have started to catch on a few years after the Ebonics controversy in 1996.¹⁴ The concept “language” refers to both language and dialect, and thus may cause less stigma attached to the latter and be oriented toward self-determination, compared with the concept “dialect.” A little away from the traditional Creolist camp or with a more Afrocentric flavor or taking a more neutral stand, they and some others (e.g., Alim & Smitherman 2012; Lanehart 2009; Pandey 2000) including white scholars (e.g., Wolfram 2015) employ the naming “African American Language.”

The explicit physical and biological narrative and the more sophisticated sociological and psychological narrative against black language seems to have subsided today. Even the media seem not to subscribe to such arguments. However, it may not prelude the advent of a post-racist discourse on black language; rather it might have entered into another phase of scientific discourse, which might be unintended and inadvertent. The ensuing sections discuss two major

liberalist narratives on black language prevailing today. I shall critically discuss how today's dominant paradigms in black linguistics may be a result of interest convergence between whites and blacks.

4.6.1. Dialect Equality Discourse

Soon after the decision of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* (347 U.S. 483) in 1954 a lot of issues around the way blacks were to be integrated into the white society started to surface. On the educational front emerged a covert strategy to re-segregate a majority of blacks by taking their behavioral patterns (incl., linguistic) as *pathologies to be eradicated*, which are defined against a wider range of white behaviors as *normalcy*. At almost the same time, sociolinguistic research on black language gathered momentum in the mid-1960s, implicitly or inadvertently subscribing to the former educational strategy, when the government launched a war on poverty (primarily, black poverty) in 1964: taking the linguistic patterns of most blacks as *systematic deviations to be changed*, which were defined against a wider range of white varieties as *standard*. The third layer of sociological or psychological nature was just given some superficial modification of shifting pathological underdevelopment into systematicity, with the core of the eradication of black culture and identity narrative maintained.

At that time, the government and non-profit organizations or foundations made massive investments in social science research (incl., linguistics) not only in its own territory but also in newly-independent West-bloc state-nations in Africa and Asia, apparently in an attempt to define and address social issues for people of color in a White Supremacist way. Domestically, the

government started to make huge investments in the study of black language and the application of the research results in “educating” black children. Internationally, in the West-bloc countries and regions as anti-communist bastions, the United States government attempted to spread a US system of politics, economy, and education, accompanying the spread of English (Minamoto 2000). For, perhaps, facing the expected economic “turmoil” for the white society to incorporate millions of former slaves into the white economy, the United States government may have had no choice but to further expand the capitalist structure outside of the domestic economy.

President Lyndon B. Johnson approved on June 11, 1965, a US government policy on English language teaching services abroad as shown below:

English has become one of the most important world languages. The rapidly growing interest in English cuts across political and ideological lines because of the convenience of a lingua franca increasingly used as a second language in important areas of the world. Demands for help in learning English are, therefore, widespread. The United States ought to respond to these demands. English is a key which opens doors to scientific and technical knowledge indispensable to the economic and political development of vast areas of the world. (USAID 1967: 3)

The phrasing of the passage sounds politically neutral or ideologically free, but the United States may have attempted to ensure further spread and institutionalization of one of the infrastructural components of Anglocentric capitalism, i.e., English, tied to aid activities, particularly, in former UK and US colonies, and for the very purpose of, perhaps, needing to accept the inevitable diversification of English, i.e., Englishes, not as an aberration of English but rather as an “equal dialect or creole” to the standard at the rhetorical level, while at the practical level promoting Anglo-American English, i.e., mainly the language of white elites, perhaps as a strategy for confining emerging “nonnative” dialects overseas to low-prestige functions. Under this

circumstance, at this incipient stage of sociolinguistics or the sociology of language as a discipline in the United States, many dualistic concepts characteristic of those societies, e.g., *diglossia* (Ferguson 1959 & Fishman 1967) emerged. In formerly US and UK possessions such as Nigeria, India, and the Philippines, there were local and expatriate specialists who argued for the legitimacy of their own educated varieties of English (e.g., Kachru 1992). Prator (1966) points out:

Advocates of the doctrine [= the belief that second-language varieties of English can legitimately be equated with mother-tongue varieties] appear to agree in expecting that, if a local variety of English gains acceptance as the instructional model in a given country, the chances that the language [= English] will continue to play a significant role in the life of the country will thereby be considerably increased. (462)

In this international climate, the US government might have attempted to recognize black language as a native but *nonstandard dialect* equal to the language of white elites at the rhetorical level, while at the practical level maintaining the status of the elite language as a model dialect that is given precedence over the nonstandard dialect in *public or formal* spaces. The government might have attempted to secure the interests of “whites in policymaking positions able to see the economic and political advances [tied to the spread of English] at home and abroad that would follow the abandonment of” (Bell 1980: 524), at least, their psychological public oppositions to the dialect of blacks as well as the nonnative dialects or creoles of peoples in the Third World. It must be noted that the linguistic equality discourse is an oxymoron in that it employs the hierarchical, dualistic conceptual relationships “dialect-language” and “standard-nonstandard.” The equality discourse does not act alone but is always in tandem with the dialect discourse and the diglossic or code-switching discourse in sociolinguistics from the outset. In

other words, without the dialect discourse and the code-switching discourse, the interests of the dominant group would be compromised because the adoption of the *language* equality discourse, instead of the *dialect* equality discourse theoretically equals the social, political, economic, and educational equalization of those minority groups, an unacceptable situation in which the minorities are allowed to use their marginalized languages in the majority institutions of power.

4.6.2. Dialect Discourse

In scientific terms, there may be no need for the concept “dialect” or “(non)standard” in linguistics and even in applied linguistics. All linguistic codes are just “languages,” e.g., American language, black language, Appalachian language, English language, or Cockney language, whether or not they are mutually intelligible and sound/look similar. Linguists don’t have to subcategorize a language into dialects because they necessarily get involved in the political and ideological act of determining the boundaries between linguistic codes (certainly, even calling a linguistic code “language” involves a politico-ideological decision). The term “dialect” has been historically used alongside “vernacular” and “patois” to refer to stigmatized linguistic codes in general society (Haugen 1966: 68; Weinstein 1980: 61). It is so politically-charged that it ethically or justifiably without racism may have been able to place those who use the “distinctive” dialects under the subjugation of a dominant group who use the standard language. For it is assumed with little or no doubt that nonstandard (which connotes “incorrect”) is *a priori* placed below standard (which connotes “correct”), which sounds racially neutral. Remember there are lots of comments by black parents who refer to the language of their

children as “incorrect.”

To be sure, most linguists would assert that African American “dialect” (i.e., African American English) or African American “standard English” (i.e., one of standard Englishes) is equal to the standard “language” or, apologetically, the standard “dialect.” The questions remain: whether they need to use the inanimate term “standard” vis-à-vis the animate term “African American” despite the fact that the definition of every linguistic code is predicated on human collectivity; whether linguistics needs to take the trouble to appropriate the term “dialect” that has spread in the general public as derogatory and argue that it is a “neutral” term in linguistics (cf. Wolfram 2015: 342). The Linguistic Society of America (LSA), one of the most authoritative linguistics bodies in the United States, issued the following statement in 1997, immediately after the Oakland School Board adopted the Ebonics Resolution in 1996 (which states that Ebonics is a language other than English):

The distinction between “languages” and “dialects” is usually made more on *social and political* grounds than on *purely linguistic* ones. . . . What is important from a *linguistic* and *educational* point of view is not whether AAVE is called a “language” or a “dialect” but rather that its systematicity be recognized.

(Resolution on the Oakland “Ebonics” Issue Unanimously Adopted at the Annual Meeting of the Linguistic Society of America, Chicago, Illinois, January 3, 1997, italics mine)

In this LSA statement, the linguist who prepared the resolution employs the term AAVE (= African American vernacular English). He does not use the term “dialect” here but AAVE denotes an African American *dialect* of English. Almost all the scholars including this author clarify their position on the status of black language either as a dialect or a language by simply using a particular labeling, thus engaging in the political and ideological act of distinguishing

language from dialect. They basically take over their white predecessors' paradigms in the 1960s and 1970s, and seem to still believe they can justify their sociopolitical act of *unequal* status allocation to related linguistic codes by means of emphasizing the *equal* systematicity of related linguistic codes. However the author of the statement argues that the difference between language and dialect is linguistically and educationally unimportant. Moreover, the author and others may attempt to make recognized both the systematicity and African American distinctiveness of black language (a central concern of black linguists) in exchange for abandoning the black nationalists' right to define their own language as a language, i.e., leaving it a dialect of English (mainly, a white nationalist interest). It may be because of their perception that most blacks in general do not accept the idea that their language is a language other than English or their elided fear that they would lose their job or status. Nevertheless, if the author of the LSA statement makes such an argument, he should not use AAVE but a neutral labeling like "the linguistic code of African Americans."

One problem with this contradictory use of the concept "dialect" arises from the undeniable fact that a linguistic code is largely a sociopolitical entity from the beginning. Since the author of the statement is a sociolinguist, he could take into account that a linguistic code which linguists examine is not such an objectified structural entity but a social complex of structure and function (incl., nationalism and ideology). There should be no purely linguistic criteria for defining a linguistic code as dialect or language, as Fasold (2005: 697) argues. In this vein, there should be no purely educational importance attached to defining a linguistic code. Education is one of the most controlling sociopolitical instruments of the state, in which interracial or interethnic power relations are negotiated through linguistic differences and in which the definition of a linguistic

code as a language or a dialect largely influences the destiny of many students of color.

Therefore, the distinction between language and dialect even in the science of linguistics may have important political, economic, social, and educational consequences for African Americans or other minority groups. Once a linguistic code is counted as a dialect, the users are often stigmatized and usually provided no official linguistic services. But if it is counted as a language in a governmental survey or a law, it may be respected as being on par with English, Spanish, Chinese, or Swahili, and provided official linguistic services.

Second, the concomitant descriptivist discourse in linguistics implicitly or inadvertently accommodates a state language ideology promoted by the dominant white group (some black elites are included here), i.e., that *dialect* users naturally strive to be *standard language* users to participate or succeed in the *mainstream* institutions, one of the meritocracy arguments. Many African American parents argue that their children should learn *correct* or *proper* language, implying that their mother tongue is an *incorrect* or *improper* dialect. This self-denigrating interest by some users of black language may converge with the dominant group's interest in placing black language on the English scale and marginalizing it in the English language hierarchy—covertly marginalizing the black language users in the social, political, and economic structure and insidiously denying their human rights which are tied to their linguistic rights. Therefore, the white community are able to enforce their political and economic power against the black community through state institutions, where the hegemonic linguistic relationship is embedded, without any visible, at least, linguistic form of racism. Some of the elite may patronizingly concede that black *dialect* is equal to standard English but such a narrative leaves white privileges tied to the use of standard English intact. Again it should be noted that the

attempt to equalize the stigmatized concept “dialect” with its binary opposite “standard” is an oxymoron.

In counter-moves to deconstruct the dominant discourse on black language in linguistics and beyond, we have witnessed emergence since the early 1970s of some scholars who attempt to deploy a counter-paradigm which adopts Afrocentricity or their own African-centeredness as their framework of reference against the liberalist *dialect equality* discourse, which is embedded in the larger modernist dualistic discourse. It should be remembered that a number of dichotomies in sociolinguistics or linguistics generated from the dualistic thinking have inadvertently reinforced the judgmental binary of superiority-inferiority or better-worse in practice. To be sure, the opponent scientists are not completely out of the Euro-American dualistic world view¹⁵; however, they are different from those mainstream scholars who uncritically accept the dualist interpretations of the Eurocentric world. They deploy a counter-paradigm which selects another set of scientific criteria and interpretations to describe not only the language of descendants of enslaved Africans in the United States but also other newly born African languages in other parts of the African diaspora, as African languages which belong to a Pan-African language family. The African-centered paradigm may fulfill the ideological-political and experiential-practical needs of the black nation or nationalists in general. In what follows, I shall present a brief account of each of the scholars/practitioners from various fields of inquiry, who adopt the counter-paradigm.

4.7. Interest Divergence by Black Scholars

From the early 1970s a group or some individuals from various fields of inquiry have joined the Africological school and provided a theoretical framework against the Creolist Paradigm and the Anglicist Paradigm, namely, the Africological Paradigm. They are psychologists, historians, linguists, and other language scientists. They attempt unapologetically and fundamentally to rectify the deficit status of black language both in terminological and methodological senses.

Back in 1973, Robert L. Williams, a black psychologist and currently professor emeritus at Washington University in St. Louis, and other black scholars renamed the then prevalent appellation for black language, such as “substandard speech,” “restrictive speech,” “deviant speech,” “deficient speech,” “non-standard English,” or “Black English,” to “Ebonics” (Ebony + Phonics). They adopted a Pan-Africanist definition, locating Ebonics within an African language family, which stated that Ebonics consists of:

the linguistic and paralinguistic features which on a concentric continuum represents the communicative competence of the West African, Caribbean, and United States slave descendants of African origin.

(Williams 1975: vi, originally provided by Ernie A. Smith).

They did not discuss any further details that allowed them to explicitly interpret Ebonics as an African language, which is understandable because they were mostly non-linguists. Later in the 2000s, Williams, not so explicit about whether Ebonics is grammatically an African language, expressed an idea that “Africanisms represent the deep structure of Ebonics. Many West African languages such as Ibo, Twi, Fon, Yoruba, Wolof, Fante, Mandinka, and others are relatives of

Ebonics or Black Language” (2004).

In the same year Ebonics made a debut in St. Louis, Missouri, Robert D. Twigg, an assistant professor of Pan-African Studies, California State University, Los Angeles¹⁶ coined another Pan-Africanist term called “PALWH” [Pan African Language in the Western Hemisphere]. PALWH encompasses the same range of languages in the African diaspora as the earliest Ebonics.

PALWH was intended, as was the Ebonics, to “eradicate the negatively-connoted, stigmatized so-called ‘negro-dialect’” (Twigg 1973: 11). Twigg clarified his own stand on the origin of PALWH, expressing that “[i]n reply to George P. Krapp and those who would take the position that PALWH is of British origin (Anglicist Paradigm), everything human that is Black, having its roots in Africa, is of African origin” (Ibid.: 26). He argued that PALWH is a “residual (often conscious) language and culture of African origins . . . consisting of a unique structure of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and life styles” (Ibid.: 11). Different from other scholars cited here, Twigg avoided discussing the relationship of PALWH to African languages for fear that he would become entangled in a confused controversy of the historical linguistic origin of PALWH (Ibid.: 26), but rather attempted to synchronically look at the distinct features of the US variety of PALWH, not comparing it to African linguistic structures.

Clinical and cognitive linguist Ernie A. Smith, professor at Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science, sometimes uses the term “Nigritian” over Ebonics, since the meaning of the latter has been confounded with that of African American English or African American Vernacular English. Nigritian accentuates the (mainly) West African origin of the descendants of enslaved Africans in the diaspora. Nigritian was originally proposed by Smith at the St. Louis meeting in 1973 where Ernie Smith, Ann Covington, Grace Holt, and Robert Williams discussed

the status of black language, but not agreed upon because it reminded others of negative meanings associated with the term “Negro” (Smith, personal communication, August 19, 2011). Since the early 1970s Smith has seen the linguistic affiliation of Ebonics in comparative linguistic and comprehensive terms: comparing the phonetic, phonological, morphosyntactic, and semantic structures of Ebonics and several West African languages. According to Smith (1974, 1996, 2011), the mutual intelligibility between the primary language of U.S. descendants of enslaved Africans and English does not attest to the affiliation of Ebonics to English, a West-Germanic language. Ebonics, a relexified hybrid language, retains a dominant grammatical mix of African languages. Ebonics is a relexified linguistic and paralinguistic (i.e., nonverbal sounds, cues, and gestures) continuation of West and Niger-Congo African languages, partly traced back to Egyptian in Kemet (ancient Egypt).

The late Anita P. DeFrantz, perhaps an applied linguist (FYI: mother of Olympic medallist Anita L. DeFrantz) adopted the term “Pan-African Language” or “Africanized Language.” The African-centered terms referred to the linguistic, cultural behaviors of Africans “in the United States, the Caribbean, South America, Central America, Canada, and *other geographic sites* where persons of African ancestry reside” (DeFrantz 1995: 62, emphasis added). The geographic boundaries may not be limited to the Western hemisphere, on which Williams’, Twiggs’, and Smith’s arguments are predicated. She argued that Ebonics does not belong to Indo-European language families and is a linguistic and paralinguistic continuation of African languages as the languages of Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and European Americans are continuations of their respective ancestral languages. The rationale of her argument resided in the position that phonology and syntax are most resistant to change and thus, Ebonics retains the

phonology and syntax of African languages.

Linguist Carol Aisha Blackshire-Belay, a former associate professor at African American Studies, Temple University and a former professor and chair at African and African American Studies, Indiana State University, employs the name “Ebonics” but the definition is geographically wider. The family tree of Ebonics languages is a collection of African languages alongside Yoruba, Fanti, Hausa, Ewe, Akan, and so on. It is branched into North America, South America, The Caribbean, Africa, and Asia. She focuses on the grammar of Ebonics as the criterion for its linguistic affiliation to West and Central African Hamito-Bantu and Niger-Congo languages. She contends that the lexicon of Ebonics is overwhelmingly English, French, or Spanish but a structural and communicative continuation of many of the African languages of the Niger-Congo family such as Twi, Igbo, Ewe, and Efik. Her epistemological starting point for these arguments, as was Twiggs’, is that “Ebonics is a creation by Africans in response to their environmental situations, “rooted in the African tradition just as all other African languages are, and it also demonstrates continuity” (Blackshire-Belay 1996: 22, n. 11).

Molefi Kete Asante, professor of communication and Africology and chair at African American Studies, Temple University, argues that Ebonics is a language other than English (Asante 1997 & 2016: 2). He bases his argument upon the criterion that not vocabulary but structural elements determine linguistic groupings, including the affiliation of Ebonics. The criteria are meant to be “the structure, the sound, and the philosophy of the language [= Ebonics]” (Asante 1997). As Smith does, Asante brings up the history of English in England when comparatively classifying English and Ebonics. He explains that if vocabulary is set as the criterion for classifying English, what he speaks, Ebonics is French and English is a Romance

language, but if grammar is set as the criterion, English is a Germanic language. He suggests Ebonics be classified on the criterion of grammar as European languages have long been in linguistics (Asante 1997). Asante (2016: 2) proclaims that “the national language of African Americans is Ebonics.”

Historian Kimani S. K. Nehusi, associate professor at African American Studies, Temple University, shares with others a Pan-Africanist definition of Ebonics, albeit limited to the Western hemisphere: “Ebonics in all its varieties is primarily the language of Afrikans descended from enslaved Africans in the West” (Nehusi 2001: 112). Nehusi adopts a comparative linguistic approach in that he argues that grammatical (syntactic, morphological, semantic, phonetic), communicative (including non-verbal communication), and cosmological similarities suggest continuities and connections between Ebonics and its proto-language Medew Netjer (the earliest known Afrikan and the world’s first written language in Kemet). His structural scope of Ebonics is as widest as Smith’s (1974) because it includes even “certain sounds not normally recognized as words” (Ibid.: 62).

Historian Clinton Crawford, professor and chair at Mass Communications, Creative & Performing Arts & Speech, Medgar Evers College, City University of New York, broadens the definitional scope within Africa, adding that “accepting the Niger-Congo family of languages as the sole origin of Ebonics obscures the fact that forced migration occurred over the entire continent of Africa and, therefore, Ebonics reflects the linguistic heritage of the entire continent” (Crawford 2001a: 3). He argues that “[t]here is no real structural linguistic similarity between English and Ebonics; both languages are branches from a distinct family of languages and developed in contestation with the languages of invading forces” (Crawford 2001b: 43). He

emphasizes not only that Ebonics is a grammatical continuation of African languages on the entire continent with dominant lexicons of European languages, but also that it is separate, distinct, and apart from any European language. This understanding of Ebonics is probably based on his own belief as a historian that the history of Ebonics did not begin in the European and American enslavement period as suggested in the Creolist Paradigm but in the African past (Ibid.: 32-33).

Certified school psychologist and Pan-Africanist, Umar Abdullah Johnson adopts the term “Ebonics.” He considers Ebonics as a continuation of African linguistic patterns. He states, “African-American children are a subset of African children, whose cultural DNA is alive and well within their religious, social and linguistic patterns” (Johnson 2013: 59-60). He posits that black children do not speak English or a dialect of English even though they use English vocabulary, but their language is primarily a continuation of syntactic and pragmatic patterns of African languages, i.e., an “African language being spoken through the medium of English vocabulary” (Ibid.: 62). He does not clarify the geographical distribution of Ebonics. As a school psychologist his linguistic understanding of Ebonics is probably integral to his practical finding that the diagnosis “Specific Learning Disability (SLD),” largely a language-based disability, results from the lack of black students’ cultural and linguistic familiarity with English (Ibid.: 63-64).

Theologian Karen Crozier, associate professor of Practical Theology, Fresno Pacific University, states that Ebonics is an African language system. She defines it as “[t]he linguistic and paralinguistic features which on a concentric continuum represent the communicative competence of the West African, Caribbean, and United States slave descendant of African

origin” (Williams 1975: VI). The surface structure of Ebonics is vocabulary while the deep structure is grammar. The grammar determines the parent language of Ebonics, which is of West African origin (Niger Congo, Nilo Saharan, Afro-Asiatic, and Semitic). As Smith, Blackshire-Belay, and Lo (in the next paragraph) do, she gives some syntactic and semantic examples of Ebonics to substantiate her argument (Crozier 2013).

Most recently, Sheba A. Lo adopts and substantively demonstrates the paradigm, as Smith does. She is an assistant professor of Africana Studies, California State University, Northridge, and specializes in West African, South African, and African American literature. Lo (2014) demonstrates, from her morphosyntactical comparison of Wolof, “Nigerian Pidgin English”, and African American Language/Ebonics, that Ebonics is a continuation of West and Niger-Congo African linguistic traditions. She does not discuss other linguistic and paralinguistic continuity of Ebonics to those African languages and the geographic distribution of Ebonics.

Ebonics, PALWH, Pan-African Language, Nigritian, and so on are all meant to destigmatize the newly-born African languages in the African diaspora and arm them with a common device often found in linguistic nationalisms the world over: pursuit of linguistic continuity of one’s language to an ancestral language of their great past and linguistic distance from the language of their oppressor. For Eurocentric terms such as African American Vernacular English and Jamaican Creole English and Eurocentric paradigms such as the Anglicist Paradigm and the Creolist Paradigm give “European” or white belongingness and authenticity to black language and other newly born African languages. This methodological approach to black language and others attempts to reconstruct a concentric continuum of Pan-African language systems in the Western Hemisphere or beyond, drawing mainly on one of the epistemological starting points for

determining linguistic affiliation which that Eurocentric linguistics established in the previous few centuries: grammatical continuity. They argue that the grammar of black language demonstrates a continuity to mainly West African languages. Especially, Smith and Nehusi attempt to establish its continuity ultimately to the proto-language “Ancient Egyptian” in Kemet. Consequently, the comparative linguistic paradigm or the Africological paradigm establishes the two widely seen nationalist desiderata through a methodological shift from lexicon to grammar: *continuity* to the great African past and African *distinctness* from the languages of the oppressors.

As the African-centered epistemology allows us to see the arbitrariness of some of the scientific criteria of the dominant paradigms, it draws on the very subjective malleability or flexibility of linguistics to establish its own science. The comparative linguistic paradigm or the Africological paradigm challenges the covert attempt of the dominant white groups and their black followers or captives to establish the dominance of European languages in the African diaspora and deprive the descendants of enslaved Africans of the following rights: to attain the two nationalist desiderata which are often found in the ancient one nation-one language formula¹⁷ that white groups have lavishly executed in various parts of the world, and to reinforce their national solidarity through active linguistic identity formation.

5. FORMATION OF THE COMPARATIVE LINGUISTIC PARADIGM

I postulate that ideological-political and experiential-practical concerns which linguists have formed through their life experiences are interwoven with the enactment of a first tentative proposition in linguistics before establishing it based on disciplinary criteria/interpretations and selection of data, and that this interpretive interaction of the ideological-political, experiential-practical, and theoretical-scientific factors may be found in the formation of the comparative linguistic paradigm. In this chapter, I shall explore Dr. Ernie A. Smith's life from his childhood in Tulsa, Oklahoma through to his education at the University of California, Irvine, to show how the three identified factors may have interacted prior to and during the formation of the comparative linguistic paradigm as an example of the interpretive social act of linguistic knowledge/paradigm formation.

5.1. Ideological-Political Factor¹

Since the first peak of “classical black nationalism” (Moses 1996)² from 1850 onward, black nationalism has been characterized by not so much an appeal to language as one to state-making or economy-making functions, however, many scholars and writers have expressed various thoughts on the language of descendants of enslaved Africans in the United States in relation to the notion of the black community or nation.

Alexander Crummell viewed the language just as English and a gift from God (Appiah 1992: 2), and in this vein, may have seen their community language as English, possibly, prioritizing “standard” English. Elijah Muhammad viewed it as a language other than English and the latter as a bastard language (See Section 5.1.3). Carter G. Woodson viewed it as a broken-down African language (Woodson 1933: 18). W. E. B. DuBois viewed it as a dialect of English as may be used as medium of instruction (DuBois 1933: 128). Robert D. Twiggs viewed it as a Pan-African language system in the Western hemisphere (Twiggs 1973). In fact, it is a prevalent nationalist phenomenon that:

the concept of nation—has attracted considerable numbers of influential intellectuals—writers, artists, composers, historians, *philologists*, educators—who have devoted their energies to discovering and representing the identities and images of their respective nations.

(A. D. Smith 2010: 2, italics added; also consult Errington 2005; Fishman 1972; Kazemzadeh 1968).

In black linguistics this part of nationalism may have been expressed most explicitly through the comparative linguistic paradigm, which Dr. Ernie A. Smith adopted in 1974.

This chapter examines an ideological-political factor toward or in the formation of the comparative linguistic paradigm. I reconstruct a life story of the interactive and interpretive process by which Dr. Ernie A. Smith developed a nationalist language ideology and started to pursue a scientific paradigm on the language of the descendants of enslaved Africans in the United States in the intersection of these factors: the scholar's experience of linguistic racism, his anti-Establishment linguistic behavior and loyalty to his mother tongue, his black nationalist efforts, and his encounter with linguistics in his struggle against racism on campus. This chapter explores how Dr. Smith encountered, interpreted, and acted toward the dominant group's interpretations of black language; how his definition of black and white language interacted with his black nationalist thoughts to reinterpret the meaning of black language and produce his black nationalist language ideology; and how his black nationalist meaning of black language interacted with his scientific conceptualization of it, thus feeding into Ebonics.

5.1.1. Sociohistorical Background for Language Awareness and Loyalty

From the mid-1940s through the 1970s, Los Angeles saw an exponential growth of black populations due to the booming economy in the West and incoming black migrants from the South, e.g., Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Georgia, Alabama, Missouri, Tennessee in that order,³ especially metropolitan areas in the region (Sides 2003: 38). However, blacks became socially and economically segregated again in Los Angeles.⁴ They settled almost exclusively in South Central Los Angeles, already a highly segregated black community (Ibid.: see maps 3-5). The residential re-segregation against blacks was witnessed around the country because white

residents employed various techniques to prevent blacks from entering their neighborhoods, such as restricted covenants, payoffs by neighbors to discourage home sales to prospective black buyers, vandalism, cross burnings, bombings, death threats, silent retreats to other white neighborhoods, and discriminatory tactics by real estate agents, private developers, and private lenders (Ibid.: 101-108). Even government agencies, the Federal Housing Administration and the former Veterans Administration played a role in preventing blacks from living outside already predominantly black neighborhoods (Gregory 2005). Segregation was and is a major indicator for the production and reproduction of the language of descendants of enslaved Africans in the United States, as Smith (2010) observes:

I maintain that if there has been a single most contributing factor that has served to reinforce, preserve and perpetuate the West and Niger Congo African morphology and syntax in the substratum of African American speech today, that factor has been the legacy of social “de jure” and “de facto” segregation or “apartheid” in the USA in linguistic environments that are different. (38)

There was another African-centered scholar who taught in Pan-African Studies, California State University, Los Angeles and who presented his own thesis in 1973, a year before Smith developed his own African-centered linguistic thesis. He suggested that black language is “Pan African Language in the Western Hemisphere” (PALWH /pælwh/). His name was Robert D. Twiggs, who told a similar story about the influence of segregation on the maintenance of a separate language in the black community. Twiggs (1973 maintained:

I take the point of view that everything human that is Black, having its roots in Africa, is of African origin. The European-Western system of Black slavery and institutionalized racism, which has—by law and social custom—locked Black people in Black ghettos ever since they arrived in this hemisphere has consecrated this postulation and preserved

it. Language is by no means any exception. (26-27)

The pursuit to identify an ethnic continuity/unity and authenticity in the urban area and the lower class which may have been maintained as a result of social, economic, and political segregation, in this case, the continuity/unity and authenticity of the national language of the black nation from the past in Africa to the present in the African diaspora, was an essential phenomenon seen in nationalist movements the world over (Fishman 1972: 8, 20). It was in that segregated linguistic environment, South Central Los Angeles that Dr. Smith lived and negotiated the meanings of a series of linguistic and other behaviors, events, and ideas in academic environments and in the street until he entered the University of California, Irvine. Taking into account the sociohistorical background of his neighborhood, in what follows, I will describe how his awareness of the difference between his mother tongue and white language and his loyalty to his mother tongue emerged.

5.1.2. Language Awareness and Loyalty Formation in “Ghetto”

Ernie Adolphus Smith was born September 7, 1938 in Haskell, Oklahoma, a northwestern edge of the Cotton Belt and reared in Tulsa, Oklahoma, a major oil capital. The wide-open Oklahoma territory was seen as the California of its day by blacks from the southern states (Johnson 1998: 3). Tulsa was known as “The Negro Wall Street” and a racially charged location, where the 1921 race riots saw many blacks killed at the hands of white mob violence and the district destroyed by whites. In the southern black community, he acquired a southern, midland variety of black language under the influence of his extended family and playmates. In the

legally segregated school system, there were only black teachers and children with some indigenous Indian children; as a result, Ernie experienced no linguistic discrimination that was to come later (See details below).⁵

In 1948, Mr. (truck driver & custodian) and Mrs. Smith and Ernie A. Smith, the oldest of their twelve children, moved to the heart of South Central Los Angeles to live in his grandmother's (maid) house (E 35th St & McKinley Ave), where his grandmother and aunt (shipyard worker) had already lived. Later his parents moved to 405 E Vernon and then to 71st St and S. San Pedro St. The "ghetto" was his living space until 1970, where he formed his language awareness and ideology.

His grandmother and aunt were deeply Christian, while his mother was also, but not a "Jesus-freak" like them. His grandmother, who did a lot of parenting for Ernie as did his aunt, would admonish him on his use of obscenities and profanities, but not use of his mother tongue. He recalls:

She [= his grandmother] was not herself an ideally competent English speaker. So speaking any kind of way didn't matter to her. She was more concerned with using obscene, profane language. Because she considered the use of words, that blaspheme as speaking against the holy spirit, swearing was not biblical. You understand? She was trying to teach me to be a good Christian person. Christian people don't go around swearing. So using obscene and profane words was always something that she would castigate me for . . . my aunt and my mom, people like that, would never stop rebuking me for inappropriate language. . . . So when you asked me about Ebonics, what are you talking about, obscenities, or you talking it's about not talking like a white person? . . . They did make no attempt to have me talk like a honky. Why would my family who know that the way I talk is the way I always talk all my life start to try to tell me, "Don't talk like us. Talk like the people over there"? Why would I want to come to my parents, talk to like those people over there? They wasn't feeding and clothing me. So why would I come in the house, trying to talk to them in a language that was basically foreign? (Smith, personal communication, December 8, 2014)

Different from typical middle-class families, his family was not dismissive of the community language. In his neighborhood, he saw no professional blacks who could become role models for him but “numerous bookmakers, gamblers, hustlers, pimps, gangsters, and players with whom I could identify” (Smith 1974: 10). Therefore, his main interpersonal relationships were built with the latter groups, and naturally, the predominant language he used was street life black language, whereas he learned some of the dialect of wider communication through school education. He didn’t like the language of bourgeois black professionals, i.e. “Anglo speech forms” (Smith 1974: 6).

Ernie’s elementary school education began at Paul Lawrence Dunbar Elementary School in Tulsa, Oklahoma. It was a predominantly black school with a few Native Americans and an all-black staff in the legally segregated South. At the Oklahoma school his language was treated in a respectful manner as he remembered:

If I was corrected in Oklahoma, the teacher knew English and she knew my mother tongue and they were able to transition me without making me feel that what I was doing was damaging my opportunity in the future. The method of teaching English as a second language was already being used in the South.

(Smith, personal communication, June 3, 2015)

It was ironically because the whole school system was strictly segregated that the language of blacks was not denigrated. And it was the maximized linguistic dislocation from the traditional sociolinguistic structure in the South to the urban one in the West that may have given a special meaning or interpretation to the mother tongue of blacks for young Smith.⁶

After his family migrated to South Central Los Angeles, Ernie transferred to a predominantly black school again, called Wadsworth Elementary School, which he attended from 1948-1951.

De facto segregation existed in Los Angeles, where blacks, Mexicans, and Asians attended a school different from the one which whites did (Sides 2006: 32); but the school had a predominantly white workforce with few black teachers. It is here that he was confronted with “official” linguicism. His mother tongue was diagnosed by both white and the few black teachers as a deficient speech which needed to be eradicated. The language of Ernie and many of his peers was described as “linguistically handicapped, verbal cripple, aphasia, dyslexia, or cognitively deficient” (Smith 1974: 2). Indeed, language issues for a disproportionate number of black students throughout the United States were addressed with this deficit model (Baratz & Shuy 1969). He and his peers were placed in special classes and became targets of ridicule and teasing from other black children. What’s worse, many urbanized blacks and whites attributed the lowest level of intelligence to speakers of a “deep South” variety of the language of descendants of enslaved Africans (Smith 1974: 7). It was not simply treated as a dialect of English but rather a degenerate version of English, in other words, it was not regarded as a language.

In Thomas Alva Edison Middle School (1951-1954) and John C. Fremont High School (1954-1957) of South Central Los Angeles Ernie was assigned to remediation language classes and special sections of most other academic courses. His tracking into those classes was based on his problematic language behavior rather than standardized tests. His disruptive language would become a ground for temporary expulsion from the high school and assignment to a quasi-vocational-educational, behavior management institution called Jacob A. Riis High School. In this school he was tracked into shop courses. Even in this all-boys normal school, a series of vocational aptitude tests showed he had a “low” proficiency of English, even though he must

have been highly proficient in his mother tongue. The larger society assumed that the mother tongue of black people was English; however, from another viewpoint, the test results might have suggested that he has as his primary language a language other than English.

In school education, Ernie experienced linguistic discrimination from teachers, psychologists, administrators, i.e., a powerful state institution of indoctrination and stratification, and concomitantly, schoolmates (See details in Section 5.2.2). The sociologically and linguistically legitimate language of Ernie and his peers was denied in the inhumane way and he was to continue to feel insecure about what his language was without being able to construct a plausible and persuasive counter-account of his mother tongue. In the name of medical, psychological, or speech sciences they were tracked through the public education system into lower strata of US society. It seems to have been a rampant practice in school throughout the United States (cf. Baratz & Shuy 1969; White 1984). On the other hand, the more rejections from schools and mainstream institutions black language endured, the more persistence in the use of or the more loyalty to the mother tongue the black community showed (Smith 1974: xv, 5).

Smith graduated from high school in 1957 with honors.⁷ He got the Rotary Craftsmanship Award and the Bullocks Scholastic Art Scholarship in 1957. Smith started a business to earn a living in his neighborhood. Because the system directed black students to take a different path from white children, he had no aspiration for post-secondary education. He was a street peddler of costume jewelry, i.e., slum hustler or “stuff player.”⁸ As a slum hustler, he recalls how he capitalized on whites’ attitudes toward his mother tongue when he interacted with them:

When I would go out in the streets selling costume jewelry, I knew that white people associate Ebonics, wasn’t called Ebonics, but the speech of black people with intelligence. The less proficiency in English, the less intelligence. The more proficiency

in English, the more intelligence. That's in the minds of white people. When you are selling something to white people, you don't go to them sounding intelligent. . . . [Interviewer: You have to characterize yourself as an ignorant character] . . . you want them to believe that you are an unlearned person. And the way you showed them that you're unlearned is by using as much unlearned grammar of English as you can.

(Smith, personal communication, December 8, 2014)

His language, used for the street business, was characterized by an “unlearned grammar of English” for the ears of white customers. He may have capitalized on the larger society's perception of black language as an anomaly or broken English. As a result, he was very much aware of his tactical use of his primary language to convey an ignorant personality to white customers. On the other hand, he knew how to speak English for the purpose of “sweetmouthin,” “rappin,” and “mackin.”⁹ His awareness of a large difference between his mother tongue and “standard English” and his counter-English ideology were formed, first, through the inter-defining activities of school staff, a state institution of power and stratification, and him at school and, later, through the inter-defining activities of Smith and his white (and some black) customers on the street. Merely his awareness of the large difference may not have been sufficient for him to interpret his mother tongue as a language other than English, but an interpretation given from other discriminatory and nationalist experiences, i.e., intergroup conflict, to the experience of linguistic difference may have contributed to the formation of his nationalist language ideology.¹⁰

Although Smith showed strong resistance to white language and strong allegiance to his mother tongue, in this street life, one close friend encouraged him to take a post-secondary education to master *standard* English and finally he entered into a city college. The reason Smith used the term “standard” to refer to white language may be a reflection of the then perception of

his own in a society whose hegemonic discourse was characterized by binary oppositional conceptualization, that his community language is a “nonstandard” or “broken” English. He recalls the incident in the following way:

I had people who were gamblers encouraging me to gain more fluency in reading and writing English. Not so much speaking it. But at least understanding it when it's spoken and being able to decode and encode graphic representations of English. Because they knew the disadvantages that they had suffered for the lack of that skill. To . . . decoding and encoding graphic representations of ideally competent English, what they called, standard English is a skill and I'd been encouraged by a whole lot of people all my life to master that skill. But it was only as a survival technique that it came to me as something valuable. It was not as a way to get economically and socially accepted upward mobility. . . . And I had no intention of emulating that form of speech as my way of gaining social acceptance. I was perfectly happy to be an ignorant fool if I had to talk like [a white person] to be considered acceptable. Okay? So to whatever extent the idea of being lettered in English became important to me, it was because I didn't wanna get cheated by people who had that skill. And I didn't. I was at a disadvantage.

