

**Filozofická fakulta Univerzity Palackého**

# **Negative Inversion in African American English**

Master's Diploma Thesis

**2017**

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**Filozofická fakulta Univerzity Palackého  
Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky**

# **Negative Inversion in African American English**

## **Diploma Thesis**

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Počet stran: 70

Počet znaků: 129 785

Olomouc 2017

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V Olomouci dne 04.05.2017

Bc. Markéta Fořtová

Děkuji vedoucímu diplomové práce Jeffrey K. Parrottovi za užitečnou metodickou pomoc a cenné rady při zpracování diplomové práce.

V Olomouci dne 04.05.2017

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**Abstract**

The aim of this diploma thesis is to compare various hypothesis on the structure of Negative Inversion (NI) in African American English (AAE). The work will consist of three parts. The first will describe various features of AAE, starting with the labelling of this English variety, continuing with the question of origin and ending with overview of the most highlighted syntactic AAE features. The second, theoretical part will focus on Negative Inversion (NI) and various possible approaches of analysing this phenomenon. Three main theories will be described and compared. In the third practical part my own collected examples will be added and put under each described theory, to show possible and impossible ways of analysing.

**Key words:**

Negation, negative inversion, auxiliary inversion, existential structure, expletives, tag questions, complementizer phrase, negative focus, scope of negation

## **Abstrakt**

Cílem této diplomové práce je porovnání odlišných hypotéz týkajících se struktury záporné inverze v Afro-americké angličtině. Práce je rozdělena do tří hlavních částí. V první části je položen teoretický základ znalosti hlavních problémů týkajících se této anglické variety. Od otázky označení pro jazyk, přes jeho prameny až po syntaktické znaky typické pro Afro-americkou angličtinu. V druhé části teoretické popisujeme tři hypotézy týkající se negativní inverze. Čtyři teorie popisující rozbor negativně inverzních vět jsou zde popsány a porovnány. Třetí, teoretická část pracuje s výše popsanými hypotézami o struktuře negativní inverze. Předložená data v této části jsou sesbírána z televizní show a jsou převedena a analyzována pod jednotlivými hypotézami.

## **Klíčová slova**

Negativní inverze, inverze pomocných sloves, existenciální struktura, zjevný předmět, negativní ohnisko, absolutní negace, invertovaná větná struktura, neobrácená větná struktura

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# 1 Introduction

The goal of this thesis is to closely examine the system of negation in African American English (hereafter, AAE). Over recent years, negation has received a close attention and offered interesting findings. Many researchers had studied negation into detail and offered innovative interpretations of the phenomena called negative inversion (NI), which is the type of negation that is in the focus of this work. Amongst linguists working on this topic we can find names such as Lisa Green, William Labov, Jeffrey Parrott, Jessica White-Sustaita, John Foreman, Peter Sells or James Weldon. I am following their research and offer the readers a critical overview of the main theories and ideas. Throughout this thesis I will focus on supporting the hypothesis that negative inversion carries special focused negative reading. This premise is supported by the inequality of the inverted and un-inverted structures within bigger utterance blocks than just one sample sentence. This proposition is backed in the theoretical background and by collected examples which will be further discussed in sub-chapter 4.3.

First of all, I am going to briefly explain what NI is in AAE. Negative inversion has the same structure as interrogative sentence in General English (GE)<sup>1</sup>. It differs from interrogative sentence by intonation and meaning. Thus sentence such as “*Can’t nobody save you.*” is in AAE not understood as question, but as declarative sentence. In the field of negative inversion there are four main hypotheses describing the NI structure. Those hypotheses need to be discussed in a greater detail. They are labelled as follows; Existential, Auxiliary Inversion, Neg-Criterion and Neg-Focus. The theory discussed first in my thesis, is the Underlying Expletive Hypothesis it explains the special word order in NI with a help of existential clauses containing a deleted or null expletives. The second theory explains the different sentence structure with an auxiliary movement, “where the auxiliary verb undergoes movement similar to the question forming.” (Foreman, 1999, p.9) The theory of Neg-Criterion shares the view that auxiliary undergoes movement, however the starting point as well as the final place of auxiliary verb

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<sup>1</sup> The label ‘General English’ is used instead of ‘Standard English’. Following Lippi-Green’s research about the SE mythology, she states that “Given all the facts about the way language works, a spoken standardized language can only be understood as an abstraction.” (Lippi-Green, 1998, p. 53). I adopt her ideas therefore throughout the thesis the better fitting term GE will be used.

differs from the auxiliary inversion approach. With Negative Criterion the auxiliary raises from internal verb phrase (VP), into the head of inflectional phrase (IP). Meanwhile in the auxiliary theory the auxiliary verb is moving to the head of complementizer phrase (CP). In the Neg-Focus hypothesis, the auxiliary is positioned in the leftward periphery within the extended CP.

After the analysis of these four theories is presented, my own examples are given to represent the practical usage of negatively inverted structures. The illustrations are either from my own research, rap songs, online videos or from available literature. The cases of NI in theoretical part are mainly from the presented literature, meanwhile the examples in my practical part are my collected data. The collected examples are always cited and time stamped. Before we start with the issue of analysing NI, I find it crucial to look at African American English from the bigger picture, to better understand the issues concerning this language and explain the extensive research that had been conducted on this particular English variety.

