

① per prestige → covert
↓
overt.
→ ties in with
socio-economic
standing

2 Read Texts B(i) and B(ii), and then answer the question below.

Discuss in detail **social factors that influence attitudes toward language variation.**

→ acceptance, tolerance, rejection

You should include a range of examples/ideas from Texts B(i) and B(ii) and your wider studies of English language, with detailed reference to lexis, grammar, syntax and discourse as appropriate.

[25]

Text B(i) is an edited version of a CNN news report published in 1996

So far it's little more than a vague idea, but a proposal by a California school board last week to recognize Black English as a second language has already sparked a firestorm of debate.

"I am incensed," said poet Maya Angelou, who recited one of her poems at President Clinton's inauguration. "The very idea that African-American language is a language separate and apart can be very threatening, because it can encourage young men and women not to learn standard English." 5

The Rev. Jesse Jackson also blasted the proposal, which was announced Wednesday by the California School Board to officially recognize Black English, also known as Ebonics, a term combining "ebony" and "phonics." 10

"While we are fighting in California trying to extend affirmative action and fighting to teach our children so they become more qualified for jobs, in Oakland some madness has erupted over making slang talk a second language," Jackson said in a statement. 15

"You don't have to go to school to learn to talk garbage," he said.

Critics say encouraging this non-standard English could give students the idea that Ebonics is a viable language in the workplace, a mistake that could hinder their job searches and careers. 20

Said Ryan Cameron, a rap radio disc jockey: "It's something that people use among their friends, but it's not something that they have to do to get ahead or have to do to get a job."

accept variation but feel that there is a need to learn the standard
↓
Gerrard McClelland

accepted as an identity marker } covert prestige
→ e.g. Grindie
e.g. Nordspeak

Text B(ii) contains excerpts of an academic paper by Anne H. Charity Hudley titled 'Which English you speak has nothing to do with how smart you are.'

Country
uni study:
texters did so
well on
Spelling and
grammar tests.

In classrooms across the U.S., there are kids who speak a wide variety of types of English. Even though it's historical accident that anyone considers "isn't" better than "ain't" or "wash" better than "warsh," those kids who just axed a question may feel dumb and be treated as if they're dumb by the people around them. And it starts young: Even by the end of kindergarten, many students have absorbed messages that their language is wrong, incorrect, dumb, or stigmatized. 5

→ Georgia proscribed
in schools.

For example, when I studied the language patterns of 4- and 5-year-old black children in several U.S. cities, many of them were worried that just talking with me would somehow cause them to be held back a grade if they did not do well in the conversations. You can see how these feelings of insecurity, anxiety, and apprehension when communicating—what the linguist William Labov calls linguistic insecurity—would make it disheartening to try and learn higher skills like math and reading when you're told you're wrong as soon as you even open your mouth. 10 15

. those who
speak certain
unsophisticated

But where does this idea that certain varieties of English are worse come from, does it have any basis in reality, and what can teachers—and all of us—do about it?

As the linguist Steven Pinker explains, "The choice of *isn't* over *ain't*, *dragged* over *drug*, and *can't get any* over *can't get no* did not emerge from a weighing of their inherent merits, but from the historical accident that the first member of each pair was used in the variety of English spoken around London when the written language became standardized. If history had unfolded differently, today's correct forms could have been incorrect and vice versa." 20 25

Received
Pronunciation

So why do people think of speakers of standardized English as being smarter, of a higher status, and as having more positive personality traits than speakers of nonstandardized English varieties? These values have more to do with who is in power. If people are devalued for some reason or another—race, gender, socioeconomic class, and so on—their language gets the same association. For example, the way that the British upper class speaks may sound snobby to some, but it's most always judged academically acceptable. The language of Southern African-Americans may sound warm and fun but it's often judged to be academically unacceptable or undesirable. It's even in our media: As the linguist Rosina Lippi-Green points out, the way that cartoon characters speak, like the Lion King's hyenas or Shrek's donkey, reinforces our racial and linguistic stereotypes, encouraging kids to think of their classmates who sound like Simba or Shrek as "good guys," people who sound like the hyenas as "bad guys," and people who sound like Donkey as buffoons. 30 35 40

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2. The increasingly use of English amongst people all over the world has given rise to an increasing number of variants and varieties of the English language. This new phenomenon has sparked various attitudes towards the issue of language variation, namely acceptance, tolerance, and rejection of the existence of variants.