(Smith, personal communication, December 8, 2014)

The reason he used the term “standard” to refer to white language may be a reflection of the then perception of his own in a society whose hegemonic discourse was characterized by binary oppositional conceptualization, that his community language is a “nonstandard” or “broken” English. The early (and later) experiences of linguistic annihilation and the formation of his language awareness came to have a connection to his black identity and, possibly, nationalism, as Smith (1974) stated:

Ebonics is the manifestation of Black self-esteem. It has resisted and endured generations of speech clinics, speech therapy, remediation, special training, communication skills, voice and diction, and other such pedagogically prescriptive attempts at its destruction. (42)

Ernie's awareness of a large difference between his mother tongue and *standard* English and his counter-English ideology were formed, first, through the inter-defining acts of him and school staff at school, a state institution of power and stratification, and, later, through the inter-defining acts of him and white (incl., some black) customers on the street. This series of linguistic experiences was accountable for the production and reproduction of black language and the connection of it to "Black self-esteem" (Smith 1974: 42).

However, merely his awareness of the large difference may not have been sufficient for him to interpret his mother tongue as a language other than English, but an interpretation given from other discriminatory and nationalist experiences, i.e., intergroup conflict, to the experience of linguistic difference may have contributed to the formation of his nationalist language ideology (Fishman 1972: n. 49, 104). In the ensuing sections, how his prior language awareness and loyalty was reinforced in black nationalist contexts and finally validated in academic contexts will be explored.

5.1.3. Nation of Islam and Language

The Cold War, domestic and international economic expansion, and government policy changes provided unprecedented opportunities for the civil rights movement and black nationalist movement to rectify social, economic, and political injustices especially from the mid-1950s through the mid-1970s. The external events and the ostensible internal realignments of group relations encouraged new understandings of existing cultural elements (incl., language). The continued *de facto* racial segregation or apartheid and discrimination in metropolitan cities also lent strong impetus to those movements.

Smith entered Los Angeles Metropolitan College of Business in 1959 <Associate Degree> (1959-1962).¹¹ He was placed again in a language correction class.¹² In the summer of 1962, he

met with Malcolm X. when he wandered into an auditorium of the College. Smith recollects:

Malcolm X. was there to debate Ed Warren, head of the Watts chapter of the NAACP on the subject 'Should we integrate or should we separate.' . . . Malcolm X became a regular visitor to the newly established mosque at Jefferson Boulevard and Normandie Avenue. . . . During these trips, Malcolm often took his meals at a Muslim restaurant at 51st and Main streets. There he proved to be an apt mentor to young Smith [and many other college students]. (*Our Weekly*, p. 13, parentheses added)

Inspired by his minister Malcolm, he became a registered member of the Nation of Islam in the same year (See Figure 2). As a registered Muslim member of Mosque number 27, Ernie X. Smith

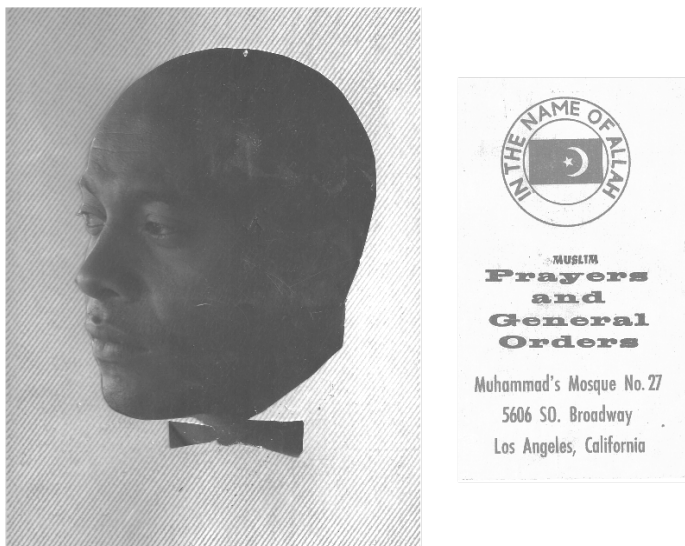


Figure 2. Ernie X. Smith. Courtesy of Ernie A. Smith.

was eager to spread his faith. Smith's path to his future career began on the day when he was informed that "English wasn't our original language" (Ibid.). Perhaps, Malcolm X. regarded their current primary language as English. He might have had an interest in his ancestral language in Africa or have disliked English.

Because of this incident with the Nation of Islam, Smith started other black nationalist efforts, for example, becoming a member of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee and the Freedom Now Committee. He came to be known as a community “activist”¹³ and militant black nationalist.¹⁴ For example, reflecting his black nationalist position, he had (and has) never voted in governmental elections and others. The following passage explains the practice:

I maintain that my African enslaved African ancestors, antecedents and forebears have never at any time by free will choice, voluntary consent or any other democratic process ever accepted or agreed to become citizens of the United States or in and of allegiance to the government of the USA and its sovereign class of white slave holding people . . . to this very day the so-called rights of citizenship granted all descendants of enslaved Africans are at all times subject to white supremacists’ enforcement, white supremacists’ interpretation and white supremacists’ repeal . . . being born in the USA does not make descendants of enslaved Africans citizens of the USA . . . as an enslaved descendant of enslaved African ancestors, antecedents and forebears, I do not regard myself to be a citizen of the USA and I have declared that I am at all times alien to, an enemy of, and rebellious to the government of the USA and its sovereign class of white slave holding people except when I am restrained by force, violence and genocide. . . . I do not vote because the citizen’s right to vote does not apply to me. (Smith 2011a: 7-9)

It should be noted that as an expression of his defiance toward the United States he does not employ the term “American” but “African” to refer to black people.¹⁵

Then, Smith encountered a clearer black nationalist language ideology in the Nation of Islam. Elijah Muhammad, the teacher of Malcolm X. voiced a more detailed version of the black nationalist language ideology:

In the new world you will not even be able to speak the English language. The speaking of the English language by us will be stopped. No language of the wicked should be spoken by the righteous, as there are some in Islam, in the Orthodox Muslim world, whom I have met myself, and who refuse to speak English; for it is an infidel language. This is the truth. English is a bastard language, for it is a language that is made up of other languages. It is a dependent language. So we see here why it is necessary for us to

have a new language. (Muhammad 1974: 124-125)

This idea was introduced to Smith in the early 1960s. The passage suggests that Elijah Muhammad may have thought their primary or second language was English. As for “a new language,” in this Islamic context, Elijah Mohammad probably meant that it would be Arabic. However, according to the teachings of the Messenger Elijah Muhammad the nature of the Asiatic Black Man is different from the nature of the Caucasian or white man. The thought process of the Asiatic Black Man is different from that of the Caucasian or white man. The grammar (or “thought process,” an equivalent term which the Nation of Islam used to mean “grammar”) of the language of the Asiatic Black Man is Arabic. Therefore, it can be said that the primary language of the Asiatic Black Man is grammatically classified as a language other than English and belongs to the Arabic family, not the English language or the West-Germanic family. Smith recalls that Elijah Muhammad knew what he spoke is not English. Back then, he shared a similar feeling during his enrollment in a writing course at Los Angeles Metropolitan College of Business. He perceived his primary language as a language other than English in the following way:

To me, as a black nationalist, I was already consciously aware that English is not my language. I know that the attitude of the people [who taught at the course] was that my language is broken, sloppy, sloven, corrupt, mutilated English. That’s their attitude. You asked me about my feeling of the attitude of the people in this . . . universities or colleges. That still exists to this day. So you asked me about stigma. What do you mean? Am I feeling stigmatized because my language isn’t English? No, I feel no stigma.
(Smith, personal communication, April 7, 2015)

Smith’s experiences of the black and white language difference and his encounter with Nation of Islam’s ideas might have been mediated by a factor of conflict as Fishman (1972, n. 49, p.

104) points out, i.e., an insurmountable conflict between Smith and the white world, which might have given a particular interpretation to those experiences and ideas, i.e., his mother tongue as a language other than English.

5.1.4. Struggle for Self-Determination and Liberation of Black Nation and Language

The mid-1950s through the mid-1970s was a time when twentieth-century black nationalist movements reached their second apogee. Graduating from the city college with honors, in September of 1962, Smith transferred to California State College, Los Angeles, receiving a B.A. in 1967¹⁶ and began a double major in Speech and Fine Arts. The means of payment for tuition and books were his businesses in his neighborhood. At CAL State, he honed his skills in



Figure 3. Vietnam War Teach-in. Smith's sign in the center left reads, "Get Negroes out of Viet Nam; Leave Whitey" in an anti-Vietnam War teach-in. (*CAL State L.A. College Times*, Friday Oct 22, 1965)

argumentation and debate. He was on the debating team for the college. He became quite a public figure, having traveled throughout California speaking on college campuses primarily and having made hundreds of radio and television appearances on different talk shows often during political campaigns to community and civic groups (See Figure 3).

Smith was the leader of the Afro-American Citizens Council (AACC, an antithesis to the White Supremacist “White Citizens Councils,” the first of which was organized in Susanville, California soon after the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* decision). Smith, chair of the AACC, Ron Karenga, chair of The Organization Us, and Lennie Eggleston, a Panther of the Los Angeles chapter of the Black Panther Party joined a vigilante alliance of civil rights activists, black nationalists, business, professional, religious, and other groups (Alliance of Local



Smith, Karenga, Sanford (l-r, seated) chair meeting of some 50 'Brothers' who staged walkout of earlier ALO session.

Figure 4. Vigilante Meeting after the Watts Rebellion. Smith, Karenga, and Sanford from the Left. (“Watts alert patrol,” 1966, pp. 49.)

Organizations) in Los Angeles after the Watts Rebellion in 1965. They aimed to protect Watts and other ghetto-bound blacks from abusive police officers (See Figure 4). He also belonged to the Self Determination Committee Inc., formally called “Self Determination, Reparations, Repatriation and United States of America Citizenship Committee for United States of America Slaves’ Descendants Incorporated,” as its state chairman for California. The organization was established by Robert L. Brock and originally located in Los Angeles. The goal of the committee was for the descendants of enslaved Africans in the United States to obtain the status of non-self-governing nation and to obtain self-determination and independence through the United Nations. They filed lawsuits seeking reparations, tax exemptions, and so on, on behalf of black people, and assisted black businesses and community groups. As another black nationalist action, the Committee demanded that the black nation, as a non-self-governing nation under the Charter of the United Nations, Chapter XI, Article 73, have political, economic, social, and educational self-government and self-determination as much as whites. Smith’s role on the committee was primarily to educate people by making public speeches or lectures.

In 1965 Robert L. Brock, National President of the organization filed a civil lawsuit (No. 65-1760-5) with a U.S. District Court, Southern District of California against Dean Rusk, Secretary of State of the United States, Arthur Goldberg, Ambassador to the United Nations for the United States, and the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. The plaintiff argued, based on the United Nations Charter, which the United States had ratified:

Black people as a non-self-governing people or nation have been legally deprived of rights including voting rights and cultural heritages such as *language* and discriminated against on the basis of race, color, *language*, religion, national origin, and so on.
(italics added)

The status of the language deprived of or discriminated against was not articulated either as a dialect of English or another independent language. No mention was made of what kind of linguistic discrimination existed, but it was obvious that at that time many black children were deprived of their educational rights based on their language use in school and, consequently, political, economic, and social rights. Smith had no specific thoughts on the term “language” in the lawsuit, although it was true that around then he was aware that the language of the black nation was a language other than English. He now has a clearer idea on the relationship between nation and language. Smith (2010) states that:

I maintain that since by definition a nation is a historically evolved stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, a common territory, and a common psychological make-up, manifested in a common culture and a common economic life, the descendants of enslaved Niger-Congo Africans, having historically evolved as a stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, a common territory, and a common psychological make-up, manifested in a common culture and a common economic life, are indeed a nation. (25)

This reminds readers of an earlier quotation from Stalin (See Section 1.1). What Smith means by saying “a common territory” is the southern part of the United States (See Figure 5), where black communities evolved as a stable people for centuries, led a common economic life, and developed a common culture including language. He interpreted the segregation of blacks as a proof of the formation of a new black nation in the United States. In fact, territoriality here might be such a defining characteristic of nation as Fishman (1972) points out, i.e., an “independent political-territorial unit which is largely or increasingly under the control of a particular nationality” (5).

His black nationalist language ideology was indirectly expressed in the venue of art, too,

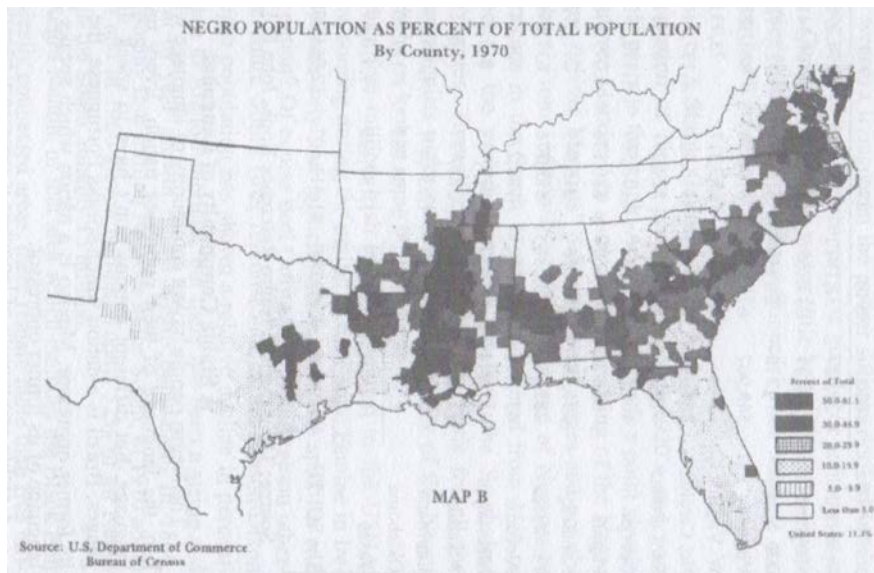


Figure 5. Concentration of Black People in the South in 1970.
Source: Nelson Peery, *The Negro National Colonial Question*,
Chicago: Workers Press, 1972, p. 64.

albeit implicit. In the section that follows, I will explain his black nationalist artistic expressions, which reflected a consciousness of the “bilingual” relationship of the languages of blacks and whites.

5.1.5. Anti-White Supremacist Art and Language

Smith’s black nationalist efforts in Los Angeles were sometimes impeded by, as other community efforts in other black metropolises were, abuse or violence by the police. After he graduated from the LA Metropolitan College, he started to sell jewelry and artistic drawings which he painted in class at CAL State, at his “Sheikh Shop” at 243 East Florence, San Pedro, Los Angeles (See Figure 6). It was one of the businesses in his community to earn for tuition, books, etc.



Figure 6. Ernie A. Smith at the Entrance of his Gallery “Sheikh Shop” at 243 East Florence, San Pedro, Los Angeles. Courtesy of Ernie A. Smith.

On July 12, 1962, he was arrested by the police on the charge of putting “nude” pictures on display to the public (People [of the State of California] vs. Smith – No. 166245, Los Angeles Judicial District Municipal Court). This was one of the police oppressions of blacks, which still continue to this day—if white artists did the same thing, they would not have been arrested. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) helped him to be acquitted. One of the drawings confiscated by the police depicted a black man and a white woman snuggled against each other (See Figure 7). This was clearly an incendiary theme for white police officers because this “nude” picture and others were of white women and because historically whites had lynched blacks when they saw a black man interacting with a white woman or sentenced them to death for alleged rapes of white women (e.g., *Chicago Defender*, Feb 11, 1967, p. 7). In this picture, the caption contains a black language line, “I don’t CEH WHAT Muhammy say; dis here ain’t

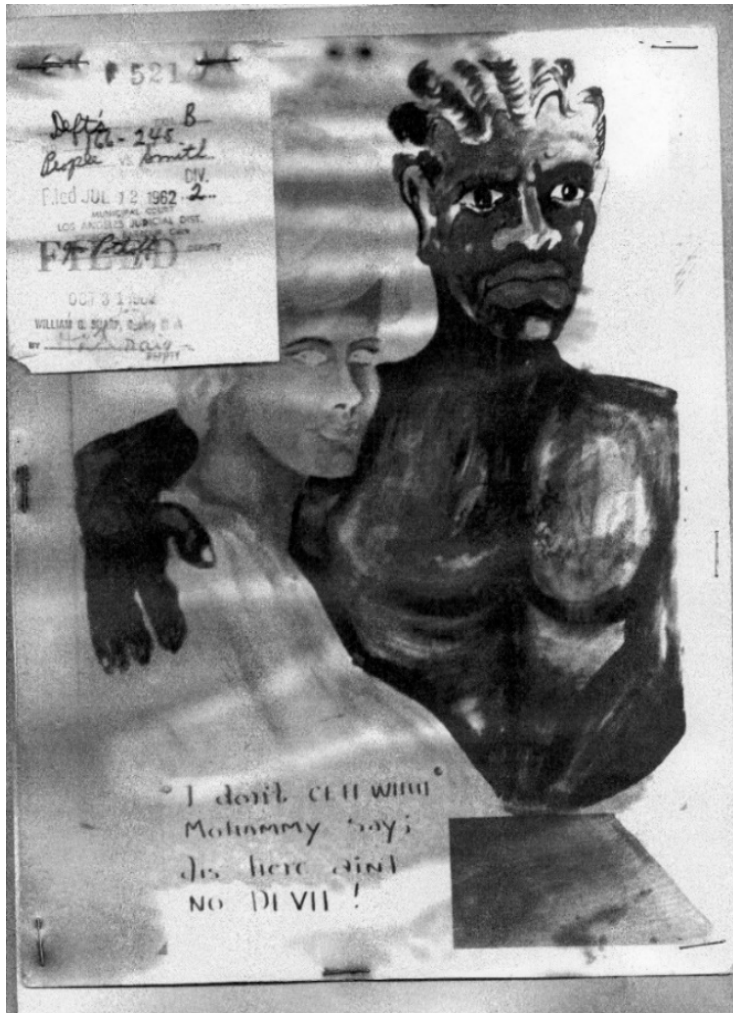


Figure 7. Black Man with Attempted Straightened Hair Holds White Woman. Courtesy of Ernie A. Smith.

NO DEVIL.”¹⁷ It suggested that this white woman is not a devil though Honorable Elijah Muhammad taught the white man is a devil. Another drawing was a scene where a white district attorney, dressed in KKK cloth (See Figure 8), made a statement against the Honorable Elijah Muhammad before a jury (incl., a black priest dressed in Christian cloth). A southern variety of English caption is presented here with the caption, “This Heh Mooslum been teachin our niggras Hate.” These were examples in which Dr. Smith’s anti-White Supremacist thoughts or the teachings of the Nation of Islam were expressed through his drawings and the code-switching

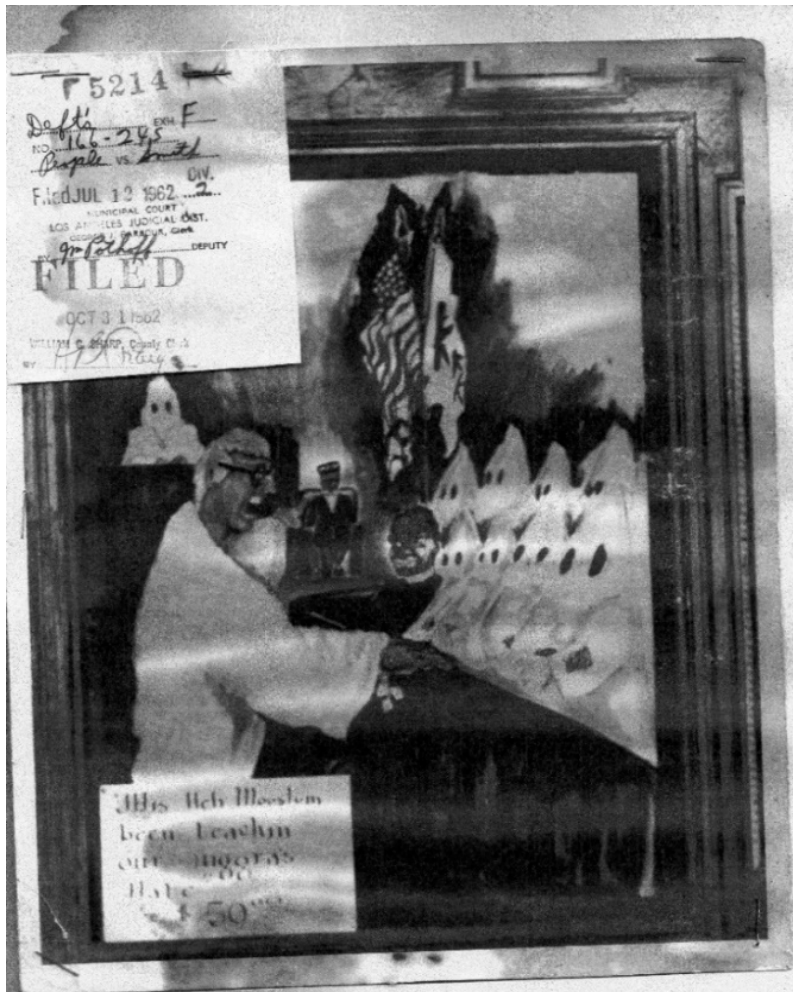


Figure 8. White Supremacist Christianity Against Black Islam. Courtesy of Ernie A. Smith.

between the language of the black nation and that of the white nation. It may be an illustration of how he was aware of the distinction between black and white language in religious, political, and artistic contexts. It might be suggested that his incipient language awareness of “their own kind of English” metamorphosed into a language ideology of “their own language other than English” in the course of negotiating stigmatizing and enlightening meanings attached to black language, although the changing process is not clear and reconstructed *post facto*.

5.1.6. English Literacy for the Descendants of Enslaved Africans in Self-Determined Way

In the 1960s, low achievement levels in literacy of black students¹⁸ had already become a pressing concern for some sociolinguists because the students' problems had been addressed as deficits such as dyslexia. Some of these predominantly white scholars (e.g., Baratz & Shuy 1969; Brooks 1964; Dillard 1972; Fasold 1969; Fasold & Shuy 1970; Goodman 1965; Labov 1967, 1969; Labov et al. 1968; Leaverton 1971; McDavid, Jr. 1964; Pederson 1964; Piestrup 1973; Stewart 1964; Williamson 1961; Wolfram 1969) who studied black language recognized it as a *different linguistic system* and attempted to address the issue in an *English as a second language* manner. However, all of them treated the black language as a dialect of English (See details in Section 4.5).

During this period, when the former outright deficit status of black language was being redressed with that scientific but self-contradictory conceptual framework, still not so incompatible with the perspective of the larger society, literacy skills and linguistic competence became one of Smith's conscious concerns, which later gave an experiential-practical motivation for his study at the University of California, Irvine. In 1968, he determined to use his education to help young black male high school dropouts and graduates who were unable to read and write English in South Central Los Angeles (See details in Section 5.2.4). The community effort stimulated formation of a clearer black nationalist linguistic view that the language of the descendants of enslaved Africans is not English but more specifically, an African language, as shown in the following excerpt:

When I first became concerned about the literacy of black people was as the Minister of

Education, because even when I was selling Muhammad's *Speaks*, I was not aware of the extent to which there was a high illiteracy rate amongst my people. I knew I could read and write. But I didn't know the degree to which a lot of people who were descendants of enslaved Africans were functionally illiterate or unlettered. That's what kind of motivated a lot of my studies in UC Irvine. . . . And that's when I began to view it from a scientific or comparative linguistic point of view as a "broken-down" African tongue, as Carter G. Woodson said in his book *The Mis-Education of the Negro*.

(E. A. Smith, personal communication, April 7, 2015)

This conceptualization of black language was not exactly scientific or based on hard data, but his black nationalist language ideology became African-centered a few years before entering the University of California, Irvine. It was of utmost significance to this event that he encountered Woodson's linguistic view. In the next section, the final step toward scientific substantiation of his nationalist view of the relationship between black language and English will be explored.

5.1.7. Nationalist Embodiment of the Descendants' Language in Science

The 1960s and 70s was a time when the black power movement and the black campus movement were at their apogee. It was not until then that sporadic Afrocentric attempts thus far to reconstruct from the perspective of black people the European-centered social sciences and humanities which had been constructed for centuries turned into an organized, formal effort to found a Black Studies program. "In the wake of the civil rights movement, ideas that valorized Blackness and Africanity," i.e., the search for the African origins of the traits of the US African descendants, "blossomed as never before" (Price 2010: 54). It was in the 1970s that African-centered views of black language, e.g., an Ebonics paradigm emerged in the academic circles. Interestingly enough, another paradigm similar to Smith's Ebonics paradigm, which viewed

black language as “Pan African Language in the Western Hemisphere (PALWH),” was presented in 1973 by Robert D. Twiggs in Los Angeles. Smith didn’t know Twiggs and his 1973 work at the time of writing his dissertation. However, the dominant trend back then was that many black scholars attempted to find some African or black features in “English,” in other words, they treated black language as a decreolized variety of English—the Creolist Paradigm (e.g., Baugh 1980; Rickford 1974; Taylor 1969; Smitherman 1977).

In 1967, Smith completed a BA degree at the then California State College, Los Angeles and landed a job as an associate producer for the *Joe Pyne Show* with Television Station KTTV (1967-1969). The producer of the TV show wrote a strong recommendation letter to the University of California, Irvine (UCI). UCI psychologist Joseph L. White, who “was influential in establishing the SF [San Francisco] State University's Black Studies Program” (SF State News 2008), the country’s first such program and who was Afrocentric enough to later accept Smith’s position on Ebonics, recruited him to the department. Smith enrolled in the Ph.D. program in Comparative Culture, UCI (1970-1974).¹⁹

At first, Smith talked to Dr. White about his interest in the literacy issue of the black community and thus, Dr. White recommended him to take a few courses in linguistics and social sciences. On the other hand, Smith hoped to study Egyptology, but he found no proper faculty member who could advise in Egyptology. Then, one event on campus completely guided his academic course. In May of 1970, he delivered an anti-Vietnam War speech in Gateway Plaza on the Irvine campus (See Figure 9). He talked about capitalism and the imperialistic oppression of Afro-Asian and Latin American peoples. Because of the language which he used at the podium allegedly within the presence or hearing of women and children, he was indicted on the ground

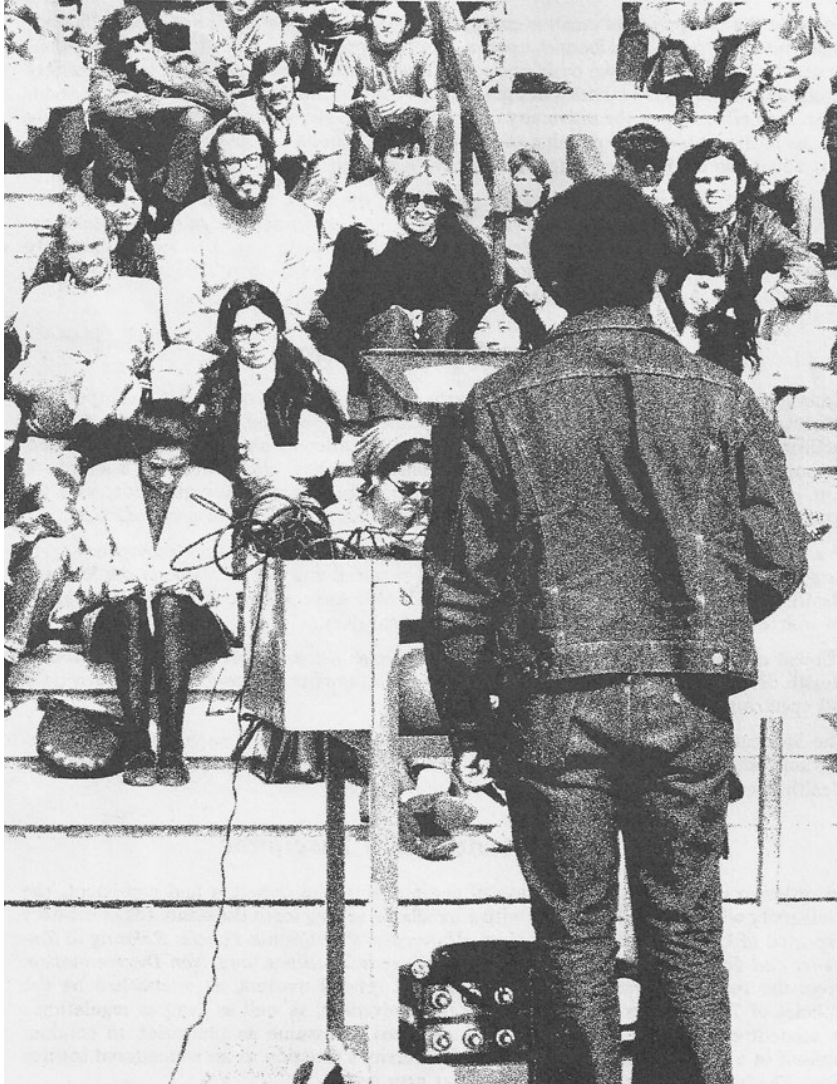


Figure 9. Anti-Vietnam War Speech in Gateway Plaza, UCI.
(Source unknown)

of violation of the Penal Code (See Figure 10; read Section 5.2.5 for more details). Interestingly enough, despite dozens of other speeches made during the previous two months by him and others, who used similar languages, nobody but he was prosecuted. In the ensuing trial, Dr. Mary Ritchie Key, a white assistant professor in Linguistics (Black English) at UCI, testified in his behalf (See details in Section 5.2.5). Her testimony established that the language he used in the speech was inherently free from “vulgarity, profanity, or indecency,” and he was acquitted. The

FLAMBOYANT MAN ON CAMPUS

UCI's 'Sweet Ernie' Faces Trial for Alleged Obscenity

BY SCOTT MOORE
Times Staff Writer

There never has been a student at UC Irvine quite like Ernie Adolphus Smith. He's black, flamboyant and brash. He drives a new Cadillac and owns a wardrobe that would make Flip Wilson gasp.

"Sweet Ernie" is what everyone calls him at UCI, where he's doing doctorate work on the language of the black man—a lingo that is gritty and often offensive to whites.

Because he used such language during a campus rally, Ernie Smith will stand trial beginning Tuesday in Harbor Municipal Court.

It is expected to be a precedent-setting trial, the first free speech test case in recent years involving the verbal use of obscenities.

Smith, 30, is charged with misdemeanor counts of using obscene language in the presence of women and children, and of disturbing the peace.

The charges result from a rally last May during the height of nationwide student protests over the Cambodian invasion and the Kent State shootings.

Smith is not denying he used obscene language. "I uncorked some

real hot ones," he admits.

But he does contend such rhetoric is commonly used on campuses everywhere, particularly among blacks.

He points out several white speakers at the same rally used similar language but were not cited. For this reason, he privately maintains the charges against him are motivated by "blatant racism."

The case has an interesting background and is fraught with far-reaching legal implications that could have national significance.

The charges were not brought by any women or children present at the rally, but by the campus police chief, whose two witnesses were UCI administrators, including the vice chancellor for business affairs.

When they threw the matter into the courts, the campus at large was appalled. The action directly countered the wishes of Chancellor Daniel G. Aldrich Jr., who wanted a campus settlement.

A campus movement has been organized on Smith's behalf. A "Free Ernie" rally was held just two days

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Ernie Smith

Times photo

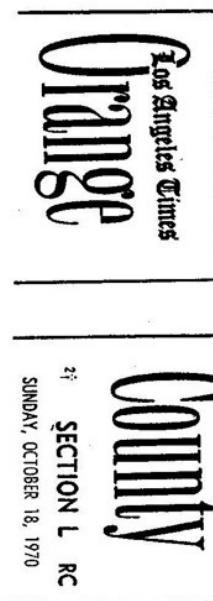


Figure 10. Court Trial Against Smith. (*Los Angeles Times*, Sunday, October 18, 1970)

scientific authority of linguistics in conferring legitimacy on his language in the criminal judicial proceeding led him finally to major in linguistics. It is also worth mentioning that there was another factor for his pursuing a linguistic study, i.e., "to keep out of the penitentiary and get some intelligence enough to buy a place to sleep every night." He said further, "That was more of a trigger for me, studying linguistics as a science than black nationalism" (Smith, personal communication, April 7, 2015).

Smith determined to study under Dr. Mary Key, an expert in "Black English," and the expert witness at his trial. Dr. Key, Smith, and other students examined the language of black children in fieldwork and found some interesting grammatical patterns in their linguistic behavior (See details in Section 5.3.5). In sharp contrast to Dr. Key, who viewed it as a continuation of old

British dialects, he interpreted the linguistic data as proving the black language to be a grammatical continuation of West African languages, and finally, his black nationalist language ideology gained scientific endorsement in linguistics. In 1973, he adopted the term “Ebonics” in replacement for “Black English” (See details in Section 5.3.8). Dr. Key disagreed with the term “Ebonics,” possibly the conceptualization and theorization of Ebonics, so he replaced her with then Dr. Arthur L. Smith (later, Molefi Kete Asante) at UCLA as his non-UCI dissertation committee member. Now his entire dissertation committee members including psychologist Joseph L. White, sociologist George O. Roberts, and economist O. L. E. Mbatia, all black or African scholars, understood and accepted his Ebonics thesis (See detailed discussions in Sections 5.3.1 and 5.3.2).

When the new term “Ebonics” was coined, Smith expressed his nationalist thought on the relationship between the black nation and the black language. He declared:

Let me tell you something, if you notice, *every language in the world represents a nation or a nationality*. What we are speaking has continuity not only in the United States, but outside of the United States and all the way to the mother country. We need to get the term completely off the English scale and start calling it what it really represents. . . . Ebonics may be defined as the linguistic and paralinguistic features which on a concentric continuum represent the communicative competence of the West African, Caribbean and United States slave descendent of African origin. It includes the various idioms, patois, argots, idiolects and social dialects of black people. Ebonics, also, includes nonverbal sounds, cues and gestures which are systematically and predictably utilized in the process of communication by Afro-Americans.

(Williams 1997: 210, italics added)

Ebonics represents a broader continuum or family of languages resulting from contact between African languages and European languages. It does not only refer individually to the language of the descendants of enslaved Africans in the United States, especially in the lower stratum, or

either of the other African diaspora languages, but collectively to all the newly born languages in the African diaspora. It symbolizes a national unity for the US descendants of enslaved Africans. The view that language is an important factor in delimiting a nation or nationality is a prevalent one seen across the globe (Kedourie 1960: 58 & ff.; Rosenblatt 1964: 137) and among linguists. For example, in Europe, to classify European languages and human collectivities was a strong factor in nationalism (e.g., for German, cf. Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835), cited by Rocker 1937: 228, and other comparative linguists (Fishman 1971: 128)); in the United States, one formalization of this view was the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (Fishman 1960); in the Caribbean, to officially establish an indigenous or a national language is a recently established case (e.g., Kreyòl [Haitian Creole], cf. DeGraff 2013 & 2017) or still a pressing concern among some linguists (cf., e.g., Devonish 2016 and Joseph-Haynes & Rivera Castillo 2016 for Jamaican and Limonese, respectively). It also symbolizes a Pan-African broader unity connecting diasporic Africans way back to continental Africa. Ebonics is both a black national symbol and a Pan-African symbol to express the black nation's distinctness and identity, i.e., represents African authenticity and an independence from English. All this illustrates the pursuit of ethnocultural broader unity and authenticity as widely seen in language nationalist movements (Fishman 1972: 8) and may fulfill the three broad nationalist goals of autonomy, unity, and identity (A. D. Smith 2010: 9).

5.1.8. Language Awareness and Loyalty to Nationalist Language Ideology to Ebonics

So far three phases of the ideological-political factor for the formation of the comparative

linguistic paradigm have been identified: the language awareness and loyalty phase, the nationalist language ideology phase, and the nationalist ideology and science intersection phase. Each of the stages acted toward political, economic, educational, and academic conditions and events of the time. The comparative linguistic paradigm, probably as did the mainstream paradigms, emerged as a scientific paradigm, interacting with a certain set of ideological-political meanings of the time.²⁰

I simplistically assumed that Dr. Smith's black nationalist language ideology "motivated" him to pursue his linguistic research at the University of California, Irvine. However, the reconstructed picture of the sequence from the ideological-political factor to the Ebonics paradigm is not so straightforward. At the microsociological level of his life story, my tentative presupposition of cause and effect, i.e., that a scientific paradigm is influenced by attempts to define and address some political, economic, and educational needs of a group, does not neatly fit into the story. I've found that, though it may be said that his black nationalist ideology stimulated part of his academic interests, Dr. Key's expert witness testimony at the 1970 trial rather than his black nationalist language ideology may have been a key factor for his pursuing a linguistic study at UCI. I've also learned that the matter of survival on the street was salient as a factor for his pursuing a doctoral degree (cf. Knorr-Cetina 1981), as the following dialogue between Dr. Smith and me [KM] reveals:

Dr. Smith: "That [= focus of keeping out of the penitentiary and getting some intelligence enough to buy a place to sleep every night] was more of a trigger for me, studying linguistics as a science than black nationalism. The science that I learned supported the black nationalism . . ."

KM: "In that sense, black nationalism has influenced . . ."