## 1.1 Disclaimer

*“African American English is not Standard English with mistakes.”* (Pullum, 1999, p.1)

I am introducing the thesis with the quote from the article by professor Geoffrey K. Pullum. The title of his article summarizes the basis for all the research that was done on this English variety. To many, especially lay people, AAE remains slang or even, badly learned English. The speakers of AAE were always looked down upon, and the question of linguistic profiling is still valid today. In a good amount of studies, we can find a note about how the features of the language are stigmatized. That is why I feel the need to add a disclaimer about racial issues connected with this English variety.

The label itself suggests that speakers should be African-Americans exclusively, it is not always the case. It is important to realize that language is not crucially connected to the race, but to the surrounding in which one grows up. It is possible to see white speakers speaking AAE and similarly black speakers to speak General English (GE). The speakers may often feel stigmatized therefore during field studies we may come across certain anomalies, for example hypercorrections. Some speakers may have access to two registers and may switch



back and forth depending on the surrounding or the audience. It is not impossible to see a white policeman speaking AAE and African American speaking English without features directly connected to AAE.<sup>2</sup>

African American English is one of the most studied and documented varieties of English in the United States (Ricento, 2013, p.281). There has been an extensive research conducted on AAE's various topics such as the questions of its origin, unique lexicon, phonology, morphology and also syntactical structures. The problem that arises with this variety is that it has developed from English, so hearers find it difficult to understand that it has evolved into a language with its own rules. The words remained the same, however they do not necessarily create well- formed sentences in the same order, or mean the same things.

## 1.2 General Overview of AAE features

For the purpose of understanding this variety and phenomena that are connected to the main topic, several AAE features are introduced. Starting with the labels for language itself, discussing the question of origin, continuing with the unique lexicons and finish off this subchapter with limited account of syntactic features, namely the copula absence and habitual be.

As every language AAE has its own history. Its history is disturbing and partially reflected in the labels which were used to refer to the language. The labels reflect political and social situation in the United States. The first label emerged at the dawn of all studies and it was the Negro dialect or Negro English. Later, the label of Black dialect and Black English Vernacular (BEV) emerged.<sup>3</sup> Today we use politically correct term African American English (AAE) or African American Vernacular English (AAVE), depending on the preference of individual researcher. Both labels are acceptable and are equally frequent in use.

The question of origin is not yet completely resolved. The discussion is whether the AAE speech comes from Creole or it is English based. Three main hypotheses are proposed on the question of origin.

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<sup>2</sup> This case occurred during my previous field work on AAE. For detailed transcription of the interviews see: Fořtová, Markéta. "African-American Vernacular English: A Field Study." unpublished bachelor thesis, Univerzita Jana Evangelisty Purkyně, Ústí nad Labem.

<sup>3</sup> Introduced by William Labov in his book *Language in the Inner City: Studies in the Black English Vernacular* (Green, 2001, p.7).

The Anglicist hypothesis, emerging in mid 60's, which basically states that "The speech of African- Americans was derived from British based dialects" (Wolfram & Thomas, 2002, p.10). and that "AAE's distinct features represent retention from an earlier, less SAE-like stage of the language." (Lanehart,2015, p.24). The second view is the Creolist hypothesis, strongly supported by William Steward and J. L. Dillard. Their view that AAE was derived from Creole variety is still not completely turned down and even the biggest critic of the creole origin admits that "regarding the emergence of AAVE, the evidence appears to speak against some creole origins." (Lanehart, 2015, p. 36). Meaning that there are still some features of AAE that can be attributed to creole. The creole hypothesis is not proven to be false completely.

The third hypothesis is called Neo-Anglicist or English Origin Hypothesis (EOH). This hypothesis assumes that the "English component of AAE has become obscured over time, as the variety has undergone its on internally driven change." (Lanehart, 2015, p.23). The ongoing debate has not yet reached its consensus and because all the issues about the origin brought some valid points from both sides of the continuum, Gerard Van Herk proposes the Hybrid Position. "In which he mixes the most prominent features from both camps, thus admitting some features might have creole origins without being evidence of a widespread earlier creole." (Lanehart, 2015, p. 30)

Apart from the origin linguists also study AAE's unique lexicon in which "The entries are also English words that occur in other varieties of American English, but they have different meanings and may be used in different linguistic environments." (Green, 2002, p.13) Those are called camouflage words. The example might be the word "kitchen". In GE it refers to the place where we cook, in AAE it refers to "the nappy hair at the nape of the neck." (Major, 1994, p.271) There are lexicons of AAE and amongst the most famous ones would be: Geneva Smitherman and her *Black Talk: Words and Phrases from the Hood to the Amern Corner* or Clarence Major *Juba to Jive: A dictionary of African American Slang*.

Linguist devote a great deal of attention to AAE's syntactic properties. On the syntactic bases, researchers managed to prove that African American English is governed by rules which are in some cases different in GE. Amongst the most studied syntactic features belong the study of copula. Copula serves as connecting link between subject and predicate and it is it's absence that is the single most

highlighted feature of AAE<sup>4</sup>. The examples (1a) on copula absence comes from my previous field study in Texas and reality show *Beyond Scared Straight* (BSS).

- (1a) a') Jamiah still here. (line 83, interview 1)  
 b') Uhm, she my niece. (line 102)  
 c') They cute. (line 222)  
 d') You that tough? (2:34) BSS 3x1

The copula absence is one of the visible features and it evokes the feeling among lay people of incorrect grammar. “Copulae can not be deleted randomly but its deletion is governed by set of syntactic rules.” (Bender, 2000, p.95). Labov (1972) suggested that those rules are phonetically based and thought of a simple rule: “When GE can contract, AAVE can delete. When GE cannot contract, AAVE cannot delete” (Labov, 1972, p. 66). This simple rule did not hold, when other researchers went to study the copula. Dawn Hanna (2001) disproved Labov’s findings.

