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# Chicano English in Children's Literature

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# Chicano English in Children's Literature

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By  
Katie Nance

An Honors Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for Graduation from the  
Western Oregon University Honors Program

Dr. Robert A. Troyer,  
Thesis Advisor

Dr. Gavin Keulks,  
Honors Program Director

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**Abstract**

Language is an integral part of our day-to-day lives; it is the way we express ourselves, the way we relate to others, and the way we meet our basic needs. However, for speakers of nonstandard dialects of English in America, language can be complicated. Many American students who fall into this category are taught, explicitly or implicitly, from a very young age, that the way they speak is different, wrong, and should be changed. With the growing number of Hispanic Americans currently in the United States, there is a nonstandard dialect which is becoming increasingly relevant: Chicano English. However, there seems to be a gap between the number of speakers of Chicano English in America, and the frequency with which this dialect is represented in literature, specifically within children's literature. Following the recommendations of several online sources and academic experts, more than 50 children's books that reportedly contained representations of nonstandard dialects were selected as a representative sample for initial screening. This preliminary analysis revealed that only twelve of the books actually contained representations of nonstandard dialects. Subsequent detailed analysis determined which nonstandard dialects including Chicano English were represented in this sample of children's literature as well as the frequency with which these dialects were present. The results showed that no representations of Chicano English were found in the children's books that were studied; however, the dialect was present in some young adult literature which was added to the analysis for comparison. The implication is that the Chicano English dialect may be considered less established and/or less prestigious than other nonstandard dialects of American English. The research and analysis, outlined below, show evidence of

this, as well as potential explanations for this gap between the number of speakers of this dialect, and the lack of its representation in children's literature.

## 1. Introduction

For many elementary students, read-aloud time is one of the best parts of the day; a child can sit back, listen to the story, and be carried into another world. As the teacher reads, the story comes alive through his or her intonation, expression, and voice. Each character has a unique vocal tone, vocabulary, or rate of speech. In some cases, these characters may even speak in an accent or dialect, which the teacher imitates, creating language diversity within the storytelling. These dialects may be unfamiliar to the students, or may even be those students' own dialect, helping students identify with the characters in the book, and to understand the story in new ways. A teacher's use of students' dialect in storytelling can also help the students relate to the story, seeing themselves mirrored in the images of those characters. These students who speak a nonstandard dialect may suddenly see characters like themselves within the text, where they usually see only characters who speak Standard English.

Language diversity is woven throughout American schools, seen in children who speak a language other than English, who speak multiple languages, or who speak nonstandard dialects. Yet, most instruction in American schools is done in Standard English, and most of the literature found in American elementary schools is written in this dialect. Just as English is the most prestigious language in the United States, Standard American English is the most prestigious dialect in the country. This means that, as the speech form garnering the most respect and having the highest status, most American writing and broadcasted speech is done in this language variety. This can cause speakers of other languages and dialects to feel that their own language variety is devalued. Language

diversity is an issue of equity in American schools; many students enter school feeling that their identity is constantly reflected and validated by school culture, while other students enter school to find that their local and familial identity is discouraged, or simply does not have a place in the school's culture.

This issue became of interest to me as I worked and volunteered in a variety of Early Childhood and Elementary classrooms throughout my high school and college years. The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) statewide report card for the 2015-2016 school year showed that while 76.6% of students are native English speakers, 15.5% of students speak Spanish as a first language (Noor, 2016). The Spanish language has a huge influence within the state of Oregon. In the roles of both student and educator in Oregon schools, this has been evident to me, though most education continues to be done with the end goal of students gaining fluency in Standard English. While I have seen many cases where bilingual students have had their own languages spoken, recognized, and encouraged in schools, I have not seen the same done with nonstandard dialects. Often, nonstandard dialect in speech and writing is seen as a mistake to be corrected. In researching and writing for this thesis, I hoped to discover to what extent nonstandard dialects, and especially the Chicano English dialect, were represented within children's literature. This research was done from the perspective of a future educator, with hopes of using this research to establish a foundation for creating equitable classroom environments.



### Research Questions

- 1a. Which dialects of English, other than Standard English, are portrayed in children's literature?
- 1b. How frequently do representations of non-standard dialects occur in dialogue and the narrative of a representative sample of children's books?
- 2a. To what degree is the Chicano English dialect portrayed within children's literature?
- 2b. Do commonly cited examples of children's books containing Chicano English contain accurate representations of the dialect?

This thesis begins with a literature review, which discusses the current literature surrounding both dialect in literature and nonstandard dialects. There is a particular focus on children's literature, and how dialect in children's literature can be used in teaching. The literature review also puts a particular emphasis on the Chicano English dialect, including its history and features. Next, the thesis contains a methods section explaining the steps which were taken to answer the above questions, including the specific analyses of literature which were carried out. Then, the results section explains what was found in these analyses, including the data gathered and a discussion of such. Finally, the conclusion uses this data to answer each of the above research questions.

## 2. Literature Review

This literature review contains an examination of current sources on the employment of dialect in fiction, including authors' purposes for representing dialect in literature. Sources that discuss the use of dialect in children's literature specifically are identified and discussed. The main focus of this thesis concerns children's literature, so the goal in this section is to determine what research has already been done on dialect use in this type of literature. Next, there is an extensive discussion of Chicano English, and its history in gaining status as an established dialect of English. This section also discusses the features of Chicano English, and what it means to be a speaker of Chicano English, in comparison to a native Spanish speaker learning English.

This literature review also touches on the nonstandard dialects which are common within children's literature and how these dialects are defined, including prominent features of these dialects. Finally, the literature review discusses the pedagogical significance of dialect in children's literature; in other words, how children's literature containing nonstandard dialect representations can be used to teach in the classroom. This section discusses how the use of nonstandard dialects in teaching speakers of those dialects contributes to equity in education, as well as how discussing and using nonstandard dialect representations in the classroom can contribute to students gaining fluency in Standard English.

While reading this literature review and considering its topics, it is important to remember that "dialect" simply means a specific form or variation of a language. A dialect is structured, has rules, and is usually specific to a certain geographic region or group of

people. All types of English, including Standard English, which is the variation that is seen and heard most commonly in publications and media, are dialects of English. Every speaker of every language speaks in a dialect, regardless of how prestigious or obscure that dialect is.

### Dialect in Fiction

Fiction writers use speech in their writing in order to show interactions between characters, create realism, and give depth and identity to characters. Representing speech is essential in telling stories which people can relate to. Dialogue brings life to characters, and makes them seem more realistic. Accurate representations of speech are important, because inaccurate representations (for instance, speech representations that are too formal for the context) can make the characters seem less relatable to the reader. It is also important for fiction writers to develop their characters by instilling them with strong identities. Language is an integral part of identity, and giving characters an authentic language variety or dialect is a good way to give a character a strong identity. Because of this, fiction writers may choose to represent nonstandard dialects in the speech of their characters. Writers may have many different motivations for having a character speak a nonstandard dialect, such as giving that character a particular cultural identity, setting the character apart from others, or establishing the character's social status. Whatever the motivation, dialect representations are often an important part of a story and a character's identity.

When represented in a fictional piece of literature, dialect is most often present in the dialogue, or characters' speech. However, dialect can also be represented in the main body narrative of a text. The narrative is most often written in the standard version of a language, perhaps because this is the most prestigious and widely accepted form of the language, or perhaps because it is assumed that most readers will be speakers of the standard variety, or more accustomed to seeing it in published writing.

When a writer sets out to put characters' speech onto paper, what they are doing is 'representing' human speech—they want to develop a close, accurate approximation of what it actually sounds like to hear people talk. For example, a writer might write "gonna," instead of "going to," or "hafta" instead of "have to," since this is closer to what actual speech sounds like. While representing dialect in this way is a great for adding realism and depth of character, it is also important that writers maintain readability in their writing. If a reader struggles to understand the text in front of them, they will be discouraged from continuing with the book. Sands Hetherington (n.d.) sums this up well when he says, "The trick is to deviate from standard orthography enough to impart the flavor and the distinctive 'sound' you want, but not so much that the reading becomes difficult." He concludes by saying "No reader, regardless of age, wants to be alienated by the language used in your book" (Hetherington, n.d.). Writers who wish to accurately represent dialect must work to do so while also considering the readability of the text. For example, the way to most accurately represent the above example of writing "have to" as "hafta" would be to use the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) to spell it, which would be /hæftə/. However, because most people cannot easily read IPA, doing so would isolate many readers. So,

writers must find the balance between accurately representing a dialect and keeping their writing readable for a large audience.

In his 1990 *The Stylistics of Fiction: A Literary-Linguistic Approach*, Toolan, editor of the *Journal of Literary Semantics* and author of more than 6 books and 60 book chapters and journal articles on the language of literature, discusses dialogue within fiction in detail; this is of interest because dialect is most often present within dialogue, rather than within narrative, as discussed above. He states that conversational analysis is not only concerned with the structure and organization of talk, but is also highly social and dependent on context and inference. He explains that in some cases, "...what gets done conversationally is very much more than what actually gets said" (Toolan, 1990, p. 276). We can see that Toolan (1990) views the social context of speech and interaction to be highly important to meaning.