Dr. Smith: “Yeah, that influenced [my linguistics]. I allow that much influence. I came to UC Irvine with the history of being involved in the Nation of Islam and being . . . [in] the black nationalist struggle for independence from imperial America as a non-self-governing people, as a chairman of the Self-Determination Committee . . .”

KM: “So I should have used ‘influence’ rather than ‘motivation’ [in reference to the black nationalist factor].”

Dr. Smith: “I said those are ‘foundational’.”²¹

(Smith, personal communication, June 3, 2015)

The factors were more concrete and “down to earth” than I first hypothesized—he admits his black nationalist language ideology provided a foundation for his Ebonics paradigm. However, it appears to be the linguistic evidence he found in the language of black children in Los Angeles that germinated his African-centered thesis that black language is a grammatical continuation of Niger-Congo and West African languages. This event gave scientific credence back to his black nationalist language ideology. Therefore, I might suggest that his black nationalist language ideology may have opened another way for black linguistics to interpret the meaning of the language of descendants of enslaved Africans in the United States.

5.2. Experiential-Practical Factor

In this section, I explore how and why Dr. Ernie A. Smith reached the induction that black language is so different from white language in symbolic interaction with state institutions of power in his everyday life, that is, I aim to interrogate the experiential-practical factor for the formation of his comparative linguistic paradigm. In regard to an earlier section, I found that Dr. Smith encountered pathologizing and dehumanizing meanings attached to his own community language especially in state-sponsored education and in the judiciary. It may be suggested that he may have attempted to experientially reconstruct those meanings of his mother tongue to the extent that black language may be defined as an African language on a path to elaborating on his ideological-political and/or experiential-practical view of his mother tongue scientifically in an emerging field of inquiry at the University of California, Irvine.

Blacks or black linguists like Dr. Smith who had excruciating experiences as a result of their language use may share a dissenting view of their mother tongue.¹ On the other hand, blacks or black linguists who seem to have had a relatively stable childhood and adolescence and/or came from outside of the United States may have a dominant perspective as held by those in the mainstream. In short, the degree of difference which blacks or black linguists feel exists between black and white language may depend on the social locations and manners they have been “educated” in the United States, as DeBose (2005) observes. Therefore, the location and manner Dr. Smith was socialized or desocialized in his community and the wider society may be a critical differentiating factor for his linguistic view. In this section, I shall explore the experiential-practical factor which might have contributed to the formation of the Afrocentric

linguistic view for him. The factor is bifurcated into: (1) an experiential-practical factor which might have led him to perceive black language as a language other than English and (2) an experiential-practical factor which might have led him to recognize the need to establish the scientific legitimacy of black language. The ensuing five situations of black language, I suppose, constitute both factors (1) and (2), or either of them: (a) significant difference between black and white language, (b) black language as a pathology in school, (c) black language as a factor in IQ tests, (d) bilingual education in black language and English, and (e) black language in the judiciary system.

5.2.1. Significant Difference between Black and White Language

As explicated in Section 5.1.2, as a child, Ernie A. Smith acquired and spoke Ebonics as the primary language of his black community, Tulsa, Oklahoma as a child because his parents and playmates spoke it. The school environment in the South was strictly segregated and all the teachers were African [-descended]. Once migrating into South Central Los Angeles, a predominantly black neighborhood back then, he encountered a different linguistic experience, a *large difference* between his everyday language, on the one hand, and the language of urbanized blacks and teachers which was expected to be used in LA schools, where the teachers were predominantly white, on the other hand. At another experiential-practical level of intelligibility, when Smith, his instructor, and white students conducted field research on the language of black school children in the vicinity of UCI in 1970, they found some differences between the interpretations of black language users' verbal productions, which white graduate students made

of the language and those which Smith made of it. He remembers:

I was asked to transcribe. And I had very limited skills in phonetics at that time. My limited skills in phonetics as a science of describing speech was limited, very limited. Okay? So in my transcriptions of the tape the professor of my class at the seminar noticed that I did not have phonetics as a science, but I was exhibiting some differences in the interpretations whites have made in their transcriptions and my transcriptions. Okay? She attributed those differences to my lack of phonetics as a science, but it did make them aware that what they were missing was some stuff that, if I had better skills in phonetics, that would not change the misinterpretations whites have made of what was said or what was heard. . . . Speaker intuitions to verify any transcriptions made of our language other than the language that you speak. You cannot rely on your interpretations as a non-native speaker. So she validated the use of native speaker intuitions. Being a native speaker of the language that the children were speaking, she said, my interpretation was an interpretation of native speaker intuitions, which is much more valid than nonnative speaker intuitions about what somebody is saying. That's in the science of linguistics. Native speaker intuitions are valid, okay? more than nonnative speaker intuitions or interpretations. That's another thing that she pointed out. She relied on my native speaker intuitions for what was on the transcriptions.

(Smith, personal communication, November 8, 2016)

Smith found white students misinterpreted what black children said. There are three possible explanations for this misunderstanding: semantics, phonology, other grammatical elements, and mistranscriptions. I suppose semantics may have been a prevailing difference between black and white language, which was partly a result of the other grammatical components. Phonology, in conjunction with other grammatical factors, may have led the white students to mistranscribe and then misinterpret. All this points to the possibility that the white students may have had a language as their primary language other than the language that the black school children brought from their home and community, and relied on their own native intuitions, not the native-user intuitions of the black children. The instructor and her white students may have assumed that as native users of English they could correctly interpret the language of those

school children whose primary language was, they assumed, another dialect of English, which meant for them that both the investigators and the children shared the same native-user intuitions, in other words, the deep structure of the English language. But what happened was misinterpretations on the part of whites and the absolute reliance on Smith's linguistic intuitions for valid interpretations of the language data. The discovery of two different native-user intuitions in the fieldwork may have partly scientifically validated his black nationalist belief that black language is a language other than English.

Even creolist black linguists since the 1970s point out that white language users overwhelmingly misinterpret utterances containing black grammatical features such as the stressed *been* and the modal semi-auxiliary *come* (e.g., Rickford 1975: 172-174; Spears 1982: 871, cited in Morgan 1996: 412).² Although avoiding the explicit politically dichotomized interpretation of whether it is a dialect of language X or constitutes language Y, i.e., avoiding one scientific responsibility to protect individual and collective human rights and squarely face the power politics in which the linguist is inevitably (and comfortably) involved, white linguist William Labov revealed his honest dilemma in demarcating black and white language. He substituted another discursive tactic for the usual binary discourse:

The uniform Black English vernacular is separated from . . . all . . . white vernaculars . . . by both categorical and variable rules specific to Black English with accompanying norms of interpretation; by differences in underlying forms; and by a large section of the lexicon with associated semantic interpretations and cultural knowledge. . . . We then find two kinds of relations between white and black speech communities: integration of the various rules, with a high level of potential recognition and common semantic interpretations, and absolute barriers that seem to demand separate grammatical description. (1980: 374, 376, cited in Spears 1982: 870).

Another white linguist William Stewart (1967) perceived “Negros . . . include within their group speakers of the *most radically non-standard* dialects of natively-spoken English in the entire country” (22, italics added). It is not clear what “most radically non-standard” meant, but it suggested this line of scholars may have sensed some limitations when they talked about black language as a dialect of English. All these arguments suggest the interpretivity, arbitrariness, and subjectivity of linguistics, which against the intentions of mainstream scholars justifies more inclusive paradigmatic competition, including the comparative linguistic paradigm, in black linguistics.

If white teachers still feel the difference is to the effect that they cannot correctly understand what black students say due to morphosyntactic, semantic, phonological, phonetic, and pragmatic features, then it suggests that at least in terms of intelligibility, which largely derives from grammatical patterns, black language may have a different linguistic and communicative system from English; especially, back in the early 1970s, black language may have been more differentiated than now to the extent that people may have more confidently said it is a language other than English. Back then, whites had greater difficulty comprehending black children’s speech especially at the phonological level from a low socio-economic urban environment (e.g., Baran & Seymour 1976; Nober & Seymour 1979).³ Even recently, we witness such an incidence at school, as partly attested by recent studies (e.g., Robinson 2006, Robinson & Stockman 2009). In 1997, one white female teacher from Illinois exchanged her opinions with a black educator on the *unintelligibility* of Ebonics in a CNN live program on the 1996 Ebonics Resolution. The part of the dialogue went:

The teacher: “At the current time I have students talking Ebonics as a means of deception. I don’t know what they’re saying in my classroom. As an English teacher I wanna teach them Standard English, but I also wanna understand them. I’m confused. I don’t know what to do.”

A black female commentator from Los Angeles: “I tell you what to do. You teach them *Standard* English. That’s the job of the teacher, to teach *correct* grammar.”

The teacher: “But I don’t understand”

A black female commentator from Los Angeles: “Then you ask them what they mean. If they say something to you, that’s things out of the ordinary, I’ll ask them to explain and then tell them *correct* ways to express themselves and use those same sentences but the *correct* way. That’s the way to do it.”

The teacher: “But I’m afraid of going to turn off my students”

(“CNN and ABC shows on Ebonics” at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Z2te_r3FYI, especially 29:08-30:29, emphasis added)

The teacher insists she can’t understand what her black students say, but she frames the incidence within the dialect-to-dialect relationship because her use of the term “Standard English” suggests a dichotomy between “standard” and “nonstandard” (the latter means a nonstandard kind of English that black students speak). However, we see the most problematic in the comments from the black commentator concerning the black language the students use: “tell them *correct* ways to express themselves.” So the comment suggests that black language is *incorrect*, although it correctly and appropriately communicates their ideas and emotions.

It is obvious in the literature that most linguists base their decision on whether they use the term “language” or “dialect” or “creole” or categorize a target linguistic code that they attempt to describe into a “language,” a “dialect,” or a “creole,” partly on the general intelligibility or understandability of the linguistic code to their and others’ ears (e.g., Spears 1982: 871). For example, higher unintelligibility between, assumedly, two dialects of the same language may

make linguists suspect there exists a great difference in the two grammatical structures of a linguistic code which they attempt to describe and another linguistic code that they know as their primary medium of communication (e.g., Stewart 1962: 44). However, most linguists seem to elide any linguistic arguments on why they describe and analyze a linguistic code as a dialect of Language A or B. Considering they may know or can soon understand their academic discourses are tied to, whether they hope or not, the state and inter-state power structure, they appear to avoid their political responsibility as scientists, while some liberal linguists believe their science can be justified by merely citing white linguist Max Weinreich, who said, “A language is a dialect with an army and navy.” The problematic nature of the experiential-practical factor of intelligibility, which some claim to be an unscientific criterion, may have made many linguists reluctant to admit that the experiential-practical factor predetermined their scientific methodology, afraid that they may be labeled unscientific; however, I would argue that, as predecessors in various sciences have made important discoveries in or based on their experiences, the experiential-practical factor should be an important, legitimate constitutive element of a scientific paradigm, in other words, it is scientific.

5.2.2. Black Language as a Pathology in School

Black language was long perceived as a pathology or a deficiency. Teachers and school officials suggested that Ernie Smith’s mother tongue features were deficiencies that were related to physical and/or mental abnormalities. They suggested to some parents that their children be assigned to the school speech clinic for speech therapy or to the school psychologist for a

diagnostic examination, and treatment for possible congenital mental disorders. This was indeed a widespread practice against black children in school, as illustrated by the following case of the late “Jesse” Owens, who was born to a sharecropper in Oakville, Alabama and migrated from the South to metropolis Cleveland, Ohio:

After moving to Ohio from the deep South as an elementary school pupil, he was afraid to speak in school because of problems with stammering. The name Jesse comes from an aborted attempt on the part of Owens as a shy child to tell the teacher his name was J. C., which came out sounding like Jesse. Other children sometimes make fun of the stammering and stuttering caused by interference modification, which makes the withdrawn child even more hesitant to speak. Extremely withdrawn children, who stammer and stutter when they speak, run the risk of being classified as either autistic or nonverbal cripples, classifications that suggest the presence of a serious psychological disorder. (White 1984: 127)

The example cited above will most likely remind readers of his own experience of linguistic discriminations at school in South Central Los Angeles (See Section 5.1.2). His later reinterpretation and higher awareness of the childhood experiences in his immediate empirical world may have partly guided him to pursue a scientific, plausible explanation of the difference between black and white language or what his language is, and destigmatize the black tongue away from the white tongue. Smith’s argument below, partly coming from his own childhood experience in the inner-city, may justify my suggestion:

It is this writer’s contention that because the speech and linguistic codes of the inner city Black culture differs significantly from the speech and linguistic codes of the dominant culture, when many inner city children become pupils in the urban or inner city school system, untold numbers of these children have the awesome experience of being diagnosed by teachers as having a corrupt, broken, disordered, and deficit speech, and being labeled as verbal cripples and linguistically deprived. Often labeled “slow learners” and considered as being cognitively deficient, many of these children are continually assigned to an array of remediation type courses which are ostensibly

designed to cure their language defects. As a consequence of having been assigned to these remediation courses and dumbbell sections of their classes, many of these children have the common experience of being teased, mocked, and taunted by their so-called “normal” schoolmates. Because some of these children react to this harassment by engaging in verbal duels (“woofin sessions”) and fist fights to protect their self respect, they soon find themselves suspended or expelled from school and labeled as being incorrigible and uneducable. Perhaps it is here we find the emergence of a pattering among Black people. (Smith 1974: 32)

Despite an increasing number of sociolinguistic works from the mid-1960s (See Chapter 4), there still continued to emerge such works as to frame the language of some black children as a deficit in the area of speech pathology or communicative disorders (e.g., Norton & Hodgson 1973).

However, from an ethnolinguistic perspective, the “acting out” and “incorrigible” verbal expressive styles were part of the legitimate black language (Smith 1974: 49). This institutional injustice against the legitimate language, unjustly, made untold numbers of inner city children suspended or expelled from school, parents frequently intimidated and threatened with having to face civil action suits or juvenile court hearings for their alleged failure to properly rear a disruptive or incorrigible child, or schools resorting to behavioral corrections or penalties.

Smith (1974) concludes:

To the inner city school system, Black verbal arts and oral expressive styles are lewd, indecent, and profane, and totally unsuitable for educational purposes . . . the inner city schools have tried to empty-out Ebonics by employing prescriptive grammars, pedantic teachers, corrective, suppressive, and negative teaching techniques. The inner city schools have attempted to pour in good grammar (SAE) by the speech pathology, clinical therapy, and language laboratory approach. (50)

From the perspective of the mainstream/white educational institution, the language of many black children was not a language but a pathology, by implication, it was not English, although

most interpreted it as a degenerated or underdeveloped dialect of English. It was one of the dominant *scientific* interpretations on black language (e.g., Bereiter & Englemann 1966; Bereiter, et al. 1966; Bloom, Davis, & Hess 1965; Carson & Rabin 1960; Deutsch 1963, 1965, 1966; Hess & Shipman 1965; Jensen 1968; Shuey 1966). It is very interesting to note one coincidence that learning disabilities became formally recognized as a medical condition and discipline in the 1960s and 1970s (Hallahan & Sayeski 2010), when the civil rights movement and the black nationalist movement clamored for civil rights and independent black institutions. The scientific community, an entity to authorize the various discourses of, primarily, the dominant group, might have constructed various segregating categories such as learning disorders to maintain or distribute power relations between the dominant group and the subjugated group(s).

5.2.3. Black Language as a Factor in IQ Tests

IQ tests served two devastating functions for the black community: one was to track and lock many blacks into the lower strata of the society and the other, to negate the mother tongue of the community. In those tests,

[i]ntelligence is usually assessed in tests of factual knowledge, reasoning, memory, *word knowledge*, arithmetic, spatial visualization, and knowledge of social conventions. Some intelligence tests call for *verbal responses*, whereas others require the manipulation of concrete materials. . . . These tests are based on *verbal behavior* which develops along different lines in poor black children than in white children.
(Haskins & Butts 1973: 8, emphasis added)

The verbal responses mean two things: grammatical and pragmatic. For the former, the use of

black linguistic features would tell white examiners that the students had a pathological or underdeveloped form of English. The pragmatic features of black language would show the examiners that they had an illogical formation of their thoughts. For Ernie Smith, the problem occurring between black language and IQ tests came to his attention at UCI:

Jo White, Joseph White was Professor, Social Sciences at UC Irvine. That's who recruited me to the graduate program in the School of Social Sciences at UC Irvine. It was from Joseph White, in the seminar that I had taken from Joseph White, that I understood the whole concept of testing, validity in testing, the invalidity of testing. So if there was one person who influenced my better understanding of that phenomenon, it would be Joseph White . . . My understanding of the bias in testing all that came from primarily Joseph White. I had met Asa Hilliard and a lot number of black psychologists, who belonged to the Association of Black Psychologists, who were all very Afrocentric, . . . very Afrocentric. He testified at the Larry P. vs. Riles case in San Francisco. . . . That [= the relationship between black language and the IQ tests] was what their whole issue was. That's, the test was linguistically and culturally biased. The items on the test were items about things that black children would not be expected to know. If I gave you a test today in Russian and you don't know anything about Russia, you don't know the Russian language, you don't know the Russian culture, then I label you mentally retarded because you don't know the questions on the test, they are all in Russian, your language is not Russian, then I label you mentally retarded because you don't understand the Russian language and the Russian culture. How can I label you mentally retarded because you don't know another language? All these tests are language-based. They are all in English.

(Smith, personal communication, November 8, 2016)

For Joseph Whites, at the root of black psychology, in relation to the language behavior of Africans in America, lay “an identifiable African cultural influence that has persisted despite the continuing exposure of the Black American psyche to the Euro-American culture during the past 350 and more years of geographical and temporal separation from Africa” (White 1984: 3). In the late 1960s and early 1970s, predicated on the thesis that the so-called standardized tests being used to place disproportionate numbers of black pupils in classes for the educable mentally

retarded (EMR) were culturally and linguistically biased, the San Francisco Association of Black Psychologists filed a lawsuit known as “Larry P. v. Riles” in 1972 against the San Francisco Unified School District (Smith 2015; White 1984). For example, in 1971, in the school district, whose 28.5 percent was constituted by black students, 60 percent of the EMR students were black. The semantics of black language was a key evidential factor for delegitimizing the current IQ tests used in the school system, but the semantics was often interwoven with the morphosyntax. For example, when Dr. White asked one of the six plaintiffs who had been labeled as retarded on the basis of IQ tests administered by the district about the following hypothetical situation:

The interviewer: “What should you do if a child much smaller than you tries to start a fight with you?”

The nine-year-old black male: “I would hit him back, I don’t be buyin’ no woof (wolf) tickets and I don’t be sellin’ no woof tickets, buyin’ woof tickets ain’t nothin’ but trouble.”

(White 1984: 111)

When the retest was administered with culturally and linguistically modified scoring criteria by black psychologists, the plaintiffs tested above 75, the cutoff scores by the school district for placement in classes for the mentally retarded. One of the black culture specific tests created against the IQ tests which were culturally and linguistically biased toward the white middle class was the Black Intelligence Test of Cultural Homogeneity (BITCH)⁴. Compared to the cultural biases, “[l]ittle consideration has been thus far given to the problems which dialect differences pose in test construction” (Williams 1975: 117). Therefore, BITCH was predicated on the

rationale that “a combination of dialect specific and culture specific tests would certainly enhance the possibility of measuring accurately what is inside the Black child's head” (Williams 1972: 7). Black psychologist Robert L. Williams, who were to coin the term “Ebonics” with Ernie Smith in 1973, created the BITCH test. The black culturally-specific test may have been based on his understanding that:

a federal judge has recently ordered that California school children be given intelligence tests in their own language. While this decision has specifically been directed at correcting some of the inequities suffered by Spanish surnamed children, it has implications for Black children who also speak non-standard English.

(Williams 1975: 120)

Williams’ attempt to relate the Spanish language to black language is reminiscent of the attempt of Smith to equate the former to the latter in bilingual education (See Section 5.2.4 for details). The following examples from the BITCH test attest to the suggested connection between the two scholars:

1. *Blood*

- a. tire
- b. worthless
- c. An injured person
- d. A brother of color

2. *Jet*

is:

- a. an East Oakland motorcycle club
- b. one of the gangs in "West Side Story"
- c. a news and gossip magazine
- d. a way of life for the very rich

3. Many people say that "Juneteenth" (June 19) should be made a legal holiday because this was the day when:

- a. the slaves were freed in the USA
- b. the slaves were freed in Texas
- c. the slaves were freed in Jamaica
- d. the slaves were freed in California
- e. Martin Luther King was born
- f. Booker T. Washington died

(Sources: Williams 1975; SusanOhanian.Org 2011)

All the questions are both cultural and linguistic (largely semantic), and black language plays a large role. The results of the test when administered to white students showed a similar tendency to those of the traditional IQ tests administered to black students: “many whites would score ten to fifteen points below Blacks on the BITCH test” (White 1984: 112).

Black psychology and linguistics were in a collaborative position to rectify the entrenched tracking system of blacks into a lower stratum of state institutions based on the IQ tests which drew on white cultural psychology and language. Smith’s argument that the semantics of polysemy is a key factor in the intersection between black psychology and language (2016) may attest to the close relationship between his linguistic expertise and the psychological perspective of the BITCH test. The result of the BITCH experiment suggested black language may need to be treated off the scale of English, especially, for Smith. It is of great significance to note that the intersection of linguistics and psychology provided the major impetus for renaming and redefining black language in the small black caucus meeting in 1973 (See Section 5.3.8) and might have offered another experiential-practical and theoretical-scientific (inter-disciplinary) factor in Smith’s linguistic research at UCI.

5.2.4. Bilingual Education in Black Language and English

It might be said that Dr. Smith's concern with bilingual education for black children dates back to the late 1960s, when he founded the United Front Against Imperialism (UFAI) in South Central Los Angeles. As Minister of Education, UFAI, he helped young black male high school dropouts and graduates to learn literacy in English with his self-made teaching materials (but found it failed possibly due to the youth's "ghetto" language). He describes the materials in the following way:

The point that I was making was that the materials that I had developed were just like a test in English. If you write a leaflet and you want to get people who speak a language other than English involved, you can't write it at a level that they don't understand. Okay? I hadn't even come to that understanding in sixty-eight. I didn't even understand anything in sixty-eight other than that was White Supremacy and that was imperialism going on. The war in Vietnam hadn't ended. So the United Front Against Imperialism was based on the belief that we should form alliances with other groups, even white groups who opposed to imperialism by the United States against the African and Asian world. That's what United Front Against Imperialism is about. It had nothing to do with linguistics. I discovered in the process of trying to issue information that the people didn't understand the information because it was in a language they didn't understand. I reached that conclusion way after I had done what I had done. I said, "Oh, this is, this is, I was doing the same thing, trying to educate people to the problem of imperialism. I wasn't getting to them, I was only getting to people who speak English."

(Smith, personal communication, November 8, 2016)

As in the IQ test, his materials were written in white language, a language which the students couldn't properly understand. This was what he came to understand way after 1968. I suppose that it was partly because of the surface-level similarities that may have caused more confusions to the extent that they couldn't properly understand the actual differences which existed between black and white language. Smith recalls the black youths perfectly memorized the grammar rules

(of English) but they could not decode and encode the graphic representations of speech. This point overlaps with and thus reinforces the argument in Section 5.2.1 on the “significant” difference between black and white language. Remember Smith noticed in field research his white colleagues could not understand what black language users said, while the white students should have been confident that they could correctly understand what they must have thought was “English” particularly at the lexical level. There was another he noticed in his community literacy program: the possible influence of the “ghetto” language in learning literacy in English, i.e., the language may have interfered with learning literacy skills in English, though “dialects” of English, I suppose, would not have done so.

It was a time that bilingual education especially for Spanish-using children became an issue in California and other parts of the United States, of which Smith was aware (The Federal Bilingual Education Act was enacted in 1968 and the provision of instructions in English and Spanish, Chinese, or other second languages was mandated in public schools). Two years later, at UCI, he formed his idea on bilingual education in Ebonics and English, partly based on relevant works at the time, which were written by some people close to him in his linguistics-communication-psychology network, i.e., Brock (1972), Holt (1970), and Taylor (1969). Dr. Grace Holt and Dr. Orlando Taylor as well as Smith attended the conference on “Cognitive and Language Development of the Black Child” in St. Louis in 1973. Dr. Holt was in a small conference with Smith and others to coin the term “Ebonics” and define it (See details in Section 5.3.8). Robert Brock was a black nationalist leader who managed an organization in California, where Smith was a member, and demanded the United States Government grant self-determination to the descendants of enslaved Africans in its territory (See details in Section

5.1.4).

At UCI, Smith encountered three different views on the language education of black children in school. They were the deficit view, the difference view, and the dissident view (Brock 1972; Holt 1970; Smith 1974; Taylor 1969). The deficit view contended that “[s]ubstandard Negro English . . . is an ‘illiterate’, ‘corrupt’, and ‘error’ filled vernacular that is a barrier to cognitive operations and intellectual growth”; it posited “an ‘environmental deprivation’ or ‘cultural deficiency’ model”, and proposed “the cultural enrichment program” (Ibid.: 36). On the other hand, the difference view and the dissident view supported the linguistic position that black language is:

a well ordered, highly structured and rule governed language. Whereas the proponents of the Difference position accuse the teachers in the inner city of unpreparedness and advocate the Bi-lingual or English As a Second Language approach to literacy, . . . the proponents of the Dissident position denounce the institutionalized destruction of the children and propose that reading and all other subjects be taught in the child’s vernacular - the Ethnolinguistic approach. (Ibid.: 37-38, underlining in the original)

The difference view was exemplified by William Stewart (1973), who was a supporter of a contrastive approach to teaching standard English, a second “dialect,” to the users of black language, a first “dialect,” as the contrastive approach, widely promoted among linguists then, was associated with bilingual education. The mainstream white researchers including Stewart as listed in Section 4.5, however, did not mention any suggestion to protect or promote black language. It may have shown their covert position on the language or their implicit agreement to the government’s “hidden” policy to level out or segregate undesirable linguistic differences. In fact, at the “unofficial,” viz., implementation level, the omnipresence of remedial language

programs from elementary to tertiary level was noticeable.

Quite contrary to the difference model's attitudes toward the maintenance of black language, the dissident model argued, "The teaching of Standard English as a tool language is a tenable goal for American education, so long as it does not preclude instruction in Black English" (Taylor 1969: 17), or that the use of Black English should be allowed in language lessons, a weaker version (Holt 1970). One difference from Smith is, they regarded black language as a dialect of English. Their position was additive "bidialectal" education. Therefore, Smith adopted the pedagogic element of the dissident position and adjusted the dissident position from "bidialectal" to "bilingual" education. He observes that:

it would seem to follow that if Black youths who drop out of school are more closely associated with Black oral expressive styles, education programs should be geared toward incorporating these styles in both teaching and learning strategies. . . . Moreover, if . . . learning is more meaningful, if it is *additive* in nature, educators should continue to develop programs which build upon the Black child's linguistic strengths, that is, their stylistic oral expressiveness. This applies not only to the teaching of Standard Anglo English but other subjects as well. (Smith 1974: 144, italics added)

The idea "additive" in his bilingual education is to promote or maintain both students' primary and second language, in sharp contrast to the "subtractive" model promoted by the liberal white scholars since the mid-1960s, where black students were supposed to subtract black language in their existing linguistic repertoire. It is worth a note that Smith's argument for bilingual education partly drew on the UNESCO's position on the use of "vernacular" languages in education as first expressed in 1953. It states:

It is axiomatic that the best medium for teaching a child is his mother tongue. Psychologically, it is the system of meaningful signs that in his mind works

automatically for expression and understanding. Sociologically, it is a means of identification among the members of the community to which he belongs. Educationally, he learns more quickly through it than through an unfamiliar linguistic medium. (UNESCO 1953: 11)

The UNESCO statement seems to cater to only linguistic codes deemed relatively far from their cognate linguistic codes in linguistics, containing no discussions on black language varieties in the African diaspora. However, since the idea by UNESCO was applicable to any linguistic code or mother tongue, he adopted the essence of that sociolinguistic principle. We find another paragraph which may support his suggestion to employ Ebonics as a medium of instruction. The paragraph read:

Every child is born into a cultural environment; the language is both a part of, and an expression of, that environment. Thus the acquiring of this language (his 'mother tongue') is a part of the process by which a child absorbs the cultural environment; it can, then, be said that this language plays an important part in moulding the child's early concepts. He will, therefore, find it difficult to grasp any new concept which is so alien to his cultural environment that it cannot readily find expression in his mother tongue. (Ibid.: 47)

As Smith points out (See Section 5.1.1), the *de facto* geographical, social, economic, and cultural segregation of most blacks in the United States has been a determinant factor for the reproduction of black language. Concepts tied to the segregated cultural environment make it difficult for most black children to grasp any new concepts embedded in the white cultural environment, which are so alien. Today, he explains his position back then as follows:

To the extent that the United Nations, UNESCO position on teaching children . . . United Nations UNESCO report in 1954 said that the best medium for teaching a child is his mother tongue. If you don't accept that premise, then everything else you think you know is absurd. I accept the United Nations' finding. . . . If I'm gonna learn

Japanese and the teacher's only speaking in Japanese, I don't understand Japanese, I don't speak Japanese, how will I learn Japanese? The teacher doesn't speak to me in my language, or any language I understand, it's all in Japanese. Now, tell me how I'm going to learn Japanese, just by hearing Japanese. I can turn the radio on to Japanese radio station, turn the television on to Japanese station. 'm I gonna learn Japanese soon, listening to Japanese? (Smith, personal communication, November 8, 2016)

He expressed his support for the dissident position, which recommended that black children be taught in black and white language for different subject matters. In this bilingual policy black teachers who are Ebonics users should teach subject matters including language (i.e., English) arts in Ebonics and English. It was not a matter of teachers' unpreparedness.

The strong tie between his own view of black language as a language other than English and bilingual education was best articulated in a later incident involving the US Department of Education and him. He sent the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare a paper entitled "A Case for Bilingual and Bicultural Education for United States Slave Descendants of African Origin" (Smith 1976-1977, see Figure 11). He summarized it in the following way:

[A]s a consequence of: 1) their being descendants of African forbearers whose native languages were African languages, and not English, and 2) as a consequence of their having historically been born into, reared in, and compelled to live lifestyles in socially isolated linguistic environments that are different from that of the majority Anglo-English speaking population, by all linguistic evidence and historical fact, Afro-Americans are: a) not native speakers of English, b) have retained an African linguistic substratum in their speech, and c) because of this have limited-English-speaking abilities within the meaning of "limited-English-speaking" as defined in Public Law 93-380 -- the Federal Bilingual Education Act. It is further posited that given that oral linguistic behavior is determined by the extent to which a person is exposed to a given linguistic environment and given that the African-American child has not been reared in a linguistic environment in which English is the dominant language any more than Asian-American, Hispanic-American, or Native American children who are presently considered to be of limited-English-speaking ability under the law, the African-American child is equally entitled to be given instruction in English As a Second Language by only those individuals who have a native competence in Ebonics or who have been trained in the nuances of the Ebonics bilingual and bicultural *contrastive*

linguistic approach. (underlines original, italics added)

We witness how the practical relationship between Ebonics as a language other than English and bilingual education was given a scientific edge. One interesting suggestion, as in the statement by Dr. Smith, i.e., use of contrastive approach, a reduced version of the greater use of Ebonics as a co-medium of instruction with English that he proposed earlier in his dissertation, has been found to be an effective strategy to bring Ebonics-using students to a working bilingualism in

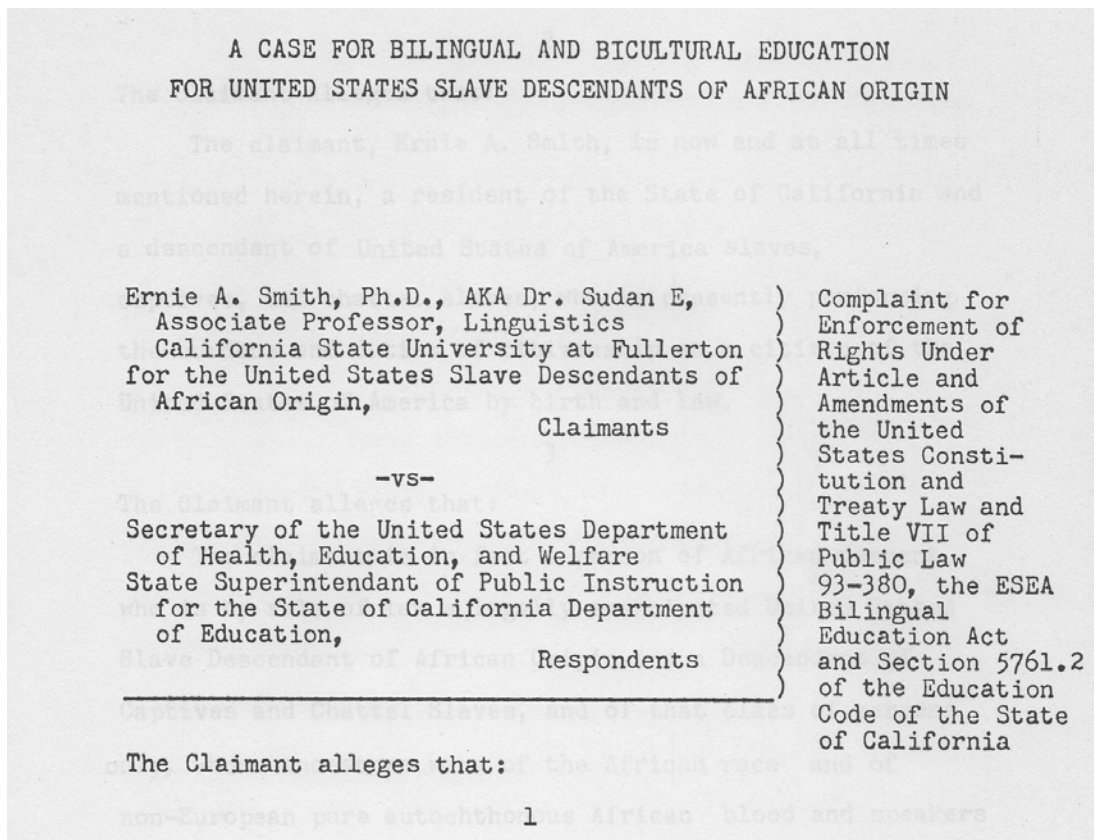


Figure 11. A Case for Bilingual and Bicultural Education for United States Slave Descendants of African Origin. Courtesy of Ernie A. Smith.

Ebonics and English (cf. Pandey 2000). In response to the paper, on May 13, 1977, Boyer, Ernest L., US Commissioner of Education countered in the following two respects:

- 1) The native language of black Americans is English
- 2) The United States slave descendants of African origin are not “limited English-speaking”

Interestingly, Boyer stated Gullah *may* be eligible for the Bilingual Education Act, suggesting Gullah may not be a dialect of English, a creolized form of English like Hawaiian Pidgin.

Perhaps, this is a telling illustration of practical application or appropriation of the dominant scientific knowledge, i.e., the Creolist Paradigm in a way to suit the interests of the United States, i.e., mostly white elites. The Paradigm admits Gullah and other varieties of black language may constitute a continuum (e.g., Rickford 1974), but tends to differentiate them either as a creole or a post-creole, i.e., dialect respectively.

Even today, an African-born linguist of South Asian ancestry, Anita Pandey, who examined the linguistic competence of “monodialectal” black language users by using the paper-based TOEFL test, found compelling evidence that is in favor of bilingual education, and, albeit against the author’s intention, offers a possibility of defining black language as a language other than English. The test results showed the lowest points for the grammar and listening comprehension. The results were comparable to those of the low-level or low-intermediate-level ESL/EFL students who use a language other than English as their primary language. Though Pandey emphasized black language as a dialect of English, she recommends the black users learn English by means of the very contrastive approach that Dr. Smith recommended back in the late 1970s. The example points to a contradictory reality that bilingual education usually addresses only those linguistic codes which are widely recognized as “languages” other than English; whereas one scientific study suggests the legitimacy of using some method of bilingual

education in teaching English to black language users and, by implication or extension, black language might be viewed as a language other than English as are German and Spanish, whose primary users are entitled to be enrolled in bilingual education or ESL programs under the federal law. The last point is supported by the following results. Though the denominator was very small (Focus group A consisted of 11 inner-city black students aged 18-19 who were enrolled in an intensive six-week summer Bridge Transition program at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign), their test results showed 477/_{1st}→519/_{2nd}→545/_{3rd} (513/_{Ave.}). According to the ETS statistics taken in 2000-2001 (*ETS 2001-2002*), the denominators are not large enough, but, for example, the German users (n of German users: 274) and the Spanish users (n of Spanish users: 1601) took average scores of 596 and 564 respectively. The statistics may present one contradiction and one implication. One contradiction is, the German and Spanish users, whose primary linguistic codes are scientifically said to be close grammatically or lexically to English and scientifically and officially defined as “language,” are still entitled to the bilingual education services in the United States, but the black language users, whose primary linguistic code is scientifically said to be close lexically to English and scientifically and officially defined as a “dialect” of English, are not. One implication is, most linguists would contend black language is a dialect of English based on their observation of a certain area of grammar, lexicon, and orthographic conventions, but if they are scientists and advisors for the larger society, they may need to look at a holistic gamut of language including semantics and pragmatics as the defining features of black language. Consistency between linguistics and applied linguistics might have been an important scientific criterion for Smith to determine the validity and integrity of his comparative linguistic argument on the relationship between black and white language.

5.2.5. Black Language in the Judiciary System⁵

According to the National Congress of Parents and Teachers (1962: 10, cited in Smith 1974: 54), the statutes for juvenile delinquency frequently prohibit using “profane” language. In fact, various acts, characteristic of many innercity black children and families and adolescents, were interpreted as acts of delinquency in the juvenile justice system by using color-blind discourse. It was part of a trend in the historical development of social and scientific discourses against blacks. Smith observes, “In the juvenile detention centers of America the language of the innercity child presents a problem because it is perceived as being uppity, vulgar, indecent, and profane” (1974: 52). He attributed the reason why whites and others who adopted the white (para)linguistic standard took black language as profanity to a sociolinguistic fact that the black linguistic and oral expressive styles of the urban youth do not differentiate but rather equate the styles of adults with children (Smith 1974: 56). The use of black language in the larger society, as in the school system, then, played another role in stratifying many blacks into the underclass.