The next highlighted feature is the use of so called habitual *be*. Habitual *be* is a verbal marker, that does not have auxiliary properties, but simply states that the action is taking place habitually, not right now. When we have sentence with habitual *be*, we often use glosses such as *usually/always* because those resemble the meaning in GE. It can be seen in the sentences in bare or uninflected form only as in example (1). It occurs in the sentence before verb, adjectives, nouns, prepositions and adverbs and can resemble the usage of uninflected *am, is* or *are*. It is not specific only to AAE, but other English varieties such as Hiberno English.

- (1) a) She *be*<sub>ASP</sub> eating beans. (24:37) BSS 6x4  
 b) He *be*<sub>ASP</sub> beating on his little brother. (13:22) BSS 8x1  
 c) Jamiah *be*<sub>ASP</sub> breaking curfew. (24:12) BSS 6x6  
 d) I don't *be*<sub>ASP</sub> on streets no more. (40:00) BSS 2x2  
 e) I *be*<sub>ASP</sub> putting roaches in my container here. (10:15) BSS 3x1

In this introductory section we have focused on the most highlighted features in AAE. We have reviewed the origin hypotheses, briefly discussed semantics and

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<sup>4</sup> It also a feature that is studies to prove Creolist hypothesis

outlined syntactic anomalies. It is important to have a bigger outlook on the entire language variety before we focus strictly on syntactical properties of negative inversion.

## 2 Negative Inversion in African American English

### 2.1 Negation in African American English

Negation in AAE is created similarly to general English. Words are organized in the same order, however AAE allows different combinations. It is possible to observe several types of negation, some are common with general English, some are specific to AAE. Amongst the more specific we can place *ain't*<sup>5</sup> or negative concord. Negative concord is often compared to French way of negation. Negation in French consist of two elements *ne-pas*, that surround the main verb. In AAE it causes no trouble to use negated auxiliary and negated indefinite noun within one sentence. For example, in general English we would have sentence such as (2a), with verbal negation realized though the negative polarity item only. That works fine but speaker of AAE would express the same idea by something like this (3a) - by adding auxiliary negation after negative polarity item. According to Pullum “African American English is negative concord language that requires agreement between negative particles.” (Pullum,1999, p.50). “Negative concord languages do not permit the negation to occur within the VP alone.” (Horn, Kato, 2003, p.6). So the main difference between general English and AAE is that negative polarity items (NPI) in general English are sufficient enough to create negation by themselves, meanwhile AAE needs true – auxiliary negation to be added. Keeping this in mind, it is normal to see an additional negative element after verbal negation. “The difference between general English and AAE, is that auxiliary and object can be both negative.” (Green, 2011, p.76.). The strong sensitivity to negative polarity is demonstrated on the ungrammatical examples (2b) and (3b) – where (3b) would be accepted by speakers whose speech moved closer towards general English variety.

- (2)           a) I saw **nobody**.  
              b) \*I saw anybody.
- (3)           a) I didn't see **nobody**.  
              b) \* I saw nobody.

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<sup>5</sup> The word itself is not specific to AAE, however the preference by which it used in this particular variety is striking.

The verbal negation of auxiliaries with *not* and lexical verbs with *do*, is common within other varieties. The most frequent negator in AAE is the particle *ain't*, which is attested to substitute for *be+not*, *have+not*, *do+not* and *did+not*. This particle is also observable in Southern White speech, but never substituting past tense *did+not*. The usage of *ain't* for *did+not* is thus exclusive to AAE. Negative concord is much less used in other varieties, but we cannot say it is completely exclusive to AAE. Another key negation is negative inversion, it is also observable within Southern White Speech such as for example West Texas English, which is the main focus of John Foreman's analyses. However, NI is not exclusive only to the New World varieties of English as Sustaita (2010) falsely proposed, but examples of NI structures were found for example in *Harry Potter and The Sorcerer's Stone* written by British writer J.K.Rowling.

(4) "Can't have, "Hagrid said, his voice shaking. Can't nothing interfere with a broomstick expect powerful Dark magic - no kid could do that to a Nimbus Two Thousand." (Rowling, 1999, p. 190, as cited in Foreman, 2015, p.139)

NI construction is thus not exclusive to the varieties within North American continent, but can occur in British English varieties as well. There are suggestions for further research to examine the relationship between NC and NI. Nonetheless when NI is attested even in non-negative concord languages, the extent to which NI might be connected with a phenomena of negative concord remains unclear.

### **2.1.1 *Ain't***

One of many possibilities to create negation is with the help of particle *ain't*. It is not the occurrence of *ain't* that makes this particle interesting in the study of AAE, it is it's preferredness over any other type of negated construction, that makes it worth mentioning. "This particle is said to be the most stigmatized word in language and also a social marker, distinguishing class." (Singh, 2012, p. 2). It has two basic syntactic properties. It stands in function of auxiliary and has a copular use. *Ain't* is fundamental negator. It exists only in contracted form. It is impossible

to see *Ai not* negation. This particle is tense and person neutral, meaning there is no subject-verb agreement observable. It can be substituted for *be* in copular use (5a) and *be* in auxiliary use (4b), *have* (5), *do* (6) and *did* (7) + not. It is crucial to point out that *ain't* can substitute only the verb *do* in the past. The substitution for past tense *do*, seems to be reported in AAE exclusively. No other English variation has it. This past tense variation appears to be recent phenomena that was only rarely reported in ex-slaves narratives, suggesting a language development.