When Toolan (1990) discusses dialect, he refers to it as "social semiotic," a means of communication in a specific social setting. He recognizes that the use of dialect in fiction has been met with resistance, but still believes that it is important. He says that contemporary authors are representing dialects which differ from standard speech "...not so as to prompt the reader to consign them to a notional periphery of deviancy in the moral universe, but so as to assert a counter-norm" (Toolan, 1990, pp. 277-278). Dialect is represented not to show the stupidity or immorality of characters, but rather to assert individuality and moral values that are "positively opposed to the normal and conventional" (p. 278). In this way, the use of dialect can be a stylistic choice on the part of the author, making a character stand out. Speaking in a certain dialect may also create associations between the character

and certain cultural values and morals. Toolan (1990) goes on to explain that "...the personal and social significance of dialect informs and meshes with the thematic significance of literary works" (p. 278). According to this author, dialect can say a lot about a person's morality, association, and overall identity.

The dialect in which a text is written can have pragmatic implications. *Pragmatics* is "...the investigation into that aspect of meaning which is derived not from the formal properties of words and constructions, but from the way in which utterances are used and how they relate to the context in which they are uttered" (Leech & Short, 1981, p. 290). In other words, the things we say have different meanings based on how we say them, and on the context in which we say them. Readers of novels tend to have to draw a lot from the context of the writing.

Additionally, readers have a lot of assumptions about the book they are reading; for example, if a novel is set on Earth, the author would not have to specify this fact. Readers would be able to draw from the context and from their previous knowledge of the fact that most novels are set on Earth, without the author having to explicitly state this fact.

Assumptions that people make about literature differ from culture to culture; an American person reading a book may assume that the characters in the story value individuality, while a native of Mexico may assume that those same characters value the collective good. Similarly, the contextual cues which are used by authors, or which are understood by readers, may differ between dialects of the same language. Let us look at the example of two students hearing a book read aloud; one student is a native speaker of Chicano English, and the other is a native Standard English speaker. The verbs in the story

sound like “look,” “thank,” “open,” and “miss.” A Standard English speaking student would most likely be able to easily pick up on the fact that the story is happening in present tense. A speaker of Chicano English, however, might need to rely more heavily on contextual cues and time words, such as “today” and “now.” This is because Chicano English regularly drops the phonemes /d/ and /t/ in word-final position, causing a loss of the inflectional morphemes which signal past tense—many verbs sound the same in both the past and present tenses. In this way, the dialect in which a text is written can affect not only the pragmatics between the characters and between the author and readers, but also the comprehensibility of the text.

Analysis of dialect in fiction has often been done using adult or young adult classic novels, such as *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (Carkeet, 1979), *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Hodson, 2014), or the works of Charles Dickens (Luu, 2016; Ilhem, 2012). These works of literature have been discussed in linguistic contexts for many years (St. Dunstan’s House, E.C., 1894; Brook, 1970; Carkeet, 1979; Leech & Short, 1981; Toolan, 1990).

### Dialect in Children’s Literature

Dialect representations appear in many different types of literature, and information can be found about the use of dialect representations in literature. Research and analysis of dialect in fiction is commonly done using adult or young adult fiction. However, some research has been done on dialect representations in children’s literature and the implications of said dialect representations. Dialect in children’s literature is the main focus of this thesis, especially as it pertains to classroom teaching.

There are many reasons why authors may use dialect in children's literature. Wells (1976), when discussing why authors began using dialect in children's literature more commonly in the 1960s, says that "We can only speculate that their use of it is to communicate more effectively with their reader than by using Standard English" (p. 40). Sands Hetherington, a children's author himself, encourages the use of dialect in children's literature, to add "flavor" to the writing, and says that "using dialect does help them [children] to sound out words and figure out their meanings based on that" (n.d.). While dialect within children's literature is perhaps not as common as dialect in young adult and adult literature, it does exist, though some dialects are more commonly represented than others. Sources such as the Bank Street Library's *Dialect Variations* list provide examples of children's literature which contains various dialects, such as African-American Vernacular English (AAVE), Caribbean stories, and Cajun stories.

While sources which discuss the prevalence of dialect in children's literature are not widespread, it is possible to find lists of children's books written in specific dialects. These lists are often found compiled on blogs, such as "Mighty Little Librarian" by Tiffany Whitehead, "Read Aloud Picture Books," or "Caribbean Children's Fiction" by Hazel Campbell. These blogs are simply lists that specific authors or educators have compiled, which contain fantastic references to children's books, but do not necessarily contain peer-reviewed research on the dialect representations' accuracy. Most peer-reviewed resources surrounding dialect in children's literature focus on AAVE, such as Melvin W. Wells' article "Black Dialect in Children's Books," which discusses various children's books containing AAVE, and the various features represented in those texts. Overall, there is a smaller



amount of peer-reviewed research surrounding dialect in children's literature. However, many books can be found which are said to contain these representations, and more extensive research has been done on representations of AAVE in children's literature.

### Chicano English

The Spanish language has had a significant and growing impact in the United States since the country's establishment. According to US Census data from 2011, over 37 million Americans speak Spanish, making it the second most prominent language in the US (Lopez & Gonzalez-Barrera, 2013). This is over three times as many Spanish speakers as there were in 1980, showing monumental growth in Spanish influence in this country, and Spanish language use is predicted to continue this increase in the coming years. In the state of Oregon, 15.5% of public school students speak the Spanish language, according to the 2015-16 annual state report card. Additionally, about 22% of students in Oregon are identified as Hispanic, according to the report card (Noor, 2016). This is comparable to national data, which shows that 25% of public school students are Hispanic (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016). It is clear to see that, within the US, there is a significant influence from the Spanish language. There is also a larger percentage of the population which has an influence of Hispanic heritage, even if they may not speak the Spanish language. The significant influence of the Spanish language and Hispanic heritage is important to consider in order to fully understand the importance of the Chicano English dialect.

The existence of Chicano English as a dialect has been highly contested by researchers and linguists in the past; however, the growing consensus is that it does exist as its own

distinct dialect. Allan Metcalf, a linguist who did extensive research on Chicano English in the 1970s, published an essay entitled *Chicano English* on the nature of the dialect which shows some of the debate over its existence, as well as where the dialect was prevalent at that time and how it sounded. This is one of the first studies on the dialect, and while in many ways he echoed the research of a previous linguist, this publication popularized the term “Chicano English” (Wald, as cited in Ornstein-Galicia, 1984, p. 16). He explains that while Chicano English can accurately be called “Spanish-influenced English,” due to both the way it sounds and the way it came to be, “...such a term can be misleading, since it also implies that the Spanish influence is a continuing one” (Metcalf, 1979, p. 1). In fact, he explains, this dialect is often spoken by people who do not speak any Spanish and are actually fluent in English. He says that although one researcher’s 1970 publication went as far as to declare that there was no such dialect, there is evidence that this dialect does indeed exist in many places throughout the United States.

Metcalf (1979) goes on to discuss the varieties of Chicano English spoken by elementary school students and adults in the states of California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas. While the linguistic features vary slightly between states, he is able to make several conclusions from his research. He states that while there is still not extensive knowledge of the dialect, he can conclude that “...Chicano English is not just a familiar part of the English or Spanish languages, but a new world of its own” which “[does] not by any means display all the language-learning errors one would expect of a Spanish speaker learning English for the first time in a classroom” (p. 15). That is to say, Chicano English is not simply a mix of some linguistic features of English and Spanish, but a dialect with its own distinct features.

He lists several widely reported characteristics of the dialect, namely, the Spanish intonation pattern, devoicing of word-final consonants, reduction of vowel contrasts, and the substitution of a low vowel /a/ for the schwa /ə/. These characteristics are further explained in Figure 2.1 below. Overall, the main point of the essay is that Chicano English exists as a dialect of English, with documented patterns and rules that exist independently of Spanish-speakers who are learning English.

Published in 1984, editor Jacob Ornstein-Galicia, also a prominent researcher of the dialect, has compiled a collection of essays entitled *Form and Function in Chicano English*. It is the consensus among these authors that the dialect is spoken mainly in the Southwest United States, although it is also spoken elsewhere (it is likely that the dialect has spread even further since this 1984 publication). “An estimated 10 to 12 million people, Mexican-Americans, make up the largest foreign language population in the United States” says Ornstein-Galicia (1984) in the editor’s introduction, but “...comparing the amount of sociolinguistic work done on Black English [African American Vernacular English] with the speech of U.S. Hispanics, one finds that the latter trails woefully behind” (p. ix). The compilation is split into sections discussing the linguistic definition of Chicano English, its sociocultural dimension, an investigation of what has and should be researched regarding Chicano English, and a look at the presence of the dialect in the mainstream, with reactions to this presence. In Gonzalez’ contribution to Ornstein-Galicia’s (1984) book, the author emphasizes that despite the range of variation in CE production and the challenges of categorizing the dialect, it is important to study it in order to determine how the general public, and most especially educators, should view and use the dialect.

