

**BLACK ENGLISH VERNACULAR FOUND IN *BLACK EYED*  
*PEAS' THE E.N.D* ALBUM**

**THESIS**

*Submitted as a Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Strata One (S1) Degree  
at the English Department of FBS UNP Padang*



**Nurul Basmalah  
12304/2009**

**ADVISORS:**

**Prof. Dr. Hermawati Syarif, M.Hum  
Yuli Tiarina, M.Pd**

**ENGLISH DEPARTMENT  
FACULTY OF LANGUAGES AND ARTS  
PADANG STATE UNIVERSITY  
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HALAMAN PENGESAHAN LULUS UJIAN SKRIPSI


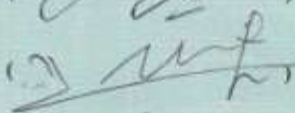



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Universitas Negeri Padang

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Nama : Nurul Basmalah  
NIM/BP : 12304/2009  
Program Studi : Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris  
Jurusan : Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris  
Fakultas : Bahasa dan Seni

Padang, 19 Januari 2014

Tim Penguji

	Nama	Tanda Tangan
Ketua	: Prof. Dr. Hermawati Syarif, M. Hum.	(  )
Sekretaris	: Yuli Tiarina, M. Pd	(  )
Anggota	: 1. Prof. Dr. Jufrizal, M. Hum.	(  )
	2. Dr. Kusni, M. Pd	(  )
	3. Rusdi Noor Rosa, S.S., M. Hum.	(  )

## ABSTRAK

**Basmalah, Nurul. 2014. *Black English Vernacular found in Black Eyed Peas' the E.N.D Album*. Fakultas Bahasa dan Seni. Universitas Negeri Padang.**

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menemukan cirri-ciri fonologi dan tatabahasa dari bahasa orang kulit hitam (*Black English Vernacular*) dan pengaruh dari bahasa tersebut terhadap penulisan rima lagu yang ditemukan di dalam *the E.N.D* album. Penelitian ini termasuk ke dalam kajian sosiolingistik.

Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah metode deskriptif kualitatif. Data pada penelitian ini adalah lirik lagu dari album musik *Black Eyed Peas* yang ditemukan didalam album *the E.N.D*. Data dianalisis dengan cara mengelompokkan setiap kata dan kalimat yang mengandung sifat-sifat fonologi dan tatabahasa menurut sumber bahasanya. Setelah itu, dilakukan analisis mengenai pengaruh dari penggunaan bahasa tersebut terhadap rima lagu.

Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa terdapat 376 buah kata dan kalimat yang mengandung sifat-sifat fonologi dan tatabahasa dari BEV. 235 dari data tersebut merupakan kata-kata yang termasuk kedalam karakteristik ciri-ciri fonologi. Ditemukan didalam lagu bahwa 12 karakteristik dari karakteristik fonologi diidentifikasikan didalam lagu. 141 dari data adalah karekteristik tatabahasa. Ditemukan sebanyak 12 karakteristik dari karakteristik tatabahasa yang diidentifikasikan didalam lagu. Hasil penilitian dari analisis pengaruh *BEV* terhadap rima lagu juga menunjukkan bahwa terdapat pengaruh *BEV* terhadap penulisan rima tersebut. Berdasarkan hasil penelitan, pengaruh yang diteumkan adalah pengaruh dari karakteristik fonologi. Pengaruh karakteristik fonologi yang ditemukan didalam lagu adalah *consonant cluster reduction, monophthongization of /aɪ/, r-lessness, vocalization or lost of postvocalic /r/, glide reduction of /aɪ/ and /ɔɪ/, the merging of [ɪ] and [ɛ] before nasal, the reduction of final nasal to vowel nasalization, the lost of the single final consonant, and the loss of /r/ after consonant.*

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Nurul Basmalah

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## CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

### A. Background of the problem

As one of the variant of English spoken in the USA, Black English Vernacular (BEV) or what sociolinguists usually called African American Vernacular English (AAVE) is a variety spoken by many African-Americans in the USA which shares a set of grammatical and other linguistic features that distinguish it from various other American dialects. Basically, this variety of American English considered as a bastardized form of English which is spoken because the speakers do not know how to speak the better one and the standard one.