- (5) a) I ain't no superman. (21:34) BSS 3x12  
b) She ain't gonna do what we tell her. (35: 17) BSS 2x2
- (6) I ain't got my daddy around. (02:27) BSS 1x4
- (7) I ain't know why I am here. (17:36) BSS 8x1
- (8) I am here for a murder I ain't even do. (17:12) BSS 6x3

*Ain't* has the property of being person neutral meaning that the verb does not inflect for 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular (9), as it would in general English. It remains the same all across the board. The particle *ain't* introduces nothing new in the system of language. General English has also particles that are same with every person, those are modals such as *will, can, may and must* (10).

- (9) I ain't there. You ain't here. She ain't here. We ain't here...
- (10) I may be there. You may be here. She may be there...

*Ain't* takes properties of auxiliary verb (**NICE** properties). It accepts **N**egation (11), precedes subject in interrogative sentences which accounts for **I**nversion (12). Takes **C**oda (13) and allows **E**llipsis (14). Even though it might look like it, even from my examples, *ain't* does not occurs only in the 1<sup>st</sup> person, but its occurrence with personal pronoun *I* is quite frequent.

- (11) I ain't trying to come here (29:19) BSS 6x4
- (12) Ain't I trying to come here?
- (13) It tastes good, ain't it? (14:57) BSS 3x11
- (14) I ain't trying to come here, you ain't either. (16:13) BSS 9x9

As it was mentioned above, particle *ain't* also serves as a copular verb. It means that it serves as connecting link between subject and predicate and can be converted to *be* in general English. We can also observe copulae with progressive aspect and in passive use. It frequently occurs with negative concord (15), and also in negative inversion constructions (16).

(15) That ain't being no man. (35:47) BSS 06x04

(16) Ain't nobody there for you. (18:40) BSS 07x06



### 2.1.2 Negative Concord

As it applies to other AAE features, there is a strong tendency for speakers of general English to perceive negative concord as illogical and ungrammatical. Following the logical rule that two negatives cancel each other out to make positive. “This rule applies only to logical forms, not the grammatical ones.” (Huddleston, Pullum, 2002, p.847). We speak about negative concord (NC) when a single semantic negative is expressed multiple times within a sentence, creating agreement between those negative elements. Negative concord is sometimes referred to as double negation, however this label is deceiving. The recurrence may happen unlimitedly, as long as human working brain is able to comprehend it. In complex sentences, not just twice, as the label would suggest. Look at the example (17) with eleven cases of negative elements. For these reasons the label of multiple negation or negative concord is preferred. “Within negative concord languages one negative element triggers negative agreement with subsequent negative elements.” (Lanehart, 2015, p. 366) We can see a reoccurring number of negative elements in one sentence. Those additional negative elements do not add any extra negative force and speakers comprehend this as a case of one ongoing negation.

(17) I **ain’t** gonna sit here in **no** chair and let **no** crazy lawyer tell me **no** lies about **no** law, that **no** judge told **no** smart ass clerk to look up in **no** book that **no** smart politician wrote or **nothin’** like that **nohow**.

(Labov, 1978, p.147.)

(18) I **didn’t** eat **no** cake **nowhere**/with **nobody**.

Those extra negative elements are labeled “pleonastic” because they do not add extra information to the sentence. They are not restricted to a single clause and therefore can extend to other clauses in the sentence as well. Negative concord is not often seen in general English, but it is well documented in its earlier stages such as Old English (19) Middle English (20) and Early Modern English (21). All three examples are cited from Howe & Walker, 2000, p15.

(19) & ne bid daer naenig ealo gebrowen mid Estum  
and not is there not any ale brewed among Est  
“and no ale is brewed among Est” (Orosius)

- (20) But nevere gronte he at no strook but oon  
 But never groaned he at no blow but one  
 “But he never groaned at any of the blows but one” (Canterbury Tales)
- (21) I cannot goe no further.  
 “I can not go no further.” (Shakespeare, As You Like It)

General English today allows further negation of single logical negation in some cases but negative concord occurs much more frequently in many non-standard varieties. For example, in White Southern Speech.

Negative concord is standard way to negate in many languages. Take for example Czech sentence in (22), where there are two negative elements used, and in (23), where we can see three negative elements used. There is nothing illogical about negative concord. General English does allow for certain features to be marked on more than one word without a problem. If we take number as an example: *There are seven students that hate syntax*. Plurality is reflected on verb *be* and noun *student*. The numeral seven could be efficient enough, creating sentence like: *\*There is seven student that hate syntax*. The plural is marked on three elements in the clause. It is the same case with negation. It is marked on more places than just the verb, and similarly with the plural, it does not mark the sentence with emphasis.

- (22) Nic            jsem            neslyšel.  
 Nothing    I have            not heard.  
 “I heard nothing.”
- (23) Nesnedl            jsem            zadny        dort.  
 Not eaten        I have            no            cake.  
 “I haven’t eaten any cake”

There is no reason to suppose that AAE is more consistent than any other English variety and it would be completely wrong to suppose that AAE speakers negate only exclusively with negative concord. Even though it is very frequent, and it is becoming almost obligatory, there are still negative sentences without NC. There are many AAE speakers recorded to use single negation (24). Equivalently to multiple negation, a single negation is also a part of the language system. Both negative concord and single negation strategy are standard ways of expressing single negation.