Historically, there have been many misunderstandings and myths surrounding dialect in the United States. Many of these misconceptions apply to Chicano English, just as they apply to other dialects. Devereaux (2015) explains several myths specific to Chicano English in her book *Teaching about Dialect Variations and Language in Secondary English Classrooms*. One such myth is that “Chicano English is the same as ‘Spanglish’” (p. 199); “Spanglish” is a word used to describe the way in which bilingual speakers of English and Spanish use words from both of their languages in speech. It is a myth that “codeswitching,” or “the switching from the linguistic system of one language or dialect to that of another” (Merriam-Webster), is the same as speaking the dialect of Chicano English. An example of codeswitching could be a sentence such as “I went to the store with *mi abuela*,” where most of the sentence is in English, but some words, especially familiar words and phrases, are spoken in Spanish. The opposite of this, where a sentence contains mostly Spanish words with some English words or phrases, is also a form of codeswitching. The same goes for any two languages. Devereaux (2015) also discusses the myth that Chicano English is simply learner English, or that “Chicano English is spoken by people whose first language is Spanish, which introduces mistakes into their language” (p. 199). In truth, this dialect exists among individuals who are monolingual; many speakers of Chicano English are *native speakers* of the dialect, just as people from Boston are native speakers of the regional dialect spoken where they are from and many African Americans are native speakers of the dialect spoken in the communities where they grew up. However, learner English can sometimes coincide with the rules of Chicano English, making the speech of a Spanish

speaker who is learning English sound quite similar to the speech of a native Chicano English speaker.

The article *Chicano English: Language Issues and their Relationship to Culture* was written by Dawn Duchnowski for a class website for Western Connecticut State University's Virtual International Classroom on Language Varieties. She discusses the phenomenon of 'interference English,' or the English which is spoken by those who are learning the language; in this case, native Spanish speakers. As native Spanish speakers begin to learn English, they make systematic mistakes in pronunciation, morphology, and syntax, based on their native language and the elements of the English language that they have not yet mastered. For this reason, some linguists and researchers may not believe in the existence of Chicano English as a distinct dialect. As Duchnowski (n.d.) points out, "some of the similar features between 'interference' English and Chicano English include phonology, distinct stress patterns in speech, and intonation or prosodic patterns" (np), so that a person speaking learner English may sound incredibly similar to one who is speaking Chicano English. Based on this evidence, some researchers have concluded that Chicano English is not a dialect, because it is only spoken by those who are learning English. A study referenced by both Metcalf (1979) and Wald (as cited in Ornstein-Galicia, 1984), done by Janet B. Sawyer, concluded that there is no such thing as the Chicano English dialect, because the pronunciation of a word list by "...seven Spanish-English bilinguals, found that the two U.S.-born speakers with college education had the least number of phonological features attributable to Spanish in their speech" (Wald, as cited in Ornstein-Galicia, 1984, p. 15). However, Wald points out that this sort of study has been criticized for the fact that it

does not represent the population, nor does it represent everyday speech of Chicanos. Additionally, as Duchnowski (n.d.) points out, “[w]hile Chicano English phonology is much like the phonology of the recent English learner, Chicano English phonology also exhibits slight differences that categorize it as independent of Spanish phonological interference on English” (np). So, although Chicano English and learner English may be similar, there is a preponderance of evidence to say that Chicano English is its own, distinct dialect of English.

What distinguishes Chicano English from Standard English? As with any dialect, there are patterns within the dialect which follow specific rules. These rules may be phonological (involving speech sounds) or morpho-syntactic (having to do with the structure of phrases, clauses, and sentences), but perhaps the most important assertion here is that the dialect *is not random* (Devereaux, 2015). While those who are learning English may make the same mistake across the board, they may also make random mistakes. On the other hand, Chicano English has *rules* which are observed by speakers; without the observation of these rules, a person is not truly speaking the dialect.

The tables below discuss several examples of phonological rules for Chicano English [Figure 2.1] and syntactic and morphological patterns that occur among speakers of Chicano English [Figure 2.2.], as well as comparisons to Standard English (SE). The features that are shown in the two tables are compiled from multiple different sources on the form and function of Chicano English, and many of these patterns are referenced in multiple sources. The patterns come primarily from Devereaux (2015), Metcalf (1979), and Duchnowski (n.d.), referenced above. Several rules also come from *Teachers’ Guide to Supporting Mexican American Standard English Learners* (Barrón & San Roman, n.d.), which is a compilation of

many different, studied patterns in Chicano English. Some similar rules and patterns have been combined, and each pattern shows the source or sources from which it comes.

<b>Figure 2.1. Phonological Patterns: Chicano English</b>		
Pattern	Explanation	Examples
Elision of final consonant, especially /t/ or /d/ of consonant clusters <sup>1</sup>	The final consonant of a consonant cluster is deleted more often in Chicano English than in other dialects <sup>2</sup> . This "...often creates a loss of inflectional morphemes". <sup>1</sup>	"He was headed wes'" for "He was headed west" "I thank him" for "I thanked him"
Higher Vowel Ending at end of '-ing' words	Speakers of Chicano English may use a higher vowel, like the <i>i</i> in <i>si</i> . <sup>2</sup>	Talking sounds like <i>talkeen</i>
Shift in pronunciation of final consonant <sup>2</sup>	This shift occurs when "climbing" is pronounced "climbin'." The former uses a velar consonant, where the back of the tongue touches the roof of the mouth; the latter uses an alveolar consonant, where the tip of the tongue touches the alveolar ridge.	Running sounds like <i>runnin'</i>
Alternation of /ch/ and /sh/ <sup>1,3</sup>	Speakers may substitute /ch/ in place of /sh/, or /sh/ in place of /ch/. Interference from Spanish explains the use of /ch/ in place of /sh/, since the /ch/ sound exists in Spanish while the /sh/ sound does not. However, it does not explain the substitution of /sh/ in place of /ch/.	<i>Chow</i> for <i>show</i> <i>Shek</i> for <i>check</i>
Devoicing of /z/, especially in word-final position <sup>1,3</sup>	Speakers may devoice /z/ so that it sounds like /s/. Other word-final consonants may also be devoiced. <sup>3</sup>	<i>Seize</i> sounds like <i>cease</i>
Devoicing of /v/ in word-final position, or substitution of /b/ for /v/ <sup>1</sup>	Speakers may either devoice or substitute other phonemes for /v/ because there is no phoneme /v/ in Spanish. The Spanish letter "v" represents the phoneme /b/.	<i>Leave</i> sounds like <i>leaf</i> <i>Very</i> sounds like <i>berry</i>
Reduction of vowel contrasts <sup>3</sup>	Certain vowel pairs may sound similar to one another, especially	<i>This</i> and <i>these</i> are difficult to distinguish between

	among high vowels such as /i/ and /l/ or /u/ and /ʊ/.	<i>Shooed</i> and <i>should</i> , or <i>who'd</i> and <i>hood</i> sound similar
Substitution of low vowel /a/ or /ɑ/ for the schwa /ə/	Words with a schwa, a vowel sound similar to /ʌ/, which occurs in an unemphasized syllable, such as in sep(a)rate, choc(o)late, or cam(e)ra (the schwa sound occurs in the syllable in parenthesis).	<i>Again</i> [əgen] sounds like <i>aw-gen</i> [aɡen] <i>President</i> [prezədint] sounds like <i>prez-aw-dent</i> [prezadint]

<b>Figure 2.2. Grammatical, Syntactic, and Morphological Patterns: Chicano English</b>		
Multiple negation forms <sup>1,2,4</sup>	The term “multiple negation” is used, rather than “double negation,” because a speaker may use three or more negatives in one statement. Multiple negation is common in Spanish, as well as in other languages, such as Japanese and Russian. <sup>1,2,4</sup>	<i>“I ain’t going nowhere with no one.”</i>  <i>“He don’t never do that.”</i>
Understood “be” <sup>2</sup>	The understood “be” occurs when a form of the verb “to be” is dropped from a sentence. This typically occurs in Chicano English where “is” or “are” can be contracted in Standard English (e.g. <i>he’s</i> , <i>we’re</i> ).	<i>“She funny.”</i>  <i>“They running.”</i>
Preposition substitution <sup>2</sup>	Speakers may use several prepositions interchangeably, or may substitute another preposition in place of one normally used in Standard English. This is an example of Spanish having a direct influence on Chicano English.	Standard v. Chicano English “at” v. “On, to, from” or “in” “on” v. “in, to” “in” v. “to, of, on” “of” v. “in” “out of” v. “off” “so” v. “for” <sup>2,4</sup>
Elision of past tense – ed	Due to the dropping of the final consonant in a consonant cluster, the inflectional morpheme which marks past tense may be dropped from some verbs. Adverbial markers, words which identify time, may be used instead.	<i>“We search all over for it earlier.”</i>  <i>“She wish for a dog last night.”</i>
Substitution of <i>could</i> for <i>can</i>	“In Chicano English <i>could</i> can be used as a substitute for <i>can</i> when meaning competence.” <sup>2</sup>	<i>“He doesn’t believe you could get into college.”</i>
Homophonous <i>will</i> and <i>would</i> <sup>1</sup>	The two words may be homophonous, or may sound the	<i>“What would you have to eat?”</i>



	same, in the speech of some Chicano English speakers. The two words may also be substituted for each other.	<i>"We will have come if we were not busy."</i>
Embedded Question inversion <sup>4</sup>	The subject generally comes before the verb in an embedded question, and embedded questions often begin with phrases such as "Can you tell me..." or "The question is..." In Chicano English, the question is inverted.	<i>"Could you please tell me where the store is?" becomes "Where is the store could you please tell me?"</i> <i>"Can you tell me where he went last night?" becomes "Where did he go last night can you tell me?"</i>
"Barely" used as an intensifier <sup>2,4</sup>	"Barely" is used as an indicator of time, number, or scarcity.	<i>"I barely have five dollars."</i> <i>"She barely went there yesterday."</i>
Regularization of third person singular verbs <sup>4</sup>	This feature of Chicano English regularizes the irregularity in Standard English of third person singular verbs (ie, I run, we run, you run, they run, he <i>runs</i> )	<i>"He runs two miles every day" becomes "He run two miles every day."</i>

Both Devereaux (2015) and Duchnowski (n.d.) explain that Chicano English rules or patterns draw from the Spanish language in several ways. Many of the phonological aspects of this dialect correspond with Standard Spanish phonemes. Because of this, it may appear that the Chicano dialect is only spoken by native Spanish speakers who are learning English. However, as discussed above, while Chicano English and learner English may share some features, Chicano English is often spoken by people who know little to no Spanish whatsoever (Devereaux, 2015, p. 199). There are also some patterns in Chicano English that cannot be explained by interference from Spanish, such as the substitution of /sh/ in place

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<sup>1</sup> Duchnowski, n.d.