One of the most important factors in dealing with the attitude adopted towards the presence of variants is the issue of prestige. As Text B(ii) mentions, the value of a certain variety ~~of them~~ often "has more to do with who is in power" (line 30), and the practices of the upper class ~~one~~ come to be accepted as the norm as ^{the} overt prestige attached to their social standing is similarly accorded to the variety of language they speak. ~~For example, the dropping of~~ Similarly, "if people are devalued for some reason or another... their language gets the same association" (Text B(ii), line 30-32), and this can lead to a rejection of varieties that are considered of lower standing and class. One such example is the case of Geordie, which despite being of rather common usage in Newcastle ~~as~~ colloquially, is proscribed in schools ~~and taught~~ and its usage discouraged. The natural ~~of~~ association of Geordie with a lower social class leads to its rejection, at least in formal settings. ~~A similar case can also be observed in Singapore,~~ whose showing to us how the issue of overt prestige can influence a ~~society's~~ society's attitudes towards the existence of variants.

Many want to add that it is also lack of intelligence that has contributed to the phenomenon

However, ~~over~~ overt prestige is not the only form of prestige there is, and a slightly more subtle consider

court prestige, also plays a large role in ~~determining~~ influencing attitudes towards language variants. The role that non-standard ~~language~~ varieties play in creating a common identity and serving as an identity marker for communities can lead to ~~not~~ increasing acceptance of non-standard varieties. ~~They serve as a distinct marker~~ As mentioned in Text Bii, "It's something that people use among their friends" (line 21-22), and serves as a distinct marker of who is in the "in-group" and who is in the out group. Perhaps the clearest example of acceptance of variants as an identity marker is the case of African-American Vernacular English (AAVE), which has become an integral part of the African-American community, and has even gained mainstream acceptance by being featured in television programmes and films. For example, in a sketch ~~by~~ ^{on} the popular comedy show "Key and Peele", two characters ~~who are shown~~ who are initially in a largely white environment quickly switch to the usage of AAVE when they are alone, incorporating features such as the use of slang words like "nigga" and the dropping of the /h/ sound to the /d/ sound into their speech with each other exclusively. Another example of court prestige helping variants to gain acceptance is the case of ~~Wagspeet, the language variant spoken by migrants to~~ Martha's Vineyard, where court prestige attached with being a native helped the non-standard ~~and~~ variety of English there to ~~gain~~ gain mass acceptance instead of the standard New English spoken by ~~the~~ mainland tourists, as it helped the residents ~~mark~~ mark their identity and establish themselves as the in-group.

~~However~~ Yet despite the role non-standard ~~and~~ varieties play in creating and maintaining the identity



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of social groups, rapid ~~and~~ acceptance of ~~such~~ such varieties ~~as~~ is still greeted ~~it~~ with reluctance and much hesitancy, as many are aware that such varieties can ~~my~~ my impede social mobility in the long run. As Text B1) mentions, rapid and institutional acceptance of non-standard variants such as AAVE could "give students the idea that Ebonics is a viable language in the workplace, a mistake that could hinder their job searches and careers", and this concern has ~~hindered~~ ^{stopped many} ~~stopped~~ stopped many from accepting non-standard varieties ~~so~~ readily. The social implications ~~on~~ on mobility that the use of non-standard varieties ~~has~~ has on mobility is a real concern, as evident in the example of an extremely qualified applicant from Tyneside who was rejected from Oxford because of his accent, and this explains the outrage displayed in text B1) over the proposal to recognise ~~Black~~ Black English as a second language by the African- American community itself.

The combination of recognising the need for the presence of varieties of English to ~~serve~~ bind communities together, as well as understanding that usage of such variants in the wrong context can hinder social mobility has given rise to another attitude towards language variation - tolerance.

~~The~~ The promotion of ~~and~~ enabling students and people to ~~use~~ "code-switch", or to use the right variety in the right situation is one that is gaining popularity in recent years. For example, ~~African-~~ African-American radio host and author Garrahd McClendon has been a strong advocate for code-switching, accepting that there is a place and a need for the

AAVE ~~standard~~ variety, but there is also a need to learn the standard so as to empower the African-American community to be upward socially mobile. This echoes the sentiment expressed in Text B13 by Rev. Jesse Jackson, where ~~we~~ he mentions how many are "fighting to teach our children so they become more qualified for jobs" (lines 13-14). This attitude of tolerance helps to give leeway for the non-standard variety to thrive and grow, while not stifling the mobility of the people by ~~equally~~ ensuring that they are hopefully equally fluent in the standard, and can give rise to a diglossic situation, such as in Singapore, where Standard Singapore English (SSE), the ~~higher~~ ~~variant~~ higher variant, is used in schools, ~~and~~ ~~Singapore~~ and formal situations, and Singapore Colloquial English, the lower variant, used ~~as~~ at home and in more informal settings.

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How does this demonstrate tolerance?

Good range, well elaborated

w/us