- (24) They didn’t like the stuff they said they liked. (Interview 2, line 463)

## 2.2 Negative Auxiliary Inversion

The group of auxiliary verbs in general allows inversion. We can observe this phenomenon in the regular interrogative clauses. Clauses with subject-auxiliary inversion (SAI) have the subject immediately following the auxiliary verb thus creating general interrogative sentence as: *Do you like milk?*

The structure of interrogative clauses and negative inversion structure may appear to be interchangeable, they share inversion property. Klima (1964) states that “The operators in interrogative and negative sentences have parallel syntactic status.” (cited in Horn & Kato, 2003, p.6). This frivolous ambiguity is often resolved not only in spoken utterance, where they differ in intonation patterns, but also in the written speech. Questions in general have raising intonation, NI constructions have falling intonation. NI is characterized by initial negated auxiliary which is immediately followed by indefinite subject (25). The subject must be indefinite and most frequently negative quantifier, in order for the sentence to be acceptable. It is impossible to see sentences such as (26). This constraint operating in NI sentences is called the Definiteness Effect (DE).

(25) Can't nobody stop it. (Labov, 1968, example 368, p. 285)

(26) \*Can't John stop it.

As the label suggest NI is licensed only in negative sentences (27). As a result of failing this condition we can observe regular interrogative sentence (28). The negation must occur on verbal level. Bare negation only by quantifier is not sufficient enough (29). Negator *not* must be in contracted form only and not in full realization (30). The inversion that takes place in the sentence is said to be optional and that's why it is not uncommon to see un-inverted forms as well (31)<sup>6</sup>. Yet at the same time, the un-inverted structures were reported by Sells et al. (1996) to occur in lesser numbers than their inverted correspondents. Therefore, the issue occurs whether those two constructions are mutually substitutive. Non-inverted sentence may have in initial position negator such as nobody in (31), or any other selection from absolute negators (*nothing, none, no*), followed by subject auxiliary

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<sup>6</sup> There is an ongoing discussion about the similarity of inverted and non-inverted sentences. I will be paying more attention to Green's findings in chapter 4. For detailed analysis, see Green (2014).

inversion. Negative Inversion would have negated auxiliary in the first position followed by absolute negator as in example (32).

(27) **Can't nobody** beat them (Labov, 1968, ex. 367.)

(28) Can somebody beat them?

(29) Can nobody beat them.

(30) \***Can not nobody** beat them.

(31) **Nobody can't** beat them.

(32) **Can't nobody** beat them.

There are other English varieties that share NI construction with AAE. For example; Apalachian English (Wolfram & Christian, 1976), Alabama (Faegin, 1979), Smoky Mountain English (Monthomery & Hall, 2004) and West Texas English (Foreman, 2015). Those varieties allow NI constructions to have expletive *there/it* or *they/ dey* in the first position, this does not apply in AAE. Green (2002) states that “The present-day AAE does not permit NI constructions that start with an expletive.” (Green, 2002, cited in White 2010, p.431) I myself have found four examples with expletives (33) which I account to the true existential constructions, where expletives are allowed and also to variation<sup>7</sup> to which expletives were accounted by Labov’s statement. “Negro<sup>8</sup> speakers will occasionally use *it* in environments which are quite natural to SE as well, but instead of the *it* referring anaphorically to a particular object, it is a general *it* referring to noting at all.” (Labov, 1968, p.301). What we have to bear in mind is that AAE is highly regionalized variety and a speaker from southern part of United States will portray slightly different features and allow different collocations than a speaker from northern or western parts. AAE must be understood in the sense of language continuum, where on one side we would have AAE closer to general English and on the other AAE that is much closer to vernacular language.

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<sup>7</sup> We have to point out that variation is not able to account for every deviation. It is not ‘anything goes’ approach, however due to the close contact between GE and AAE which brings language convergence and accommodation we may expect certain features to be acceptable in environment where it was naturally not used before.

<sup>8</sup> I am only copying this label, because it was in original quote from Labov’s work

(33) It ain't nothing to it, man. (04:53) BSS 6x4

It ain't nothing fabulous about it.

There ain't no wrestling on the ground. (27:15) BSS 04x02

There ain't nothing behind here for you. (11:07) BSS 05x04

Labov (1968), introduced the idea that negative inversion structure was thought to have an affective or emphatic meaning. His theory was then declined by many linguist, stating that emphasis has nothing to do with inversion and that it is only syntactic phenomena. Green (2014) in her article reinvents Labov's view of emphatic use and concludes that: "Speakers use them as strategy to underscore that the reference is absolutely zero or nothing/no one." (Lanehart, 2015, p.487). Green encouraged the view that inverted and non-inverted sentences are not always interchangeable, thus they not necessarily carry the same meaning. She supports her theory with the help of example (34a). This sentence is in absolute negation, meaning there is not one person that rides the bus. It would be impossible to add exception(34b). "The non-inverted counterpart (35) might have an absolute reading but not necessarily." (Green 2014, p.127). On these illustrations Green supports Labov's earlier findings. I would add from the experience with data collection, that NI occurs in the most emotionally tense situations within the TV show, which might also point towards a pragmatic differentiation. The question of emphatic reading will be further discussed in the subchapter 4.3, where Green's theory will be described in greater details.

(34) a) Don't nobody ride that bus. (Green, 2014, p.119)

b) \*Don't nobody ride that bus, just the three people from the office.

(35) a) Nobody don't ride that bus.

b) Nobody don't ride that bus, just the three people from the office.