<sup>2</sup> Devereaux, 2015

<sup>3</sup> Metcalf, 1979

<sup>4</sup> Barrón & San Roman, n.d.

of /ch/. Additionally, Chicano English is not just accented Standard English; there are a variety of grammatical and syntactic patterns within the dialect.

While the Chicano English dialect may contain some codeswitching, or “mixed-language utterances” (García, 2002, p. 187), it is not only codeswitching. This dialect is defined by the rules it follows, not by its use of Spanish words or phrases. Codeswitching is common among bilingual speakers, and even individuals who are monolingual may occasionally utilize common or culturally significant foreign words in their everyday speech. An example of this would be a Native English speaker using the words “bourgeois” or “déjà vu,” which are French words. In conjunction with the patterns listed above, codeswitching may be considered Chicano English, but on its own is simply that—codeswitching, not a distinct dialect of English.

It is important to clarify that, as with all dialects, there is a certain amount of variability in the way that Chicano English speakers speak. Not every speaker of the dialect will demonstrate all of the above-listed features in everyday speech. Additionally, not every individual who is Mexican-American will speak Chicano English, and not every speaker of Chicano English will be Mexican-American, or even Latino, just as not every New Yorker will use the local dialect in every situation or utterance. Rickford (1999) says the same thing about African American Vernacular English (AAVE) in his book, explaining, “Not every African-American speaks AAVE, and no one uses all of the features in tables 1.1 and 1.2 [phonological and grammatical features of AAVE] 100 percent of the time” (p. 9). Speakers of Chicano English may use certain features only sometimes, and may never use some features, or may only use features of Chicano English in their speech in certain

environments or groups. Despite this variability, these people can still be considered speakers of CE.

In their book *Language and Linguistic Diversity in the US*, Tamasi and Antieau (2014) state that "...language is intimately and inherently connected to its speakers" (p. 20). This means that, in order to determine what dialect is being spoken, we must look to the speaker. Let us consider four different instances. Speaker A is a recent immigrant who has spoken Spanish all their life, and is now learning English, is demonstrating some features of CE in his English speech. Speaker B has grown up bilingual in America, speaking both Spanish and English from a very young age; while she speaks Standard English at school, she still demonstrates features of CE in her everyday English speech among her peers. Speaker C is white and a native English speaker, but as a child has been surrounded by playmates who speak CE; as a result, Speaker C often demonstrates CE features in his everyday play among his peers. Finally, Speaker D is Mexican American, and many of her relatives speak Spanish, but she is monolingual in English, using features of CE due to the influence of relatives and peers. All of these speakers may seem to be following the rules of CE in their speech, but one of them is not a true speaker of this dialect. Speaker A may appear to be following the rules of the Chicano English dialect, but since this speaker is still in the process of learning English, he would not be classified as a speaker of the dialect. On the other hand, speakers B, C, and D are all Chicano English speakers, although they may use CE only in certain environments or within certain groups. We can see from this example that speakers of Chicano English may differ, and that it is very important to know who the speaker is in order to determine whether he or she is a speaker of CE.

### Other Nonstandard Dialects Analyzed

In order to compare the frequency with which nonstandard dialects other than Chicano English (CE) are represented within children's literature, it is important to look at children's literature which represents other nonstandard dialects. These pieces of literature which will be considered in this thesis portray three different dialects, including African American Vernacular English (AAVE), Caribbean English (abbreviated as CarE to avoid confusion with Chicano English, CE), and Cajun Creole (abbreviated as CC). These books provide data about the different dialects which are portrayed in children's literature, as well as the frequency with which they are represented, in order to determine whether these works of children's literature contain accurate representations of the dialects which they claim to represent.

AAVE is one of the most frequently represented nonstandard English dialects within children's literature, and has been studied extensively. Just as Chicano English has its own phonological, grammatical, syntactic, and morphological patterns, so too do AAVE and other nonstandard dialects. The first chapter of *African American Vernacular English* (Rickford, 1999) contains information on features of AAVE. John Rickford is a professor of linguistics at Stanford University and a leading expert in his field. This chapter gives an introduction to the dialect, as well as incorporating two tables which list 25 distinctive phonological and grammatical features of AAVE. This chapter also lists four other references on the dialect's features, written before 1999, including two scholarly texts and two shorter and less formal texts, which can be referenced if needed for more information. Another

valuable source on AAVE is a web page from the University of Alberta, Canada, entitled “Phonological Features of African American Vernacular English (AAVE)” (Pollock et. al., 1998), which has a list of AAVE features with examples, scope, and references. These sources show the main features of African American Vernacular English, which help to distinguish it from other nonstandard dialects, and to recognize its written representations.

When analyzing Caribbean English, an important source will be the British Library’s case study on Caribbean English (n.d.). This case study explains the Caribbean creole’s most common characteristics, explaining that it includes certain phonological, grammatical, and lexical features which are common across the forms of CarE. The study then lists ten common phonological and grammatical features of Caribbean English, with descriptions, as well as an additional helpful feature: audio clips of native CarE speakers using these pronunciations and grammatical constructions within their everyday speech. English in the Caribbean is incredibly variable, and features of Caribbean English can vary by speaker and by country of origin. These sources show common features of CarE, but do not encompass every nonstandard feature of the dialect for this reason.

Cajun Vernacular English, or Cajun Creole, is a variety spoken most prominently in the southern US state of Louisiana. The dialect is famous for its French influence, with some of its most distinctive features, such as its intonation patterns, /th/ phoneme replacements, and lexical differences, having direct ties to the French language. This is a wonderful example of how dialect can appear to be indicative of bilingualism, while in reality, most younger Cajun speakers do not speak French at all, just as speakers of Chicano English may not speak Spanish. Two main resources which can be used as references when analyzing

literature for representations of Cajun creole follow. The first is an article on Cajun English from PBS's "Do You Speak American?" series, which describes many of the dialect's common features. The second is a case study on Cajun creole spoken among children, which lists distinctive features of the dialect (Oetting & Garrity, 2006). Both of these sources show common features of Cajun creole, and show how these features may be represented in a written work.

The sources referred to above can be found cited in this paper's reference list. It is important to consider the features of specific nonstandard dialects, because it allows representations of these dialects to be more easily recognized. Within children's literature, dialect is often represented using nonstandard or phonetic spellings, which allow the reader to see and hear those dialect features. Children's literature is often read aloud to children, giving these dialect representations a voice. A deep understanding of how dialects such as AAVE, CarE, and CC may look and sound allows these dialects to be recognized within children's literature and evaluated for their degree of accuracy as representations.

### Pedagogical Significance

#### *Teaching Equity*

The 1954 decision on *Brown v Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* historically ruled that separate educational facilities for African American students were unconstitutional, a decision which shifted the paradigm for equal education in the United States, and paved the way for later legislation which would guarantee equal opportunity in education for all students. As discussed by Wright (2010) in his book *Foundations for Teaching English*

*Language Learners: Research, Theory, Policy, and Practice*, legislation has been passed in America which requires that all students be given equal access to quality education. One of the most important Supreme Court decisions was the Equal Educational Opportunities Act (EEOA) in 1974, which included a statement saying that states could not discriminate against any person by failing to overcome language barriers which may affect the individual's ability to participate fully in education (Wright, 2010, p. 84). These examples show the importance of equal opportunity in American schools, and the obligation that educators have to help all students to be able to participate in the classroom environment.

In keeping with this high standard for equity in education, teachers must help their students to be the best learners they can be. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs teaches that children must have their basic physiological needs, their need for safety and security, their need to belong, and their self-worth/self-esteem needs, met before they can fulfill their growth needs (Martin & Joomis, 2007). This means that a student must feel as though they are safe and a part of the group, and must have adequate self-worth, before they are able to learn and grow. Soltero (2011) also discusses the value of increasing students' self-confidence in her discussion of Stephen Krashen's affective filter hypothesis, which states that if a student does not feel safe and comfortable in the classroom the child will effectively be unable to learn; the three main factors which influence a learner's affective filter are "motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety" (p. 27). Wright (2010) explains that valuing and/or using the native language in the classroom can boost students' self-esteem, and improve their opportunities for education (p. 58-59). Because of this, "The goal of a language teacher is to increase learners' motivation and self-esteem while lowering their

anxiety” (Soltero, 2011, p. 27). All teachers are language teachers, whether they recognize it or not. It is not simply the teacher’s responsibility to teach Standard English (SE) to those students who speak foreign languages, but also to teach SE to students who speak nonstandard dialects.