BEV was once a Creole spoken by the black slaves of trans-Atlantic African slave trades in the late 16c-19c. The function of the Creole was to communicate among the slaves and with their captors. As the result of the imperfect and inadequate imitation of European American language, BEV lacks some of the phonological features, grammatical features, and in some cases, words that deviate in meanings from American English. For examples, the word *bath* [bæ Θ] is pronounced as [bæ f] and the use of copula 'be' such as *sometimes we just BE joking*.

Nowadays, the use of BEV is increasing. BEV is not only spoken by black people, but also by the white people, teenagers, and media entertainment such as movie, music, and advertisement. African American Language has continuously influenced white Americans speech since the era of enslavement. It can be clearly seen that 'blacks' culture (language) already influenced the culture of white people. Regardless the facts that it naturally becomes the culture of Black to speak BEV, white people think that they also can speak like black.



As an English department student, the writer sees some kind of misunderstanding among the English department students. They often treat BEV as an “incorrect” and slang language. It has been proved by the writer when she did a small test the other English student. She gave them a song lyric, a hip-hop song, and then asked them to decide whether the lyric was grammatically correct or wrong. The result showed that most of the student thought that it was slang and grammatically incorrect. It made the writer realized that her friends lacks of knowledge about BEV.

The same kind of misunderstanding also crossed the writer mind when she watched an American movie. Sometime she could not understand what the actor or actress said. The writer thought that the actor or the actress speaks English; in fact, they actually spoke the vernacular English (although some of them are whites). In the *Man In Black* movie, for example, the writer found it hard to understand some of the conversation of the actors and actresses, such as:

1. Man A : where you comin' from, Nick?  
Nick : Fishin' in Cuernavaca
2. Dee : I ain't playing with you, have you?  
Women : No

From the examples above, the writer notices the absent of the copula “be”, in this case copula “are”, in the example 1 and the use of *ain't* instead of *I am not* in the example 2.

The use of BEV eventually becomes more acceptable and sociable in the society. A language which used to be used by black people only no longer become a problematic language for white man, because the language is also used by the

white people in their daily life as Rickford (2000) says “[Ebonics] it is the symbol of a culture and a life-style that has had and continued to have a profound impact on American popular life”.

The use of BEV is like a mode. It is loved by many people, used by them, and can be found easily. Sometimes, BEV is more attractive and expressive than standard English. Emotional expressions such as happiness and anger, for example, can be much more fun and ease if it is expressed in BEV. For example, in expressing anger, BEV expressed it by using dirt words and abusive words such as: “I don’t give a damn ‘bout your f\*\*king business, you insolent son of b\*\*ch!”

The attractiveness and expressiveness of BEV also the writer found in the music world of the American singers. The appearance of ‘white rapper’ in the music world such as Eminem, Beastie Boys, Vanilla Ice, Everlast, House of Pain, and La Coka Nostra become the proof of the influence of BEV in white community’s life as Teller (2008) says, “Many of the nation’s most popular white musicians have adopted the argot and of Ebonics to such an extent that they are sometimes mistaken for being black by black people”.

The spreading of Black English in the music world is so incredible among the music styles which are originally developed by African American origin especially *Hip-Hop group, Jazz, Blues, Rock ‘n’ Roll, and R&B group*. Karen deWitt (1996) said “most particularly, it has found its way into the songs we sing and the way we sing them.”

The hip-hop genre, Rickford (2000: 86, 87) asserted “Black English, which encompasses vocabulary – and thus slang – but it is also composed of distinct grammatical and phonological elements. There is no question that black talk provides hip-hop’s linguistic underpinnings.” Hip-hop (also refers to rap) is an admired and a famous music’s style in USA. The origin of Hip-hop music is from African-American and West African music to offer a rebellion toward races discrimination in politic and economy in the form of music and dance that attacks and critics the government and white supremacy in the USA.