In May of 1970, Smith delivered an anti-Vietnam War speech in Gateway Plaza at the Irvine campus (See Section 5.1.7 for additional details). Because of the “vulgar, profane, and indecent” language which he used at the podium allegedly within the presence or hearing of women and children, he was indicted on the 26th of the same month on the ground of violation of Sections 415.5 and 311.6 of the Penal Code, misdemeanors by the Orange County’s district attorney’s office (The People of the State of California vs. Ernie Adolphus Smith – Orange County Harbor District Municipal Court) (See Figure 12). It was filed by the Campus Chief of Police at the behest of Vice Chancellor L. E. on behalf of two elderly female secretaries in his office. In this

IN THE MUNICIPAL COURT
Of ORANGE COUNTY HARBOR **Judicial District**
County of Orange, **State of California**

No. **M 55438**

MISDEMEANOR COMPLAINT – CRIMINAL
P. C. Section 740
(This Space for Clerk's Stamp Only)

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA,
Plaintiff,

vs.

ERNIE ADOLPHUS SMITH, 9/7/38

Defendant

* AMENDED *

Indexed.....
Register.....

The undersigned hereby certifies, upon information and belief:

Count I: That on or about the 19th day of May, 1970, at and within Orange County Harbor Judicial District, Orange County, California, the crime of Misdemeanor, to-wit: Violation of Section 415.5 of the Penal Code was committed by ERNIE ADOLPHUS SMITH who at the time and place last aforesaid, did then and there willfully and unlawfully and maliciously disturb the peace or quiet of the University of California at Irvine by using vulgar, profane or indecent language within the presence or hearing of women or children, in a loud and boisterous manner.

Count II: That on or about the 19th day of October, 1970, at and within Orange County Harbor Judicial District, Orange County, California, the crime of MISDEMEANOR, to-wit: Violation of Section 415.5 of the Penal Code was committed by ERNIE ADOLPHUS SMITH who at the time and place last aforesaid, did then and there willfully, unlawfully and maliciously disturb the peace or quiet of the University of California at Irvine by using vulgar, profane or indecent language within the presence or hearing of women or children, in a loud and boisterous manner.

Figure 12. The People of the State of California vs. Ernie Adolphus Smith – Orange County Harbor District Municipal Court. Courtesy of Ernie A. Smith.

trial, three sociolinguists and one biologist made expert witnesses for him. He recollects about the court discussion that:

Those four <sic> linguists that testified in my trial, and they told the court, “these are not bad words. These are words that annoyed people. He didn’t disturb the peace. He was at a rally. Everybody there enjoyed what he said. He was talking against the war and that upset a lot of people, the war, expanding the war in Vietnam, over in Cambodia. The people at the rally didn’t object.” [Dr. Mary Key said that] there were no bad words used. There were some words that annoyed some people who were not participants in

the rally, that I was on the microphone that I could be heard it annoyed those people. But the law says that I have to use bad words. There're no bad words. . . . [The other three were] Harvey Sacks, David Sudnow, and Sam Shacks. . . . Sam Shacks is a bioethicist. His PhD is in molecular biology. And he was explaining to them that the science says that these are not bad words. There's no such thing as a bad word coming from human voice, vocal apparatus. . . . The other ones testifying were sociolinguists. [They said that] even music has these kinds of words, I mean, you don't like these words, don't buy the record. . . . You had these words. Rap music nowadays is a derivative of that whole attitude against black music. (Smith, personal communication, November 8, 2016)

Dr. Key's and others' expert witness testimonies established that the language Smith used in the speech was free from "vulgarity, profanity, or indecency," and he was acquitted. The scientific discourse of linguistics in conferring legitimacy on language in the court led him finally to major in linguistics. The court case addressed some "indecent" words and phrases, like motherf**cker, which he used in the campus rally. Therefore, it was not against "broken English," "nonstandard English," or "Black English." There were no specifications made about what other linguistic and paralinguistic features the accused part of his language was. Interestingly enough, though, no other speakers who made speeches using similar expressions during the previous two months were prosecuted. What this seems to suggest is that the linguistic and paralinguistic way he talked that identified him as black might have been the hidden basis on which the white administrators upstairs placed their charge against him. Therefore, in order to test this claim, I analyzed one of his black nationalist speeches, *Is the White Liberal a Racist? Is the Blackman Insane?* (Smith, year of publication unknown), and found that the most prominent feature of his speech style was his oratory style, very similar to the African oratory style, as he points out:

The oral expressive style of the diasporic African orator and preacher is very much like that of autochthonous African announcer, notably in that there is much more reliance on gestures and voice quality in rendering an oration or sermon than in any other genre of Afro-American oral literature. (Smith 1974: 116)

The audience on the campus was predominantly white (See Figure 8 in Section 5.1.7; according to Dr. Smith, there were only five black students at UCI back then). Hence, it might be assumed from conventional sociolinguistic wisdom that he would have used less of his black linguistic features and expressive styles or brought his language closer to the language of whites when he talked to such a student body. That said, based on my analysis of the speech, which may be targeted at both whites and blacks, I still identified many of the Afro-American linguistic features and expressive styles even in the “formal,” i.e., mixed-race, setting. Looking at the literature on Ebonics back then, Smith observed “the Black verbal arts and oral expressive styles have been made to appear in one body of literature as a lewd, obscene, and deviant verbal behavior” (Smith 1974: 26). Quite speculative as this observation may be, it might partly explain the attitudes of the white female administrators who indirectly filed a complaint against him, even though they did not say so in public record.

Today Dr. Smith does not regard the court case as linguistic. A possible influence of the court case on the formation of Smith’s view of black language as a language other than English may be difficult to establish. On the other hand, a possible influence of the case on Smith to attempt to reach a scientific account of the linguistic and paralinguistic features of his mother tongue might be inducted from a series of events in his life story that his language became a target of accusation by a combination of white institutions: education and psychology, later, a combination of white education and law. In fact, the profanity and indecency which the white institutions found in the language of blacks was one of the paralinguistic patterns of the black community which Smith (1974) discussed. Therefore, the case might be interpreted as linguistic in a wider sense.

There were some later incidents which happened after Dr. Smith graduated from UCI that were clearly linguistic issues different from the 1970 court case. They pointed to the need for official recognition of black language as a language other than English in the court as Chinese, Spanish, etc. were recognized. One was a court case for pimping or pandering in 1977. On August 1, 1977, the Los Angeles County Public Defender asked CSU Fullerton Professor, Dr. Ernie A. Smith to interpret a black defendant in a trial (See Figure 13). Dr. Smith recollects his role as an expert witness in the trial as follows:

I was sent a transcript of a tape recording that had been made of a man by the name of [anonymous]. . . . He was talking to the undercover police woman. He was accused of pimping and pandering. Okay? And I was asked to come as an expert witness to refute the interpretations that the police were making on what was said. He was acquitted. . . . The whole issue was linguistics. He said something. She said something. They listened to the tape, and they construed what he was saying to be what they wanted it to be. . . . I wrote my interpretation of what he meant and the jury accepted my interpretation as more valid than the interpretations made by the police. [The interviewer: So it's mainly about semantics.] Yeah. . . . In fact the district attorney tried to challenge my credentials by pointing out my license plate that said, "BADMF." [The interviewer: What is BADMF?] Motherfucker. He was trying to poison the mind of the jury. . . . My attorney said, you know, "I didn't know about this, but he is citing something that said, 'This man is a part of the culture of these people who engaged in pimping and pandering, so if he is not an expert, he sure has a lot of credentials in that area'." So he took the very thing to try to use to invalidate my abilities as a linguist and said, 'He is reinforcing the fact that this man is a linguist and, you see, because he knows about pimping because everything that he has just cited proves this guy not only knows linguistics, he knows the culture as well. He is very familiar with the culture. And he seems to be very proud of it, has MF on his license plate.'" (Smith, personal communication, November 8, 2016)

The main area that the white group had extreme difficulty in understanding was the semantics of Ebonics. This case established (may still establish) the fact that many black defendants need to have an Ebonics interpreter so that their human rights could be protected in the court. And similarly interesting is the fact that the district attorney attempted to

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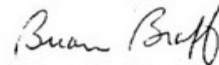
August 1, 1977

Professor Ernie Smith
Department of Linguistics
California State College-Fullerton
800 North State College Drive
Fullerton, CA 92624

Dear Dr. Smith:

Enclosed are copies of the police reports and preliminary hearing transcript in the case of [REDACTED]. Pursuant to our telephone conversation, will you please review these documents, and advise me whether you can draw any conclusions from them.

Very truly yours,



Brian S. Braff
Deputy Public Defender

BSB:mm

Enclosures

Figure 13. A Letter from LA Deputy Public Defender. Courtesy of Ernie A. Smith.

discredit Dr. Smith as a linguist with the jury, although his background knowledge on the language and culture of most blacks in the inner city as a professor of linguistics at an accredited university qualified him as a reliable expert witness. The elided motive of the district attorney, who had to be in an unbiased position toward both parties, may as well be because he was a black person.

Much later, there appeared a DEA (Drug Enforcement Administration) hiring motion where they attempted to hire some linguists who are versed in black language to translate their wiretaps. It suggests that they officially recognize black language is an independent language other than

English (Austin, Williams, & Smitherman 2011: 114). There was another recent attempt to recognize Ebonics as a language worthy of interpretive services in the court from the side of the lawyer. One black lawyer, Alton Maddox strongly recommended that those young blacks who are not versed in English grammar and cannot speak standard English be provided court interpretation services especially concerning stylistics and semantics and Ebonics be recognized as a language among the court designated languages.⁶

5.2.6. Experiential-Practical “Connections” to Ebonics

The experiential-practical influences on the formation or adoption of a linguistic paradigm seems to often remain or be made implicit, perhaps because linguists would posit scientific interpretations of linguistic data must be given priority over experiential interpretations. Therefore, when such linguists talk about whether a linguistic code is language or dialect, linguists often seem to draw on syntactic or morphosyntactic data rather than semantic, phonological, and pragmatic data, particularly avoiding an intuitive notion of intelligibility and understandability. But considering a simple historical fact that much scientific research began after the scientists make intuitive, layperson findings in their own empirical world, it may be reasonable to assume that they determine to examine the phenomena because they simply find them interesting or to be addressed immediately in their empirical world. Therefore, there are highly likely to exist some experiential-practical foundations for the scientists’ arguments.

It might be suggested that the experiential-practical factor A, such as what linguistic difference or what degree of understandability Smith felt existed between black and white

language and how strong his collective loyalty to his mother tongue became as a result of its being oppressed by state institutions such as education, psychology, and law, may have led Smith to perceive black language is a language other than English. Particularly, the language consciousness and loyalty deriving from Smith's experience of white racism may have been tied to a nationalist desire to establish his collective identity around, among others, his mother tongue and differentiate between black and white language. As for the experiential-practical factor B which may have led Smith to recognize the need to scientifically validate his mother tongue, the language problems his community faced in the state institutions such as education, psychology, and law may have given a motivation to pursue linguistic research on black language. All in all, factors A and B may have interacted to stimulate Smith, first, to pursue linguistics to prove the scientific legitimacy of his mother tongue, and second, to interpret his mother tongue as a language other than English.

In the case of the Ebonics paradigm, it sounds plausible that Smith may have attempted to integrate the experiential-practical meanings he attached to the relationship between black and white language in his empirical world with the theoretical-scientific meanings of black language. Different from traditional disciplines whose knowledges are *applied* in real-life situations (e.g., applied linguistics), in the African-centered program in Comparative Culture, UCI (See details in Section 5.3.2), Smith may have attempted to *connect* theory to practice or treats them as the *inextricable whole* of the discipline, as seen in the current Africology (cf. Nelson, 2007[1997]; Okafor, 2013). Therefore, his experiential-practical meanings of black language may have provided an important foundation for selection of a particular descriptive and analytical method/criteria and selection of particular language data to establish what black language is and

to solve those social and linguistic problems that may not be solved if black language was interpreted as a dialect of white language.

5.3. Theoretical-Scientific Factor

So far, I have explored the ideological-political and experiential-practical factors for or toward the formation of the comparative linguistic paradigm. The accounts in earlier sections may have given the appearance that the paradigm is merely or largely ideologically-politically and experientially-practically driven. Indeed, the ideological-political and experiential-practical factors may have provided some foundation and flexibility for Ernie A. Smith to conduct his scientific endeavor; however, as I pointed out in Chapter 1, what made it a science was ultimately the scientist's observance of disciplinary criteria and interpretations (remember scientific criteria and interpretations are socially constructed through symbolic interaction of the tripartite factors).

In this section, I will reconstruct the life story of how Dr. Smith built his comparative linguistic paradigm in his years (1970-1974) in the doctoral program of Comparative Culture, University of California, Irvine. I will delve into the theoretical-scientific factor, i.e., what disciplinary circumstances, what paradigms, what scholarly thoughts, and what linguistic evidence interacted to produce his paradigm. It was obvious that he investigated the language of United States descendants of enslaved Africans under the influence of African-centered ideas (incl., Egyptology or Kemetology) on black language. His “provocative” choice of a comparative linguistic approach against mainstream paradigms, i.e., the Transformationalist (See a definition in Section 5.3.7.1) and the Creolist Paradigm, made it possible for him to scientifically and Afrocentrically interpret as an African language the linguistic data of black children that he and his mentor collected in a Los Angeles elementary school. It is scientifically intriguing that the

very paradigm that he chose for the description of black language has been widely used for determining what families languages all over the world belong to, but particularly not for determining the genealogy of newly born languages in the African diaspora, where other criteria were deployed to justify the paradigmatic shift. It was also revealed that both his comparative linguistic paradigm and Europe-born comparative linguistics shared some interests as seen in nationalist movements the world over.

In the ensuing sections, I shall reconstruct a life story of the scientific exploration of black language by Smith at the University of California, Irvine from 1970 through 1974.

5.3.1. Enrollment in Comparative Culture

From 1968, a local black nationalist, Ernie A. Smith participated as a part-time community resource volunteer in one of the black-white relating sessions run by the Operation Bootstrap (OB, hereafter¹; see Figure 14). OB was established (incorporated) on October 24, 1965 at the corner of 42nd Street and Central Avenue in South Central Los Angeles. It was two months after the Watts Rebellion. It was designed to lay the potential for poor blacks to enter the occupational world, and for the ghetto to enter the national economy. It was specifically designed not to be a typical middle-class-oriented program as seen in the influential national network organizations like the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). It emerged as an offshoot of the black nationalist component of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE, hereafter). In its embryonic stage, Louis S. Smith, a.k.a., Lou Smith, then, the Western Regional Director of CORE, played a central role in putting a new CORE agenda into practice, and was



Figure 14. Ernie A. Smith in Operation Bootstrap. Smith made a counter-argument against a comment by a white guest. (Source: a private video on OB, Courtesy of Ernie A. Smith)

the founder of OB (Ellis 1987). He was a lecturer teaching an undergraduate course on problems in the black community (e.g., 100 ABC Contemporary Problems²) at the Black (a black studies component) and Comparative Culture section of a newly founded program, Comparative Culture, University of California, Irvine (UCI PCC F 1973). At this Lou-led organization, Dr. Joseph L. White recommended Ernie Smith to enter the doctoral program in Comparative Culture. Dr. Smith remembers:

My choosing UC Irvine was not to go to Comparative Culture. I was recruited to Irvine by Dr. Joseph White. I was working at the Operation Bootstrap. The person who directed the Operation Bootstrap was Lou Smith. Lou Smith was a professor at Irvine. He was teaching quite a time. (Smith, personal communication, September 6, 2016)

It was not Dr. Smith that chose the department. Fortuitously, his engagement in OB and his acquaintance with Lou Smith therein, who was oriented toward black nationalism, and Lou Smith's UCI connection to Dr. White, who was also oriented toward black nationalism, converged to bring Ernie Smith into the African-centered program.

5.3.2. "Black Studies" in Comparative Culture: Cultural Nationalist Project

Before entering into discussion on Smith's education and research in the Afrocentric environment, a brief explanation on how the Comparative Culture Department was related to Black Studies, an incipient cultural nationalist project (Karenga 2009) should be beneficial for understanding how and why such a "provocative" paradigm as Ebonics was born on the UCI campus.

It was not until the Black Power Movement and the Black Campus Movement in the 1960s that earlier sporadic African-centered thoughts or attempts turned into an organized, formal effort to found a Black Studies or a Black Studies program. It was in 1968, at the height of black nationalism that the San Francisco State College established a first Black Studies program in the United States, in which Dr. Joseph L. White, Smith's future advisor at UCI, was one of the founders. Earlier, the lives of black and other peoples of color had been underserved and distorted by the academic mainstream or Eurocentrism. Various disciplines or sub-disciplines had been allocated to describing particular groups in particular ways. The behaviors, including language, of black people had been described first as biological and physical, and, later, psychological and sociological anomalies on the criterion of mainstream white behaviors. The established disciplines had not paid enough attention to the histories and cultures of black

people. Consequently, those disciplines had contributed to maintenance of the established social order—slavery and, then, segregation of blacks. It was against this historical backdrop and in the 1960s that some black scholars and students stood up to rectify the scientific racism and proceeded to establish a discipline centered on black or African experiences and perspectives and dedicated to serving the African community in the United States (Bunzel 1968; Okafor 2013; Rojas 2007).

Most young black intellectuals in the 1960s, among whom was Ernie A. Smith, were seeking an African or Pan-African perspective which transcended generations, continents, and places of origin (Asante 2009; Austin 2006). Back then, there was still no clear discipline as Africology. However, there seems to have already been the same strands of thought that define 21st-century Africology. It was an embryonic field of inquiry which examined an African phenomenon from an African perspective. It located the African phenomenon in Africa and in the diaspora as an organic whole. The Pan-African way of describing and analyzing the phenomenon allowed them to reconstruct African continuity and distinctness spanning from the African diaspora to continental Africa. The Pan-African methodology aimed at establishing the African roots of various black phenomena in the United States, especially, West African roots from the 1970s (e.g., Smith 1974, 1978c, Smitherman 1977) and Egyptian roots from the 1980s (e.g., Smith 2011a, Smith & Shabaka 2003). All this may fit the profile of the Department of Comparative Culture, UCI, where the Black Culture component and the African Culture component meet. The two components in comparison and integration might as well have been equivalent to what Karenga calls cultural nationalist project, i.e., Black Studies, Africology.

When Smith entered the doctoral program in Comparative Culture, UCI, he told Dr. White

about his interest in the literacy problem of the black community. He was interested in Egyptology too. His education in the Nation of Islam motivated him to verify what was taught in the Nation in Egyptology scientifically. However, he couldn't find any researcher who could deal with that particular field of inquiry. Then, the life-changing event happened on campus in 1970, and it led him to specialize in linguistics, which was partly related to literacy. This change was partly explained by his long frustration with his inability to explain the legitimacy of black language with technical concepts.

In Comparative Culture, “[i]n addition to the general core designed for all Comparative Culture majors the student concentrating in Black Culture should elect to take courses which would strengthen his background in literature, philosophy, social sciences and fine arts . . . as an introduction to the Black Culture area he should complete the Black America I and II series and one course in creative or expository writing. . . . The student should plan his program to include at least one course offering field study in the Black community, one course in Black Literature, and one course in either Black Politics, Black Psychology or Community Problems” (UCI CCPP). For example, at the undergraduate level, Black America I examined the role of civic, political, economic, religious, and other institutions and organizations in the black community, and Black America II analyzed the styles and major themes of black spokespersons including Douglas, DuBois, Washington, King, Malcolm X, and Carmichael. Comparative Culture also offered courses entitled “Race and Racism in the Modern World” or “Sociology of Black Nationalism.” The selection and structure of the courses may have reflected the African-centered ideas of Smith’ advisors. The courses, at the early stage of the development of Black Studies, did not contain such theoretical or disciplinary works as gave the backbone for the new discipline.

However, considering the career history of Dr. White, the Black Culture section was equivalent to the burgeoning Black Studies or such programs throughout the United States back then.

Therefore, Smith was placed in the interdisciplinary, innovative, cultural nationalist, African-centered field of inquiry, characteristic of Black Studies against “caucasio-centric” (Smith 1974) disciplines. In that academic environment, he majored in Comparative Culture with a research area of concentration in comparative linguistics. In Comparative Culture, he compared black culture with African culture, i.e., black language with African languages. He took courses in linguistics, advanced conversation, statistics, sociology, independent studies, psychology, and so on.

Lastly, I will briefly talk about Dr. Smith’s original major concern, Egyptology, which still appears pertinent to his research (See Figure 15). It can be said that his two research concerns,



Figure 15. Dr. Smith’s Office at Lillian Mobley Multipurpose Center, 7813 South Central Avenue, Los Angeles.


Egyptology and linguistics looks different but may have been interrelated fields of inquiry for his dissertation. The Egyptology, Kemetology, or Niggerology which he envisioned and defined in 1970 (Smith 2015) was:

Niggerology: [ngr + ology] 1. The study of, Neggurs, Niggahs and Niggers. The study of the people of ancient Khemit or Kemit (Egypt) who worshiped the god Negrs and goddess Neggur; 2. The study of incorrigible and recalcitrant Nigritians, especially descendants of enslaved Nigritians that openly defy the system of Racism White Supremacy

The study of Kemet, Nigritians (West Africans), and diasporic Nigritians under this field of inquiry suggests an African-centered perspective from which we study things African, which was to be elaborated and established as a discipline later. Dr. Molefi Kete Asante, who may have largely influenced Smith in his dissertation, provides a definition of the perspective on which Africology should be centered in the following way:

Afrocentricity is . . . an intellectual quality of thought, practice, and perspective where the scholar perceives Africans as subjects and willful agents of phenomena who act from their own historical and cultural image for human interest (Asante 2006: 648). [It is] a frame of reference wherein phenomena are viewed from the perspective of the African person (Asante 1991: 171). The Afrocentric analysis reestablishes the centrality of the ancient Kemetic civilization and the Nile Valley cultural complex as points of reference for an African perspective. (Asante 1998: 11).

Considering the two definitions above of relevant fields by the two individuals who were both situated in Los Angeles, E. A. Smith and Asante (A. L. Smith, back in the early 1970s) both may have attempted to rectify the “discontinuous history and . . . uncertain future” (Asante 1998: 11) for African cultures, which had been promulgated by white sciences, for the descendants of

enslaved Africans in the United States and other diasporic regions. As a telling example much later, in *Nigger: A Divine Origin* (2003), Dr. Smith substantiated the divine origin of the term “nigger” in Ebonics to Ancient Egyptian,  (Medew Netjer) in Kemet (See Figure 16).

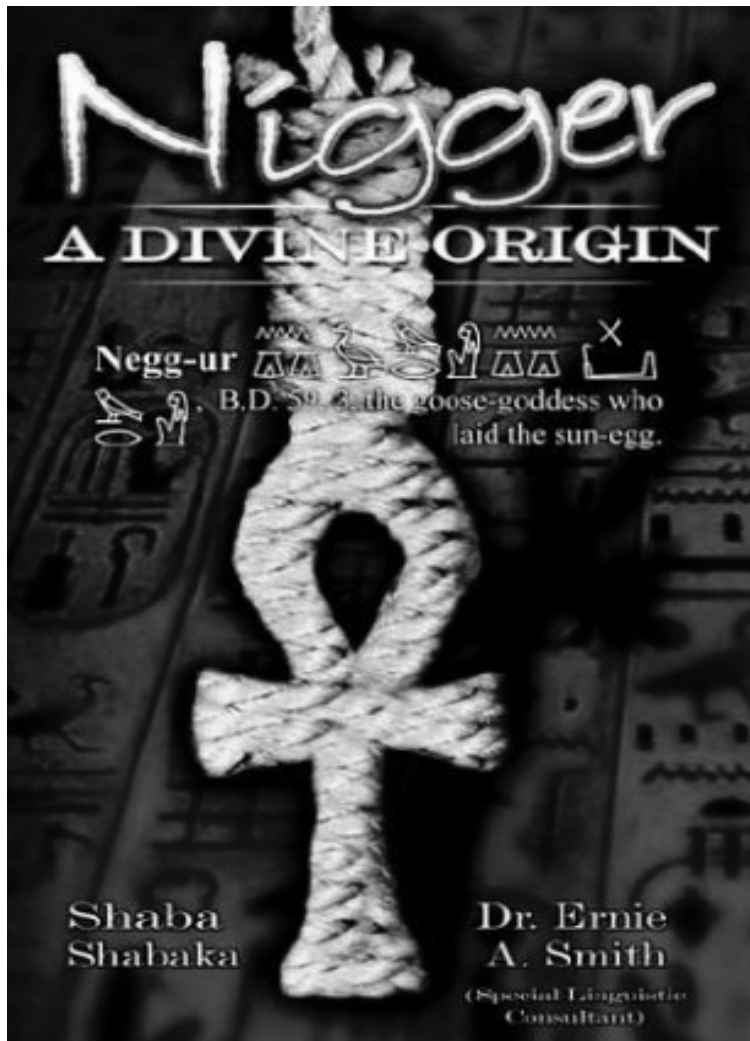


Figure 16. Nigger: A Divine Origin.

Later in 1970, after Smith was acquitted of the linguistic misdemeanor charge filed by a university administrator and impressed by the scientific persuasiveness of linguistics by the

expert witness in the court—Dr. Mary Key, he determined to pursue a scientific explanation of black language in the discipline of linguistics. At the surface level, Egyptology and linguistics constitute two fields of inquiry, but a main theme in Egyptology, i.e., pursuit of African continuity and distinctness/identity, was later to resonate with what he found in a linguistic field study on black school children in Los Angeles in 1970 and 1971. However, more direct influences in this regard were to come from some of the readings in various disciplines with which he became familiar in the late 1960s and the early 1970s.

5.3.3. Guidance Committee Members

As mentioned in the previous section, the Comparative Culture Department was an ethnic studies program and had, among others, a black studies component. Thus, it was necessarily interdisciplinary as is today's Africology. Comparative Culture was:

an independent program designed to study specific cultures cross-culturally and draw upon multiple disciplines. Its aim was to "shed light on the forces and processes which have shaped the culture of America" by comparing systematically the dominant and minority cultures of the United States and Third World. . . . Each student could design his or her own program. In 1969 students could study African, American, Asian, Black, and Chicano cultures, or with other areas by special arrangement.

(OAC 2016: Background)³

There was a lot of flexibility to design a much more innovative research project than in conventional departments. Ernie A. Smith recalls that the academic atmosphere was liberal and receptive to various perspectives.

In Comparative Culture, Smith majored in Comparative Culture with a concentration in

linguistics. The faculty members were mostly in psychology and sociology, including one linguistics professor, as shown below:

Joseph L. White, Ph.D. Professor of Psychology and Black and Comparative Culture
George O. Roberts, Ph.D. Professor of Sociology and American/African and
Comparative Culture
Oliver L. E. Mbatia, Ph.D. Acting Assistant Professor of Economics and Black/African
and Comparative Culture
Pete E. Clecak, Ph.D. Assistant Professor of English and Comparative Culture
Mary R. Key, Ph.D. Assistant Professor of English and Social Science (Linguistics)
David Sudnow, Ph.D. Associate Professor of Sociology
Harvey Sacks, Ph.D. Associate Professor of Anthropology and Sociology
Henry Fagin, Ph.D. Professor of Administration, Research Administrator in the Public
Policy Research Organization
John Wallace, Ph.D. Associate Professor of Administration and Psychology
Gordon G. Globus, M.D. Associate Professor of Psychiatry and Human Behavior

(Source: Smith 2015; University of California, Irvine 1970-1971)

In this environment, there may have been little departmental or disciplinary constraints on him to follow the established paradigms in conventional linguistics departments strictly. His original dissertation committee members were Dr. Joseph L. White (Professor of Psychology & Comparative Culture), the late Sierra Leonean Dr. George O. Roberts (Professor of Sociology, African and Comparative Culture), Kenyan Dr. O. L. E. Mbatia (Assistant Professor of Economics & African and Comparative Culture), and Dr. Mary R. Key (Assistant Professor of English and Social Science).

Dr. Joseph L. White (Ph.D., Michigan State University) specialized in the psychology of blacks from an Afrocentric perspective (cf. White 1970, 1984). He was one of the founding members of the Black Studies program at San Francisco State College (SFSC) in 1968, a first such program in the United States. On February 26, 1969, as Dean of Undergraduate

Affairs, SFSC, he advised a faculty Ad Hoc Committee at the University of California, Irvine, which considered founding a black studies program within American Studies, on the development of the SFSC Black Studies program.⁴ He moved to UCI in the fall of 1969 and became Director of the Program of Black and Comparative Culture.⁵ He was interested in, among others, the linguistic and communicative behavior of blacks, which connected him to another black psychologist Robert L. Williams, a professor at Washington University in St. Louis. Dr. White interpreted the relationship between black language and psychology considering the general orality of their culture as follows:

[I]n black idioms—what we call black English or whatever—we do things that are unique in terms of syntax. I think this might have had its roots in an oral existence which still has some Africanisms, but also in our social need to use language to reveal and to conceal simultaneously. Black language is very deep in subtle meaning and nuances. (White 1970: 56)

Dr. White viewed the language of blacks as a necessary part of their linguistic repertoire. He saw it as a dialect of English⁶ while he was receptive to Ernie Smith's view that Ebonics is an African language. He noted the dismaying situation that white researchers or educational psychologists "listening to black speech assume that our use of non-standard oral English is an example of bad grammar without recognizing the possibility that we have a valid, legitimate, alternate dialect" (White 1970: 45). In Comparative Culture, Dr. White taught "Black Psychology" with an emphasis on school education, black power, or mental health, and "Political Process in the Black Community" (undergraduate courses).

Dr. Mary Ritchie Key (Ph.D., University of Texas), the only white on the committee, specialized in "Black English." Because Smith had known Dr. Key's expertise, he

beseached her to testify at his trial in 1970. Dr. Key's successful expert witness testimony was the very determinant for his decision to specialize in linguistics and invite her on his guidance committee. She taught linguistics, bringing him to a fieldwork on the language of black children in the vicinity of Orange County.

Dr. George O. Roberts (Ph.D., Catholic University of America, deceased) was a Sierra Leonean sociologist. He taught sociological methods, and in the undergraduate division, for example, "Social Structure and Change in Sub-Saharan Africa," and "History of Western Africa." Dr. O. L. E. Mbatia (Ph.D., Oregon State University) was a Kenyan expert in statistics, and taught quantitative methods. In the undergraduate division, he taught "Economics of Discrimination," "Urban Problems," and "Economic Development of Ghetto and Barrio" for undergraduates. Dr. Roberts and Dr. Mbatia played an important role in linguistically verifying Smith's comparative linguistic analysis of black language and Niger-Congo and West African languages. They were receptive to his comparative linguistic view of black language.

However, there was a risk about the composition of the faculty members in the department: only one linguistics professor, who espoused one of the dominant paradigms, the "Anglicist Paradigm" (Smith 1974: 93), served there. His first linguistics mentor, Dr. Mary Key left his dissertation committee for the following reason:

She disagreed over the use of the term "Ebonics." . . . That's what the issue was. She didn't support the term "Ebonics." . . . She did not believe it would be accepted in the linguistic community. To this day it has not. . . . So she was right. The term hasn't been accepted in the White Supremacist linguistic community. That didn't validate what I'm saying because white people don't accept it. . . . She examined what she saw, described what she saw from the tape recordings. She wasn't taking a position. She was describing what she saw based on the transcription of the tape recordings that were

made of black children. She described, she didn't prescribe, she described what she heard and what was translated to her. . . . She attested that the canonical form of syllable structure in Black English has a CV vocalic pattern. Okay? That's what she said. I said that the origin of the CV pattern is Africa. . . . I said that the origin of the CVCV pattern is attested in articles by the Africanist who are authority on the African languages. I cited Ladefoged, Welmers, any number of scholars on autochthonous African languages, who attest that the absence of consonants at the end of words is related to the fact that there are no consonant blends for homogenous consonants in African languages. I cited my authorities about African language, continental African languages. So I explained that the CVCV pattern is related to those patterns in the autochthonous African languages. . . . [The interviewer: So she didn't express anything about your Afrocentric thesis?] No, not to me, she didn't.

(Smith, personal communication, November 8, 2016)

The reason Smith chose not to keep Dr. Key in his committee was her disagreement over the naming of black language. She was receptive to his linguistic arguments when they analyzed the language of black children in 1970 and 1971, and did not express any opinion or opposition on his thesis that black language is an African language, an African-centered approach that fundamentally challenged the legitimacy of the accepted paradigms in black linguistics. She might have considered Smith's arguments to constitute merely part of the entire Black English complex, in other words, his arguments might not have denied her Anglicist position. Or she might have indirectly shown her opposition to his thesis by focusing her opposition on the naming, because in a sense Dr. Key had already taken her position when she labeled black language "Black English."

Finally, the UCI committee members became three: Dr. Joseph L. White, Dr. George O. Roberts, and Dr. O. L. E. Mbatia, who were all African (incl., of African descent). In replacement for Dr. Key, Smith asked Dr. Arthur L. Smith (later, Molefi Kete Asante) at UCLA onto his guidance committee. Now the committee were all Afrocentric enough to accept his thesis on Ebonics. This shift from Dr. Key (linguistics) to Dr. A. L. Smith (communication) may have

brought about a very interesting structure and focus in his dissertation (See Section 5.3.9).

5.3.4. African-Centered Ideas on Black Language

There were several important works which gave Smith foundational ideas on Ebonics. In this section, I shall arrange and discuss in chronological order the African-centered ideas on black language in various disciplines, which influenced his dissertation thesis (Smith 1974).

5.3.4.1. Carter G. Woodson (1875-1950)

There already appeared in the early 1930s a search for authentic continuity and distinctness of black language outside of the scale of the English language. It was expressed as part of the educational thoughts presented by historian Carter G. Woodson. Discussing the discriminatory treatment of Africans in the United States, Woodson developed his own view on black language and language education:

In the study of language in school pupils were made to scoff at the Negro *dialect* as some peculiar possession of the Negro which they should despise rather than directed to study the background of this language as a broken-down *African tongue*—in short to understand their own linguistic history, which is certainly more important for them than the French phonetics or Historical Spanish Grammar. To the *African language* as such no attention was given except in case of the preparation of traders, missionaries and public functionaries to exploit the natives.
(Woodson 1933: 18, emphasis added)

At this point it is not clear whether Woodson was aware of the negative meanings

surrounding the term “dialect.” He might have merely intended to show the oppressor’s perception of black language. It deserves a special mention that at this stage of the history of linguistics in the United States, a historian showed a deconstructing insight on the usually demeaned language of enslaved Africans and their descendants in the United States. It is sociologically interesting to note that he saw black language as parallel to French and Spanish. It may suggest he might have drawn on the one nation-one language conceptualization, a prevailing nationalist ideology, by identifying “Negro” people with a distinct language. Reflecting the historical phase of linguistics in the United States, though, as a non-linguist, Woodson made quite an unlinguistic wording “broken-down.”

Dr. Smith found Woodson’s linguistic view a comparative linguistic argument, probably because Woodson regarded black language not as a dialect of English but as an African language and the existing linguistic paradigm which could embody this argument was the genealogical method of comparative linguistics. To be sure, Woodson’s argument appeared well before Smith got engaged in the academia in the 1970s; however, Woodson’s influence on his proposition on black language had to wait until the black nationalist movement from the mid-60s. In fact, Smith encountered Woodson’s African-centered linguistic thesis during his enrollment at California State College, Los Angeles (1962-1967), possibly, in 1967. Woodson’s argument was more linguistic vis-à-vis the sociolinguistic nature of Smith’s doctoral research on black oral expressive styles, so that he decided not to quote Woodson (1933) in his dissertation. That said, Woodson’s idea had left an imprint on his comparative linguistic interpretation of black language as an African language.

5.3.4.2. Janheinz Jahn (1918-1973)

Janheinz Jahn was a German white scholar of African literature. Smith's dissertation referred to Jahn (1961) because in order to understand black language Smith needed to situate and understand it as integral to the whole black or African culture. Albeit a European, Jahn presented not solely an African-centered epistemology to interpret the data of African culture in a self-determined way but a social constructionist understanding of what science is (cf. Jahn 1961: 17). He emphasized one principal perspective that African histories in the diaspora began in Africa (191). As a manifestation of his African-centered epistemology, he observed the "Baptist and Methodist Christianities" widely accepted in the black community in North America and aptly suggested that they might be African rather than Christian (217-218), which may provide quite analogous a suggestion to the status of the language of descendants of enslaved Africans in the United States. Jahn had a wider perspective of what language is than conventional linguists. On the traditional level, he made the distinction between vocabulary and grammar, usually made in linguistics. On the other hand, he offered a wider definition of what constitutes language possibly because it encompassed not solely the conventional categories of linguistics such as lexicon and grammar but also pragmatic categories such as style and discourse, as he emphasized, "It is not the vocabulary, but the way of using speech that is his [i.e., Muntu, 'human being'] real language" (194). While pioneers such as Melville J. Herskovits and Frances S. Herskovits (1936)⁷, Melville J. Herskovits (1941), Lorenzo D. Turner (1949)⁸, and Arthur L. Smith (1972) recognized the existence of African elements in black language (Smith 1974: 60) within the framework of

creole linguistics, Jahn (1961) was *more* Afrocentric and comparative linguistic, stating:

In the Afro-American world some hybrid languages have arisen: Creole, Surinaams, Papiamentu and others, which are generally designated as dialects. Creole counts as spoiled French, Surinaams is also called Negro-English. The vocabulary consists predominantly of European words, but the syntax and word formation follow the rules of African grammar. It is wrong therefore to call these languages 'spoiled' English or 'spoiled' French. If one considers the essence of a language to be its vocabulary, Creole and Papiamentu must be called the youngest of the Romance languages, Surinaams must be called the youngest of the Germanic languages. But if one considers the grammatical structure of a language more important than its vocabulary, then the three languages mentioned do not belong to the Indo-European group. In the light of African culture, which places function ahead of object, for which Kuntu is more important in concrete life than Kintu [i.e., a thing], Creole, Surinaams and Papiamentu must be described as neo-African languages. (194)

The author based his rationale for describing those newly born languages in the African diaspora as neo-African languages, not belonging to the Indo-European language family, upon the grammatical continuation of African languages. It seems this cultural epistemology was most persuasive or acceptable for Dr. Smith because he repeatedly cites the same paragraph (e.g., Smith 2015). On the other hand, Jahn may have meant to refer to only "more" African languages called creole or pidgin, not the US varieties of black language spoken outside the Sea Islands. That said, he should be given credit where it was due: he was, perhaps, the first white scholar ever that explicitly provided a comparative linguistic paradigm for description of black language, the citadel of creole linguistics and dialectological sociolinguistics. This work, however, was not directly quoted in the dissertation perhaps because it was written by a non-linguist, a scholar of literature.