It appears that NAI construction are not new phenomena and that they had occurred in earlier version of AAE, such as ex-slave narratives<sup>9</sup>. From the diachronic point of view, we can observe certain evolvement of AAE and differentiate between early AAE and modern AAE.

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<sup>9</sup> *Don't nobody say nothing after that.* (Ledbetter, b.1861; Bailey and Maynor 46,1.124 as cited in Sells, 1969, p.595)

### 3 Several Approaches to the Problem

In this upcoming chapter we will provide the reader with the theoretical background that one may need to successfully analyse NI sentences. We will further narrow our focus to the sentences on which Existential Analysis is applicable and differentiate them from those on which Auxiliary Inversion analysis could be used. The theoretical part will be divided into three main subchapters, where in the first two, we will concentrate on above mentioned analyses. The third part will elaborate on the alternative approaches and discuss the possibilities for future research.

William Labov had become, for the most linguist, the innovator and leader of studies in non-general English and fundamentally marked the beginning of sociolinguistics and analysis of nonstandard languages. He was also the first to describe the phenomena of negative inversion in AAE in a book called "*A Study of the Non-Standard English of Negro and Puerto Rican Speakers in New York City*" (1968). His study provided a base for many researchers who further elaborated on his findings. Labov proposed two different approaches to the single problem of the structure of negative inversion. First hypothesis deals with sentences derived from there constructions, the second one involves Aux-to-Comp movement, which may at first be portrayed as having similar structure to the question making. For further reference we will use terms coined by Sells et al., the Existential Analysis (EA) and Auxiliary Inversion Analysis (AI). Many researchers however saw a problem with dual analysis. So they started to search for an alternative view. This dispute sparked interest amongst many linguists. Some of them took a different starting point, disagreeing with Labov's separation of structures and aimed at unifying theory for both structures. Some have used the basis of Labov's work and built upon it. Amongst those we see names such as Jessica White-Sustaita with her Neg-Criterion, Jeffrey K. Parrott with NEXPLETIVE theory, John Foreman with NegP<sub>2</sub> and Peter Sells, John Rickford and Thomas Wasow with their Optimality Theory Approach (OT). Several approaches, the pluses and minuses of the analyses will be described in the chapter below.

### 3.1 Underlying Existential Analysis

We need to closely examine the NI sentences to find out how they are structured and what syntactic operations take action when those sentences are formed. There are two main theories about the structure of NI. As mentioned above it was William Labov who stated that negative inversion needs two separate syntactic analyses, differentiating between sentences with auxiliary inversion and sentences containing null expletive. In the latter case the theory is that underlying expletive pronoun is added. In most cases of general English, the expletive would be *there*, in the case of AAE this expletive is *it*. Meaning that the sentence is created in a similar pattern to a standard existential clause except the expletive is not phonetically realized or it was never initially inserted. The sentences that are able to undergo the expletive theory are only the sentences containing some form *be*. Thus sentences where initial auxiliary is *can't* or *don't* are excluded. NI are naturally bound with negative concord. Sentences that are inverted very often come with another morphological negation, sometimes there are two or three negatively marked elements in one sentence as shown on example (36a). This feature is very common but not necessary. We may find examples without following negative concord elements (36b).

- (36) a) Ain't nobody doing nothing wrong. (Sells et al.1996, ex.3)  
b) Ain't a damn thing changed. (Parrott, 1999, ex 9b)

Another unifying factor already mentioned above is DE. "The DE holds in all English varieties and is also applicable to AAE's negative inversion." (Parrott, 1999, p.418)

- (37) a) Can't nobody beat us.  
b) \*Can't John beat us.

The DE is in fact one of the strongest fact pointing towards acceptability of this theory. The fact that DE is applicable to both existential sentences and NI constructions, points toward the occurrence of some kind of expletive within NI. It can be null expletive, syntactically deleted expletive or expletive that is not realized phonetically, but certainly expletive must be present in order for DE to hold.

Another strength of this theory is that it allows us to interpret the sentences with the simplest mechanism. There is no need for multiple layered analyses with several constraints and rules. However, once we start with the analysis itself, we will point out some of the problems we will find out that this approach has weak spots and it is not all that simple after all. To the disadvantages of this theory we add the need for the second theory for auxiliary NI. The expletive approach may seem as the simplest but only a partial solution to the problem. On one hand we have tried to eliminate the need for two analyses, on the other hand what if a dual analysis is the only possible explanation. Many researchers exclude existential sentences completely from their unifying analyses. “Constructions containing existential *be* as auxiliary are equivalent of there-insertion existential constructions and their clause initial auxiliary is the result of phonological deletion of the expletive or syntactically motivated expletive absence.” (Sustaita, 2010, p. 432). Similarly, Green (2014) distinguishes and excludes existential constructions, stating that “In AAE there is a clear distinction between NI constructions and existential *it* sentences.” (Green, 2014, p. 121) We will now focus more on existential structure in GE to better understand the issue.

### ***3.1.1 The Existential Clauses in GE***

For better understanding the first theory about underlying expletive it will be useful to look at the structure of existential clauses in general English. The hypothetical underlying deleted expletive in AAE negative inversion will share properties with general English expletive and it will help us to shed some light on the problem.

The label for existential clauses is self-explanatory. It denotes the presence or existence of something. It is created with dummy subject *there* or as mentioned above *it* for AAE. The expletive has no semantic meaning and serves as grammatical subject. It is followed by a NP that is a logical subject of a sentence. Examples of simple existential sentences are shown below (36).