Hip-hop is very popular among young people. As what the writer can see in most of the movies and American songs, the way the actor acts and the way the rapper speaks are being absorb by the young people. Just say Eminem, many young people try to talk like the way he talks and act the way he acts. For example, Eminem song, the *Mocking Bird*:

*I can see it in your eyes, deep inside you want to cry.  
 'Cause you're scared, I ain't there?.  
 Daddy's with you in your prayers.  
 No more crying, wipe them tears.  
 Daddy's here, no more nightmares.  
We gon' pull together through it, we gon' do it.  
 Laney uncles crazy, ain't he?*

The underline words are the BEV words which Eminem used in his song, Mocking Bird. He used *I ain't* Instead of using *I am not* in the first sentence. In the fourth sentence, the possessive pronoun was missing. He replaced it with *them* (pronoun) instead of *their tears*. The examples above are the proof of what Smitherman (2006: 116) says: “hip-hop language [...] adheres to the pronunciation and grammar of African American Vernacular English (AAVE)”.

In addition of BEV's phonological and grammatical characteristics, BEV also influences the Hip-hop music's components, such as the flow (beats and gaps), the rhythm, and the rhyme. Among all of the Hip-hop music's components above, rhyme is the component which usually influenced by BEV. Rhyme is the adjustment of the ending of the songs. In the hip-hop or rap music, rhyme is often called as the most important factor in writing the lyric. Edwards (2009: 81) added that rhyme makes rap lyrics more melodious, because the same sound being repeated twice is interesting to listen to. Rhyme also makes the song writers able to express their selves more effectively and develop their style more creatively. For example, the rhymes in *Murs* "Silly Girl" lyrics:

*She thought that makin' me wait was the way to get me hooked.*

*Now fellas, we all know the oldest trick in the book.*

*What you do you wait around.*

*Waitin' 'til she breaks down.*

*One day at the crib, she gon' let you break ground.*

*That got me feelin' I was givin' but I wasn't getting' back.*

*man, that story 'bout that cow and that milk ain't a fact.*

*'Cause if you wait too long, the milk goes sour.*

*And I like my love hot, no more cold showers so.*

in the sentence 1 and 2, 'hooked' and 'book' has the same ending sound [hu:k] – where the –ed is missing or unpronounced – and [buk]. This is happen due to the influence of the phonological characteristic of BEV where the speaker seldom pronounce the past marker (in this lyric is the –ed marker) or what its speaker called as the consonant cluster reduction.

One of the famous *Hip-Hop groups* that use BEV in their songs is *Black Eyed Peas*. *Black Eyed Peas* is an American Hip-Hop group formed in 1988 which had 2 members; William Adams or Will.I.Am (leader, main rapper, vocalist, producer, song writer) and Allan Pineda or Apl.De.Ap (lead rapper, sub-vocalist, songwriter, and producer). After their first performance in Los Angeles, in 1992, Eazy-E or Dante Santiago joined the group as the third member. At that time, the group's name was The Black Eyed Pods. They changed the name into Black Eyed Peas due to the death of the member, Eazy-E. Jaime Gomez or Taboo (lead rapper, song writer) then replaced the position of Eazy-E in 1995 and followed by Fergie (main vocalist, sub-rapper, and song writer) in 2002.

As one of phenomenon of Hip-Hop group, *Black Eyed Peas* has already released 6 albums: (1) Behind The front, (2) Bridging The Gap, (3) Elephunk, (4) Monkey Business, (5) The E.N.D (Energy Never Dies), and (6) The Beginning. Most of the lyrics of the songs were written by Will.I.Am and eventhough he belongs to the chocolate skin people, not all of the song were written in BEV some of them were also written in SE. To know further about the use of Black English in the songs, the writer thinks that it is needed to be analyzed. So the writer chose to analyze the songs in the "The E.N.D" album.

