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In classrooms, workplaces, and even in day to day conversation, people who don't speak "proper English" are quickly judged before a thought is taken to understand their words. To see that their words that have come out in a certain way due to their background have just as much importance as the words from those who speak "proper English". In the United States, there are so many different backgrounds of people who come from all over the world. As they build a life and find a way to communicate their background, intertwined with the official language, which is English. This mix creates these types of English, such as Black English, Spanglish, Caribbean English, etc. These are called dialects, which reflect cultural identity and the community that created a way to express themselves. Despite this linguistic diversity, people who speak in a dialect that's not considered standard English are often labeled as uneducated or less intelligent. This affects many aspects in their lives that hinder their ability to be successful. Misunderstandings of different English dialects create social and educational barriers for speakers from urban and immigrant households. This prejudice attacks their sense of identity and forces many to change or hide how they speak in order to fit society's narrow idea of "proper English."

In the United States, all types of English are allowed, there are no government set restrictions on the type of English used, yet "standard English" is treated as if it's the only correct form. In the article *Dialect, interaction and class positioning at school: from deficit to difference to repertoire* 2013, author Julia Snell, Professor of Sociolinguistics,

asserts that promoting acceptance of different dialects may not work due to the prejudice against it having a huge impact. She backs up her claim by defining street english how it's perceived, then, she conducts a case study of dialect use, lastly, she provides a solution to the prejudice that is faced. Snell clarifies how “street english” as a non standard dialect has its own grammatical structure, vocabulary and pronunciation, so for standard english to be seen as the only “correct” form of english is indeed false. Black English is a valid form of communication as it has a structure making it easy to be understood and learned just as standard English is used and understood.

This idea is further supported by American Linguist, John R. Rickford, in his essay, *How Linguists Approach the Study of Language and Dialect*, published in 2002 by Stanford University, addresses the topic of principles of African American vernacular English and argues that certain assumptions should not be made towards linguistics. He supports this claim by explaining how all dialects follow rules, then how language differences are normal, and finally social prejudice affects how dialects are judged. Rickford states, “ every naturally used language variety is systematic, with regular rules and restrictions at the lexical, phonological, and grammatical level”. Both pieces of evidence reveal a shared understanding of how other type of english dialects, particularly black English, is a “correct” form of English. A misunderstanding fueled by stereotypes is caused by certain dialects being judged and misinterpreted. In reality, these dialects are forms of communication that need to be learned and understood because they have their own basic structures, as this avoid communication misunderstandings.

Additionally supported by Guardian News a video, ['Such good English': Trump praises Liberian president's use of his country's official language'](#) published in 2025 shows the president of the United States Donald J. Trump praising the Liberian president's English. Guardian News supports this idea of "correct" English by presenting President Trump asking the Liberian president "where he learned to speak so beautifully" causing a sense of awkwardness and embarrassment and he puts down those who don't speak proper English by saying "I have people at this table who can't speak nearly as well. And they come from here". This praising and belittling others' English, especially coming from someone with influence, shows that those who don't speak proper English are often judged and their intelligence is essentially questioned. When in reality, as Rickford and Snell show, non-standard English is just as correct and equally valid.

Dialect prejudice influences more than just the way a person speaks; it has a large impact on identity, culture, and belonging. A well-known writer who specialized in English, Amy Tan, in her essay, *Mother Tongue* published in 1990, addresses the topic of prejudice of language identity and argues that one type of English should not be normalized into society; everyone should be represented and understood. She supports this claim by talking about how she used language growing up, then telling a story about her mother and the prejudice she faced because she spoke a different dialect of English, and finally, she talks about how she was able to overcome this prejudice, yet it still goes on. Tan states, "I was ashamed of her English. I believed that her English reflected the quality of what she had to say" (78). Tan's experience illustrates that the prejudice faced in society changed her perception of how she perceived her mother's identity. Those who don't speak standard English are often seen as uneducated or

inferior, which is how Tan perceived her mom with her mom's constant use of nonstandard English.

Building on this point, Graduate Student, Ina N Owens, in her study, *Experiences of Bidialectism in College-Educated African Americans: An Exploratory Study*, published in 1996, addresses the topic of dialect prejudice and conducts research on whether speaking two dialects makes things easier for them in society or if it causes uncertainty in how they should communicate and their identity. By supplying information about what dialectism is, explaining the history of Black English, and conducting a study on American students, Owens builds her claim about the effects of dialectism. Owen's research concludes that the type of dialect they used is based on "perception of environment". She further states how Black English is used to provide "cultural solidarity," while standard English is considered "valuable" to communicate in society. Owen's findings suggest that the choice of dialect used in a situation is a way to navigate through social expectations and help adapt to the prejudice that is faced. Using Black English when not in a formal situation is a way to preserve one's identity; however, it's still dismissed in society.

To expand on this point, a known poet, writer, activist, and teacher, June Jordan, in her political essay, *Nobody Mean More to me Than You and the Future Life of Wille Jordan*, published in 1985, addresses the topic of prejudice against black English and argues that Black English marginalizes African Americans. She supports this claim by giving context on black English and how those who use it are affected, then by her discussion with her students about a boy named Reggie Jordan who was affected by his use of black English, and finally, by what she learned from her experience, she states. “

We begin to grow up in a house where every true mirror shows us the face of somebody who does not belong there, whose walk and whose talk will never look or sound “right” because that house was meant to shelter a family that is alien and hostile to us”(363). Jordan reveals that prejudice not just judges a person's language but shapes how a person sees themselves. Society labeling those as “alien and hostile to us” causes many to feel out of place in an environment that values one proper way of speaking.

Ultimately, society values certain dialects in a diminishing way that not only shapes people's perception of themselves but also forces those who speak non standard English to redefine who they are. Across the works of authors and new lines mentioned, they all share an argument that goes against the idea of language prejudice with a goal of moving past it. Recognizing and normalizing dialect diversity should be something we should come to an understanding on as a society.