5.3.4.3. Mervyn C. Alleyne (1933-)

Smith read “Linguistic Continuity of Africa in the Caribbean” (Alleyne 1971) soon after he entered UCI. Caribbean linguist Mervyn C. Alleyne (See Figure 17), who provided a linguistic foundation for his comparative linguistic paradigm in his doctoral research, made the following interesting observation on the cultural nationalist atmosphere of Afro-America in the latter half of the 20th century:

In North America and in the Caribbean, there is a growing feeling that Black people must finally take control over of their own political and economic lives. In the Caribbean, the reevaluation and regeneration of non-European-derived forms of behavior is seen as a necessary factor in the development of the area. The need to break away from external economic domination and develop the area by internal dynamics and internal resources, both intellectual and material, implies that the West Indian has to create a new image, a new self-reliance, a new cultural security. In the United States, the Black cultural awakening is not seen in terms of nation-building as it is Caribbean, since Afro-Americans there constitute a minority group within a preexisting nation. But for them, too, cultural renaissance is also functional, whether seen in terms of strengthening the United States by more significant participation of Blacks in all aspects of national life, or in other terms, undefined at present. (Alleyne 1980: 1)

The passage might have shown his own underlying political ideology, although he did not explicitly say so. It is no wonder, though, if he had such an inclination as a linguist, as many other linguists in the past did all over the world, which never invalidated his work.

As a black Caribbean linguist Alleyne’s observation of the political and academic atmosphere in Afro-America sounds valid. The United States witnessed the emergence of cultural black nationalism or Afrocentrism since the late 1960s. It functioned as a framework of reference for African-centered scholarship on black cultural phenomena, especially which gathered



Figure 17. Dr. Mervyn C. Alleyne at his Home in Jamaica.

momentum amidst the heightened black nationalism from the late 1960s and, again, the late 1980s. This African-centered scholarship, viz., Black Studies was a cultural nationalist project. In this vein, Smith's African-centered concerns with Egyptology and black language as a legitimate language, which might be connected to African languages, at UCI, may be categorized as

cultural nationalist projects. To be sure, the statement above by Alleyne was made in 1980 and thus did not influence Smith when his dissertation was in progress; however, there was one cultural nationalist, i.e., African-centered linguistic statement on Afro-American “dialects” made by Alleyne nine years before he observed the cultural nationalist phenomena in Afro-America in 1980, which Smith admits influenced his linguistic research on black language. Alleyne (1971) argued on the newly born languages of the African diaspora that:

[i]f we find an almost total absence of Indo-European morphology in Afro-American dialects, but instead find that the morphosyntax of West African languages, we can reasonably conclude that there is morphosyntactical continuity from West African languages to Afro-American dialects. But . . . the way in which the genesis of Creole languages has been presented in much of the current work implies a break in any linguistic continuity with Africa. The implication is that Africans and African slaves gave up African languages, that is, broke with the African linguistic tradition and accepted a pidgin i.e. primarily European invention, a simplified version of a European language. To relate non-Standard dialects of Black American urban communities to a pidgin would lead to the inference that there has been discontinuity, as far as the transmission of an African cultural item is concerned, and would in fact support the deficiency hypothesis. (126)

The linguistic criterion of morphosyntactical continuity for determining linguistic genealogy was the very criterion of comparative linguistics. This idea gave Smith the linguistic backbone for pursuing the grammatical and, extensively, pragmatic continuity of black language to Niger-Congo and West African languages, i.e., treating it as an African language, not a West-Germanic language. Alleyne’s criterion added a traditional linguistic, i.e., morphosyntactic rationale to Smith’s holistic—structural, stylistic, and paralinguistic—rationale for the continuation of African language traditions. An inextricable connection between structure and style was postulated by Smith when he said:

Since historians have already established the fact that prior to the existence of any American institutions, the ancestors and antecedents of Black Americans were Africans who were brought to America as captives and slaves, and since recent comparative and historical linguistic studies have produced much evidence of a plausible African substratum in the phonological, morphosyntactical, and semantic features of African and Afro-American speech, there is no reason why it cannot reasonably be inferred that there exists an African substratum in the Afro-American verbal arts and oral expressive styles. (Smith 1974: 59)

It must be noted, as in the case of Jahn, that Alleyne's article discussed the linguistic status of newly born languages in the Caribbean, perhaps, not including those in the United States.

Therefore, Smith may have drawn on Alleyne's thesis because Gullah, a language of the Sea Islands, was regarded as a creole, in that sense, comparable to the Caribbean counterparts, and Gullah was often considered to constitute a continuum with mainland US varieties of black language (Rickford 1974).

5.3.4.4. James Haskins (1941-2005) and Hugh F. Butts (unknown)

The linguistic continuity and distinctness arguments so far were complemented by the ensuing psychological argument for the continuity and distinctness of oral expressive styles in Smith's dissertation. Smith cited *The Psychology of Black Language* published by Haskins and Butts in 1973 as the "Continuity in the African Substratum Position" in search of another verbal perspective, i.e., psychological perspective to interpret black language as an African phenomenon, against "The Severance and the Discontinuity Position," represented by E. Franklin Frazier (1966). The late James Haskins⁹ was a Professor Emeritus in the Department of English, University of Florida, Gainesville, a prolific writer of nonfictions, and a social

psychologist. As a former special education teacher in the New York City public school system, he had first-hand experience of some issues black children had in school (cf. Haskins 1969).

Hugh F. Butts was, at that time, and still is a psychiatrist. practices now in New York.

Their work may have provided Smith with a functional perspective for examining the production and reproduction process of black oral expressive styles. Haskins and Butts argued that a sort of universal black language was produced through continuation and adaptation as a result of a common series of sufferings (1973: 29), from slavery, segregation, pathologization, and criminalization. They said:

All Blacks can trace their heritage to some part of Africa. It was only as a result of the slave trade that they were dispersed throughout America and the islands of the Caribbean. But once dispersed and forced to accommodate to different alien environments, each group of blacks developed a specific language, folklore, music, and religion. These in turn influenced each group's characteristics which in turn influenced its thinking. Each retained certain aspects of the African heritage and incorporated them with certain aspects of the new dominant culture. (Haskins & Butts 1973: 28)

In this vein, Smith argued that due to the long sufferings, "there has been much more reinforcement of the original African cultural behavioral patterns than there has been Americanization" (Smith 1974: 64).

Drawing on this psychological work, Smith may have attempted to relate the grammatical structure of black language to the thought process of blacks because he equated the term "deep structure" or "substratum" to both "grammar" and "thought process." In fact, Haskins and Butts attempted to establish the continuity of black language to African languages in continental Africa, and then, equalize the partly African language with the partly African thought process of blacks. Syntactics (relation of signs to signs), semantics (relation of signs to their meanings), and

pragmatics (relation of signs to the people who use them) are the scheme to learn about the psychological or thought process involved in linguistic knowledge and behavior (Haskins & Butts 1973: 7, citing Miller 1964: 91). Thus, “thought process” came to be equated with “grammar” and this idea sounds similar to Dr. Smith’s argument that African thought process-cum-grammar continues in black thought process-cum-grammar, as he explains:

The grammar is the thought process. They are synonymous terms. The grammar is the thought process. That’s the mental system that linguists are attempting to describe. There is a thought process that he uses the term “mental system.” . . . It connects to psychology because psychology is the study of mind from a different point of view, from a non-linguistic point of view. Okay? Psychologists are interested in behavior that exhibits itself in a myriad of ways including linguistic.

(Smith, personal communication, November 8, 2016)

Lastly, it must be pointed out that the authors viewed black language as “black English.” What the work provided for Smith’s African-centered argument on black language, therefore, may be rephrased as follows: the psychological production and reproduction process of distinct black language as a result of African continuity and American adaptation under the oppressive systems of the United States. This last point probably reflects the statement that:

[t]o the extent to which there has been positive or negative reinforcement, certain aspects and features of the oral tradition of Africa have been retained and currently exist in the verbal arts and oral expressive styles of Black America. (Smith 1974: 94-95)

5.3.5. Fieldwork on the Language of Black Children

Conversations on some topics by black children, 9 to 12 years old, at the Monte Vista

Elementary School in Santa Ana, California were recorded in collaboration with the teachers of the Language Development Center of the school. The interviewers, transcribers, and interpreters were presented in Key et al. (1977) as in the aggregate but not identified. Dr. Smith discloses the fact that the interviewer, not the interviewers, and the transcriber, not the transcribers, was himself; he was the only black in the research group, and the other investigators did not understand those utterances the black children spoke.

The results of the fieldwork and research were presented at the Conference on Child Language, Chicago, Illinois, November 22-24, 1971. There was a panel presentation by Dr. Mary Ritchie Key, Assistant Professor of Linguistics, Laila Fiege-Kollmann, a graduate student, and Smith, a graduate student, from the University of California, Irvine, entitled "Some Linguistic and Stylistic Features of Child Black English." The research group mentioned the multiple origins of "Black English": (1) old British dialects such as Early Modern English, (2) West African languages, (3) developmental, (4) malapropisms, (5) baby talk/pidgin English, and so on.

It was Smith that proposed the West African origin hypothesis and inserted the comments or analyses, to which "Dr. Key was receptive" (Smith, personal communication, September 5, 2016). In his comparative analysis of black language and West African languages, he drew on several works (Abraham 1959; Ladefoged 1964; Spencer 1971; Taylor 1969) on West African languages and West African "English." He provided the following examples:

Example 1. Syllable-timed (consonant-vowel or CV pattern)

e.g., *down there* /dau.ner/; *trying to* /traɪ.na/

Example 2. /l/ and /r/

e.g., *rather* /wɑðə/; *playing* /prejən/

Example 3. Double subject

e.g., “The chief he came.”

Example 4. Repetition of a clause connector

e.g., “Then...,” “And then...”

For Example 1, a phonetic feature, he said, “The English of Nigerian speakers [is] described as syllable-timed” (Key, Fiege-Kollman, & Smith 1977: 195, n. 7, citing Spencer 1971: 42 & 109).

He explains Example 2, a phonological feature, by saying, “/l/ and /r/ are a common source of interference from language where a phonological distinction is not made, as for example in West African Ewe” (Ibid.: 189, citing Spencer 1971: 158). Example 3 was a syntactic feature seen in Hausa, a West African language (Ibid.: 189, citing Spencer 1971: 132). Example 4 was a stylistic or discourse feature, different from the traditional grammatical features. He compared black language to West African Hausa and noted, “in a narrative there is often a long sequence of ‘then’ clauses: ‘they asked us and then we said we agreed: so they replied that . . . then they . . .’”

(Ibid.: 196, n. 15, citing Abraham 1959). He gave other interesting examples possibly deriving from the enslaved Africans’ and their descendants’ experiences in the New World. The use of *jug* as in the clause “cause dat gran’father got jugged in his heart” was a semantic example possibly coming from Jamaican English (Ibid.: 186 & 195, n. 4).

5.3.6. Conception of an Ethnolinguist's/Comparative Linguistic Paradigm

In order to rectify the Eurocentric trend in linguistics, the ethnolinguistic view or a comparative linguistic paradigm adopted the genealogical criterion of grammar and an additional genealogical criterion of pragmatics for the language of descendants of enslaved Africans in the United States and beyond. The comparative linguistic approach, which had been reserved for certain languages thus far, provided Ebonics with an African linguistic continuity, “authentically distinct” to African values and “continuous” to African pasts. The newly adopted paradigm focused on the grammar (phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics)—a “hybrid” of the grammars of West African languages (not such one pure, continuing grammar as Indo-European linguistics attempted in the 19th century)—of black language and described it as a new “hybrid” African language. It may have been an effective paradigm which provides an African-centered epistemology and which could liberate black linguistics from the entrenched racist or racialized scientific discourse.

Against the mainstream paradigms, the Transformationalist view (an equivalent to the Anglicist Paradigm) and the Creolist view, in 1971, Smith conceived a scientific idea that black language is a grammatical continuation of West African languages. It was a proposition he reached, when he and Dr. Key collected and analyzed the language data of school-aged black children in Los Angeles. He studied the data by himself and made a comparative study of black language and ancestral West African languages. He recalls:

What she [= Dr. Key] gleaned from that was that as a phenomenon of African languages, the canonical form or shape of the syllable structure of Ebonics, black language, she was calling it Black English, was very strongly a CVCV [consonant

vowel consonant vowel] pattern. . . . I was already of the belief that our language was related to the African languages' substratum. I went to the African languages. And I found several articles that attested to the fact that the shape of the syllable structure in African languages was CV-structured. . . . Recognizing that phonetics is only one aspect of the grammar of languages, . . . phonetics, phonology, morphology, . . . syntax, and semantics, . . . separating those aspects of grammar.

(Smith, personal communication, November 8, 2016)

At this stage of research, Smith just mentioned the CVCV pattern as a predominant linguistic continuation of West African languages, with several "minor" patterns. He might have had more to say about the relationship between those languages across the Atlantic, but he did not go further in this, his first mentor's research project. That said, highly hypothetical as it might have been back then, Smith (2015) concluded from the fieldwork that:

[i]t was in 1970 and 1971 as a graduate student at UCI, that, on the basis of my research and studies of the grammar of the Nigritian (Niger-Congo and West African) languages, I concluded that the native language of descendants of enslaved Niger-Congo and West Africans has a Niger-Congo and West African or Nigritian grammar with European words superimposed (most of which are not even native English words).

The African source languages were chosen drawing on Lorenzo D. Turner (1949). In his dissertation, Smith began with his comparative linguistic hypothesis on the historical development of Ebonics in opposition to the two mainstream paradigms, the Transformationalist and the Creolist, drawing mainly on Mervyn C. Alleyne (1971). He developed a general comparative analysis of linguistic and paralinguistic features, especially, a more detailed comparative analysis of the pragmatic features of black language and Niger-Congo and West African languages. Therefore, his ethnolinguistic view or comparative linguistic paradigm with respect to traditional structural features may have been of a highly theoretical or hypothetical

nature at this stage (See Section 5.3.9 for further detail). The information below may be illustrative of his conception of an ethnolinguistic/comparative linguistic paradigm back then: for the summer semester of 1971, he taught a course on “Black Oral Expressive Styles” under the general theme of “Educational Strategies for Tutoring the Bilingual Child XI 100A(4)” at UCI (UC Irvine 1971). Though the course information did not contain any known linguistic labelings such as Black English, he taught the course as a “bilingual” issue, thus indirectly treating black language as a language, not a dialect of English.

5.3.7. Two Dominant Paradigms within the Scale of the English Language

In this section, I will briefly explain the two dominant paradigms in black linguistics in the early 1970s, against which Smith deployed his African-centered paradigm: the Transformationalist and the Creolist. For, within the theoretical-scientific factor, it was not only the language data obtained from the black children in fieldwork but also the mainstream black linguistics that influenced Smith to construct an African-centered paradigm.

Smith identified in the literature review of his dissertation these three different paradigms on the historical development of Ebonics: Creolist (Stewart 1971), Transformationalist (Pfaff 1971), and Ethnolinguist (Alleyne 1971). He found the first two linguistic views were dominant in black linguistics. The Creolist viewed black language as a decreolized dialect of English for much of black language and an English creole for the Gullah part of black language. The Transformationalist viewed it as a dialect of English from the beginning. In this section, I shall briefly discuss on what grounds Smith refuted the mainstream paradigms so that his

ethnolinguistic or comparative linguistic paradigm could be validated.

5.3.7.1. Transformationalist View

According to Ernie A. Smith (1974), the Transformationalist view claimed that:

in the 'deep structure' the linguistic patterns of Black and White Americans are basically the same, and . . . by careful and systematic comparison of morphosyntactical constructions, employing transformational rules, one can derive the identical underlying grammatical structure of Black and Anglo American English . . . the differences in Black Anglo American linguistic behavior are superficial and mainly in the surface structure.
(18)

The view argued that "Black English" and standard Anglo English have *different structures* at the surface level but *the same structure* at the deep level. However, Smith countered, "the question of linguistic genesis can not be explained by merely using phrase structure rules, tree diagrams, and transformational manipulation of contemporary linguistic events" (Ibid.: 21). He suggested the Transformationalist view did not see the deep structures of African languages but those of English varieties. He pointed out that it had no diachronic validity.

5.3.7.2. Creolist View

In creole linguistics, there was a group (e.g., Lucien Adam) who saw the existence of African language grammars in the substratum of the "creoles."¹⁰ These "substratists" inadvertently suggested that "comparative-linguistically" speaking, newly born languages in the African

diaspora are African languages. The last criterion and interpretation was a position which Ernie A. Smith took on Ebonics in his dissertation (Smith placed the black language in the mainland United States, widely defined as a dialect of English, and the black language in the Sea Islands, widely defined as a creole of English, onto the same terrain: language, neither dialect nor variety). However, the substratist position clung to one principal creolistic criterion and still interpreted it as a European language-based “creole.” It was true that some of the creolists officially adopted the criterion of lexicon for determining linguistic genealogy. This was the major point of contention for Smith. On the other hand, some renowned linguists, e.g., Dell Hymes (1971) and Suzanne Romaine (2001), emphasize the genealogical criterion in creolistics is grammar, not lexicon. However, even the latter position employs the linguistic labeling “English-based-” or “-English.” It seems they “officially” pronounce grammar as the criterion, while “unofficially” employ lexicon as the criterion.

Smith pointed out a few serious drawbacks in the Creolist approach to black language. He refuted the fact that the approach viewed the newly born languages as kinds of English as manifested in the wording “creolized English” (Smith 1974: 20). The Creolist scholars did not apply a sufficient knowledge of Niger-Congo and West African languages, as Herskovits (1941: 276, cited by Asante 1990: 19) admonished more than seven decades ago. Moreover, “until recently research into the linguistic systems of autochthonous African languages has been negligible” (Smith 1974: 24). Therefore, the Creolists could not compare the structure of newly born languages in the African diaspora with the ancestral languages in the continent, except Lorenzo Dow Turner (1949).

Smith (1974) did not develop his argument on the other part of the Creolist view that black

language, especially, outside of the Sea Islands was a decreolized variety of English, i.e., not a creole but a dialect of English. However, Smith should have refuted the genealogical argument that the mainland variety of black language was a creole in the past but currently is a dialect of English.

5.3.8. A Small Conference among Black Scholars in St. Louis

In St. Louis, Missouri, in January 1973, there was a conference on the “Cognitive and Language Development of the Black Child.” In one of the hospitality rooms at Rodeway Inn at Jefferson Avenue and Market Street, on the 23rd of January, a small caucus of black scholars gathered to self-determine, that is, rename and redefine black language away from caucasio-centrism. They attempted to redress its deficit status as implicitly promoted in the use of the term “non-standard English” or “Black English” which they themselves had used to refer to black language. This feeling was shared not merely by those who attended the meeting but also by others who later continued to view it as a dialect of English in the discipline of linguistics (e.g., Smitherman 1972). One intersection was seen in the disciplines of the caucus, black psychology and black linguistics. Both fields of inquiry were eager amidst the modern black nationalist movement to find a common conceptual framework designed to organize, explain, and understand black psychology and language in education and the wider society.

The small black caucus was composed of Dr. Robert L. Williams (psychologist, Washington University), Dr. Grace Holt (speech & communication, University of Illinois, Chicago), Dr. Ann Covington (speech & audiology, City College), and doctoral student Ernie A. Smith (linguist).

Dr. Smith thinks back on what brought them together:

The conference was funded by a grant from the National Institute of Mental Health. The title of the conference was “The Cognitive and Linguistic Development of the African American Child.” There were many other scholars invited who had also been funded by the NIMH to do research on the cognitive, mental development of the black child. Okay? These scholars came and presented papers. After the first two papers were presented, . . . [it] became evident that there were scholars using the term “Black English” to describe what others in the audience disagreed with. [One question asked was], “What are you classifying as English? Are you basing your classification of English on vocabulary or are you basing your classification on grammar?” People who claimed it was English didn’t have a clue as to what my questions were. Because they hadn’t delved into what the definition of English is. Okay? They hadn’t delved into the issue of what constitutes English. You gonna claim this is a dialect of English, but you haven’t established what’s your criteria for classifying English. [The interviewer: Are they linguists or psychologists?] They were people in education, they were sociologists. I don’t recall other than Mary Key, she was there, she was presenting her paper. Mary Key was more of an anthropologist than a linguist. But she was teaching courses in linguistics. That’s what helped me understand the importance of describing as opposed to prescribing language behavior. The papers that were presented at the conference resulted in the black scholars who were there, who understood what I was saying. They want to hear me explain more. That’s what the small group meeting was about. And they all agreed that I gave it more fully. But I hadn’t presented my paper yet. They understood where I was coming from. Then I posed the question I pose. Okay. Robert Williams understood because he had heard me speak at Harvard University a year before. He was more interested in the African substratum in black speech because he was not a linguist. This whole notion of deep structure, surface structure that existed thanks to Noam Chomsky in human language was something that he felt is very useful. The Black Intelligence Test of Homogeneity was presented around the meaning of words. There were a hundred of questions on the BITCH test.

(Smith, personal communication, November 8, 2016)

Dr. Williams had been intrigued by Smith’s African-centered thesis since they met in Boston a year before. Then, Dr. Ann Covington and Dr. Grace Holt became interested in his thesis too. Therefore, his African-centered paradigm was the gravity for the small black caucus to gather in the by-product but historic meeting. Dr. Williams was interested in the “deep structure” of the semantics of black language, in other words, the relationship between the grammatical structure

and the thought process of black people.

Dr. Williams was professor of psychology at Washington University in St. Louis and widely known as the creator of the BITCH (Black Intelligence Test of Cultural Homogeneity) test.¹¹ He was the first full-time director of the Black Studies Program at Washington University in St. Louis.¹² He was one of the founders of the Association of Black Psychologists (ABP) and the second national president.¹³ Dr. Grace Holt was professor of speech at the University of Illinois, Chicago, and appointed to establish the Black Studies Program in 1971, for which she served as director from 1974 through 1986.¹⁴ Her research focus was black non-verbal communication.¹⁵ Dr. Ann Covington was associate professor of speech and audiology at federal City College. Her specialty was “Black English.”¹⁶ Their pressing practical concerns in psychology and speech may partly explain the counter-Establishment epistemology which they were geared toward to reconstruct the name and definition of black language. For its name and definition had affected a large segment of the black community but they had not been adequately addressed in the dominant linguistic paradigm in which black language was scientifically and institutionally treated as a dialect of English. Their discussion on the relabeling and redefinition of black language proceeded as shown below:

Dr. Robert Williams: “Ladies and gentlemen, we need to define what we speak. We need to give a clear definition of our language.”

Dr. Ernie Smith: “Let me tell you something, if you notice, *every language in the world represents a nation* or a nationality. What we are speaking has continuity not only in the United States, but outside the United States and all the way back to the mother country. We need to *get the term completely off the English scale* and start calling it what it really represents.”

Dr. Williams: “Let me make a point here: Language is a process of communication. But, we need to deal with the root of our language. What about Ebo? Ebo

linguistics? Ebolingual? Ebo-Phonics? Ebonics? Let's define our language as EBONICS.”

The Group: “That sounds real good.”

Dr. Williams: “I am talking about an ebony language. We know that ebony means black and that phonics refers to speech sounds or the science of sounds.¹⁷ Thus, we are really talking about the science of black speech sounds or language.”

Dr. Ann Covington: “That's beautiful.”

Dr. Williams: “With Ebonics, we mean black pronunciation, vocabulary, syntax, structure and the whole ball of wax. . . . Ebonics, first of all, means a lexicon or black vocabulary. Secondly, it refers to the basic structure of black speech.”

Dr. Grace Halt: “That’s beautiful. Now we can go to a new term and really define it and say what our language really is.”

Dr. Smith: “Ebonics may be defined as the linguistic and paralinguistic features which on a concentric continuum represents the communicative competence of the West African, Caribbean and United States slave descendent of African origin. It includes the various idioms, patois, argots, idiolects and social dialects of black people. Ebonics, also, includes nonverbal sounds, cues and gestures which are systematically and predictably utilized in the process of communication by Afro-Americans.”

Dr. Williams: “Yes, that is our official definition of Ebonics.”

(Williams 1997: 210; *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, January 28, 1997, italics added)

The then doctoral student of linguistics at UCI, Ernie A. Smith pronounced the black language represents the black nation and thus it should be completely off the English scale. The relabeling of black language was initiated by Dr. Williams, resulting in the coinage of a term which symbolized their collective destiny and identity. The new definition of the new term was provided by Smith. This Pan-African definition of newly-born languages in the African diaspora was well resonant with the 1971 argument by Caribbean creole-cum-comparative linguist Mervyn C. Alleyne (See Section 5.3.4.3). It encompassed two levels of

linguistic entity: a new African language within a geopolitical boundary and a new African language family across such boundaries. All this process illustrated a cultural nationalist project like Black Studies, as widely practiced in language nationalisms the world over,

5.3.9. Doctoral Dissertation

In the first year of his graduate studies, Smith decided to major in linguistics under Dr. Key. But taught by Dr. White and others, his expertise ranged from linguistics to psychology to ethnic studies and community advisorship. At the completion of the dissertation his interests covered 1) sociolinguistics, linguistics, child development, and inner-city education, 2) political and cultural history of minorities in America, and 3) trans-racial communications, urban race relations, and urban crisis liaison. There are two points of special interest to me. One is, Smith attempted to develop self-knowledge and directly channel it to the black community. Another is, though most people may assume that linguists would interrogate their areas of interest as primarily related to language, he juxtaposed linguistics, psychology, education, and law. Therefore, it may be significant to see his research not purely as scientific but also as practical, i.e. the two are integral to each other, which is one of the pivotal features of Black Studies or Africology.

Smith's phrasing of his dissertation title "The Evolution and Continuing Presence of the African *Oral* Tradition in Black America," deserves a special mention. He employed the term "Oral", not a more specific term, "Linguistic," because he was enrolled in Comparative Culture, not Linguistics. It might have been partly because he invited Dr. Arthur L. Smith to his committee, who specialized in black communication. In the first half of the dissertation, he

attempted to establish a holistic argument that Ebonics is a formal and functional continuation of African languages. The dissertation, considering my presupposition that the dissertation should have attempted to establish the grammatical continuity of Ebonics to Niger-Congo and West African languages, accomplished what he could do in the department: it briefly discussed the traditional linguistic category of grammar, but the focus was on comparative analysis of the sociolinguistic or stylistic aspects of Ebonics with those of African languages. I've found that it was in 1978 that as an associate professor at California State University, Fullerton, Dr. Smith (he called himself "Ernie *Abdullah* Smith" then) began linguistic field work in West African countries (Cameroon, Niger, Sierra Leone, etc.) for a more substantive comparative linguistic analysis of some West African languages and Ebonics (Smith 1977, 1978b, 1978c). Therefore, it may be said that his ethnolinguistic/comparative linguistic paradigm in the dissertation was highly hypothetical and theoretical, particularly in terms of the traditional grammatical domains of phonetics, phonology, morphosyntax, and semantics.

Smith began his dissertation by stating, "Black people in America, owing to their autochthonous African heritage—which is primarily an oral culture—have retained and maintained a highly structured, rule governed, and systematized communication system in the oral tradition" (Smith 1974: xvi). This thesis may have partly been influenced by his non-UCI committee member, Dr. Smith, who said, "Black Americans are essentially an oral people much like their African ancestors who found the expressive word to be the basis of society" (A. L. Smith: 1972a: x). In fact, when Smith argued on the oral expressive styles of blacks, most of his references overlapped with those found in A. L. Smith (1972b). The main concern in the doctoral research was "the interpersonal and cultural context in which Black oral expressive styles

occur . . . the extent to which the urban or inner city Black youths utilize, recognize, and differentiate Afro-American oral expressive styles” (Smith 1974: 14), while recognizing the current trend in black linguistics which was focused on the structural aspects and features of Ebonics.

His African-centered ideas on black oral expressive styles were gained from various linguistic themes: comparative linguistics (Fromkin & Rodman 1974), anthropological ethnolinguistics (Kroeber 1969), and generative transformational theory (Chomsky 1965). Different from the traditional comparative linguistics, which drew on written data to reconstruct a common proto-language and/or classify languages, his linguistic and sociolinguistic analysis had to be based on oral data because black language did not have an established orthography (in fact, they were “written down” when they had to be incorporated into his dissertation). He referred to the following source to accommodate the comparative linguistic perspective into comparative analysis of unwritten languages:

For language families without any written history, the attempt to reconstruct an earlier language from several modern languages shown to be related may be the only way of gaining any information about the history of the speakers of those languages. This method has proved modestly effective in the case of American Indian languages, though *we may never achieve any detailed knowledge*. But we get a rough picture of where peoples were at what point in time. Knowing that two languages are closely related, but widely separated geographically, tells us that one or the other group of speakers migrated (or they both migrated in opposite directions).

(Fromkin & Rodman 1974: 219)

It is significant that Fromkin and Rodman told Smith that even unwritten languages could be a target of comparative linguistic analysis, different from conventional wisdom. The authors’ view of comparative analysis of unwritten languages allows us to understand that Smith’s comparative

linguistic analysis of Ebonics and West African languages achieved no detailed knowledge.

Knowing unwritten languages could be comparatively studied, Smith consulted an anthropological-linguistic case study on American Indian languages, which survived thousands of years, and learned the methodology for investigating the genetic relationships between unwritten languages. He adopted the method to comparatively investigate the history of some sociolinguistic styles of Ebonics and West African languages. It was innovative in that it adopted a modified linguistic methodology for stylistic features, rather than traditional structural features. The anthropological linguistic method employed in the case study viewed language change and continuity in the following way:

Spoken language is in a sense always changing, since each speaker of his tongue imprints on it his imperceptibly individual voice and accent and choice or rejection of particular words and usages, but the changing is as drops of water on the stone of fixed grammatical form. (Kroeber 1969: 16)

Based on the author's view on the nature of the grammar of an unwritten language, Smith argued since the grammatical structure remains relatively intact throughout history, the grammar of African oral expressive styles also remains relatively stable in the *deep structure* of Afro-American oral expressive styles. Three years later, a similar idea was expressed by black linguist Geneva Smitherman, who specialized in black language. Though Smitherman took a different position from Smith, their concerns converged here:

[T]he one item of a language that remains relatively rigid and fixed over time is its structure. . . . Black English's main structural components are . . . the adaptations based on African language rules. (Smitherman 1977: 6, 9; Smitherman 2001: 215, 220, 229)

Smith appropriated some key concepts from other traditional subdisciplines for his comparative linguistic study of Ebonics: transformational grammar and creole linguistics. He adopted the notions “deep structure” and “surface structure” from Noam Chomsky (1965) for analyzing Ebonics. The application of the terminology in his dissertation suggested “there are underlying intracultural rules (deep structure) and inter-group linguistic functions (surface structure) for the uses of Afro-American oral expressive styles and verbal arts” (Smith 1974: 66, n. 23). In 1962, he brought in the process “relexification” from creole linguistics. William Stewart theorized the process by which the original syntax of a “creole” language is left almost intact (Stewart 1962: 46-47, cited in Bailey 1965: 172). It conferred legitimacy on Smith’s argument that the grammars (incl., syntaxes) of West African languages constitute the predominant grammars of Ebonics.

Smith’s research targeted blacks who acquired black language in the environment in which it was spoken and heard. He argued that “the American elementary and secondary schools and the Black interactions, therein, must be considered as plausible tributaries for the precipitation and/or nutriment of the verbal arts or the oral expressive styles” (Smith 1974: 33-34). Starting from the comparative linguistic understandings he had gained from his fieldwork with Dr. Key, he determined to examine comparatively the form and function of African oral literature and those of Afro-American oral literature.

The oral expressive styles on the African continent (particularly, Niger-Congo and West African) and in the United States were compared with respect to (1) the audience (direct involvement), (2) audience style (call and response), (3) genres (sacred or religious literature, mythic recitals and stories, genealogies and historico-legendary recitations, riddles and

proverbs), (4) styles (tone, phoneme, morpheme, syntax, prosody and rhythm, symbolism such as metaphors, similes, and clichés), (5) the performer (narrators, reciters, announcers or orators, preachers), and (6) gestures (phonographic, ocular). What made the elements of African oral tradition comparable to the corresponding elements of the Afro-American oral tradition was this reasoning:

Since it is an axiomatic historical fact that the slave forbearers of Black America were of African origin, the hypothesis that there exists a genetic relationship between the African oral tradition and the oral expressive styles of Black America, cannot be considered as purely speculative conjecture. (Smith 1974: 87)

Based on the oral tradition of Africa which diasporic Africans brought for slavery, and the pervasiveness of *nommo*, the spoken word as a result of the anti-literacy laws during slavery, blacks in the United States produced and reproduced their distinct oral expressive styles, i.e., an autochthonous continuation of African oral expressive styles. Considering both formal and functional aspects, Smith maintained African deep structure continues in black oral literature, saying:

No matter how drastically altered the form or how different the social function of oral literature in America, the ravages of slavery did not decimate their deep structure. The underlying forms and function of African oral literature has, like the morphosyntax of African language, been resistant to change. (Smith 1974: 90)

The first two-thirds of the dissertation research was of theoretical nature with a few examples dispersed into each category of the oral expressive styles in black America. Especially the descriptive part of the African oral tradition was highly theoretical with inputs from various

secondary sources. He did not conduct field research on this part of the comparative analysis. The explanatory part of the Afro-American oral tradition was also highly theoretical but with both primary and secondary data. Therefore, all the comparative analysis was basically theoretical as he stated, “I have not reached any firm or final conclusions regarding the theoretical issues of whether or not the structural linguistic features of Afro-American speech are a continuation of African linguistic forms” (Smith 1974: 143).

In the second one-third, Smith conducted field research to examine how inner-city black youths maintain the oral expressive styles of blacks in America, i.e., check his hypothesis that the longer black students stay in school, the lower their proficiency in the styles becomes. The sample was an in-school and out-of-school population of urban inner city youths in Los Angeles, Santa Ana, and San Bernardino, paired by age, sex, years in school, family sizes, income levels, parents’ educational levels, and places of birth, the respondent’s place of birth, and number of years the respondent had resided in California. The findings supported his hypothesis. Against the popular notion that females are more oriented toward a “high-status” code like a dominant code, often called “standard,” black females scored a slightly higher than black males in the maintenance of Afro-American oral expressive styles.

5.3.10. Courses on Ebonics

As mentioned earlier, Smith started to teach a course on black language or Ebonics and other courses since the summer semester of 1971. He taught about black language as a language other than English. In the winter of 1973, he had a course to teach named “Black Linguistics” (UCI

PCC W 1973). Because the winter of 1973 brochure should have been produced well before the semester began, at least before the semester began, like December 1972, Smith did not have a specialized term to use for that course, considering particularly that the term “Ebonics” was coined in late January of 1973; thus, there officially existed no new naming for black language. This was evident in the course description which read:

In the Black community there are varieties of verbal patterns and non-verbal communicative gestures which have historically evolved from the Black experience and presently exist as an integral part of contemporary Black America’s life style. The purpose of this course is to explore and explain the phonological, syntactic, and semantic nuance of *Black English* and gestures and mannerisms on contemporary Black America within the scope of the most recent language and communication theory, and thereby increase effective communication between different racial and ethnic groups. This approach will allow examination of language and communications in terms which are familiar to students and scholars of human communications as well as to laymen interested in broadening their social awareness and developing their communicative skills through familiarization and comprehension of *Black English*. (emphasis added)

One possible reason why the course description contained the labelling “Black English” was that he might have respected the Anglicist conceptualization and theorization of black language his mentor linguist then held. Another reason might have been that Smith might have tried to let students soon recognize what language the instruction was about. He also taught “Independent Study” in the Black Culture section.

In the spring of 1973, he taught as part of the undergraduate courses in Black Culture a course entitled “Black Oral Expressive Styles,” explaining “the parlance, jargon, and mannerisms of contemporary Black America.”¹⁸ He had another course called “Sociolinguistic Approach to Writing” (UCI PCC S 1973) with the following course description:

A seminar on the sociolinguistic approach to the writing, reading and speech problems peculiar to Black students, emphasizing the structural differences between ordinary speech and the written “University Dialect.” Emphasis will be given to contrastive linguistic and sociolinguistic features which distinguish *Ebonics* (Black English) and the “University Dialect.” (emphasis added)

He promoted a contrastive teaching technique, widely used in bilingual education or ESL classes, which he has continued to commend to this day. It must be noted that while it was interchangeable with “Black English” in the description, the term “Ebonics” appeared here soon after it was coined earlier in the same year in St. Louis. Perhaps because Dr. Key left his committee for her disagreement over the use of the labeling “Ebonics,” Smith might have adopted a middle position. Or he might have just attempted to let students soon understand what Ebonics referred to until the new term became widely known.