*Foundations for Teaching English Language Learners* also touches on dialect, or what sociolinguists refer to as “language variation” (Wright, 2010): “Many students... in their homes and communities speak regional or nonstandard varieties of English that differ in phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, and vocabulary” and which “are rule-governed and legitimate varieties of English” (p. 38). So, dialects are rule-governed language varieties, and the children that speak them can be considered native speakers of those dialects. Since this is the case, educators should treat students who speak nonstandard dialects as Standard English Language Learners (SELLs), and be encouraged to teach these students using similar strategies as those used to teach ELLs.

A student’s home language should also be valued as a source of the child’s knowledge and linguistic competence. Wright (2010) discusses the wealth of knowledge that students have in their first language, saying “...teachers can be assured that students’ knowledge and literacy skills in their L1 [first language, including home dialect] is a strength that will facilitate their academic and English language development” (p. 55). In other words, what students already know in their first languages could be transferred into academic and language learning in English. If teachers use the L1 to draw upon students’ knowledge, they will be able to help students learn more effectively in English. Drawing a



parallel between the L1 and a student's native dialect, we can therefore conclude that teachers would be able to use transfer to teach Standard English to SELLS.

Soltero (2011) also clearly shows the importance of linguistic transfer when teaching a second language. The concept of transfer applies when learning dialect as well; Wheeler & Swords (2004) cite three insights about language that set the foundation for common terms like dialect in the language classroom: "Language is structured. Language varies by circumstance of use. Difference is *distinct from* deficiency." (p. 473). These statements confer facts about linguistics which show that all dialects are structured, and that dialect can vary situationally independently of deficiency. Students who speak a nonstandard dialect know the rules of their dialect, though they may need prompting and support to discover them. Students' deep understanding of their dialect shows an understanding of the linguistic concept that language is structured, and this is a skill which can be transferred into their learning of Standard English.

One reason that dialects of English are not often treated the same in the elementary classroom is that some dialects have a higher status than others. Noted sociolinguist Dell Hymes explains that "*Competence* as a term for ideal knowledge may overcome inequality conceptually for linguists, but only as a term for the abilities of persons... can it help to overcome inequality practically for the members of speech communities" (1973, p. 80). In other words, a person may be a competent speaker of a dialect from a linguistic viewpoint, but may still be considered unequal to a speaker of another dialect based on the status of their respective dialects. "While variation in language structures is always present, a different kind of variation lies in the public's *attitudes* toward language. 'Standard' English is

often called 'good' English while 'nonstandard' English is considered 'bad.' These judgments are not based on linguistic grounds, but on sociopolitical considerations" (Wheeler & Swords, 2004, p. 473). Thus, social views toward language varieties often play a part in the way a student and his or her native dialect are treated.

### *The Case for Contrastive Analysis*

Rickford also discusses the "Oakland Ebonics decision," wherein the school board moved to use AAVE to help African American and other students learn Standard English. It is important to note that the term "ebonics," meaning literally "black speech," is outdated and confers an idea of inferiority; the term is used by Rickford throughout his article as it was common at this time. Rickford (1996) says that while the decision has been vilified and misinterpreted by the national media, it is an important decision which deserves praise. Firstly, the Op Ed explains that the decision "...brings to national attention the fact that while existing methods of teaching English work superbly for white and middle class children, they fail miserably for working class African American children" (np). The fact that the schools are systematically failing to teach one group of students as well as they are able to teach another group of students speaks volumes. This sort of a trend needs to be addressed in schools, and this decision gave national attention to the issue.

This is not the only benefit to the decision; according to Rickford (1996), because AAVE is indeed a structured language, so that contrastive analysis can be used to compare between Standard English and AAVE. Contrastive analysis is a tool which can help students learn SE, and may help them to learn the dialect more quickly, which is the ultimately goal. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the linguist explains that "...studies from over three

decades, both in this country and abroad (e.g., Sweden) show that teaching methods which DO take vernacular dialects into account in teaching the standard work better than those which DO NOT” (Rickford, 1996, np). He cites studies done, such as one in Chicago, wherein two groups of university students were taught Standard English; one group was taught using the school’s traditional methods, while with the other group “...he [Hanni Taylor] raised students' metalinguistic awareness of the differences between Ebonics and Standard English through contrastive analysis, and tailored pattern practice drills” (Rickford, 1996, np). At the end of the study, the control group had shown a slight *increase* in features of AAVE in their language, while the group who was taught using contrastive analysis had almost a 60% decrease in AAVE features when attempting to write in Standard English. This Op Ed makes a strong case for the acceptance and use of a nonstandard dialect to teach Standard English in the academic classroom.

The above debate is not the only case for the use of contrastive analysis to help students learn Standard English. Dr. Rebecca Wheeler is a professor of English, and is considered to be an expert on teaching Standard English in classrooms where there are a mix of dialects spoken. She has written a variety of articles about how best to teach Standard English to students who speak nonstandard dialects, and puts a lot of emphasis on contrastive analysis. Using contrastive analysis to teach differences between dialects helps students to codeswitch in different social situations. In her article written with classroom teacher Rachel Swords, who was teaching many students who spoke AAVE, Wheeler says, “After just one year of using a contrastive approach, her [Swords’] black and white children performed equally well on year-end benchmarks” (Wheeler & Swords, 2004, p. 479).

Metcalf (1979) gives words of advice to teachers of students who speak Chicano English, recommending that the school "...teach the child to read and write by relating the child's variety of spoken English to the standard written forms" (p. 18). He does not believe that a school should try to change a child's dialect, but encourages the use of contrastive analysis in the teaching of reading and writing. Further, he encourages teachers to educate themselves and work to discover whether their students are truly fluent in English, while simply differing in pronunciation from a Standard English speaker. In this way, Metcalf (1979) also values the use of an additive approach when teaching students who speak nonstandard dialects.

González (as cited in Ornstein-Galicia, 1984) also values an additive approach when teaching young children the standard dialect of English. As discussed above in the "Chicano English" section, González writes on the range of this dialect, and questions what exactly can be considered as "Chicano English." However, he does state that if we can indeed view Chicano English as simply a nonstandard variety of English, which is no better or worse than any other dialect, then "...the schools would seek to *add* the Standard variety to the Chicano variety and not replace one with the other" (González, as cited in Ornstein-Galicia, 1984, p. 35). He seems to take for granted the idea that once a dialect is recognized as such, teachers and institutions will immediately recognize their value and not seek to eradicate the home dialect. However, this is not always the case, and many times schools are still hesitant to allow nonstandard dialects to remain in their classrooms. González's assumption that teachers would feel this way, though, shows his clear support of an additive approach when teaching children whose home dialects are different from the standard variety.

These pedagogical sources show, through decades of research, that using a native language or dialect in teaching helps to build language skills. The use of strategies such as contrastive analysis helps students transfer their language skills to the learning of Standard English. This is also a way to employ the additive approach to teaching SE, which lowers the affective filter and has been proven to help students learn language. For these reasons, including students' native dialects in classroom teaching can help students to learn Standard English.

### 3. Methods

The first research question considered within this thesis is which dialects, other than Standard English, are represented within children's literature. This thesis mainly considers children's literature written for kids ages birth through grade five, with some investigation into young adult literature. Having found which dialects do exist within a sample of children's literature, the thesis will investigate the frequency of these representations within the narrative and dialogue of a representative text sample. Secondly, the research will investigate the degree to which the Chicano English dialect is represented in children's literature, and will select commonly cited examples of children's literature containing this dialect, to be analyzed in order to determine whether they contain accurate representations of Chicano English.

The first step in this project was to gather a collection of books that are representative of contemporary children's literature which contain non-standard dialects; this was referred to as the NS (nonstandard) Sample and consisted of more than 50 books. These books were found and acquired mainly through web research, recommendations from experts, and subsequent online purchase as well as borrowing from the Western Oregon University library. An initial analysis of these books was conducted in order to determine which ones actually contain representations of nonstandard dialects. For this preliminary analysis, I looked at three things; first, whether the author stated an intention to represent a nonstandard dialect; second, whether another source listed the text as containing a nonstandard dialect; and third, whether representations of a nonstandard dialect were obvious in an initial analysis of the text. I also used this primary analysis to

determine which nonstandard dialects were most commonly represented in children's literature.

From the general NS Sample, I created a sub-group of children's books that, according to outside sources and my cursory examination, might contain Chicano English representations; this was referred to as the CE Sample. This sample was gathered purposefully to fit within the topic of this thesis. I searched out children's books which were 1) labeled as "Chicano" or "Spanish dialect" stories, 2) had a Chicano/a author, or 3) contained Chicano/a characters or a Chicano community. These books were found through web research, contacting children's literature experts in Western Oregon's Education program, and contacting classroom teachers. I contacted a number of children's literature experts at Western Oregon University, such as Dr. Marie LeJeune and Dr. Patty Beauchamp, as well as eight classroom teachers. If an author's name was provided by these experts, the book from that author which was most commonly cited by other sources, such as web sites, was selected. I looked at a sample of approximately 25 children's books for the initial CE Sample. After the initial analysis, I determined that only five texts potentially represented CE so these were included in the final CE Sample for detailed analysis.