(38) There is a computer on a table.

There are cops on the streets.

One might ask, why it is necessary to add syntactic subjects in the English sentence, when other languages can function without it. We need to examine the basic syntactic structures to fully understand the need for the expletive in the sentence.



The syntactic schemes work as follows: Complementizer Phrase > Inflectional/Tense Phrase > Negation Phrase and Verb Phrase. CP is responsible for illocutionary force, IP/TP takes tense, mood and inflections, NegP takes verbal negation and the VP takes predicative elements. The specifier of CP does not need to be filled, but it is not the case with specifier of IP. “When the IP specifier is not filled, expletive merges to the spot to specify subject verb agreement.” (Sustaita, 2015,p.433.) In the standard varieties the rule never fails to apply, however according to Sells et.al SpecIP does not need to be always filled in AAE.

Languages with strong morphology do not need expletives. The morphology on English verbs is weak and that is why we see the need for expletives. There are two types of *there* expletives. The first one we may call existential, this expletive typically allow indefinite NP and the argument is NP itself, creating sentences such as: *There is a girl by the table.* The second one is called ‘list’<sup>10</sup> *there* and this type allows definite and indefinite NP, thus it can occur in sentences such as: *There is the restaurant, the hotel and a very nice church.* It is crucial to differentiate between the existential and list expletive and not call *there* existential, because it is not always the case.

In other languages, Czech included, existential clauses can be formed without the use of dummy subject, simply by using copula (39).

(39) V            domě        je        pes.  
          In        the house    is       a dog.

For English it is also not always completely necessary to use existential construction in order to present the existence of something. Example (40) shows us the sentence without expletive from which the example (41) arises and creates standardly formed existential sentence. This transformation is called “There Insertion” (TI) rule. “The effect of this rule will be moving the NP rightward to a position immediately right of *be*, replacing moved NP with *there*.” (Milsark, 1979, p.22)

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<sup>10</sup> For further discussion about the definites in *there* sentences see: Emily Rando & Donna Jo Napoli (1978) and their article “*Definites in there sentences*”

- (40) A dog is in a house.  
 (41) There is a dog in a house.

“*There* satisfies the structural description of well known rule of subject-auxiliary inversion, exactly as do NP in general.” (Milsark, 1979, p. 17). In the example above we can observe different structure within constituents. Example (40) offers us the following structure: [NP a dog [ VP is [ PP in a house]]]. *There* expletive triggers the inversion of VP, NP, PP in example (41) thus creating structure like this: [VP There is [NP a dog [ PP in a house]]]. According to Milsark (1979) existential sentences are produced the same way as copular sentences. The structure is for all the same: NP – AUX- be- [pred NP] Pred.

Joe is a teacher -> NP – be – [pred NP] – copular sentence  
 There is a book -> NP – be – [pred NP] – existential sentence

### 3.1.2 Existential Analysis for NI

With everything we have learned about existential clauses in GE let us have a look at the negative inversion in AAE. As we already know the form is very similar to yes/no questions. In the literature the existential clauses are often compared to copular clauses and topicalized sentences. The differences between them are numerous. The most visible distinguisher, available to speakers without deeper syntax knowledge, is the intonation which differs immensely. Meanwhile interrogatives would have rising intonation, topicalized sentences would show pausing, the NI would have the intonation falling and without pause. The reading of NI is more likely to be emphatic than with un-inverted forms, but that depends on a point of view of the researcher. Some researchers, for example Sells et al. (1996), will strictly state that pragmatics will in no way influence syntactic structures, others such as Green (2014) will argue the opposite. I am presenting two examples of NI for the readers in (42). Notice that those examples contain the same auxiliary word “*ain’t*”. The auxiliary is crucial when deciding under which analysis the sentences is analysed. Another common feature for all NI is that they occur exclusively in negative sentences and any attempt at positive inversion appears to be ungrammatical (43).

- (42) Ain’t nothing went down. (Labov et al. 1968, ex. 359)

Ain't none of the students done their homework. (Foreman. 1999, ex. 4b)

(43) \* Is something went down.

\* Are some of the students done their homework.

(44) It ain't nothing (that) went down.

It ain't none of the students (that) done their homework.

From the examples is clear that NI sentences start with negated auxiliary and that the sentences that are analysed under EA must contain some form of *be*, most frequently *ain't* will occur. It is next to impossible to analyse sentences starting with “*don't*” such as “*Don't nobody live there*” (Foreman, 1999, ex. 12b) under the EA analysis, because it fails to employ the verb “*be*”. The sentences in (42) are completely acceptable when containing a null or deleted expletive *it* as presented in (44) above, and would also work with relative particle *that* added to the sentence. According to EA sentences such as “*Ain't nothing went down*” were derived by the addition of expletive *it* and later on followed by *it* deletion. This analysis also accounts for bi-clausal structures, which is successfully proved by adding relative pronoun *that*. Take for example the first sentence, there are two verbs marked for tense – *ain't* and *went*. They do not normally occur in a single clause. “The Existential analysis has two separate clauses and so only it can account for bi-clausal structures.” (Sells, 1996, p. 602). “The deletion of *that*, which is a subject of a clause, is restricted in GE, however this operation is completely acceptable in AAE.” (Sells et al. 1996, p. 602) as shown in example (45).