In the fall, he opened in undergraduate Black Culture the course “Philosophy of Black Radical Thought.”¹⁹ At the graduate level he taught “Individual Study” in the Comparative Culture and the Black Culture division (UCI PCC F 1973). After graduation in 1974, he taught “Black English ‘Ebonics’,” to undergraduates in the Black Culture section, discussing “varieties of oral expressions and non-verbal communicative gestures” in the black community (UCI PCC W 1974). He might have decided to continue to use “Black English” with an alternative “Ebonics” for heightening potential students’ awareness of the newly coined term. At this point the course description became holistic again, reflecting his dissertation, e.g., including non-verbal elements, but was nearly the same as the Winter 1973 description, as shown below:

In the Black community there are varieties of *oral* expressions and non-verbal communicative gestures which have historically evolved from the Black experience and exist as an integral part of contemporary Black America within the scope of the most recent language and communication theory, and thereby increase effective

communications between different racial and ethnic groups. This approach will allow examination of language and communications as well as to laymen interested in broadening their social awareness and developing their communicative skills through familiarization and comprehension of *Black English*. No prerequisites.

(Ibid., italics added)

But it must be emphasized that different from the Winter 1973 semester, he changed from verbal (which refers to both oral and written) to oral, and most importantly, employed the term “Ebonics” in the title of the course, accompanying “Black English.” He taught another course titled “The Philosophy of Black Radical Thought in Urban Society” in the Black Culture division of the undergraduate program. He was also assigned to working with students individually in “Independent Study” courses in Comparative and Black Culture at the undergraduate level and “Individual Study” in Comparative and Black Culture at the graduate level.

In the spring of 1973, he offered an undergraduate course entitled “Black Semantics,” employing only the term “Ebonics” in the course description. “A lecture/seminar course on the phonological, morphosyntactical continuums of *Ebonics* with special emphasis on the nuances of the lexicon and semantic constituents” (UCI PCC S 1974, emphasis added). Perhaps, having reflected the fact that this course was conducted after he completed his dissertation, the explanation more specified his own position in this regard. At the undergraduate and graduate level he taught “Independent Study” and “Individual Study” courses respectively in their Comparative Culture and the Black Culture divisions (UCI PCC S 1974). His courses were not shown in the Fall 1974 semester.

5.3.11. African-Centered Epistemology: Comparative and Holistic

European linguistics has set trends in linguistics to this day. Comparative linguistics, creole linguistics, and dialectology complementary to each other in some sense, were products of such early European linguistics in nationalism, colonialism, and imperialism. Comparative linguistics, oriented toward essentialist, purist ideology (racial and ethnic purity), was closely related to self-determination for a nation and designed to establish both the pan-Aryan continuity of European languages to the great ancestral languages and the national and pan-Aryan distinctness of the languages, to the extent of excluding Semitic peoples and languages (Minamoto 2012). Creole linguistics, oriented toward counter-essentialist, -purist ideology, was designed to demystify the essentialist, purist notion of the comparative linguistic paradigm, but it didn't do so unfortunately and instead was applied almost exclusively to newly born languages in (post-/neo-) slavery or (post-/neo-) colonial societies. Sometimes, dialectological or variationist sociolinguistics is employed to describe some of the newly born languages which look or sound closer to the European languages than the creole or pidgin counterparts. Today, the creole linguistic paradigm attempts to interpret the languages—it concedes they are restructured languages and retain African grammatical structures in their substrata—as derived from European languages and discontinuous to and distinct from the original mother tongues of slaves and natives, i.e., the autochthonous languages of their descendants in continental Africa. Or the dialectological or variationist sociolinguistic paradigm *a priori* shuts out any interpretations or criteria which allow them to be linguistic codes other than dialects of the European languages.

Perhaps taking the dominant trends in linguistics into account, to “descriptively” fulfill the

two nationalist desiderata of the *autochthonous lineage/continuity* and *uniqueness/distinctness*, i.e., the African *authenticity*, of the language(s) of the black/African nation(s)²⁰ from the linguistic data, the core criteria or interpretations of comparative linguistics may have been the fittest for Smith, but he selectively appropriated categories and concepts characteristic of creole linguistics, e.g., hybridity, relexification, substratum. Though away from the purpose of this dissertation, it is very much worth pointing out that Smith accomplished what early European predecessors could not: he rectified the fallacies in comparative linguistics with important findings in creole linguistics. Moreover, his comparative linguistic approach underwent additional modifications when he attempted to expand the traditional definition of what constitutes the criteria for the genetic classification of a language, that is, morphosyntax further to include phonetics, phonology, semantics, pragmatics, and paralinguistics: comparative linguistics became *holistic* in his Ebonics paradigm.

In fact, the comparative linguistic paradigm was holistic in multiple ways: as part of the cultural nationalist programs it fulfilled nationalist goals or necessities and became integral to practical issues in the black community. The utilization of a mother tongue for nationalist purposes as seen all over the world is succinctly summarized by sociologist and linguist Joshua A. Fishman (1972), who aptly observed:

The functional dependence of new protoelites on the vernaculars²¹ was a reflection of the need of these elite to *communicate with, organize, and activate recently urbanized but still predominantly illiterate populations*. Less obvious is the fact that these populations often had neither a single vernacular (but, rather, a socially, regionally, and experientially differentiated *continuum of vernaculars*), not a vernacular that could readily be put to the modern ideologizing and organizing purposes that new protoelites had in mind. (41, emphasis added)

It was true that (1), among his black nationalist efforts, Dr. Smith's research on Ebonics integrally addressed teaching literacy in Ebonics and English to predominantly illiterate descendants of enslaved Africans and he attempted to reach his community with their mother tongue; (2) that his definition of Ebonics was a concentric continuum of varieties of Ebonics throughout the African diaspora; (3) that many blacks denied the legitimacy of their own linguistic collective symbol, what he called Ebonics, around which they were expected to be mobilized in the black nationalist movement. Therefore, he could have been called one of such cultural protoelites, of course who always attended to the grass-roots.

Looking back through Chapter 5, it might be suggested for constructing a theory of linguistic knowledge formation that the ideological-political meanings and the experiential-practical meanings may have given some foundations for Dr. Smith's linguistic research and both may have been intricately interwoven with the theoretical-scientific meanings to select a certain set of methodological criteria, interpretations, and language data, and construct his comparative linguistic paradigm, while the scientific account was determined by linguistic evidence. As Krajewski (1988: 177) notes, "The intellectual atmosphere and philosophical ideas may play a considerable role in the context of the discovery but play no role in the context of justification."

6. IDEOLOGY-POLITICS, EXPERIENCE-PRACTICE, AND THEORY-SCIENCE IN INTERACTION

Thus far, I have described and analyzed the life story of Dr. Ernie Adolphus Smith focusing on the linguistic element. We have seen how his life from his early childhood to early adulthood might have led to the formation of an ethnolinguistic/comparative linguistic paradigm at the University of California, Irvine, as a result of the interaction of the ideological-political, experiential-practical, and theoretical-scientific meanings which he encountered and negotiated in in his empirical world. I have presented a process by which the meanings of his mother tongue were negotiated with its meanings in the state institutions of power, finally, in an attempt to deconstruct and reconstruct the existing meanings of his mother tongue in the scientific context of linguistics. It should be noted that this tripartite division of the interpretive social act is mine merely for an analytic purpose which I, not Dr. Smith, constructed by reinterpreting meanings surrounding Dr. Smith's language and other relevant events, occurrences, information pertinent to his life. The three factors are too intricately interwoven in actual life to allow us to figure out a linear cause-and-effect. Keeping that in mind, in what follows, I will delve more into the interpretive workings of the three factors in interaction, and hopefully, a proposition might emerge as to linguistic knowledge formation.

6.1. Ideological-Political

In Section 5.1, I described Dr. Smith's life story focusing on the ideological-political factor

from his elementary school in South Central Los Angeles to his graduate study at the University of California, Irvine. As the very foundation for his black nationalist efforts, it should be mentioned, first of all, that the immigration of people from a rural area into an urban area and the maximized social and economic dislocation from the traditional social structure were a major factor for the growth of nationalism (Fishman 1972: 18, 35). Therefore, this foundational experience may have been an overarching force for moulding meanings attached to his mother tongue. His early language awareness and loyalty emerged in his home and community, particularly, school education. His switch between black and white linguistic codes became conscious in his early adulthood. His language nationalism took form during his tertiary education and black nationalist community work, when the tie between nation, territory, and language became conscious for him. One of his arguments on the tie between language and nation was made during the course of his doctoral study at UC Irvine. The demarcation between language awareness, language loyalty, and language nationalism is not so straightforward and thus overlaps to varying degrees particularly since their differences are a matter of degree. Another significant factor, relevant to his language nationalism, might be his avoidance of the term “American” when he referred to blacks or their mother tongue as shown in the categories or concepts which I have employed throughout the life story.¹ As he has always stated, he has never accepted being a citizen of the United States and thus an American. Many other black linguists who adopt the Creolist Paradigm have employed terms involving the category “American” when they name the language of blacks and discuss things around them. This difference in political attitudes might also have provided some foundation for his separatist linguistic thought.

Before entering deeper into the life story of Dr. Smith, it is important to note that I had

erroneously presupposed that his black nationalist ideology influenced the formation of his comparative linguistic paradigm in visible form, in which black language was described from the outset as a newly born African language. I had supposed that the language nationalism that he had constructed and internalized motivated him to enter the doctoral program in Comparative Culture, UCI. Additionally, I had supposed that he targeted from the start to identify African linguistic evidence to verify his Afrocentric hypothesis or give scientific endorsement to his Afrocentric linguistic ideology. But I have found that my assumptions lacked three elements between Dr. Smith's nationalist language ideology and his scientific conceptualization and theorization of Ebonics: the impetus for entrance to UCI, the original research plan, and a discovery of scientific evidence in fieldwork. First, the direct impetus for his entrance into the PhD program was not his own. Dr. Joseph White happened to find Smith in a community organization in South Central Los Angeles and invited him to take the entrance exam into the program. Second, Smith explained to Dr. White his interest in the literacy issue that the black community faced, but he intended to do research in Egyptology at first. Then, the court case against him in 1970 gave him an opportunity to learn about linguistics and decide to pursue research on black language. Third, it is true that he had a nationalist language ideology that partly shaped his position of his mother tongue as an African language, not English, before he entered into the Department of Comparative Culture (Section 5.1.6); however, he also discovered some linguistic and paralinguistic patterns in the language of black children which he and Dr. Mary Key investigated near Los Angeles, features which were also seen in West African languages. Therefore, I should say that Dr. Smith's prior language ideology appears not to have impacted his African-centered linguistic thesis straightforwardly, but rather, it was the scientific

evidence that led him to pursue a scientific thesis that black language may be grammatically an African language, which then finally gave scientific authority to his nationalist language ideology.

As a manifestation of language nationalism, Smith mentioned some strong ties between nation or nationality and language in the 1973 meeting (Section 5.3.8), as seen in Lenin's (1967), *Lenin on the National and Colonial Question: Three Articles*, which Dr. Smith sometimes quotes to me. Scholars who are informed of the sociology of linguistics would see one historical phenomenon of language nationalism, i.e., pursuing the origin of one's group, in the formation of the comparative linguistic paradigm. As sociologist A. D. Smith (2011) points out, nationalism/imperialism in Europe stimulated the scientific reconstruction of a common ancestral language in the Indo-European language family through comparative philology or grammar, i.e., comparative linguistics (Gauger 2010). It has been witnessed in politics and linguistics around the world (cf., A. D. Smith 2011; Errington 2008; Poliakov 1971; Yasuda 1999, 2004).

Nationalist/imperialist movements gave an implicit or explicit foundation for linguistic research and planning, one of which attempted to determine genetic classifications or boundaries between linguistic codes (Cooper 1989; Weinstein 1979) in other parts of the world such as Central America (e.g., Joseph-Haynes & Castillo 2016), Francophone Africa (e.g., Weinstein 1980), Indonesia (e.g., Errington 2008), Japan (e.g., Yasuda 1999 & 2004), North America (e.g., Weinstein 1982), and Europe (e.g., Poliakov 1971). Therefore, what I could say about the relationship between Dr. Smith's comparative linguistic paradigm and language nationalism is that he might have based his conceptualization of Ebonics on that of the black nation in the United States and that of the Pan-African nation in the Western Hemisphere. He might have

selected a certain set of linguistic criteria and data to describe or construct a linguistic system, which (implicit though it may have been), was congruent with the nation and compatible with his nationalist belief. (In this respect, mainstream scholars in black linguistics and linguistics in general might do the same thing; cf. Anderson 2006 & Errington 2008.)

On the other hand, mainstream linguists of minority origin might as well find no need to express their thoughts explicitly on the relationship between a linguistic code which they attempt to “describe” and a nationality or nation, perhaps because their own language experiences might not put them under such nationalist pressure; they may be under tighter disciplinary constraints to follow their predecessors’ paradigms; or they may fear they may become a pariah in the academic mainstream or the wider society, ultimately losing their job and status, which is a serious issue for anybody under such a circumstance. That said, their paradigmatic positions may not be separated from their own or other group’s nationalist goals. The breadth and depth of minority nationalism that they adhere to may just be different from those that Dr. Smith adhered to. They may show their acquiescence to the majority nationalism of the United States (i.e., white nationalism).

There is another ideological-political element to be noted. Whether linguists have a far stronger desire for ethno-racial self-determination and separation from the state sovereignty in which they are situated might provide a foundation for selecting a particular set of criteria and data from languages other than the language of the oppressor and choosing or constructing an independent linguistic system based on the select data and the interpretations which the select criteria allow them to glean from the data. As Dr. Smith’s life story showed, he had been long in the mindset that he never agreed to and would never participate in the state sovereignty of the

United States. As an illustration, he, in cooperation with an organization, sought to achieve the right for the descendants of enslaved Africans, e.g., full self-determination like repatriation to Africa or possession of an independent state out of the United States. It appears he was more separatist than other black intelligentsia who were also engaged in some community efforts which others would call nationalist. This factor is one possible foundation to the extent that the linguist may become more receptive or open to various possible paradigms on a linguistic code, in which it may be described as a dialect of the language of the oppressor or a creole of the language or a language away from the oppressor's language. In other words, the epistemology to see black language as a language other than English may not exist from the beginning in most of the linguists in black linguistics who have little or no separatist thoughts. For example, John H. McWhorter seems to have no intention of exploring any possibility other than English from the beginning and continuously produces a discourse on black language which satisfies the interests of the dominant group and elites to the fullest extent that he squarely denies the conceptualization of Ebonics.

Lastly, often tied to language nationalism is religion, e.g., Arabic for Muslims in general, Malay for Malaysian Muslims, Hindi for Hindus, Urdu for Indian and Pakistani Muslims, Latin for Catholics in general, Hebrew for Jews in general, among many others the world over (cf. Cooper 1989; Fishman 1972). In the case of the Nation of Islam, in which Dr. Smith was enrolled from 1962 (but disenrolled shortly after Malcolm X. was assassinated), the language which played the most important role as a collective symbol was Arabic. On the other hand, he learned from the Nation a separatist linguistic view that the language of the descendants of enslaved Africans is a language other than English. Therefore, this view in the Nation of Islam

may be an additive, sanctifying element to his whole black nationalist language ideology which he reached around 1968, i.e., a view that black language is an African tongue, partly based on his experiential-practical concern with literacy in English among inner-city black males.

Section 5.1, “Ideological-Political Factor,” described a life story of Dr. Smith from his early childhood through his adolescence, inclusive of the events which were covered in Sections 5.2 and 5.3. As a result, there have been many instances of overlap, especially between Sections 5.1 and 5.2, on the one hand, and between Sections 5.1 and 5.3, on the other. In particular, I find it difficult to clearly divide the ideological-political and experiential-practical factor because the ideological-political goals are interrelated to people’s prior and future experiences in their empirical world and the meanings and interpretations that they attach to the experiences may influence the ideological-political goals. Therefore, the demarcation between ideological-political and experiential-practical is mainly for my own theorization of linguistic knowledge formation, distinguishing the political thoughts and goals from the community or down-to-the-earth experiences and problems, which provide foundational meanings for the thoughts and goals. Therefore, ideological-political and experiential-practical concerns may provide interrelated underlying meanings for linguistic research, which awaits further validation from studying more cases of linguistic knowledge formation both in the dominant and marginalized schools of thought.

6.2. Experiential-Practical

People encounter a wide range of social, political, and economic experiences (incl.,

linguistic) through their lives and continuously interpret, negotiate, and construct the meanings of the experiences so that they can address social, political, and economic problems (incl., linguistic). Linguistics becomes one of the weapons to rectify the situations, as many linguists mention the significance of their works for their practical concerns. This is the way, I suppose, linguists name a linguistic system and construct or adopt a particular linguistic paradigm to describe and construct the linguistic system on the basis of their prior experiences and meanings surrounding the hypothesized or imagined linguistic system. However, most of them hardly even give any room for discussing scientific criteria supporting the deduced name, or find no need for doing so. The widespread practice suggests there exist some experiential-practical meanings which linguists have accepted or constructed through their life experiences and the meanings implicitly provide the basis for the naming and paradigm selection. Naming often occurs as if the existing *a priori* science had established the genetic relationship of the linguistic system to others, or as if linguists are trying to avoid any discussion on the inevitable politics involved in defining the linguistic system by saying the naming is just “descriptive,” reflecting the larger society’s prevalent usage. They examine it as a dialect, a creole, or a language and often apply their knowledge (even non-linguists apply their scientifically authorized knowledge) within their empirical worlds such as education and other state/interstate institutions of power. Thus, the linguistic meanings which linguists accept or construct in relation to their social, political, and economic experiences from early on may influence the linguistic names and paradigms, which they adopt.

Different from mainstream linguists in black linguistics, the comparative linguistic paradigm makes explicit what scientific criteria and data on which the labeling and definition of Ebonics is

predicated. However, it does not explicitly make an empirical statement, “the paradigm adopts the concept and theory of Ebonics based on this linguistic experience at school or linguistic practices in court.” It is probably because others may criticize such academic practice for being “subjective” or “unscientific,” unless the scientist sees the linguistic code through the lens of disciplinary criteria of this or that grammatical structure, whose holistic entity as a communicative code has been dissolved into pieces to the extent that the original whole cannot be recovered. Dr. Smith did not explicitly base the comparative linguistic paradigm on his experiential-practical interpretations or meanings, e.g., the significant difference he felt existed between black and white language systems (Section 5.2.1), the placement of disproportionate numbers of black students in educable mentally retarded classes due to the cleavage between their mother tongue and the language of the white middle and upper class as seen in the IQ tests culturally biased toward those white groups (Section 5.2.3), and the need for a bilingual education program in Ebonics and English because the languages bring different linguistic and cultural frameworks on which students base their learning and understanding in school (Section 5.2.4). On the other hand, he emphatically related the experiential-practical concerns to his linguistic finding that Ebonics is an African language with a grammatical substratum deriving from, or a linguistic and paralinguistic continuation of, West and Niger-Congo African languages. What I could suggest is that most language scientists may start to examine a phenomenon after forming their interest in the phenomenon in their empirical world, that is, after witnessing something intriguing or problematic to themselves, a local community, and/or a larger society and decide to conduct scientific research on it. Therefore, whether linguists make it explicit or not, most of them may start their scientific research through their experiential-

practical interpretations of whether a linguistic code which they attempt to examine is a dialect, a creole, or a language. In most cases, the experiential-practical factor may provide more down-to-earth, persuasive foundations than the ideological-political factor for putting forward a linguistic thesis, as many linguists emphasize the importance of theory to practice consistency.

Lastly, readers should attend to two subfactors of the experiential-practical factor: “Black Language as a Pathology in School” (Section 5.2.2) and “Black Language in the Judiciary System” (Section 5.2.5). The subfactor, “Black Language as a Pathology in School,” might be interpreted as giving an experiential-practical meaning and reason for Dr. Smith to pursue linguistic research to give a scientific explanation of what his mother tongue is rather than how it is African. The larger society or white society saw Dr. Smith’s legitimate mother tongue as a degenerate form of English or a linguistic anomaly, and, as a result, he adhered to using black language as a medium of resistance to the Establishment or an expression of loyalty to the language, which became one of his political actions or goals later. However, the pressing concern for him as a graduate student in this regard may have been to confirm that his mother tongue is a legitimate linguistic system. Therefore, the experience of Dr. Smith’s language being pathologized in education might have been of secondary importance to the construction of the comparative linguistic paradigm in the sense that his African-centered paradigm emerged *after* he was informed that black language is a legitimate linguistic system. This experience may have provided a foundation for his majoring in linguistics rather than pursuing a specific linguistic paradigm. As regards the subfactor, “Black Language in the Judiciary System,” his knowledge that the juvenile detention system interpreted the language of black youths as “uppity, vulgar, indecent, and profane” (Smith 1974: 52) and their personalities as delinquent or insubordinate

was possibly tied to his own experience that he was indicted by the university administrator in 1970 because of his “vulgar, profane, or indecent” language. Though he does not interpret the 1970 case as a linguistic one, at least the incident guided him to linguistics and, thus, it could be considered a precondition for his decision to major in linguistics and his pursuit to validate the legitimacy of black language. Therefore, it may be suggested that these two subfactors constituted *indirect* influences on the formation of Dr. Smith’s ethnolinguistic/comparative linguistic paradigm.

6.3. Theoretical-Scientific

Among the subheadings discussed in the “Theoretical-Scientific Factor,” Section 5.3.1, “Program in Comparative Culture,” may be one of the most important factors for the formation of the comparative linguistic paradigm. One of the salient things is that, to the best of my knowledge, different from Dr. Smith’s experience, most black linguists graduated from the department of linguistics, communication, or speech. The disciplines were the citadels for conventional or conservative linguistic paradigms. Therefore, most of the major black linguists may have adopted the paradigms of their white predecessors, whereas some dissident scholars in the mainstream seem to have attempted to adjust the mainstream canons but still have been accepted there (e.g., Dr. Geneva Smitherman). Among the major black linguists who adopt the comparative linguistic paradigm, excluding Dr. Carol Aisha Blackshire-Belay, who graduated from a linguistics department, only Dr. Smith is a graduate of a non-linguistics department, viz., Comparative Culture, whose “Black Culture” unit looked quite like today’s Black Studies

program. The far less linguistic nature of Comparative Culture and the innovative, African-centered nature of the Black Culture unit of the department may have been a strong element which enabled Smith to pursue his Ebonics paradigm, even though his main advisor Dr. Joseph White personally viewed black language as a dialect of English. In relation to the departmental or disciplinary factor, the subfactor of “Guidance Committee Members” (Section 5.3.3) was an ancillary but, probably, indispensable factor which allowed him to explore his Afrocentric theme. All the guidance committee members (psychologist, sociologist, economist, communicationist), including non-UCI committee member Dr. Arthur L. Smith (Molefi Kete Asante), were Afrocentric enough to be receptive to Smith’s linguistic paradigm, after he decided not to include Dr. Mary R. Key, the only white linguist.

Another disciplinary influence would be the interdisciplinary nature of Comparative Culture. Smith had various influential sources of academic input: linguistics, psychology, history, and literature. As a result, the background knowledge section of his dissertation was full of citations and ideas from those fields. Among the most important for the formation of his paradigm was his encounter with one work in Caribbean linguistics: black creole linguist Mervyn C. Alleyne (1971) was the person who gave Smith a comparative linguistic perspective to describe or interpret his mother tongue and other newly born languages in other parts of the African diaspora as maintaining the grammatical patterns of West African languages. Possibly because of Alleyne’s influence, many of the categories or concepts were adopted from creole linguistics, which were incorporated into his comparative linguistic approach. The work of Janheinz Jahn gave another comparative linguistic endorsement from the perspective of literature to Smith’s thesis. James Haskins and Hugh Butts reinforced the African retention thesis of Smith’s from a

psychological perspective, although the authors regarded black language as a dialect of English. Another connection between their black psychology and Smith's linguistic thesis can be found in the former's argument that blacks showed an underlying African thought process in black language, which he equated with grammar, hence, an underlying African grammar. Lastly, other important disciplinary factors deriving from this academic environment were the *integration* of multi-disciplines, which would have made it possible for him to adopt a *holistic* interpretation of black language as a whole system of linguistic and paralinguistic features, and the *counter-epistemology* of "Black Studies," which could have enabled him to pursue an African-centered, i.e., *comparative* perspective to include African languages in his linguistic analysis.

First preceded and supported by the holistic and comparative epistemology, the second most important factor may be Smith's "Fieldwork on the Language of Black Children" (Section 5.3.5). Without this incident in which he found some linguistic and paralinguistic patterns in the language of black elementary school children in Santa Ana, California that were common to some of the grammatical patterns seen across West African languages, he should not have developed a specific idea that black language grammatically belongs to a family of West and Niger-Congo African languages. Therefore, if he had not encountered the linguistic evidence, what remained in his mind may have been an experiential-practical perception and a nationalist language ideology simultaneously that his mother tongue is a language other than English or an African language, as Carter G. Woodson (1933) put it. With the finding of the canonical syllable pattern of West African languages and some other grammatical patterns, the adoption of a linguistic paradigm he extended from Alleyne (1971), and the input from Lorenzo Dow Turner (1949), who found West African languages were the main grammatical sources for black

language, Smith reached his ethnolinguistic view, later what he calls, the comparative linguistic view or paradigm. In this paradigm, a grammatical comparison between black language and West African languages was made and the former was interpreted as a continuation of the grammatical structures of the latter. Especially, the paradigm was placed against the mainstream paradigms: the Transformationalist (similar to the Anglicist Paradigm) and the Pidgin-Creolist Paradigm, in that the latter two examined only a linguistic portion recognizable as English.

Though it may not have been foundational or conditional to the formation of the comparative linguistic paradigm, the small conference among black scholars in St. Louis (Section 5.3.8) may have offered a wider venue (Williams 1975) for the Paradigm with an African-centered name and definition of black language, to be publicized widely, in particular, in psychology and language sciences. It may have been an effective setting for a widely acceptable name for black language to be arrived at as an interdisciplinary consensus among psychologists and language scientists rather than coined by an individual linguist.

6.4. Toward a Theory of Linguistic Knowledge Formation

The ideological-political factor, the experiential-practical factor, and the theoretical-scientific factor have been divided for the purpose of, first, better understanding the comparative linguistic paradigm; second, clarifying the multi- and inter- dimensional nature of linguistic knowledge formation process, in other words, how the linguist could innovate a paradigm in linguistics rather than becoming the follower of existing paradigms; and third, building a theory on linguistic knowledge formation. In reality, the three factors overlap in inseparable ways.

Therefore, I do not wish the reader to rush to isolate the theoretical-scientific factor to “purify” science more than has ever been done before. My intention, probably against many scientists, is to verify my tentative argument that a linguistic paradigm may derive from the interpretive social negotiations of the three factors, i.e., linguistics is a science in the sense that it is ideological-political, experiential-practical, and theoretical-scientific at the same time. One’s political goals, both symbolic and instrumental, both linguistic and non-linguistic, interact and negotiate with their linguistic and non-linguistic experiences in their empirical world. The ideological-political and experiential-practical meanings interact and negotiate with their theoretical-scientific attempts to explain some of the experiences and define and address some problems in the experiences. Some educated people’s attempts to do so at a particular discursive level may be defined as language sciences. In the process of constructing a linguistic paradigm, the divided three factors are inseparably interwoven. For example, linguist Geneva Smitherman, speech scientist Orlando L. Taylor, and philosopher Maulana Karenga observe that the study of black language can be viewed as part of the black nationalist movement of the late 1960s and 1970s. As they are black scholars who shared a lot with Dr. Ernie Smith, Dr. Robert Williams, and their colleagues in the same conference in 1973 in St. Louis, their interpretation of their own research as a cultural nationalist project which ultimately aims to solve problems in their empirical world may give some credence to my tripartite—ideological-political, experiential-practical, theoretical-scientific—theorization on the formation of a linguistic paradigm. That said, looking back at what I argued in this chapter, I cannot maintain that the relative importance I’ve given to each of the three factors and each of the variables in each chapter remains more or less stable. Manning (1982) gives one caveat about life story research that:

the object . . . can never be explained with reference to past events or antecedents, for, strictly speaking, any outcome is a product of innumerable instances, and the relative importance of any given series of facts may vary from case to case. The precise effect of any given one remains undetermined and changing. (284)

7. CONCLUDING SUGGESTIONS

This study is not an attempt to delegitimize black linguistics and linguistics in general as well as the comparative linguistic paradigm. I have attempted to explain the formative process of the comparative linguistic paradigm in hope of knowing how a new, future paradigm in black linguistics could be constructed to better serve the community or a segment of the community, even if facing insurmountable resistance from both the academic mainstream and the larger society. Through my description and analysis of the comparative linguistic paradigm, I have developed my own argument on linguistic knowledge formation (See details in Chapter 1) and suggested linguistics may be a flexible, malleable, and creative discursive practice. My sociology of knowledge approach may encourage black linguists and linguists in general to have a healthy and productive paradigmatic competition, as Africology recommends (Horn 2007[1997]). Especially it is intended to give African-centered agency on the side of descendants of enslaved Africans in the United States and in other parts of the African diaspora, going beyond the confines of the existing impermeable frameworks which European scholars constructed and most black scholars follow or have little choice but to follow. In concluding my doctoral research, I would like to make a few suggestions for a possible future course of black linguistics.

7.1. Tripartite Analysis and Holistic Reconstruction of Black Linguistics

The present condition of the paradigms in black linguistics looks nearly fixed beginning in the 1960s and 1970s, even if there may exist a possibility of exploring a well-nigh uncharted

territory in the established black linguistics. Thomas Kuhn's caveat directed toward natural sciences may aptly fit the description of current black linguistics: "the scientist largely ceases to be an explorer at all, or at least to be an explorer of the unknown" (1972: 96-97). The linguistics almost seems to have quit exploring the connections between black language and its ancestral languages outside of the established epistemology as well as within it. For a healthier and more fruitful paradigmatic competition in black linguistics, i.e., for it to be opened-minded to paradigmatic innovations which pose a fundamental challenge to the dominant paradigms, I suggest three things which could be done by language scientists:

- 1) interject a microsociological analysis of linguistic knowledge formation in the mainstream
- 2) reconstruct the dominant definition of linguistic system in linguistics
- 3) reconsider the dominant practice to recruit only those students who conform to the accepting linguists' paradigms or thoughts

First, it would be crucial to know the workings or internal structure of the current dominant black linguistics, the Dialectologist/Anglicist Paradigm and the Creolist Paradigm, through a sociohistorical lens. The goal is to rectify the prevailing situation in which the primary users of the newly born languages in the African diaspora, viz., varieties of Ebonics which are defined as dialects or creoles by linguists and the larger society have been given little or no official language services in those languages, such as public education and court interpretation services through their mother tongues.¹ Language scholars and other vested parties need to understand that the definition of a linguistic code as language or dialect/creole largely determines the official

allocation of resources to public services which the community of the linguistic code receives. Many linguists' color-blind attempt to call standard English "standard dialect" would hardly provide any service to the ideological-political and experiential-practical needs of such linguistic communities in dire need. Language scientists need to examine the ideological-political, experiential-practical, and theoretical-scientific processes by which the Creolist and Anglicist Paradigms were born and have been maintained thus far in relation to other actions and discourses in state institutions of the United States; in other words, how the paradigms may have been designed to produce and reproduce the system of White Supremacy.

In the course of figuring out the mechanism of the tripartite interpretive construction of the two paradigms, the following three questions should be addressed: 1) how the definition of the linguistic system in black linguistics has shifted in negotiations with the ideological-political, experiential-practical, and theoretical-scientific meanings which the researchers embraced toward the white world, 2) what scientific criteria and empirical data have been selected to reach those theoretical-scientific interpretations which implicitly or invisibly or inadvertently fit the ideological-political and experiential-practical meanings and interests of the researchers and the white world, and 3) whether something exists in current linguistics which provides excessive agency for whites to attain their politico-economic goals to the extent of oppressing other peoples through linguistic means. Once recognizing the subjectivity, arbitrariness, and malleability of linguistics in the process of linguistic knowledge formation, the researchers might begin to explore an uncharted territory and select a different set of criteria and data, only if they should have adequate motivation or determination to face the daunting challenges expected from White Supremacist academic system and society. In my opinion, as long as a possibility for

validating a least accepted interpretation remains, they *must* do so, if they claim they are “true” scientists.

The next step may be to re-examine the current definition of linguistic system which is provided for the *fragmentary* purpose of linguistics, and then, drawing on my hypothetical three *desiderata* of the ideological-political, experiential-practical, and theoretical-scientific factor for the formation of a linguistic paradigm, to recover such a holistic definition of linguistic system—inclusive of linguistics and paralinguistics—as the comparative linguistic paradigm adopted for the *integral* purpose of linguistics, praxis, and politics. Even with a holistic definition in hand, language scientists still need to attempt to find other areas we haven’t explored yet for linguistic analysis other than traditional linguistic and paralinguistic areas. For instance, we need to reconsider the current Eurocentric binaries of grammar and pragmatics, linguistics and paralinguistics, linguistics and speech communication, form and function, formal and informal, language and dialect, speech and writing system, which partly results in overemphasis on spoken data and a wrong view of spoken as a “true” or “natural” linguistic code, and so on. They may expand the traditional domain of grammar, i.e., syntax, morphology, phonetics, phonology, semantics, to a wider grammar which includes any systematic features in pragmatic and paralinguistic areas. More importantly, although probably almost all linguists would not agree with this, I would suggest the *collective-symbolic* or *nationalist* components of a linguistic code need to be an *integral* part of linguistic system in linguistics. Language is more than such an objectified tool of communication (Cooper 1989: 133), although, unfortunately, Cooper does not attempt to include the symbolic or nationalist components as part of a linguistic system but merely part of the *functions* for which the system or *form* serves. The collective-symbolic or

nationalist components may be a group's loyalty to their linguistic code or their labeling of the code, which fulfills the nationalist or other collective needs of the group. These are what linguists and even sociolinguists have put aside as outside of language sciences, i.e., as *political*, *ideological*, or *non-scientific*. In reality, they are the very starting points for whether a linguistic code is a language or a dialect and are inseparably interwoven with the traditional components of linguistic system. What linguists can determine based on their analysis of grammatical or so-called "linguistic" features is merely fragmentary. Look at most linguistic codes around the world. Except for the imperialistic cases in many post-colonial societies in which the naming of linguistic codes has been determined by European colonizers' practices rather than the nationalist or other collective needs of oppressed peoples, they would soon notice the labeling of linguistic codes is based on nationalist or other collective needs. Some would-be critiques like Fasold (2005) would deploy a "democratic" argument that most blacks would not agree with such a naming as Ebonics. (It is important to remember that the ideology of democracy is usually effective only for a dominant majority group in a multiethnic and multiracial polity.) However, since the black community has not had any self-determining moment in history in which a majority of them could spend centuries in disseminating and standardizing nationalist thoughts such as Ebonics and since they have been forced for centuries to negate their own mother tongue in relation to white language, Fasold's claiming "Most black people don't like the idea of Ebonics" is a simple neo-liberalist discourse. Black intelligentsia including black linguists should be given an opportunity to lead their community under no oppressive influences of Eurocentric media, scholarship, and education.

Summarizing the two suggestions for the purpose of recovering the meaning of what

language is so far, I suggest linguists of color should be aware of the two daunting tasks to liberate themselves out of the confines of “white logic, white methods”: 1) expansion of the current narrowed set of linguistic categories on which linguists base their “linguistic” arguments about language or dialect, which covertly work for European and other dominant languages, and 2) recovery of the collective-symbolic or nationalist into the components of linguistic system in linguistics. The visible integration of the ideological-political, experiential-practical, and theoretical-scientific factors in linguistics might create finer interconnection between theory and practice as commended in that Afrocentricity which Asante (2006), Nelson (2007[1997]), Okafor (2013), and others adopt, about which many linguists have deplored the current conditions.

Asante (2006) states: “Afrocentricity is characterized by its commitment to a political program in conformity with the idea that theory is not disconnected from practice” (658). For example, Dr. Ernie A. Smith attempted to cater to not only the traditional “applied” domain of linguistics, i.e., language education in school but extend it to a package of disciplinary and punitive institutions such as the school and the court, in which language played a significant filtering role, within the framework of Ebonics (Smith 1974, 1976-77, 1978a, 1993a). With a strategic negotiation of the three factors (cf. Asante 1980²), they might be able to select another set of criteria, data, and interpretations, which help simultaneously attain ideological-political and experiential-practical goals. Inevitably, they will shoulder an unfair burden of trying to be unperturbed and consistent in the face of discursive, material, and psychological retaliations from the Establishment.

This may be ancillary to the former two agendas, but there is a third area, which would affect the first two recommendations. If most mainstream linguists do not accept any researcher into the academic mainstream or recruit any future scholar into their universities or colleges who

supports a theory or paradigm which they deem to be unacceptable or wrong, they are not *genuine scientists*, as my sociology-of-linguist mentor, Kasuya Keisuke (personal communication, June 3, 2013), in Nippon commented a few years ago. Unfortunately, I've found many linguists in black linguistics may fall under this category. The area of black linguistics would remain in the cradle of Eurocentric discourse, though many would adamantly deny it in one way or another. It seems that a small population of mainstream black linguists are struggling for change both in theory and practice while a majority of them are aiming for change only in practice, drawing on many or most of the Eurocentric categories and theories entrenched therein (cf. Mazama 2009). It is problematic that linguists such as Dr. Ernie A. Smith and Dr. Carol Aisha Blackshire-Belay, major proponents of the Ebonics paradigm, are now outside of the linguistics department or the mainstream linguistics. If black linguistics honestly hopes to change, it has to push itself forward both with the challenges which they set up and those which others from outside of their institutions or paradigms set up.

These recommendations should be done *collectively* rather than sporadically, basically by those linguists who are members of the oppressed groups of color around the world through their cooperative and collaborative efforts. It is doubtful that those linguists from oppressor groups who enjoy the benefits from the existing state and interstate power structures will take substantive action in these areas. If they would do so, fear would hinder their efforts, including the fear that they would lose their authority as scientists and their political, economic, and other leverages in the local and global system of state institutions.