The second step was to examine all of the books in the NS Sample, including the CE Sample, in order to discover whether or not we can determine the authors' intentions regarding the representation of nonstandard dialect. I looked at the author comments within the texts. Some of the authors had notes specifically stating the dialect that they were hoping to represent, while other books were cited by online resources to contain these dialects. These notes helped me to determine which nonstandard dialect was being

represented. I included both books where the author explicitly stated their intentions, and books where the author did not, in the NS Sample. The author explicitly stated his or her intention to represent dialect in three of these books. For every book in the NS Sample, I did an initial analysis for dialect, and selected texts based on those which upon initial analysis contained representations of the nonstandard dialect.

Of the 12 texts in the entire NS Sample, I selected four books that contained AAVE, one that contained CarE, and two that contained CC. These texts were selected based on the dialects which they represent, whether dialect representations were found in these texts during the initial analysis, and the number of books containing this dialect which were available. (For example, there were many texts available which represent AAVE, while there were very few containing CarE; so, five texts containing AAVE were selected, while only one text containing CarE was selected.) The texts which I have selected for analysis which claim to represent AAVE are *She Come Bringing Me that Little Baby Girl* (Greenfield, 1974), *Working Cotton* (Williams, 1992), *Flossie & The Fox* (McKissack, 1986), and *Mirandy and Brother Wind* (McKissack, 1988). I have also selected one text which claims to represent Caribbean English, *Grannie Jus' Come!* (Sisnett, 1997), and two texts which claim to represent Cajun creole, *Feliciana Feydra Laroux: A Cajun Tall Tale* (Thomassie, 1995), and *Feliciana Meets d'Loup Garou: A Cajun Tall Tale* (Thomassie, 1998). I have selected significantly more texts which claim to represent AAVE as a result of the fact that this dialect is much more common within children's literature than the other two dialects.

I selected five books for the final CE Sample. I analyzed the books in the CE Sample to determine whether these texts contain CE features or are simply bilingual. It is important



to note that while doing my initial analysis for dialect on these texts, I chose not to select any texts which were solely bilingual. In a bilingual children's book, the sentences of the story are written on each page in both English and another language, or the sentences are in English on one page with a translation on the adjacent page. This is often a direct translation from Standard English to a standard version of another language. Of the 25 books in the initial CE Sample, I determined five which were adequate for further analysis for CE representations. These texts were chosen for the final CE sample based on the presence of codeswitching and nonstandard spellings with the English text. These five texts were those that seemed *most likely* to turn up Chicano English representations, although I did not see any obvious CE features within these texts during my primary analysis. At this point, I became concerned that I would eliminate too many texts from this sample, and my results would be inaccurate as a result of this. So, I kept the CE Sample larger than I had initially planned so that I could analyze a wide range of books; I kept the CE Sample at five texts, the same number of texts analyzed for AAVE, because I wanted to be sure that if there were CE representations in any of these books, I would catch them. The texts that I analyzed for Chicano English representations are *I Love Saturdays y domingos* (Flor Ada, 2004), *Born in the Gravy* (Cazet, 1993), *Isla* (Dorros, 1995), *Niño Wrestles the World* (Morales, 2013), and *What Can You do With a Paleta?* (Tafolla, 2009). Since the last book listed here is a bilingual book, I only carried out the analysis on the English half of the text. As stated above, I chose to exclude *solely* bilingual books from my analysis; however, *What Can You do With a Paleta?* contained codeswitching and possible other CE representations within the English portion of the text, which is why it was included in the final CE Sample. If,

after analysis, I found that a text contained only codeswitching, without any other CE features present, I classified it as containing codeswitching, rather than as containing CE; as defined in the literature review, in order for an utterance or a dialect representation to truly be Chicano English, it must have additional dialect features beyond codeswitching.

Due to the fact that I had difficulty finding any books which obviously contained features of the CE dialect, I expanded my search to include a sample of Young Adult fiction that seemed to accurately represent CE; I will call this the YACE Sample (the Young Adult Chicano English Sample). Because Young Adult novels are significantly longer than those texts in the children's CE Sample, I used several criteria to select one text for more detailed analysis. While looking at Young Adult novels for this sample, I used the following criteria; first, I looked for a Young Adult novel written by a Chicano/a author; second, I determined whether the characters in these books were Chicano/a themselves, or a part of a speech community with Chicano English influence; and third, I did an initial analysis of the narrative and of the dialogue of these characters, looking for representations of CE. After doing this initial analysis on five Young Adult books for the YACE Sample, I chose *Mexican Whiteboy* (de la Peña, 2008). The results of the analysis of this text will be shown at the end of the Results section.

Thirdly, I carried out an analysis on each of the selected children's books. The analysis looked at the frequency with which nonstandard dialect is represented in the narrative, dialogue (speech representations), and thought representations within each text. The frequency of nonstandard English representations was recorded on the sentence level, with each instance counting as one representation. For example, the excerpt "'Come

Grannie come, si' down right 'ere; come tek a lickle res'" (p. 11) from *Granny Jus' Come!* (Sisnett, 1997) contains 5 representations of Caribbean English (si'; 'ere; tek; lickle; and res'). I used an Excel sheet to record the data; each book was assigned a number. Pages were numbered based on the pages which contain text; page one was dubbed the first page of text, and only pages which contain text were numbered (full-page illustrations did not count toward page-number count). Since the data was analyzed on a sentence level, I used a numbered code to show which sentence was being analyzed. The code was "title.page.sentence," where "title" represents the number assigned to that book, "page" represents the page number, and "sentence" represents the number of the sentence on that page (the first sentence on the page will be assigned the number 1, and so forth). A sentence was considered to be the words between two terminal punctuation marks. If no terminal punctuation mark occurs over a number of pages (as is stylistically common in books for young children), a sentence was considered to be the words on one page, or the words between two terminal punctuation marks contained on one page.

A nonstandard feature was considered to be a representation of a specific dialect based on the dialect that the author intended to represent, as well as the phonological and syntactic features which research has found to be indicative of that dialect. I used a variety of resources on features of these nonstandard dialects, referenced in the "Other Nonstandard Dialects Analyzed" section of the literature review, in order to complete an accurate analysis. Though many nonstandard dialects have some of the same features, I considered a feature to be representative of the dialect which the author has stated is contained within the book. For example, zero past tense marker can be a morphological

feature of Chicano English, Cajun creole, and Caribbean English; however, if the author has indicated that their book is written in Caribbean English, as Ana Sisnett does in her book *Grannie Jus' Come!*, then a representation of a verb with zero past tense marker was considered in this instance to be a feature of Caribbean English.

The fourth step, once the text had been analyzed on the sentence level and the data was entered into the Excel file, was to total the sentences per book, as well as the columns showing the number of representations of each nonstandard dialect in narrative, dialogue, and thought representations in that book. The number of representations in each of the categories (narrative, dialogue, and thought) was then compared to the total number of sentences in the book, as was the total number of nonstandard dialect representations. This was shown as

$$\frac{\text{number of dialect representations}}{\text{total number of sentences}} = \text{_____ dialect representations/sentence}$$

This information helped me to compare the relative frequency of dialect representations within each text.

The fifth and final step was to analyze the young adult novel *Mexican Whiteboy* (de la Peña, 2008). This analysis was less quantitative than the analysis done of the children's texts. Instead of doing an analysis similar to the one above, I looked at certain excerpts from the text, and analyzed these to see whether they could be considered representations of Chicano English. I also looked at the character descriptions, including their language backgrounds, in order to determine whether they could be considered true CE speakers, or are simply English Language Learners. My purpose in doing this was to determine whether the Chicano English dialect is represented in an example of literature for older children,

because there were so few representations of CE in the children's literature. The results of this analysis are also recorded in the Results section below.

#### 4. Results

The results of the analysis done on the children's literature are shown below in Figures 4.1 and 4.2. The close analysis of 12 children's books selected from the initial sample of more than 50 nonstandard dialect-containing books revealed that not all of the books actually contained representations of dialect. The analysis of these books is split up in two charts, one containing data on the NS Sample (excluding CE) of seven books, and one containing data on the CE Sample of five books. Figure 4.1 contains the texts that were found to contain representations of nonstandard dialect, as well as the number of representations, where those representations were found, and the relative frequency of representations per sentence. Figure 4.2 contains the texts which were found to have no dialect representations outside of the appearance of codeswitching, and so were classified as containing codeswitching only and no nonstandard dialect (as discussed above, codeswitching can be a part of a dialect, but when only codeswitching is appearing, there is not a true representation of dialect). The *Feliciana* books contain some English-French codeswitching, but this is accompanied by clear representations of many other nonstandard dialect features characteristic of CC, so it is clear that these texts are representing the Cajun dialect. On the other hand, books such as *I Love Saturdays y domingos* which contain only a sprinkling of Spanish, and no other representations of CE dialect, cannot be said to accurately represent the dialect.