Besides the fact that one of the writer favorite songs is in Black Eyed Peas' album, this is not the only reason why the writer chose to do the research. Black Eyed Peas is one of a few hip-hop groups which can survive over twenty years. The survival of this group proves that their songs, styles, and maybe even their lifestyles is what the fans seek in the hip-hop world. This phenomenon is

strengthening by the request for filling in movie soundtrack and variety shows' opening themes. In the cultural point of view, Black Eyed Peas also rendered ideas about races, misogynist toward women, the violence toward black people, and also the joy of black people's love.

The last, not the least, the writer also want to know whether BEV has any influences toward the rhyme of the songs in the "The E.N.D" music album. The most important reason why the writer chooses to do this research is because she wanted to know what characteristics of BEV's phonological and grammatical are used only in the *Black Eyed Peas' the E.N.D* album.

## **B. Identification of the Problem**

Black English Vernacular (BEV) can be analyzed in various aspects such as sociolinguistics, HCL, dialectology, stylistic, phonological, grammatical, and semantics. In sociolinguistics, it can be studied as part of language variation. Besides, BEV also can be studied based on historical comparative language (HCL) study, dialectology study, and stylistic study. Based on language development, BEV can be analyzed from phonological characteristics, grammatical characteristics, and semantic characteristics. In phonological characteristic, BEV can be analyzed based on the sound production of the words. In grammatical characteristics, it can be analyzed based on the tenses of the sentence, and syntactic and lexical characteristics as well. BEV can be analyzed semantically in order to know the literal meaning of the words, phrases or sentences which is used.

## **C. Focus of the Research**

In doing this research, the writer focused on the analysis of the use of Black English found in *Black Eyed Peas'* The E.N.D album and its influence toward the rhyme of the lyrics. Then this study limited into phonological and grammatical studies. To avoid wider explanation and diverges the major topic, the writer only focused on the phonological and grammatical characteristics of Black English Vernacular and its influence toward the rhyme of the lyrics. The writer identified the use of BEV in *Black Eyed Peas'* The E.N.D album and the influence of BEV toward the rhyme of the lyrics. The writer chose "The E.N.D" album because despite the fact that Black Eyed Peas' members are black people (two of them) the use of BEV in this album was not as many as the use of BEV in the other albums.

#### **D. Formulation of the Problem**

Based on the identification and focus of the problem, the problem of this research formulated in following question, "What are the characteristics of BEV found in the Black Eyed Peas' *The E.N.D* album and how these characteristics influence the rhyme of the lyric"

#### **E. Research Questions**

In this research there were three questions:

1. What are the phonological characteristics of BEV found in Black Eyed Peas' *The E.N.D* album?
2. What are the grammatical characteristics of BEV found in Black Eyed Peas' *The E.N.D* album?

3. Does BEV have any influences toward the rhyme of the songs in the Black Eyed Peas' *The E.N.D* album?

#### **F. Purposes of the Research**

The purposes of this research were:

1. to find out the BEV's phonological characteristics used by the singer/group.
2. to find out the BEV's grammatical characteristics used in the *black eyed peas'* songs.
3. to find out the influence of BEV toward the rhyme of the lyrics in the Black Eyed Peas' *The E.N.D* album.

#### **G. Significance of The Research**

This research was expected to give contribution both theoretically and practically in linguistics field. Theoretically, the findings of this research were expected to enrich and provide the theory about Black English Vernacular. Practically, the findings of this research were expected to give better understanding for the readers about BEV which is different from Standard English and NOT particularly slang or 'incorrect'. Furthermore, it is expected that the findings of the research can become a reference for the next researchers who are interest in conducting research about Black English Vernacular.

#### **H. The Definition of Key Terms**

There are several key terms used in this research:



1. Black English Vernacular: African American variety (dialect, ethnolect and sociolect) of American English spoken by the black people in the USA.
2. Standard English: the written and spoken English that is considered acceptable by most people.
3. Hip-Hop : one of the popular music genres in America
4. Rhyme : words, syllables, or line which have the same sound ending.
5. *Black Eyed Peas* : an American Hip-Hop group formed in 1988.
6. The E.N.D (Energy Never Dies) album: the fifth album of *Black Eyed Peas*'.