7.2. Linguists as Language Planning Visionaries for Ebonics

[Writing is] merely a way of recording language by means of visible marks ——Bloomfield (1933)

No one can deny the overwhelming importance for linguistic science of the realization that writing is historically secondary to speech, as well as in the learning and the life of an individual.³ ——Haugen (1966)

These ideas predominant in linguistics today, are reflected in the established use of the word “reduce” among linguists, when they say, “someone “reduces” a linguistic code to writing.” The idea that *spoken* data is the primary target of linguistic description (Fishman 1972: 71) is merely one ideology, in this case, a Eurocentric conceptualization, possibly deriving from “Phono Supremacy.” I reasonably assume the focus on sound may more accentuate “discontinuities” of otherwise very close linguistic codes in Europe as if they constituted discontinuous or distinct languages than when viewing them from their orthographies. It sometimes considers the phonographic correspondence between a spoken code and a written code (usually called “writing system”) superior to other writing systems such as ideographs, which are adopted in Chinese, Nipponese, and so on, (cf. Joos 1960).⁴ This situation may have partly derived from a hidden agenda that European languages are able to permeate as many societies as possible all over the world, while Romanizing both unwritten and written minority languages into “middle” domains secondary to European languages and marginalizing the unwritten and minority languages into “informal” functions. The problem of writing discussed above is very much relevant to the maintenance and reinforcement of black language as an African language.

Dominant European languages are all written with their own differentiated, distinctive

orthographies. The spoken or “living” codes are inseparably supported by the standardizing/leveling, spreading, and authorizing forces of their written counterparts in the media (incl., literature), education, business, and government. Therefore, those European languages have historically maintained their linguistic systems only with minor modifications, while the spoken parts of the languages have been a little less standardized and maintained. It is possible conceptually to divide a linguistic code into spoken and written, but in the case of written or documented linguistic codes, it is impossible to do so: in fact, the spoken and the written have become part of the integral components of a linguistic code.

In retrospect, in Europe, many linguists both in governmental and non-governmental institutions were mobilized or involved in the standardization, i.e., prescription process of their linguistic codes. The linguists imagined, identified, and constructed certain sets of structural features as linguistic systems, i.e., systematic linguistic boundaries between, often, linguistic continuums, and later, called their work “describing a linguistic system,” focusing on their spoken data, as if they were relatively stable and standardized, separate “languages,” not “dialects” or “creoles” of their ancestral languages, with distinct orthographies which were differentiated primarily on political grounds. Therefore, they can *currently* argue that their linguistic work should not be “prescriptive” but “descriptive,” that the linguistic codes have this or that genetic relationship to one proto-language or another and are independent languages. Those linguistic codes, defined as “language” in state institutions and the general public and given scientific authority and further confirmation by linguistics, continue to be targets of official language services at least in their native territories.

On the other hand, most of the newly born African languages in the diaspora, which are

related to European languages in many ways, are mostly unwritten (albeit documented), and thus, with little help from writing systems, the diaspora languages have historically gone through lots of changes and been far less standardized, although the grammars may have been relatively stable. Having no established distinct orthographies which the native users create primarily on their own political needs, having few autochthonous linguistic labelings which do not contain the concept “dialect” or “creole,” and always compared to “standard” European languages in various state institutions such as education and the media, the newly born languages have been relatively unstable, far less standardized, and thus, recognized as closer to the European languages (actually getting levelled out toward the “standard” European languages as the media develop and as receiving or interactive devices spread among the masses). Linguists have identified, imagined, and constructed certain sets of linguistic features as systems out of linguistic continuums (yes, they would prefer to call it “describe a linguistic system”), selecting the linguistic or grammatical data characteristic of “dialects” or “creoles,” which constitute “continuums” with “standard” European languages, and employing the writings systems of the lexifier European languages. Therefore, most of them argue that the languages have this or that genetic relationship to one standard European language or another, or that they are severed from both the lexifier source languages and the grammatical source languages. Those linguistic codes defined as “dialects” or “creoles” in state institutions and the general public, given scientific authority and further confirmation by linguistics, usually do not become targets of official language services. As long as this status of unwritten languages and the constant levelling of those “dialects” and “creoles” toward “standard” European languages continue, the number of the users of the European languages will continue to increase all over the world and whites in

Europe, North America, and other parts of the world will continue to secure political and economic gains from people of color.

To be sure, I do not suggest unwritten linguistic codes are less prestigious or less developed and I find important not only standardization and stability but also diversification and change; however, unwritten codes may tend to be endangered under the threat of related European languages, which covertly capitalize on the authoritative and levelling forces of their own written codes and writing systems. Therefore, I would like to suggest an additional role for linguists in black linguistics: language planners. Such persons attempt to influence, i.e., consciously or honestly prescribe the corpus and status of the linguistic code(s) which they describe. They focus on differences rather than similarities between black and white linguistic codes so that the former might get recognized as independent, distinct “language(s)” in a distant future. This is what many linguists have historically been involved in the world over, and indeed, as Charles DeBose points out, what linguists are doing for “description” is equivalent to language planning, i.e., their descriptive behaviors have prescriptive functions. Language is not an object like a plant, so it cannot be so objectified as can be comparable to natural sciences. The crux of my argument is that linguists should not forget they are not only descriptors but also creators or modifiers of languages. I believe they should attempt to describe as far as the purpose of their acts is description, but the reality is that description simultaneously has a prescriptive dimension. They can create distinctive features or expressions, which is prescriptive at its extreme. Therefore, my concluding suggestion on the role of linguists is that they attempt to not only describe but also prescribe. Ultimately, I dare to suggest Ebonics and other newly born languages in the African diaspora might be given their own distinct, hopefully autochthonous, writing systems, and even

distinct grammatical features, deliberately differentiated from their related European languages, to ensure that the distinct features of the former become standardized and more permanent, especially *visibly* away from European languages. Some day, when linguists “describe” them, more of the linguists may be able to argue that they are distinct languages with an African grammatical substratum, and they may become targets of official language services because they are scientifically and widely recognized as “language,” not “dialect” or “creole.” Concisely put, what I would suggest is, linguists may be “language planning visionaries” (DeBose 2005), who may become strategically responsible for the political goal of integrating theory and practice, linguistic description and prescription, which, surely, cannot be achieved without cooperation from political, economic, educational, and other elites and masses of their communities.

That said, a liberalist opinion would sometimes be expressed on the “exotic,” hardly written languages in the non-European or non-white world, claiming these languages need not be given any writing system and can exist as they are: *naturalist*. I recently met a white researcher in Jamaica, who made this naturalist argument that there may be no necessity to give Jamaican a writing system in the face of a Jamaican researcher who proposed to the Ministry of Education that Jamaican and English be the co-media of instruction in school.⁵ However, it must be noted that the overemphasis on spoken code in European scholarship has contributed to the production and reproduction of a White Supremacist linguistic hierarchy in which written European languages are situated dominant and prestigious relative to unwritten or scarcely written languages of color, which cannot be targets of official language services and are increasingly endangered. Linguists need to notice that a writing system clearly has a political and economic dimension which controls spread, standardization, maintenance, and respect of a linguistic code

and thus, a critical politico-economic power to differentiate close linguistic codes and shift one of them from the status of dialect to that of language (Cooper 1989: 139 & *passim*). However, the dominant discourse in linguistics presently is that spoken data is real and description is the condition for science, as a result of which linguistics rarely conducts any inclusive examination of writing systems as *part* of linguistic systems.

It would be an important territory for linguists in black linguistics both as scientists and visionaries to have yet to explore: development of an authentic and autochthonous writing system for Ebonics for the maintenance of the existing distinctive features including African and, furthermore, the production of the lost or new distinctive features including African, in its spoken code as well as its written code. The development of a distinct writing system even with minor linguistic differences may have far greater impact later in the development of nation and nationalism (Fishman 1972: 61). If they do not attempt to do so in cooperation with other elites —political and literary (cf. Fishman 1971 concerning the effects of literature on the relationship between nation and language and on language planning), the status of Ebonics would continue to be “low” to English, as the words of Brian Weinstein (1979) aptly capture the situation of the black community today:

If most people are content to till the soil or to wander with their herds, and if they remain relatively isolated from the centers of power and wealth, accept the existing distribution of power and wealth, and agree with the conventional wisdom that their own speech is not suitable for high-status activities, the linguistic issue is dormant. No one challenges any of the symbols that define the group or the patterns of access to power and wealth. (350)

History testifies that many European and other languages are now investigated

“descriptively” without any due consideration of the historical process, in which many linguists and other elites played active parts in “prescribing,” that is, differentiating and standardizing those languages. Language scientists need to revisit the notion of description in linguistics and demystify the Eurocentric ideology that the goal of language scientists is to describe a spoken code.

NOTES

NOTES

ABSTRACT

1. Historically, *Japanese* is a China-centered or Europe-centered proper noun and adjective transcribed from indigenous languages in China to Portuguese, then other European languages including English (Okamoto 1987). Hence, I'd like to substitute the rarely used term *Nipponese* for the prevalent proper noun and adjective. The Nipponese Government and, consequently, most Nipponese have taken it for granted that learning English and expressing things in English is equal to learning British/American English and expressing things in British/American English and culturally Euro-Americanized ways. As a result, many culturally Nipponese things, especially many proper names, are still rendered in Euro-Americanized ways (e.g., when they express in English, most people reverse their names from the autochthonous surname + given name order to the Euro-Americanized given name + surname order. cf. Chinese and Korean practices). Throughout the dissertation I employ the surname + given name order to list Nipponese people, except myself, from the Nippon-centered perspective. The institutional constraint that my name has been formally registered in the given name + surname order with the university obliges me to be consistent in that regard.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

1. See Note 1 in Abstract.

1. A HYPOTHETICAL INTRODUCTION TO THE CONSTRUCTION OF BLACK LINGUISTICS

1. I prefer to use the term “users” to the term “speakers” when we refer to persons engaged in acts of communication. The use of the latter is too entrenched in the discourses of professional and amateur linguistics to critically examine the impact of the term on their perspectives on communicative codes and the practical issues of the codes which they deal with. I suggest the uncritical use of the term reproduces the Eurocentric *phono-supremacy* in which writing systems or written codes always derive or are “reduced” from spoken codes, i.e., spoken data are “true” rather than their written counterparts in linguistics. As a result, some languages in which the written *ideographic* components play a significant role have long been targets of cynical, subjective, ideological, and unscientific comments from linguists, e.g., condescending comments on Chinese, claiming so-called “dialects” of Chinese “spoken” around China are actually unintelligible to each other and should be called “languages.” However, when we view Chinese in a fair manner from the perspective of its written codes, the “languages” may be “dialects” of Chinese (cf. Fishman 1972: 134). I also suggest, concerning the teaching and learning of English or other languages to “nonnative speakers,” that the hegemonic use of the term “speakers” may contribute to the notion that learners of foreign or second languages cannot be considered to have working commands of

the languages until they “speak fluently” or “sound like native speakers,” even though they have working abilities in reading and writing technical works or materials in those languages for their professional purposes. The telling effect of this notion is seen in Nippon [= Japan], where too many people complain that the English which they learnt at school “cannot be used in actual society” simplistically because they cannot “speak” the language “fluently.” Consequently, too many people including business people, government officials, scholars, teachers, and various others rush to ask for the extended use (incl., learning) of the language, to the imperialistic pleasure of political, economic, and educational elites and others in “English-speaking” countries.

2. “In its established usage, a paradigm is an accepted model or pattern . . . is rarely an object for replication . . . is an object for further articulation and specification under new or more stringent conditions” (Kuhn 1996: 23). According to this definition, the comparative linguistic paradigm may still have been in an early stage of its development in the 1970s because the linguists and others who adopted the paradigm did not do as substantive research as Smith (1974), who mainly examined black language in an inner-city, and as detailed works as Lorenzo Turner (1949), who identified in Gullah massive amounts of linguistic features deriving from West African languages, which may have enabled him to conduct an extensive comparative linguistic analysis of the language. That said, it is an undeniable fact that presently there are many followers of the comparative linguistic or Africological paradigm, and it is an accepted model even among a small segment of the academic community. Therefore, I will employ the term “paradigm” to refer to the linguistic thesis of Dr. Ernie A. Smith and similar others (cf. Blackshire-Belay 1996).
3. The Anglicist Paradigm postulates that the distinctive features of the primary linguistic code of descendants of enslaved Africans in the United States “were transmitted largely intact from earlier nonstandard varieties of English . . . the English component of AAE [= African American English] has become obscured over time . . .” (Van Herk 2015: 23). See main discussions in Krapp (1924), Mufwene (2015), and Poplack (1999).
4. The Creolist Paradigm postulates that the black linguistic code is a decreolized variety of creole English. Those scholars who adopt this paradigm often employ the labelling “African American Vernacular English” or, sometimes, “African American Language.” See detailed discussions in Rickford (2015), Smith (1996c), and Winford (1997 & 1998).
5. The comparative linguistic paradigm postulates that the linguistic codes of descendants of enslaved Africans in the United States and other regions of the African diaspora are languages other than Dutch, English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish, i.e., African languages, called and fallen under the family of Ebonics. Consult Smith (1974, 1996b, 2001), and Nehusi (2001). The term “comparative linguistic” is the terminology employed by Dr. Ernie A. Smith. For others who choose to call their paradigm so, I will call theirs the “Africological” paradigm, except where they propose to call it otherwise. The cognate term “Africology” is a discipline in which the African-centered perspective “Afrocentricity” is an analytical framework for examining African phenomena. For a definition of Afrocentricity, refer to Asante (1992, 1998, 2006).

6. See Section 1.3.1, “Disciplines.”
7. It must be noted that the experiential-practical factor overlaps with the ideological-political factor because the latter includes not only ideologies but also actions, both of which derive from those ideologies and everyday experiences/practices. But in order to accentuate ideological from mundane, the two categories, conceptually separate but actually interwoven, are constructed for the purpose of this research: ideological-political for being “more” focused on power and ideology and experiential-practical for being “more” focused on mundane businesses. In this vein, the experiential-practical cannot be separated from the theoretical-scientific either. For most of the current sciences may attempt to present a specialized account of a phenomenon which, usually, the scientists experience in their daily lives or through experiments in the laboratory. In fact, some scientists view experience-practice as part of theory-science. However, because experience-practice is not necessarily compatible with theory-science, and because I want to analyze each of the three factors more independently, my dissertation presents experience-practice and theory-science as independent variables.
8. Krajewski (1988) points out “[t]he development of science is influenced not only by the economic factors but also by the spiritual ones, such as the dominating philosophy or religion . . . the *Weltanschauung* often has a direct influence on the development of science” (173).
9. Many of my arguments here are largely compatible with the following phenomenological view of science: “[t]he ‘immanence-transcendence’ principle in phenomenology establishes that what has been called a scientific ‘truth’ (objective truth) so far is merely one ‘transcendence,’ in other words, one fiction that is explained on the ground of the human life world’s needs, i.e., the general usability of things” (translated from Takeda 1989: 203).
10. Krajewski (1988: 177) explains how the power of the ruling stratum may be related to conservative science.
11. What Mühlhäusler aptly observes about the linguistic ecology of the Pacific and Australian area may be applied to the linguistic ecology of the descendant communities of enslaved Africans in the United States. Mühlhäusler (1996) cautions, “Linguists hide behind the shield of scholarly objectivity whilst the linguistic diversity that has been in existence for tens of thousands of years is being eroded at an alarming rate. . . . In the case of much of linguistics, the range of questions that has been addressed has been unduly narrow, ethnocentric and insensitive to the plight of the languages and their speakers. Moral questions and questions of the consequences of linguistic activity have been notoriously avoided in the mistaken belief that it is possible to engage in an ideologically free linguistics. . . . What is needed now is a new reformed linguistics that addresses some of the fundamental issues of the place of language in human life, of the uses of intellectual and linguistic diversity and of the responsibility linguistics has in helping to maintain and rescue a very fragile linguistic ecology. These issues have barely begun to be addressed. One hopes that they will move towards the centre of the discipline before it is too late . . .” (337-338).

12. In another social science, psychology, black psychologist Joseph White (1984: 19) admits that black psychologists adopt a posture of social and political advocacy.
13. “Education Secretary Richard Riley declared that it is not a foreign language and that no bilingual education dollars will go to help students who speak the ‘nonstandard form of English.’ . . . Elevating black English to the status of a language is not the way to raise standards of achievement in our schools and for our students. . . . It has been determined by the United States Department of Education and the Clinton administration that the use of federal bilingual education funds for what has been called black English or ebonics is not permitted” (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 12/25/1997).
14. Assembly Bill No. 1206 CHAPTER 647: An act to add Section 30.5 to the Education Code, relating to education. “30.5. (a) (1) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, bilingual education shall be defined as a system of instruction which builds upon the language skills of a pupil whose primary language is neither English nor derived from English. For purposes of this paragraph:
(A) “Primary language” is *a language, other than English or a language derived from English*, which is the language the pupil first learned.
(B) “Derived from English” means any dialect, idiom, or language derived from English. Both of the following shall be construed as being derived from English:
(i) *Any dialect, idiom, or language that has linguistic roots connected to English.*
(ii) *Any dialect, idiom, or language that has a syntax distinct from English, yet can be traced linguistically as derived from English.*
(2) A school district shall not utilize, as part of a bilingual education program, state funds or resources for the purpose of recognition of, or instruction in, any dialect, idiom, or language derived from English, as defined in paragraph (1)” (State of California 1997, emphasis added)
15. Watch the speech of black Attorney Alton H. Maddox, Jr. at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FCuPsiKF8sE>.
16. According to a probation officer at a juvenile justice center, South Central Los Angeles, court proceedings shall be conducted in English and Ebonics under the current law, if a request for services in the latter should be placed by the defendant. However, another probation officer, adds that such services, if any, would be provided to the parent, not defendants. Whether the interpretation service is needed is addressed at the beginning of the court proceeding, not as a request from the defendant but rather as a prompt to the parent from the officer. Another male officer at the court says there have been no cases in which such services are provided to Ebonics users.
17. See Section 5.2.1.
18. On 7 March 2016, I visited Pan-African Studies and the Human Resources Department, California State University, Los Angeles. I found no information on him. Even if they may have relevant information, they answered they cannot disclose his personal information without his consent.

19. Knorr-Cetina's constructivist argument seems to derive from her analysis of the knowledge production process in the "science laboratory," in which the term "science" is restricted to natural sciences. However, I quote her idea here because her analysis seems analogous to the knowledge production process in social sciences.
20. The dominant practice, for example, among those language scientists who deal with newer languages which historically and linguistically involve English, may be that they attempt to see the newer languages only through the knowledge of English, sometimes, making a certain interpretation that some features of indigenous African or Asian languages have been incorporated into English, or "describing" the newly born languages principally in the concepts, categories, and orthography of English (cf. Kachru 1992 & Mufwene, et al. 1998), I highly suspect, in their covert attempt to hide their lack of diligence to study other languages. This practice appears to be happening in applied linguistics too. For example, many language practitioners or theorist-practitioners who are "native" users of English may attempt to justify their elided indiligence in learning other languages through their "scientific" or "objective" argument that the direct method of teaching English in English to others whose primary languages are not English is more or most effective and their rampant practice of "ESL" mainly in English-as-a-first-language countries and former UK and US colonies. The literature proves that additive bilingual education is most effective in many ways (cf. Riley-Bernal 2004).
21. Errington (2008) notes that "[i]t is worth emphasizing . . . that a European science of language helped to legislate national difference in Europe as well as human inequality in an imperial world" (15).
22. Kuhn (1972) points out, "The paradigm he [= the scientist] has acquired through prior training provides him with the rules of the game, describes the pieces with which it must be played, and indicates the nature of the required outcome. His task is to manipulate those pieces within the rules in such a way that the required outcome is produced. If he fails, as most scientists do in at least their first attacks upon any given problem, that failure speaks only to his lack of skill. It cannot call into question the rules which his paradigm has supplied, for without those rules there would have been no puzzle with which to wrestle in the first place. No wonder, then, that the problems (or puzzles) which the practitioner of a mature science normally undertakes presuppose a deep commitment to a paradigm. And how fortunate it is that that commitment is not lightly given up. Experience shows that, in almost all cases, the reiterated efforts, either of the individual or of the professional group, do at last succeed in producing within the paradigm a solution to even the most stubborn problems. That is one of the ways in which science advances. Under those circumstances can we be surprised that scientists resist paradigm-change? What they are defending is, after all, neither more nor less than the basis of their professional way of life" (96).

3. LIFE STORY AND SOCIOLOGY OF KNOWLEDGE

1. Where language scientists and others locate the beginning of the paradigm may change depending on what discipline they base their argument on. For example, if they include

scholars from disciplines other than linguistics, they may argue the beginning may be the early 1930s, in which Carter G. Woodson expressed an idea that the language of descendants of enslaved African in the United States is an African language. But in this dissertation, because I concentrate my analysis on the area of linguistics, I posit that the birth of a comparative linguistic paradigm was in the 1970s.

4. POLITICS OF TRUTHS IN BLACK LINGUISTICS

1. “Linguicism can be defined as *ideologies, structures and practices which are used to legitimate, effectuate and reproduce an unequal division of power and (both material and non-material) resources between groups which are defined on the basis of language (on the basis of their mother tongues)*” (Skutnabb-Kangas 1988: 13). It should be noted that when Skutnabb-Kangas discusses linguicism, her discussions pay little or no attention to the linguistic rights of the groups or individuals whose linguistic codes are recognized as *dialects* by the state and the wider society; that her discussions include social and linguistic factors surrounding the success or failure of L1 or L2 learning, but are not so inclusive to the extent that they adequately address racial differentials and linguistic distances between the languages discussed. Nonetheless, much of her analytical framework may be applicable to protecting the rights of the “dialects,” and thus, I draw on part of her discussions, unless specified otherwise.
2. Nearly three decades ago, French linguist René de Poyen-Bellisle stated, “L’absence de toute action labiale pour les voyelles antérieures est le trait le plus frappant de la Phonologie Créole. . . . La cause de ce phénomène est purement physiologique; et, afin de le comprendre, il suffit de regarder les lèvres du nègre” (1894: 22, cited and concisely translated and paraphrased by Smith (2016: 19) as “In order to understand the absence in French creole dialects of the front rounded vowels of French, one merely had to look at the lips of the Negro”). There are two things to be pointed out: one is, there may have existed an intercontinental historical trend in which Africans were viewed by European and American intelligentsia, and the other is, creoles were viewed as part of the dialectal continuum, which points to my hypothetical argument that especially in the embryonic stage of the development of dialectology and creolistics, they might have conspired to politically and scientifically incorporate “sounds-or-looks-similar” linguistic codes within the scale of the language of the dominant group. In fact, the concepts “dialect” and “creole” are often conflated and confounded (cf. Stewart 1962).
3. When I talked with a special education teacher in a South Central Los Angeles school district in the summer of 2013, she mentioned that two of the reasons that African American students are placed in her special education class are “speech” and “academic attitudes.” She didn’t elaborate further on those reasons but it seems that the two problem categories that DeBose notes—speech pathologies and learning disorders—still seem to share something with the speech and academic attitudes as mentioned today.
4. Black psychologist Joseph L. White (1984) aptly summarizes the dominant scholarly trend back then: “Traditional scholars have been unwilling to recognize the presence of an African

influence in Black life styles. According to this view, whatever existed in the way of African culture was stamped out by the brutal effects of slavery and the subsequent economic, legal, and political oppression. Afro-Americans are solely the product of American society. . . . To the extent that differences between Euro-Americans and Afro-Americans exist, they represent inferior approximations on the part of Black Americans, attempts to imitate Euro-Americans rather than intrinsically different cultural and psychological styles. This type of thinking is at the core of the pathology, deficit, deprivation models of Black inferiority” (8).

5. An English sociologist Basil Bernstein (1960) exerted a decisive impact on most of the linguistic deficit theories cited in this article on culturally “deprived” black children from lower socioeconomic homes.
6. The following is a case outside of the United States, but still relevant because the argument is based on language differences. At the 21st Biennial Conference, *Caribbean Languages 2 di world: Caribbean Languages in a Globalizing world*, August 2-5, 2016, University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica, I personally saw a Caribbean speech therapist arguing that some creole language speakers should be treated by speech therapists due to their linguistic “deviations” from the standard. Soon a Jamaican linguist responded pointing out that her argument puts those creole speakers into the linguistic deficit frame. On the other hand, when I spoke with Linda Marie Redmond Taylor, M.A., a black speech pathologist from Tennessee, at the 7th National African/Black Psychology Conference 2016, *Honoring Dr. Robert Williams*, November 3-5, 2016, Florida A & M University, Tallahassee, Florida, she commented she sees no speech pathologist around her who diagnoses those black students who speak Ebonics as having a language deficit, and even her white colleagues recognize their speech patterns as “Black English.” (personal communication, November 5, 2016)
7. According to Smitherman (1977: 1), the year 1959 was the time the first study was done to change black language toward white language.
8. My argument here draws on an insight that “science develops successfully in the places where it is generously sponsored, either by the state or private monopolies, foundation, etc.” (Krajewski 1988: 173).
9. Alleyne (1971, 1980) states newly-born Afro-American languages in the African diaspora cannot be categorized as pidgins or creoles. In these works the author examines the languages outside of the pidgin-creole paradigm, and therefore, the works may not be taken for the substratist view in creole linguistics.
10. Hancock (1980: x) notes that the first scholar who suggested a connection of black language to Caribbean creoles was Clough (1876).
11. The following argument is not to be expanded in this dissertation, but for a future potential area of inquiry, I will make some suggestions on the historical development of sociolinguistics in the United States. The origins of dialectology and creole linguistics in Europe may have been closely but implicitly intertwined with the nationalist and

imperialistic interests of elite groups in each state-nation. The elites' linguistic codes were *described* and *prescribed* by part of the elite populations and then *imagined* by the elites and masses as their common language. This linguistic imagining process reinforced each other with the imagination of the elites and masses as nations, although other racial groups who spoke newly born languages more distant from the European language may have been kept out of the nations as, sort of, other nations without their own distinct languages. Then, the white elite group in the United States and their linguists (certainly, some black linguists were hegemonically absorbed into or had no choice but to conform to the white class) may have appropriated from their European precedents and adjusted to their ends the two scientific methods, i.e., creolistic and dialectological sets of criteria and interpretations to hegemonically lock other linguistic groups in the English-speaking state sovereignty.

12. Molefi Kete Asante later seemed to have changed his linguistic position on Ebonics arguing that it is a language other than English (cf. Asante 1997, 2016).
13. "Black Language is Euro-American speech with an Afro-American meaning, nuance, tone, and gesture. . . . Think of black speech as having two dimensions: language and style. Though we will separate the two for purposes of analysis, they are often overlapping. This is an important point, frequently overlooked in discussions of Black English. . . . Black English, then, is a language mixture, adapted to the conditions of slavery and discrimination, a combination of language and style interwoven with and inextricable from Afro-American culture" (Smitherman 1977: 2-3); "this sense of language in African Americans . . . is uniquely more African than European" (Asante 1990: 21-22).
14. According to the database "Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts (LLBA)," the term "African American Language" started to appear in 1991 and gather momentum in 1998 and thereafter.
15. My arguments on Eurocentric dualism so far largely draw on Joseph White (1984), who observes that: "[a]t the heart of the Euro-American world view is the problem of the mind-body dualism inherited from Descartes. This dualistic thinking has generated a number of dichotomies along the lines of rational-irrational, ego-id, good-bad, affective-cognitive, human-animal, primitive-civilized, and master-slave. These dichotomies in turn have led to questions of inferiority-superiority, better-worse, and debate as to which side of the dualism should control human behavior" (11).
16. No further detail on his background is available.

5. FORMATION OF THE COMPARATIVE LINGUISTIC PARADIGM

5.1. Ideological-Political Factor

1. Throughout this chapter, all life story data come from Smith 1974, 1975, 2002, and 2015, and my interviews with him since 2010, except for other sources which are given full citations. Only direct quotations from his works and the interviews with him are accompanied by

complete citations. For further information, consult the references.

2. “Classical black nationalism is defined . . . as an ideology whose goal was the creation of an autonomous black nation-state, with definite geographic boundaries—usually in Africa” (Moses 1996: 1).
3. Some would say Oklahoma was not in the South. Indeed, it was largely a white state. But others (e.g., Peery 1978; Sides 2003) include it in the South.
4. Joshua A. Fishman “analyzes nationalism as a response to both the problems and the opportunities created by social change—to the heightened need for reestablishing group identity in the face of rapid change and to the heightened awareness that group membership can serve as a basis for exclusion from or inclusion in the benefits accompanying such change” (Kelman 1972: viii).
5. As a similar case, Dr. Geneva Smitherman was born to sharecroppers in Tennessee and moved to metropolitan cities, Chicago and Detroit. She was a monolingual speaker of the Ebonics of her family, the black church, and her sharecropping community. Her only black teacher in all her years of schooling understood and sometimes even spoke her language (Smitherman 2000: 1).
6. As another telling case from Dr. Smitherman, once she moved to industrial metropolitan areas, she started to experience a similar line of linguistic discriminations in state institutions of power. She was ordered to repeat her grade in her elementary school because of her use of black language in the hearing distance of a white teacher (Smitherman 2000: 1; 2001: 214).
7. See Appendix D.
8. It is “a verbal trick and device; a cunning, manipulative ruse used by con-artists and swindlers to deceive a person for monetary gain. Stuff, i.e., worthless merchandise or nothing at all, is given in exchange for money” (Smith 1974: n. 8, p. 7).
9. To mack(in) is “(3) to talk well, particularly to a female with the intention of impressing her. (4) con-game, to swindle, after gaining one’s confidence” (Smith 1974: 172). Rappin is to “(1) Originally rhapsodize; to fascinate or dazzle someone with conversation. Hence to flatter and express deep, sincere devotion to a guy or girl. (2) To woo or flatter with praise, accolades, and amorous expressions of desire” (Ibid.: 174). Sweetmouthin is “an encomium, an enthusiastic sometimes high flown expression of praise. To flatter or express accolades, and adulation (usually behind the person’s back) as opposed to rappin which is flattery to someone in their presence” (Ibid.: 181).
10. Fishman (1972) stresses that “differences are not naturally ‘divisive’ (nor are similarities unifying) until highlighted as such. It is not the experience of difference that is divisive but the interpretation given to the experience. Thus, the ‘highly differentiated and clustered world of settlements, nodes of transport, centers of culture, areas and centers of language, divisions

of castes and class, barriers between markets, sharp regional differences in wealth and interdependence' (Deutsch 1953: 187) are only *potentially* divisive in the sense that they do not further integration. These must first interact with conflict or competition in order to be experienced as justifications for differentiation (Katz 1965: 566)" (n. 49, p. 104).

11. See Appendix E.
12. Dr. Smitherman was placed in a language remediation class in college too (Smitherman 2001: 215; Jackson, Williams, & Smitherman 2011: 102-103).
13. Dr. Ernie A. Smith does not accept the term "activist" or "activism" because according to him, it frames such actions within the perspective of Eurocentrism. He provides an alternative, "ombudsman," for example.
14. Another similar case is that Dr. Smitherman went through the Black Power Movement in graduate school, and that made her examine the functional and formal location of black language in American linguistic imperialism (Smitherman 1977: 242).
15. Dr. Smitherman sometimes refers to the black community as "Africans in America" (Smitherman 2000), but considering the fact that she refers to black language as "African *American* Language" on most occasions, she appears to accept that she is a citizen of the United States (Smitherman 2001: 230).
16. See Appendix F.
17. At that time he had no knowledge of phonetic and phonological description in linguistics.
18. The illiteracy rate for black males at 16 to 24 was 0.8% (1969), more than two and a half times higher than that for white males, 0.3% (1969) (US Department of Commerce 1971). Considering the methodological constraint that respondents replied concerning the literacy of each household member, the severity of the literacy problems facing the black community should have been much greater than the census data showed.
19. See Appendix G.
20. Nationalism in Europe stimulated the scientific reconstruction of a common ancestral language in the Indo-European language family through comparative philology or grammar, later called comparative linguistics (A. D. Smith 2010: 11); "comparative philologists spoke as public intellectuals about questions of national culture, politics, and history, and . . . they created the first academic discipline which had 'evolution as its very core'" (Hobsbawm 1964: 337, cited in Errington 2008: 71).
21. Albeit a case of being somewhere between the Creolist Paradigm and the comparative linguistic paradigm, Dr. Smitherman makes an interestingly similar remark: "I say it was being in the Freedom Struggle, in the Black Movement that provided the foundation of my

work” (Jackson, Williams, & Smitherman 2011: 96).

5.2. Experiential-Practical Factor

1. For example, Dr. Geneva Smitherman, who adopts the term “African American Language” to refer to black language, once felt that black and white language is quite different (Smitherman 1977: 242). Another testimony to the felt difference between black and white speech was one comment made by some white scholars that “the language used in some black communities is significantly different from any other American English dialect” (Wolfram & Clarke 1971: x).
2. On the contrary, Van Keulen, Weddington, and DeBose (1998) observes black language has a high similarity with white language.
3. I have recently obtained important experiential information on the intelligibility and understandability of black language for whites. A white physicist, in his early 50s, recollects his youth experience in the South. He confessed he understood nothing of the language his black cohorts at the public school spoke. Inferring from his age today, it might have been in the late 1970s.
4. Dr. Ernie A. Smith (personal communication, December 8 & 9, 2014) mentions that *The Dove Counterbalance Intelligence Test* (Dove 1967) was the model for the BITCH test.
5. Dr. Smitherman saw a black lawyer put in a court trial because of his use of African American Language and did an expert witness for him (Jackson, Williams, & Smitherman 2011: 97-98).
6. See “On Criminalization of Blacks and Why Ebonics Should Be Recognized as a Language” Accessed 10/30/2016 at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FCuPsiKF8sE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FCuPsiKF8sE;).; In a recent move for a “heavy dialect” or a “creole” of English in Canada, Jamaican speakers are officially provided with court interpretative services in Peel, Ontario. There was also a language movement for the implementation of an English creole heritage language program when the fervor for human rights or language rights was raging in Canada. On the other hand, in the Caribbean region, there is little discussion about the language rights for “creole” speakers like in court. All police officers are bilingual in English and a creole but have considerable control and power over the linguistic evidence they present to the court and their evidence is highly variable.

5.3. Theoretical-Scientific Factor

1. In the black-white relating session, Smith said in front of the white participants, “You're all a bunch of motherfucking hunky liberals. Any questions?” (Ellis 1987: 97).
2. “This course will deal with problems related to race and poverty and will involve field work and participant observation in programs like Operation Bootstrap and CORE in Los Angeles

and Orange Counties” (UCI PCC F 1973).

3. In UCI, the Program in African American Studies was founded in 1993 and became the Department of African American Studies in 2016.
4. “Irvine Black Studies.” *the new university*, Vol. 1, No. 35, Tuesday, March 4, 1969.
5. “learning beyond the classroom—an interview with joe white.” *the new university*, Vol. 3, No. 2, Tuesday, October 7, 1970. Dr. White added, “[P]rior to 1968, there were only two blacks in attendance at UCI.”
6. White still viewed black language as a dialect of English in 1984 (cf. White 1984: 126).
7. Herskovits and Herskovits (1936) reached from a linguistic viewpoint a conclusion on the languages spoken from the Sea Islands of South Carolina to Suriname in South America to West Africa that:

the peculiarities of Negro speech are primarily due to the fact that the Negroes have been using words from European languages to render literally the underlying morphological patterns of West African tongues. . . . not only *taki-taki*, but the speech of the other regions of the New World . . . and the West African pidgin dialects, are all languages exhibiting, in varying degrees of intensity, similar African constructions and idioms, though employing vocabulary that is predominantly European. (131, 134, italics in original)

It should be noted, however, that the Herskovitses’ discourse on the varieties of Ebonics was tainted with Eurocentric conceptualization: they described the languages as “deviations” of European languages. Their argument sounds similar to the substratist argument in creole linguistics (See Section 5.3.7.2 for further information on the argument).

8. Creole linguist Lorenzo Dow Turner (1890-1972) is frequently quoted as a starter of black linguistics. Inspired by Melville J. Herskovits, who also adopted a creole linguistic approach, Turner conducted a longitudinal research on the structure of Gullah “dialect” and found continuity of Ebonics to West African languages on grammatical (phonological, semantic, and morphosyntactical) and lexical levels. Though he discovered West African continuity at the grammatical level, he referred to it as “a creolized variety of English” and “Gullah dialect.” It is clear that he accepted the creole linguistic paradigm and he interpreted Gullah as an African kind of English. This was and is a typical way of interpreting newly born languages in the African diaspora in the literature. If Turner’s findings were to be interpreted comparative linguistically, Gullah is an African or, in Jahn’s terms, a neo-African language, which can be traced back to West African languages. In fact, despite the fact that he adopted the creole linguistic paradigm, his findings paved a way for comparative linguistically interpreting Ebonics as genetically or genealogically continuous to West African languages.