My results show that seven of the texts which I analyzed did indeed show accurate representations of the nonstandard dialect which the author had set out to represent. Eloise Greenfield does not specifically note within *She Come Bringing Me that Little Baby*

*Girl* that the text contains representations of African American Vernacular English (AAVE), but Greenfield is a children's author noted for writing African-American literature (Scholastic, 2017). In my analysis, I found several instances of AAVE representations within the narrative and dialogue. So, the intent of the author to represent AAVE within this fictional story was confirmed by my analysis of this text. The same can be said for both of Patricia McKissack's texts which I analyzed, *Flossie & The Fox* (1986) and *Mirandy and Brother Wind* (1988). Inside the jacket of *Flossie and the Fox* (McKissack, 1986), it says that the text is "...peppered with the rich Black language of the rural South," and the Author's Note states that the story is "...retold in the same rich and colorful language that was my [McKissack's] grandfather's". I found elements of AAVE represented in both of McKissack's books. I also found representations of AAVE in Sherley Anne Williams' *Working Cotton* (1992), and while the author does not explicitly state that AAVE will be represented within the text, Williams has stated that her writing was influenced by the works of Langston Hughes and Sterling Brown, who captured the way that "black people talk," and encouraged her to do the same in her writing (The New York Times, 1999). So, each text which I analyzed which intended to represent African American dialect succeeded, insofar as the author was able to accurately represent elements of the dialect.

Tynia Thomassie is explicit in her intentions to represent Cajun, as she calls it, including in her children's books an explanation of the dialect and its history, a Cajun glossary with pronunciations, and a "Recipe for a Cajun Accent." In both of Thomassie's texts which I analyzed, I found many accurate representations of what I have classified as Cajun Creole. Thus, the author's intentions and the mainstream classification of her books

as containing nonstandard English dialect representations is accurate. Ana Sisnett is equally explicit in her intentions to represent Caribbean English, the dialect which she and her family spoke when they moved from Panama, including a description of her intentions in a note on the back cover of the book. I found many common features of Caribbean English accurately represented in Sisnett's text.

A more detailed description of the dialect representations found within each of the above texts can be found in Table 4.1.

**Figure 4.1. Children's Literature Analysis, Nonstandard Dialect Representations**

#	Title	Dialect?	N <sup>5</sup>	D <sup>6</sup>	T <sup>7</sup>	Total representations	Total sentences	Total representations/sentences
1	She Come Bringing Me that Little Baby Girl	AAVE	8	6	0	14	72	14/72 = .19 dialect representations per sentence
2	Working Cotton	AAVE	56	3	0	59	38	59/38 = 1.55 dialect representations per sentence
3	Flossie & the Fox	AAVE	31	66	2	99	177	99/177 = .56 dialect representations per sentence
4	Mirandy and Brother Wind	AAVE	43	28	0	71	141	71/141 = .5 dialect representations per sentence
5	Grannie Jus' Come!	CarE	57	88	0	145	40	145/40 = 3.63 dialect representations per sentence

<sup>5</sup> Represents the number of dialect representations in the narrative

<sup>6</sup> Represents the number of dialect representations in the dialogue

<sup>7</sup> Represents the number of dialect representations in thought representations



6	Feliciana Feydra Laroux: A Cajun Tall Tale	CC	32	94	0	126	126	$126/126 = 1$ dialect representation per sentence
7	Feliciana Meets d'Loup Garou: A Cajun Tall Tale	CC	35	128	0	163	172	$163/172 = .95$ dialect representations per sentence

The results in figure 4.1 show us many things. Let us look first at research question 1a: Which dialects of English, other than Standard English, are portrayed in children's literature? From the representative sample here, we can see three dialects that are commonly portrayed in children's literature: African American Vernacular English, Caribbean English, and Cajun creole. Of course, these are not the only dialects which are represented throughout all of the children's literature in the world, and are not even all of the dialects of English which are represented; however, these are common dialects that are found in popular children's literature in the United States. Part b of research question 1 inquired about the frequency of dialect representations in the narrative, dialogue, and thought representations. The far-right column in the table above shows the relative frequency of dialect representations per sentence in each book. These frequencies range between about .2 representations per sentence and about 3.6 representations per sentence, which is a very large range. On average, these books contain approximately 1.2 dialect representations per sentence per book.

Since the range is so great, a more helpful number may be the average number of representations per sentence per book within each dialect. For example, we could use the

results from the far-right column for each of the books representing AAVE to take an average of the dialect representations per sentence in these books. For AAVE, this number would be around .7 representations per sentence per book. Since only one book containing Caribbean English was analyzed, we cannot use an average to productively describe these results; however, this book contained the largest amount of dialect representations per sentence, at about 3.6. Finally, an average of the two books containing Cajun dialect gives us approximately .98 dialect representations per sentence per book. These results inform us about the frequency with which these nonstandard dialects are represented, although as we can see, this is quite variable depending both upon the dialect and the book (the four books containing AAVE representations range from around .2 per sentence to approximately 1.6 per sentence).

As stated in the Methods section, I looked to a variety of sources to find children's books which claimed to represent Chicano English dialect. My research led me to many books, on which I did an initial analysis for dialect, and selected those which seemed most likely to contain CE representations. I analyzed Arthur Dorros' *Isla* after recommendations from classroom teachers, and after finding it on Bank Street Library's list of children's books entitled "Dialect Variations," under the classification of "Spanish Dialect Stories." This list is also where I found *Born in the Gravy* (Cazet, 1993). While these books may have contained "Spanish Dialect" by a certain definition, neither text was found to contain any representations of Chicano English, but rather contained many instances of codeswitching. Under the recommendation of Dr. Marie LeJeune, a children's literature expert at Western Oregon University, I looked into the works of Yuyi Morales and Carmen Tafolla, and found

*Niño Wrestles the World* (2013) and *What Can You do with a Paleta?* (2009). However, I discovered that each of these texts contained only codeswitching, and not the representations of Chicano English dialect. *I Love Saturdays y domingos* (Flor Ada, 2002) was found on a list posted on a children’s literature blog from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, entitled “Chicano English Vernacular: Books for Children and Youth.” *Niño Wrestles the World* (Morales, 2013) was also contained within this list. However, once again, I found that Flor Ada’s text contained only codeswitching, and no accurate representations of Chicano English dialect.

A complete record of the instances of codeswitching found in the above texts can be found in the table below.

**Figure 4.2. Children’s Literature Analysis, Codeswitching Instances**

#	Title	Dialect?	N <sup>8</sup>	D <sup>9</sup>	T <sup>10</sup>	Total CS instances	Total sentences	Total CS instances/sentences
8	I Love Saturdays y domingos	No, CS	53	53	0	106	146	106/146 = .73 instances/sentence
9	Born in the Gravy	No, CS	3	41	0	44	166	44/166 = .27 instances/sentence
10	Isla	No, CS	21	26	0	47	129	47/129 = .36 instances/sentence
11	Niño Wrestles the World	No, CS	41	0	0	41	47	41/47 = .87 instances/sentence
12	What Can You do with a Paleta?	No, CS/bilingual	13	0	0	13	18	13/18 = .72 instances/sentence

<sup>8</sup> Represents the number of codeswitching instances in the narrative

<sup>9</sup> Represents the number of codeswitching instances in the dialogue

<sup>10</sup> Represents the number of codeswitching instances in thought representations

Some of the books in Figure 4.2 contain direct translation, which was not listed under codeswitching; as mentioned in the literature review, codeswitching is the “...ability to produce well-formed and communicative mixed-language utterances” (García, 2002, p. 187). It further explains that, when codeswitching is done well, there is “...an absence of the redundance of unnecessary words which might tend to confuse meaning” (Padilla & Liebman, 1975, as cited in García, 2002, p. 187). So, direct translation from Spanish to English in a text is more often done as a means of clarification than as a representation of a real speaker’s codeswitching. The books which contained direct translation were *Isla* (Dorros, 1995) and *Niño Wrestles the World* (Morales, 2013). *Isla* contained a total of 14 direct translations, with 1 in the narrative and 13 in the dialogue. *Niño* contained a total of 1 direct translation in the dialogue.

The results of the analysis of Matt de la Peña’s *Mexican Whiteboy* (2008) found significant evidence of representations of Chicano English, especially within the dialogue. One of the first things that I looked at when analyzing this text was the characters. As discussed in the “Chicano English” section of the literature review, language is intimately connected to its speakers (Tamasi & Antieau, 2014), so *who* is speaking is incredibly important when determining whether it is indeed CE that is being represented. The main character in the book is Danny, a half-white half-Mexican American teenager who was raised by his white mother and speaks no Spanish. The book takes place while Danny is staying with his aunt and uncle in National City, California, in their predominantly Mexican community for the summer. When doing my analysis, I looked mainly at the speech of two

characters: Sofia and Uno. Sofia is Danny's cousin; she is bilingual, but is rarely shown speaking Spanish, and speaks English at home with her parents, with Danny, and with her peers. Uno is half-black and half-Mexican American, living with his Mexican American mother, and surrounded by Mexican American peers. While Uno's father's speech contains representations of AAVE, the book makes it clear that this is not the dialect which Uno speaks: "'You ain't got all the money, boy?'" Uno says, mimicking his dad's way of talking. 'That's all right, boy. I got a roof that needs new tile. Bring some boots, boy. Gonna have you up there strippin' tile and slingin' tar.'" (p. 242). This is important, because Uno's speech in the text shows similar feature representations to his father's; however, if he is mimicking his dad's "way of talking," then that must mean that is *not* the way in which Uno speaks.

Sofia's speech shows many potential representations of Chicano English. For example, on page 14, she says, "'Ain't nobody hustlin' *mi familia*.'" This single sentence contains three representations of features of CE: Multiple negation ("ain't nobody"), a shift in the pronunciation of a final consonant (as in "hustlin'", where the phoneme [ŋ] is shifted to the phoneme [n]), and codeswitching using common Spanish words or phrases (*mi familia*). On page 21, Sofia is shown using the CE feature of the understood "be": "'Ooh, you in trouble now,'" wherein the verb "to be" is dropped from the Standard English "You *are* in trouble now." She is shown using these features in most of her speech throughout the book. We know that both she and her parents must use fluent English in order for Danny to understand them, and we do see Danny's uncle demonstrating this: "'What's this mean, Danny?' ... 'How you turn out to be such a smart motherfucker, D? I *know* it wasn't nothin' to

do with your pops.' ...'Sofe, where's the yellow police tape I swiped off that fire truck last Halloween?'" (pp. 48-49). We also see representations of CE features in the uncle's speech: Multiple negation ("wasn't nothin'"), and a shift in the pronunciation of a final consonant ("nothin'"). It would appear that Sofia is fluent in English, and is in fact receiving Chicano English input from her father as well as her peers. Because of a combination of Sofia's character, and the representations of common CE dialect features in her speech, I have concluded that the author is representing Chicano English.

Uno's speech also shows common features of Chicano English. For example, on page 55, he says, "'Anyway, I ain't sure I could be no delivery boy... Showin' up in some stupid-ass uniform.'" This excerpt shows representations of the CE features of multiple negation ("I *ain't* sure I could be *no*...") and a shift in pronunciation of the final consonant ("showin'"). He also uses the feature of the understood "be": "'Why you always scared to swing the bat?'" (p. 14), as compared to the SE "Why *are* you always scared..?". He also uses these features repeatedly. Due to the fact that Uno receives little linguistic input from his father, who is not around much and left when Uno was a child (p. 144), and the fact that we know Uno does not talk in the same way as his father does, we can conclude that Uno's speech is most likely not representative of AAVE. The majority of Uno's linguistic input, from what we can see in the book, is coming from his peers and his Mexican American mother. Additionally, the features which are represented in Uno's speech are the same which are represented in Sofia's speech. So, I have concluded that the author is representing the Chicano English dialect here as well.

There are also many other speech representations from other characters which suggest that de la Peña intended to represent Chicano English in *Mexican Whiteboy* (2008). On page 65, one of Sofia's friends says, "'See ol' girl over there, Sofe?'" This could be a representation of the CE feature of elision of the final consonant, especially of /t/ or /d/. And on page 60, another of the teenagers' peers uses an inverted question: "'There was somethin' on my head, Carm?'" for the SE "*Was there* something on my head?" which is also an identified feature of the Chicano English dialect. Based on the evidence discovered in my analysis of *Mexican Whiteboy* (2014), I have concluded that it contains representations of the Chicano English dialect, unlike the children's literature which was analyzed above.

## 5. Conclusion

- 1a. Which dialects of English, other than Standard English, are portrayed in children's literature?
- 1b. How frequently do representations of non-standard dialects occur in dialogue and the narrative of a representative sample of children's books?
- 2a. To what degree is the Chicano English dialect portrayed within children's literature?
- 2b. Do commonly cited examples of children's books containing Chicano English contain accurate representations of the dialect?

1a. My research found that the most common nonstandard dialects represented in English children's literature were African American Vernacular English (AAVE), Cajun creole (CC), and Caribbean English (CarE).

1b. The frequency of dialect representations varied dramatically depending upon both the dialect being represented, and the text being analyzed. Overall, these texts contained an average of 1.2 dialect representations per sentence per book. All of the texts analyzed containing AAVE, CC, and CarE contained dialect representations in both the dialogue and the narrative. One book containing AAVE also contained dialect representations within thought representations. The frequency with which dialect was represented on the sentence level in each of these texts was between about .2 representations per sentence and about 3.6 representations per sentence, which is a very large range. For the books representing AAVE, the range was between about .2 and 1.6 dialect representations per sentence, which is an average of around .7 representations per sentence per book. The



book representing CarE had the largest amount of dialect representations per sentence, at about 3.6. An average of the two books containing Cajun dialect gives us approximately 1 dialect representation per sentence per book, with a range from .95 dialect representations per sentence to 1 dialect representation per sentence. But what do these numbers really mean?

The frequency of the dialect representations is important because it shows the depth to which the dialect is integrated within the text. For example, in the text where there are only .2 dialect representations per sentence, the dialect is not deeply integrated into the text; there are only a handful of dialect representations within the text. This small amount of dialect is much less likely to capture the true “flavor” of a dialect, or to accurately represent the way that speakers of that dialect sound. On the other hand, a text with 3.6 dialect representations per sentence shows a huge amount of dialect integration in the text; a reader can get a better feel for the dialect, and imagine the way that an actual speaker of that dialect may sound. However, that huge number of dialect representations may also interfere with the readability of the text, and alienate some readers. Those texts which have 1.2 or 1.6 dialect representations per sentence may show a less complete picture of the dialect, but this sacrifice may pay off by helping the text become more readable in exchange. The frequency with which a nonstandard dialect is represented in a text can show us both how accurate and true to a dialect that a text may be, but can also help us see how readable the text is and whether it is likely to alienate readers who are not familiar with the dialect.

2a. This question is difficult to answer, because my initial consultation of sources would have led me to believe that Chicano English was well-represented in children's literature. However, after doing either an initial analysis or a full analysis for dialect on the 25 children's books which I gathered that were cited as containing Chicano English, I found no books that contained representations of Chicano English.

2b. After analyzing children's literature which was cited by children's literature experts, classroom teachers, and/or Internet resources as containing Chicano English dialect, I discovered that none of these books contained accurate representations of the dialect. Instead, I found many instances of codeswitching within these texts, but no other dialect features. While codeswitching can be a feature of Chicano English, it must happen in conjunction with other dialect features in order to truly qualify as Chicano English. Additionally, many books that I found and looked at during my initial analysis were simply bilingual, with Standard English on one page and Spanish on the next. While each has its own merits, neither codeswitching texts or bilingual texts qualify as accurate representations of the Chicano English dialect. So, unfortunately, I found that the answer to my final research question was, conclusively, no.

The fact that I was unable to find a single children's book which accurately represents the Chicano English dialect is significant for several reasons. Firstly, this shows that while Chicano English has been considered a dialect by noted linguists for over 30 years, it is still not as established a dialect as AAVE, or even as Caribbean English or Cajun creole. Secondly, it is significant because of the huge influence of Spanish in America, and the large population of Hispanic-Americans in the country and in our public schools. Despite

there being many more Hispanic-Americans who are much more widespread than speakers of many other nonstandard dialects, there is still less representation of this dialect in literature than there is of other nonstandard dialects. This shows that Chicano English is still less prestigious or less established than these other dialects. Finally, it is significant that no representations of this dialect were found in children's literature because there *were* representations of such found in young adult literature. So, while it may be true that Chicano English is not considered to be an established dialect of English in the same way that AAVE or Cajun creole is, we can see that it *is* being recognized and used by authors in texts targeted at older readers. Its absence in children's literature may be an indicator of its lack of prestige, as it may be due in part to authors or publishers not believing that it is appropriate to use this type of speech in a text targeted at young children. Additionally, many of the texts written in other nonstandard dialects are framed as historical tales, having happened in the past; this is true for two of the texts analyzed containing AAVE, and both of the texts analyzed containing CC. Chicano English, being a more recently established dialect, does not have these types of historical tales associated with the dialect, and may therefore be considered less prestigious as a result of this. In conclusion, I have been unable to find any representations of the Chicano English dialect in children's literature, showing that this dialect is most likely considered to be less established and/or less prestigious than other nonstandard dialects of American English.

As an Elementary Education student and future teacher, I looked at this thesis not only through a linguistic lens, but also through the lens of an educator. The pedagogical implications of the information contained within this thesis are a key component of it. In the

Pedagogical Significance section of the literature review, sources show that explicitly addressing nonstandard dialects in the classroom can help speakers of these dialects to learn Standard English. Using books containing AAVE for read-aloud time, and discussing the differences between that dialect and Standard English, can help AAVE speakers learn Standard English. Without books containing CE available for teachers of CE speakers, these teachers are at a disadvantage for teaching Standard English to those students. This also puts students who are CE speakers at a disadvantage for learning Standard English. Additionally, the Pedagogical Significance section shows that when students see their own identities reflected in literature and within the classroom, they feel more comfortable and included, and are more likely to succeed in school in the future. If CE-speaking students are unable to see their language reflected in literature, they not only miss out on an aspect of language learning, but also on a feeling of inclusion, which could negatively affect their future success in school. Overall, this lack of books containing CE representations could have a negative effect on the school careers of students who speak Chicano English.

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