9. See details in the Department of English, University of Florida, Gainesville and *The New York Times*, July 11, 2005.
10. “[Cayenne Creole] grammar [. . .] is nothing but the grammar that is common to the languages of Guinée. The latter we can call *langues naturelles* as opposed to *langues cultivées*. For the botanist, plants that are *naturelles* are superior to plants that are *cultivées* to the extent that the former are pristine products that are free of intentional adulteration. Likewise, for the linguist, the speech of peoples considered primitive has primacy over the speech of civilized peoples: the former is closer to the sort of grammatical instincts of which children’s utterances reveal processes that are simple, logical and fast. [. . .] [Cayenne Creole] grammar is more *naturelle* than that of Sanskrit, Latin, and French. But this grammar did not spontaneously emerge in Guyana; it was imported from Africa” (Adam 1883: 4–5, translated by DeGraff 2001: 215-216).
11. The BITCH test drew on a test called the “Chitling Test of Intelligence,” developed in 1968 as the short form of a test known as “The Dove Counterbalance Intelligence Test.” The latter was developed in 1967 by black sociologist Dr. Adrian Dove, former Chairman of the Congress of Racial Equality of California (CORE-CA). See for further information on Dove (1967) <http://news.schoolsdo.org/2013/11/chitling-test-misused-badly-in-maryland-schools/> (accessed 09052016).
12. See the details at <http://afas.wustl.edu/about> (accessed 09042016).
13. Williams (ed.) (1975: 144).
14. See the details at <https://aast.uic.edu/aast/graceholt> (accessed 09042016).
15. Williams (ed.) (1975: 142).
16. Ibid.
17. Fasold (1999) critiques the ambiguity of the definition of Ebonics presented at the meeting in St. Louis. However, it is clear from the verbatim record that the intention of the caucus was to dually define the term, that is, as a language (black language) and a science (black linguistics).
18. The course description was: “The purpose of this course is to explain the parlance, jargon, and mannerisms of contemporary Black America within the scope of the most recent language and communication theory, thereby increasing effective communication between different racial and ethnic groups. Field trips and research paper.” (UCI PCC S 1973) The more specific linguistic labeling “Black English” disappeared in this semester.
19. The course description was: “The philosophy of Black Radical Thought as it emerged from the Black experience in America through slavery, Reconstruction, post-Reconstruction, pre-World War II and contemporary times; as it is expressed through music, sermons, literature,

social movements, drama, and political action. Consideration will be given to geographical time frames such as Northern urban, Southern rural differences and the like” (UCI PCC F 1973).

20. John Baugh (2000: 85) criticizes that it is problematic that the definition of Ebonics is *solely* based on race. Linguists should notice that any collective category such as race, ethnicity, nationality, and nation has an inherent inconsistency and arbitrariness. The science has “described” a linguistic code with which the larger society has forcefully matched one of the categories. Therefore, the concept “speech community,” which Baugh regards as a valid “scientific” category, also has the same internal inconsistency and arbitrariness. Nonetheless, the factor of race has become a fundamental collective factor to analysis of things African due to the historical collective oppressions of Africans as a race throughout the world. Bonilla-Silva and Zuberi (2008) develops a counter-argument in this regard: “The methodologically inclined will say, ‘Methods are objective research tools beyond race, gender, and class.’ They will argue that ‘social science methodology, like genetics, can be applied impartially regardless of the racial background of the individual conducting the investigation.’ . . . [White logic and White methods] blind (or severely limit) many social scientists from truly appreciating the significance of ‘race’ (or, properly speaking, racial stratification)” (4). It is important to understand the comparative linguistic paradigm was born to rectify the Eurocentric subjectivity and racialization/colorization of the methods in black linguistics, and thus, inevitably became pan-Africanist *partly* based on a racial element of blackness.
21. Dr. Smith does not accept the use of the term “vernacular” because it has a Latin etymology which is “a slave who was born in the master’s house.”

6. IDEOLOGY-POLITICS, EXPERIENCE-PRACTICE, AND THEORY-SCIENCE IN INTERACTION

1. As indicated earlier in Chapter 3, I attempted to reconstruct Dr. Smith’s life story from his perspective by employing the categories or concepts which he employed in the interviews with me.

7. CONCLUDING SUGGESTIONS

1. As a relevant case, I will briefly talk about a case for Caribbean immigrant students in New York. When the home language survey was administered to parents, some parents wrote their home language as Jamaican Creole or a language other than English. During the course of counselling, some linguistically informed counsellors may have advised parents to write Jamaican Creole or a language other than English as the home language. According to the law, the school district must address the issue, but no action has been taken so far. (Darvin & Grant 2016)
2. Asante (1980) emphasizes the importance of integrating culture, economics, and politics for liberation. Sciences like linguistics would be under the category of culture. Of course, his

categories “economics” and “politics” may not be congruent with my own categorical division of “ideological-political” and “experiential-practical,” but my own put together, they may be able to cover Asante’s in entirety.

3. The anteriority of one communicative mode over another does not legitimate the superiority, more authenticity, or more naturalness of the former over the latter. The ideological emphasis on speech may have obviously contributed to discrimination against other modes of communication such as sign language and the underestimation of the oppressive power of writing systems, especially Roman alphabets which have been dominantly used for writing or documenting so-called pidgins, creoles, or dialects, and other languages in post-colonial regions. Additionally I suggest that the speech supremacy may have contributed to the fact that even those who are as or far more proficient as or than “native speakers” who are white, male, middleclass have been judged to have a linguistic or communicative problem based on the phonetic and phonological differences that exist between the former and the latter (e.g., Smitherman 2001: 215). I witness this last phenomenon widely in Nipponese society.
4. In Western literature, this notion of the superiority of alphabetic orthographies may date back to Herder (1966 [1787]), which largely influenced the embryonic stage of European linguistics (Errington 2008).
5. I encountered this European or white linguist at the “Official Opening Public Lecture by Hubert Devonish and Cocktails” at the Society for Caribbean Linguistics 21st Biennial Conference, *Caribbean Languages 2 di world: Caribbean Languages in a Globalizing world*, August 2-5, 2016, University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica. Devonish only returned “a smile” with no worded reply in response to the advice or comment from the European participant.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A. Research Participant Information and Consent Form.

1. EXPLANATION OF THE RESEARCH and WHAT YOU WILL DO:

So far, a huge amount of research has been done on the language of descendants of enslaved Africans in the United States or African Americans. However, little research discusses an Afrocentric linguistic theory which argues that the language of descendants of enslaved Africans in the US or African Americans is a language other than English or an African language, except in a few years after the passing of the Ebonics Resolution by the Oakland Unified School District in 1996. Actually there still survive some voices in support of the theory in the academy and beyond. I believe that the advocates of the theory have a basic human or collective right to such a claim in public places without any discrimination or denigration from others in a true democratic society. As a researcher and an activist I hope to contribute to normalization of this undemocratic situation.

You are being asked to participate in a research study of the process by which the Afrocentric linguistic theory, which describes the primary language of Blacks in the United States as a language other than English or an African language has developed in response to the racist social structure. If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked a series of questions on your life history concerning why and how you came up with or encountered with the Afrocentric linguistic thought and, if applicable, how you have attempted to scientifically justify your position on Ebonics as a language other than English or an African language. The questions are centered around the following themes:

- (1) what your ancestry is;
- (2) where and how you grew up until adulthood in your neighborhood and school;
- (3) what linguistic codes you used in particular settings in your childhood, adolescence, and early adulthood;
- (4) what racial discrimination you have experienced so far;
- (5) what linguistic discrimination you have experienced in school and elsewhere;
- (6) what community activities to address social problems you've been engaged in;
- (7) what religious activities you've been engaged in;
- (8) how you politically and linguistically view Ebonics;
- (9) how you have come to realize that Ebonics is a language other than English or an African language;
- (10) how you attempt to scientifically justify your position on Ebonics; and
- (11) how you attempt or hope to apply your Afrocentric linguistic theory to education and other domains.

2. YOUR RIGHTS TO PARTICIPATE, SAY NO, OR WITHDRAW:

Participation in this research project is completely voluntary. You have the right to say no. You may change your mind at any time and withdraw. You may choose not to answer specific questions or to stop participating at any time.

3. CONFIDENTIALITY OF YOUR ANSWERS:

This research is close to a semi-autobiographical sketch of persons. Contents may be described

in a way that discloses your identity. If you agree to this condition, please sign your name below. Otherwise, all of the information that you provide will be kept strictly confidential, so no one except me will be able to identify your individual responses and connect them to you, except in cases you permit me to let others identify you. Whenever I want to disclose your identity linked to some of the data, I will consult you beforehand.

Consent to Disclosure of Identity

Participant's Name (Printed)

Participant's Signature

Date

4. COSTS AND COMPENSATION FOR BEING IN THE STUDY:

Participation in the study will not cost you anything, but may require a series of 2- to 3 hour interviews dispersed over a certain period of time. At the end of the study, as a thank you, I will be making a \$50 to \$200 donation to the community organization you are in or a gift card of that amount to you.

5. CONTACT INFORMATION FOR QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS:

If you have concerns or questions about this study, such as scientific issues, or how to do any part of it, please contact the researcher:

Kunihiko Minamoto

African American & African Studies

Michigan State University

A-631 Wells Hall

East Lansing, MI 48824

minamoto@msu.edu

If you have questions or concerns about your role and rights as a research participant, would like to obtain information or offer input, or would like to register a complaint about this study, you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the Michigan State University's Human Research Protection Program at 5173552180, Fax 5174324503, or email irb@msu.edu or regular mail at 408 W. Circle Drive, 207 Olds Hall, MSU, East Lansing, MI 48824.

6. DOCUMENTATION OF INFORMED CONSENT:

Please indicate your willingness to participate in this study by writing and signing your name below:

_____	_____	_____
Participant's Name (Printed)	Participant's Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Interviewer's Name (Printed)	Interviewer's Signature	Date

B. INSTRUMENT

Biographic/Demographic Profile

- 1) When were you born?
- 2) Where were you born?
- 3) Where did you live in your childhood and adolescence?
- 4) What did racial or ethnic groups live in those communities where you have lived so far?
- 5) What did your parents or grandparents do for living?
- 6) What elementary, secondary, and tertiary schools did you attend?
- 7) What were the racial or ethnic makeups of the students and teachers at the schools?
- 8) What is your occupational history?
- 9) What religion did or do belong or adhere to?

Linguistic Behavior and Attitudes

- 1) What language, e.g., Ebonics or English, did you use to whom in what settings in early childhood and adolescence? (e.g., birthplace, inner-city neighborhood, school)
- 2) What feelings did you have toward Ebonics in your childhood and adolescence?
- 3) What feelings did you have toward English in your childhood and adolescence?
- 4) When and where did you become aware of the difference between the language of Blacks and the language of whites?
- 5) When and where did you become aware that Black language is a language other than English, not a dialect of English?

Linguistic Discrimination (If yes, I will say "Could you tell me more about the incident?")

- 1) Did you have any experience that a teacher or an instructor admonished or corrected you for

the use of Ebonics in elementary school, secondary school, or college?

- 2) Did your schoolmates tease you for the use of Ebonics in elementary school, secondary school, or college?
- 3) Did your school (elementary, secondary, or tertiary) place you in a special education class or some language correction class because of the use of Ebonics?
- 4) Did you have any other discriminatory experiences in elementary school, secondary school, or college?

Racial Discrimination (If yes, I will say “Could you tell me more about the incident?)

- 1) Did you experience any race-based discrimination or attack against you? (e.g., by law enforcement or hate groups)
- 2) Did your family or your relative(s) experience any race-based discrimination or attack? (e.g., by law enforcement or hate groups)

Black Nationalism

- 1) What community activities did or do you engage in?
- 2) What needs or problems in the Black community do you think you should address?
- 3) How do you call yourself and your own people, for example, African Americans, Blacks, or just Africans?
- 4) Do you think that Black people in the United States is a nation?
- 5) Do you think that Black people in the United States should have their own institutions in the areas of economy, education, and/or politics?

- 6) Do you think that Black people in the United States should have their own state in the United States or outside of it?
- 7) Do you think that Black people should have a language of their own?

Encounter with a Particular Scientific Idea on Black Language

- 1) Where and when did you start your scholarly activities on Ebonics?
- 2) In what discipline did you start your scholarly activities on Ebonics?
- 3) How did your discipline impact your perspective on Ebonics?
- 4) Who or whose ideas most impacted your perspective on Ebonics?
- 5) Could you tell me some academic profiles on your dissertation/thesis committee members?
- 6) Could you define Ebonics?
- 7) How do you attempt to scientifically legitimize your argument that Ebonics is a language other than English?
- 8) In what ways is your argument beneficial for the Black community?
- 9) How is the dominant paradigm that views the language of Blacks as a dialect of English unacceptable?

APPENDIX B. Report of Domestic Internship (Summer 2013).

Instructor: Dr. Rita Kiki Edozie, Director, African American & African Studies

Supervisor: Dr. Ernie A. Smith, Professor, Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science

Organizations: Black¹ Community Children's Task Force, Black Community Education Task Force, Black Community Health Task Force, Black Community Mental Health Task Force

Location: 7813 South Central Avenue Los Angeles CA 90001

Period: May 13, 2013 – August 15, 2013 (meetings and interviews in May and mentoring in June through August)

Activity: To conduct 118 hours of preparations for Task Force meetings, participatory observation, and interviews, and receive Dr. Smith's mentoring

PURPOSE

Dr. Ernie A. Smith has tackled linguistic white supremacy as part of a wider array of white supremacy against U.S. descendants of enslaved Africans. This domestic internship gains an understanding of his entire human rights struggles—language issues are just among the many but permeate them all—against the racist social arrangements of the US. He is an ombudsman in various community and NGO efforts to abate ethnic discrimination and social injustice in education, mental health, children's welfare, and juvenile system. The human rights group he participates in is, as it were, a think tank, consisting of the Black Community Children's Task Force (BCCTF), the Black Community Education Task Force (BCETF), the Black Community

¹ In this report the category "Black" refers to US descendants of enslaved Africans.

Health Task Force (BCHTF), and the Black Community Mental Health Task Force (BCMHTF).

Below are brief accounts of each task force meeting and personal interview with presenters and a concluding essay on Dr. Smith's academy to community connection and NGO contributions.

TASK FORCE MEETINGS AND INTERVIEWS

05/13/2013

Presenter 1: Dr. Nicoline Ambe, Special Education Teacher, Compton Unified School District (CUSD), CA

Topic: Black Students in Special Education in the CUSD

Summary: Most speech therapists and psychologists are not from Black communities. A disproportionate number of Black students are in special education in her Compton school, considering the fact that the Black community constitutes merely 6% of the LA population and 9% of the state population: four in nine students are Black in her class.

Presenter 2 & 3: Dr. Bitu Amani, Assistant Professor, Urban Public Health, College of Science & Health, Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science & A Female Student (Gullah Speaker)

Topic: The South LA Juvenile Court System in Jeopardy

Summary: State government budget cuts are encroaching upon the LA juvenile justice system, e.g., David V. Kenyon Juvenile Justice Center. If the center is closed, there might be some repercussions to the south LA community: 1) young people will miss their court dates and run

from authorities and 2) pushing court proceedings out of the area forces them to visit other areas where other gang members reside.

Presenter 4: Ama Amofo-Yeboah, Executive Director, University of Southern California (USC) Black Student Assembly, and Riliesha Pierce, USChange Movement

Topic: Racial Profiling of USC Students: LAPD and Black Students

Summary: A graduation party by Black USC students was raided by LAPD. There was another going on across the street, which consists of White students. No action for the White was taken but for the Black. Some Black students were behind bars due to “misdemeanors,” “didn’t disperse as requested,” or “videotaped the police conducts.”

05/20/2013

Presenter: Dr. Ron Beavers, President, Greater Los Angeles Chapter, National African American Drug Policy Coalition

Topic: The Foster Care Industry Complex

Summary: The social worker and the supervisor decide to put the child for adoption without going through a required procedure from the outset. The industries and individuals that benefit from the foster care system (e.g., a foster parent earns \$5,000 per child) have produced an exploitative structure of “children for cash.” What the system is doing is to encourage foster children to jails or other institutions. The penal system and the adoption system tie their hands.

05/21/2013

Interviewee: Dr. Nicoline Ambe, Special Education Teacher, Compton Unified School District (CUSD), CA

Topic: Linguistic Issues in Special Education

Summary: There are no Black students who are placed in special education due to “linguistic” reasons in her school. Instead Latino students are placed in that manner. But there are some Black students in special education who have “communication” problems. Among them is a lack of academic expressions in their language repertoire.

05/28/2013

A visit to Central Juvenile District, Edmund D. Edelman Children's Court

Topic: Linguistic Issues in the Children's Court System

Summary: Most interpretation services are provided to Spanish-using clients (parents). No service has been provided to US descendants of enslaved Africans.

05/28/2013

A visit to the David V. Kenyon Juvenile Justice Center, interviews with: Mr. Kent Swift, Deputy Probation Officer II, Probation Department; Mr. Robin Gregory, Supervising Deputy Probation Officer, JJCPA School Based Supervision Program – Cluster 2; and an unknown male officer

Topic: Linguistic Issues in the Juvenile Court System

Summary: According to Mr. Swift court proceedings shall be conducted in English and Ebonics under the current law, if a request for services in the latter should be placed by the defendant. However Mr. Gregory adds that such services, if any, would be provided to the parent, not

defendants. Whether the interpretation service is needed is addressed at the beginning of the court proceeding, not as a request from the defendant but rather as a prompt to the parent from the officer. A third unknown male officer at the court says there have been no cases in which such services are provided to Ebonics users.

05/28/2013

Presenter 1 & 2: Mr. John Thomas, Chief, University of Southern California (USC) Department of Public Safety and Mr. Paul A. Snell, Captain, Commanding Officer, Los Angeles Police Department

Topic: Arrest of USC Black Students in a Black Graduation Party

Summary: Two graduation parties were going on across the street: one for Black students and the other for White students. According to the police the White party was dispersed soon after the police cautioned them while the Black party continued after being cautioned. Six Black students were arrested: one for felony and five for misdemeanors. Black students are constantly under the threat of racial profiling by the police.

Presenter 3: President Rosalind Scarbrough, San Fernando Valley (Branch 1064), NAACP

Topic: Recent and Rampant Killings of Black Men by LAPD, Especially the Mentally Disabled

Summary: A mentally disabled Black male was killed in an encounter with the LAPD. He hadn't taken his medication, exhibited some aggressive behavior, and acted out in order to attract attention with two kitchen knives. LAPD tasered and shot him simultaneously, causing his death, according to his relatives.

A CONCLUDING ESSAY

The report will be concluded with a summary of Dr. Smith's whole community and NGO efforts in relation to an underlying theme cutting through all his efforts. Particularly his linguistic contributions to US descendants of enslaved Africans shall be discussed vis-à-vis that underlying theme.

COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTIONS—EBONICS

Dr. Smith is a researcher on Ebonics or Nigritian languages as a mother tongue for Africans in the United States. Anyone familiar with his linguistic works would naturally suppose that he would be mainly engaged in uplifting the status of Black Language. What I've found in the internship, though, is that while his main academic concern is with the provision to US descendants of enslaved Africans of an ESL program grounded on a comparative linguistic understanding of Ebonics, his interests encompass a whole gamut of human rights.

The Task Forces he devotes himself to focus on one common thread in Black people's lives: a life course susceptible to corporate and other forms of systemic exploitation (education/foster care/incarceration). The four task forces (BCCTF, BCETF, BCHTF, and BCMHTF) mobilize academic, legal, and pragmatic knowledge and insights to break the life chain. The think tank shares a role with many organizations (incl., Black Studies programs) in enlightening Black people but it is rather oriented toward problem-solving.

One exemplary attainment of their efforts, where one parent in the Task Forces has been

fighting for his child, is that: currently an LA public school provides an ESL—not a hegemonic bidialectal—service to a Black student. It has not yet been in organized form but it is the greatest step forward that has ever been achieved. As this application of the 1968 Bilingual Education Act exemplifies, education is very often tied to linguistics and communication. Indeed most Black Language studies are concerned with language or language planning “in education,” but Dr. Smith’s linguistic concerns have a wider reach: foster care, incarceration, law enforcement, etc.

In each of these we find systemic linguistic barriers in their procedures. There are two legal dimensions here. One is legalese. Many clients would find themselves expressing their responses without understanding what has been said in the court. This is an issue everyone, be they Black or White, faces in the legal system. However, the Black language would far more complicate the issue than the White language because the former is far more critically different in syntactical, phonological, morphological, and rhetorical aspects from the legal language than the latter. In court every intricacy in language expressions would lead to grave consequences on the fate of the defendant. It would be too unprofessional and devastating if the court system simplistically identifies every Black defendant or witness in the US as a person who is fully proficient in English. On many occasions their first languages might belong not to English but the Ebonics family with varying degree of proficiencies in English. As the judiciary law stipulates, the judiciary shall 1) conduct a language survey in the community, 2) conduct a needs analysis in the court, and 3) provide services even in a language not designated. Therefore, those US Africans or Blacks who need such help need to have an interpreter who is capable of appropriately and maximally bridging the linguistic differences, i.e., who is bilingual in a variety of Ebonics and English.

LANGUAGE RIGHTS—CIVIL RIGHTS OR HUMAN RIGHTS?

One caveat is that because as an ombudsman of the Task Forces Dr. Smith attempts to achieve a fuller potential within the current institutional framework never suggests his will to participate in US citizenship. It must not be forgotten that “civil rights” are forced upon the descendants of enslaved Africans in the United (White) States of America and have never been agreed upon by them. Those rights have always been subject to white supremacist opportunism and capricious interpretations. It seems that the ultimate aim of his grass-roots efforts is never to adjust truths to white supremacist interpretations but to self-determine truths and realize full “human rights” in the Black life course, even within the confines of white supremacist state sovereignty.

Dr. Smith says:

since in the USA, whether local, state or federal, all public law is supposedly rooted in the ‘social contract’ principle of government, i.e., the principle that governments derive their just powers from the ‘consent’ of the governed, the 14th Amendment unilaterally, by force and violence without free will choice, voluntary consent, or the benefit of any plebiscite or democratic process, transferred the descendants of enslaved Africans into the political community of the *Euro-American English speaking* people as “citizens.” (Smith 2011, emphasis added)

US descendants of enslaved Africans have been forced into the Euro-American English-using citizenship. Although the Euro-American English settler has imposed their language on Africans in their dominion, they have been geographically, economically, and socially segregated to the extent that they retain their African linguistic heritages in varying degrees. Furthermore, they have been stripped of the right to claim, examine, and determine what they use as a verbal

means.

What Black Nationalist Ernie A. Smith has attempted in his “human rights” struggle is to help the Black community “fully” realize themselves in the forced-upon “civil rights” struggle. As part of that struggle he has devoted himself to self-determining Ebonics and relevant issues independently of a language of white citizenship, English.

REFERENCES

Smith, Ernie 2010. A. “Ebonics and Black Nationalism: An Essay in Response to America’s Foster Care to Prison Pipeline, The Prison Industrial Complex and The New Jim Crow.” 04/05/2010. Unpublished.

———. 2011. “Why I Do Not Vote.” 08/08/2011. Unpublished.

APPENDIX C. List of Categories Produced Based on E-mail Correspondences.

OPEN CODING

1. Black Nationalist
2. Malcolm X
3. Descendants of Enslaved Africans
4. Pathologization of Black Culture
5. Muslim
6. Whiteness
7. Racial Bias
8. Global White Supremacy
9. Eurocentric to Afrocentric History
10. Black vs. African American
11. Oriental Judicial Culture
12. Black Mental Health
13. Pseudo-Black Middle Class
14. White Media Agitation
15. Police Brutality
16. Self-Negation
17. White Idolization
18. Whitewashing
19. Muslim vs. Christianity
20. Anti-Global White Supremacy – Black Muslim – Black Nationalism – Law Enforcement

21. Possession of Black Institutions (Black Nationalism)
22. White Plagiarism of Black Culture
23. Educational Tracking (Standardized Tests)
24. White Exploitation of Black Resources
25. Mass Incarceration
26. White Supremacist Universalism
27. KKK
28. Judiciary
29. Black Genocide
30. Global White Supremacy
31. White Law
32. Black Nationalism

FOCUSED CODING

1. Black Nationalism
2. White Supremacy
3. Legal Discrimination
4. Cultural Discrimination
5. Educational Discrimination
6. Biomedical Discrimination
7. Economic Discrimination

8. Psychiatry
9. Foster Care

APPENDIX D. Certificate of Graduation for John C. Fremont High School.

John C. Fremont High School

Los Angeles City High School District



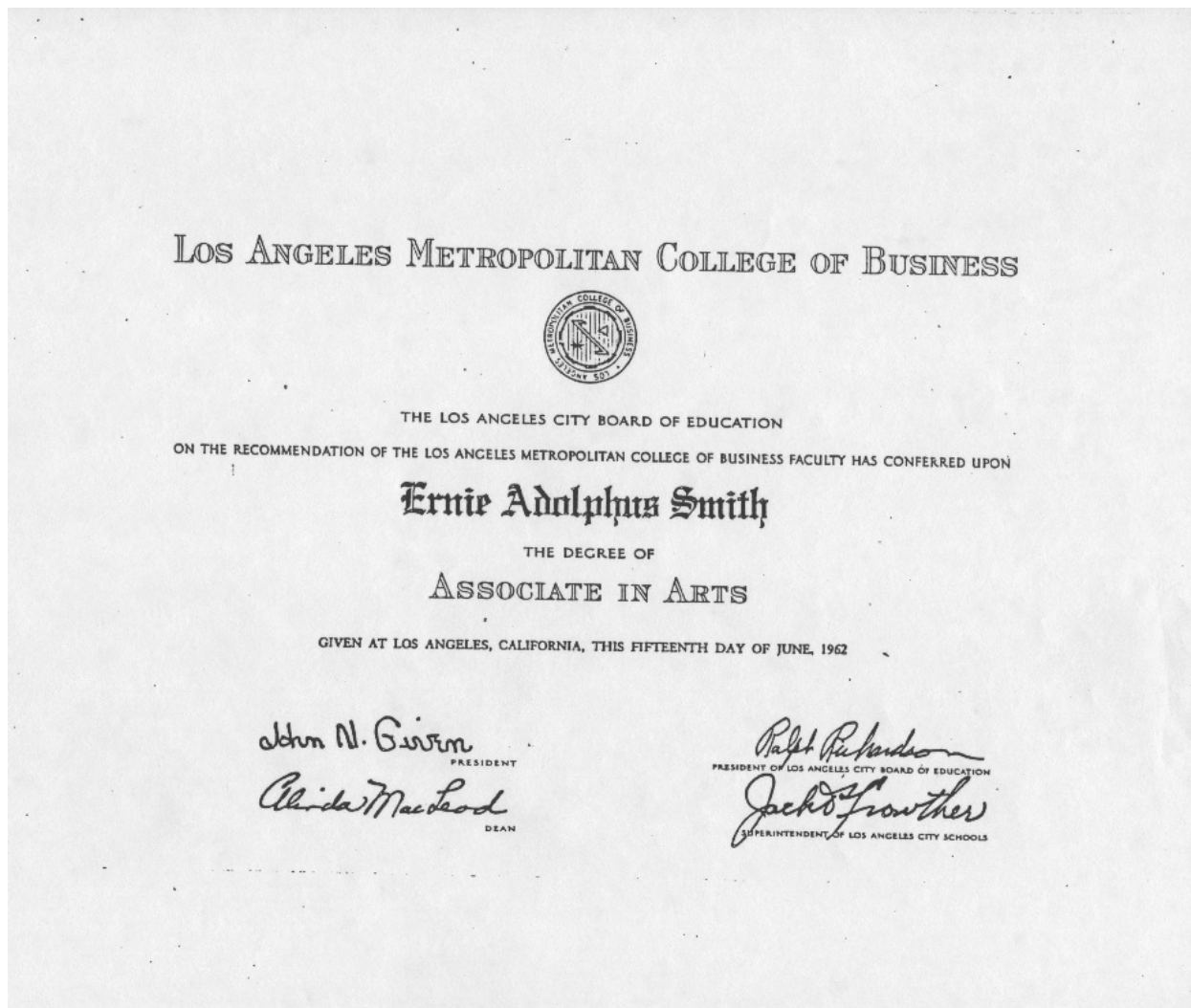
his Diploma is awarded to **Ernie Adolphus Smith**
who has been found worthy in Character and Citizenship and
has satisfactorily completed a Course of Study as prescribed
by the Board of Education

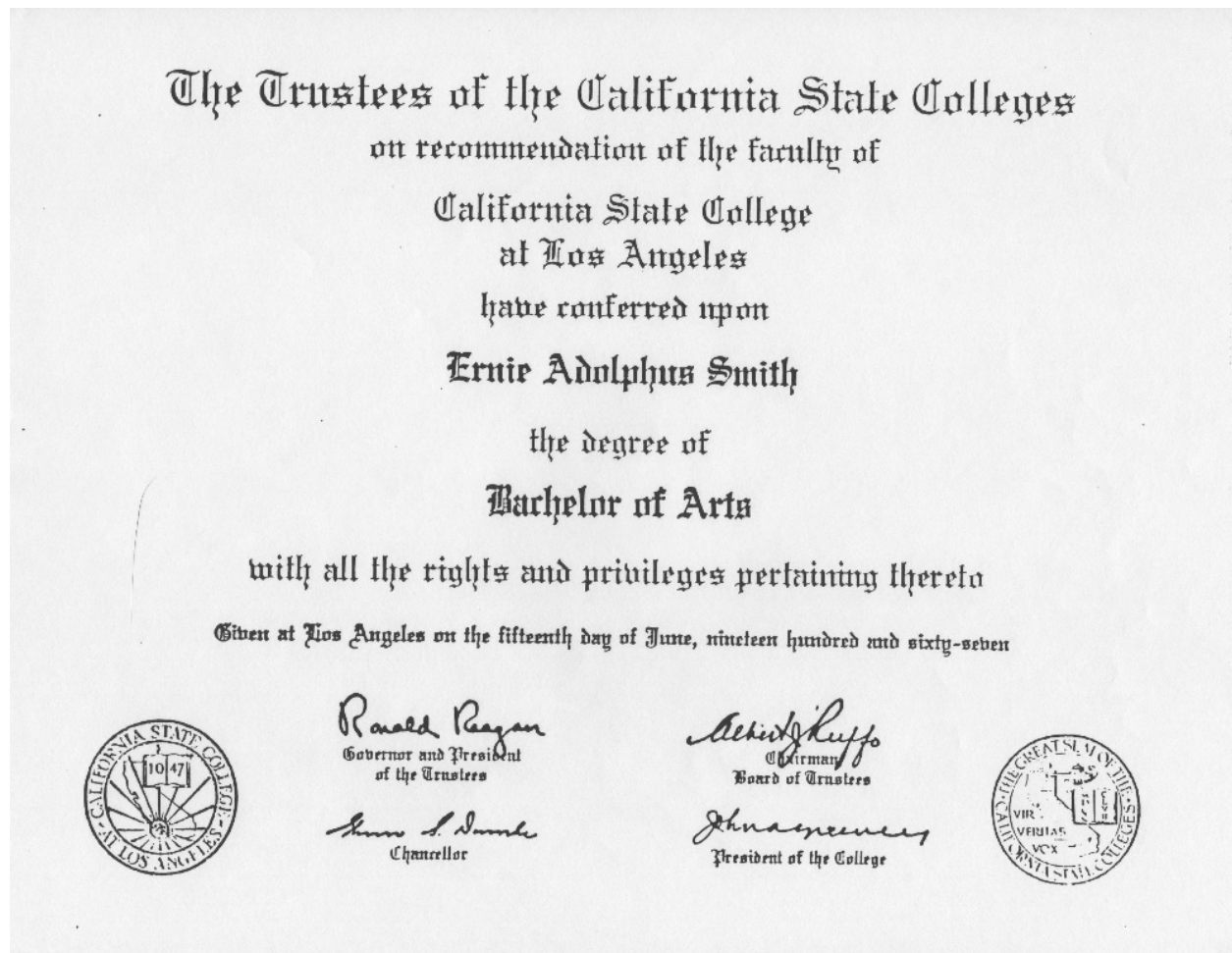
Given at Los Angeles, California, this first day
of February, nineteen hundred and fifty-seven

George C. Dircks
Principal

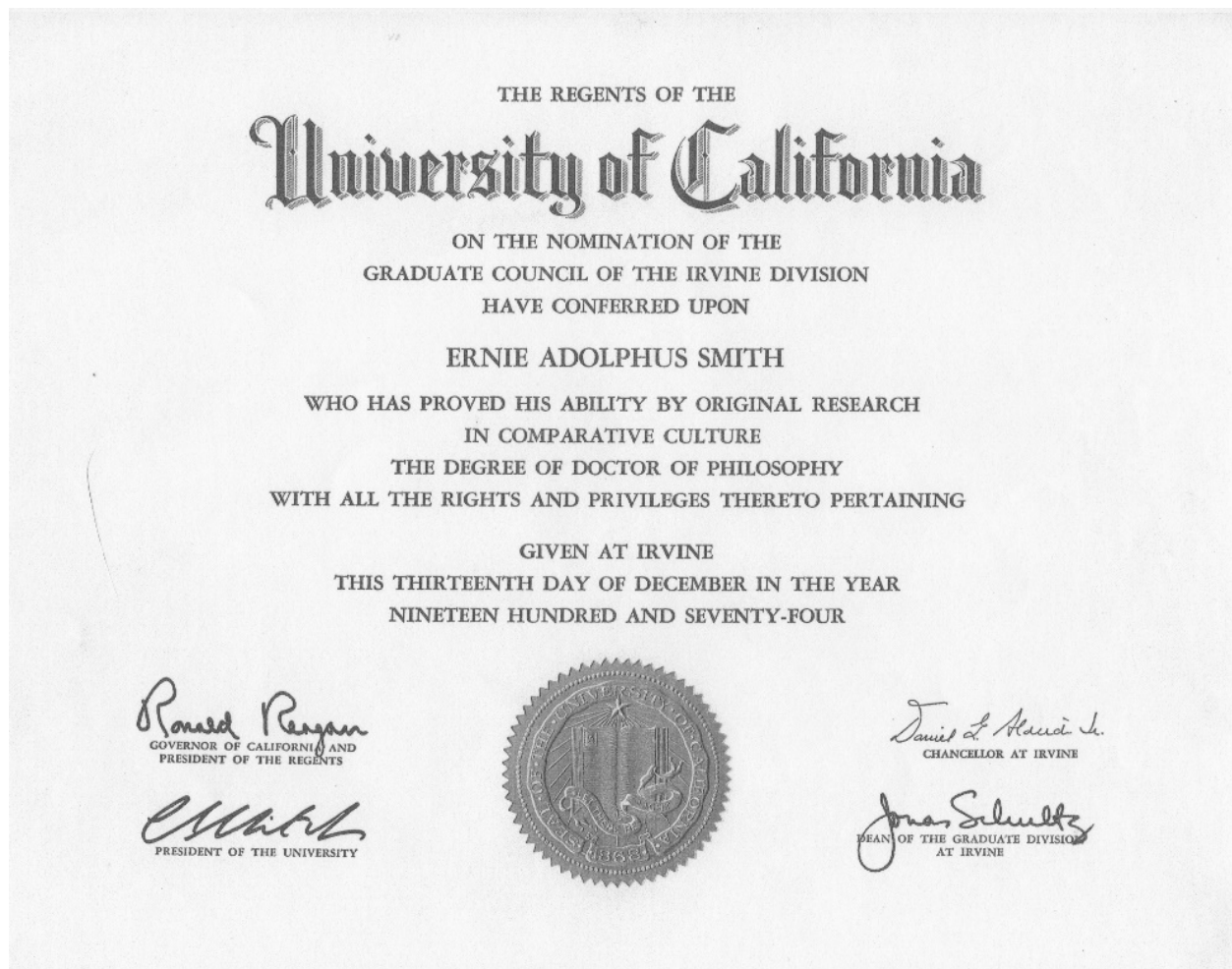
Edith K. Stafford
President Board of Education
Ellis G. Jarvis
Superintendent of Schools

APPENDIX E. Certificate of Graduation for Los Angeles Metropolitan College of Business.





APPENDIX G. Certificate of Graduation for the University of California, Irvine.



APPENDIX H. Boyer, Ernest L. US Commissioner of Education. May 13, 1977. A Letter to Ernie A. Smith in Response to his Paper *A Case for Bilingual and Bicultural Education for United States Slave Descendants of African Origin*.



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20202-

MAY 13 1977

Dr. Ernie A. Smith
Associate Professor
Department of Linguistics
California State University
Fullerton, California 92634

Dear Dr. Smith:

In Dr. Aguirre's letter to you of January 10, 1977, we acknowledged receipt of your paper entitled "A Case for Bilingual and Bicultural Education for United States Slave Descendants of African Origin". We now respond to the concerns you have raised.

Section 703(a) of the Act defines "limited English-speaking ability," when used with reference to an individual, as:

(A) [I]ndividuals who were not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English, and

(B) [I]ndividuals who come from environments where a language other than English is dominant, as further defined by the Commissioner by regulations;

and by reasons thereof, have difficulty speaking and understanding instruction in the English language.

Since most Black Americans were born in the United States, the first issue is whether the native language of Black Americans is a language other than English. Section 703(a)(2) of the Act defines "native language" as "the language normally used by the parents of the child." We consider the native language of Black Americans, within the meaning of the Act, to be English.

We also question whether most Black Americans come from environments where a language other than English is dominant. Section 123.02 of the Bilingual Education Regulations (45 CFR 123.02) defines "dominant language" as "the language most relied upon for communication in the home." Except for certain cases, such as the islands off the coast of South Carolina where a language other than English may be dominant, we consider the dominant language of Black Americans to be English.

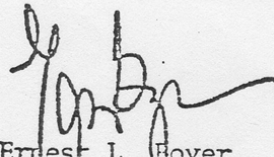
Dr. Ernie A. Smith - page 2

Because we do not consider most Black Americans to be of limited English-speaking ability within the meaning of the Act, a program of bilingual education designed for Black Americans would not be eligible. However, we do note that Blacks and other Americans not of limited English-speaking ability may participate in eligible programs. Section 703(a)(4)(B) of the Act provides that, "A program of bilingual education may make provision for the voluntary enrollment to a limited degree therein, on a regular basis of children whose language is English, in order that they may require an understanding of the cultural heritage of the children of limited English-speaking ability for whom the particular program of bilingual education is designed."

It may be of interest to you to know that the authorization for the Bilingual Education Act expires on September 30, 1978. Normally the Congress holds public hearings regarding the extension of legislation such as the Bilingual Education Act. If such hearings are held, you would have the opportunity to present your views concerning bilingual education in the United States.

Thank you for your interest in education.

Sincerely,



Ernest L. Boyer
U. S. Commissioner
of Education

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