(45) What's the worst thing  $\emptyset$  can happen? (Sells et al. 1996, ex.20)

I don't know what the old woman name  $\emptyset$  done the , the cooking. (ex.21)

To sum up the constraints for NI to be interpreted under EA we can conclude that to undergo existential analysis, the sentence must unconditionally contain some form of the verb *be*. The sentence containing two verbs, creating bi-clausal structures may be interpreted only with the help of EA. If the sentence fulfils one feature, the analysis is not that simple. As example we will use a sentence only fulfilling one feature, the copular sentence. There are sentences containing form of *be* (46a), but we are not able to create existential constructions out of them (46a').

(46) a) Ain't every student here yet (Foreman, 1999, ex.15)

a') \*It ain't every student here yet.

This theory presupposes that there is no movement of the auxiliary involved and is sometimes also labelled as non-movement analysis. "Existential analysis suggests that the NI word order is derived by the failure of the underlying subject to move up." (Foreman, 1999, p. 9). Thus subject remains in the internal VP position.

The majority of sentences derived from existential clauses show expletives in tag question (Sells, 1996, Foreman, 1999) as we can see in example (47a). In (47b) we see the sentence that it was derived from. "The resurfacing of expletive in tag question provides the evidence that the underlying subject has moved up to the subject position." (Foreman, 1999, p.9).

(47) a) Ain't no black Santa Claus, is there? (Foreman, ex. 19b)

b) There ain't no black Santa Claus.

There are some cases in which this rule does not apply exactly as is shown in examples (48), the example under a) would be a standard AAE form of creating tag question. The example (48 a') is the way a speaker of GE would create tags out of existential clause.

(48) a) Ain't nobody doin' nothin' wrong, are they? (Foreman, ex.17a)

a') There isn't somebody doing something wrong, is there?

Within these two examples we have noticed that only in true existential construction the expletive appeared in tags. In the NI construction we observed the resurfacing of the subject of the clause. It aligns to the theory which states that "Tag questions show an agreement with a true subject of a sentence, instead of introducing dummy pronouns." (Foreman, 1996, p.8)

"They provide evidence that (underlying) subjects of NI are in fact in the normal syntactic subject position." (Foreman, 1996, p.8) Those sentences with expletives in tag question are most likely to be derived from existential sentences. This problem further on complicates the most straight-forward analysis and in my

practical part I will examine the issue of tag questions further, with the help of AAE speakers and their judgements.

In general English, speaker gets to choose between existential sentence and regular declarative sentences. The same pattern would be expected in AAE. Parrott (2000) claims that “This alternation of sentences might also explain the optionality of NI.” (Parrott, 2000, p.419). We do not hold the same view, following Green’s findings (2014) we claim that there are pragmatic differences between NI and their non-inverted counterparts. Even though we may hear inverted and non-inverted constructions, Sells (1996) reports that: “In their corpus of AAE, NI actually occurs with greater frequency than non-inverted form.” (Sustaita, 2010, p. 440) It is completely natural to hear sentences with the inversion such as in (49) together with example in (50), but following Green, we argue that they do not mean the same thing. The scope of negation differs in them and so does the meaning. In (49) the negation is absolute, meaning there is not a single black person who will put their vote for Donald Trump as shown in alternative sentences below. In this absolute negation there is no room for exceptions. On the other hand, in (50) we generally assume that majority of black people but not all, will not put their vote for Donald Trump.

(49) Ain’t no black people voting for you Donald.

- Not even one black person will vote for you Donald.

- Absolutely nobody from the black community will vote for you Donald.

*Jimmy Fallon, Tonight Show (Aired October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016)*

(50) Black people ain’t voting for you Donald.

-Black people are not voting for you Donald.

## 3.2 Auxiliary Inversion Analysis

The second theory that was also proposed by Labov (1968), accounts mainly for the sentences not having form of *be* present in them, thus preventing existential structure. Auxiliary verbs most commonly appearing with NI are: *can't*, *don't*, *won't* and *wudn't*, respectively. The biggest issue for this analysis is: To what structure known in GE is NI closest to? This second types of NI sentences, these without verb “*be*”, are often compared to general negative inversion in GE, to yes/no questions or to being related to topicalized / fronted structures. To determine which one of these possible structures is the one closes to NI, we will elaborate on the rules and constraints for those structures and see if they fit NI structures or not.

As mentioned above, copular sentences are out of the analysis. The reason is simple. Within the structure of NI, the auxiliary verbs undergo additional movement similar to interrogative structure. “Auxiliary is in the head of the CP, while the subject is to the right in the specifier of IP, there is no landing site for expletive, thus expletives would create an ungrammatical sentence.” (Sustaita, 2010, p. 438)

If the main rule for copular NI is to have overt form of *be*, then the main constraint in the auxiliary inversion analysis is the possibility to create an un-inverted counterpart. In the example below (51a, b) we will present example of auxiliary NI together with un-inverted form and below that (52 a, b) an example of copular NI with ungrammatical un-inverted form, so the distinction is clear. I argue that apart from the distinction between auxiliary and copular sentences, there is also a semantic difference. The difference of focus. Inverted sentences loose their ambiguity because the negation is absolute. “The non-inverted counterparts are attested to be ambiguous.” (Matyiku, 2014, p.2).

(51) a) Didn't nobody see it. (Labov, ex.271)

b) Nobody didn't see it.

(52) a) Ain't nothing went down.

b) \* Nothing ain't went down.

Auxiliary inversion in GE is not a new phenomenon. It occurs standardly in question forming, within declarative sentences when negative is fronted and in conditional that do not have *if*. “Subject auxiliary inversion in GE refers to a

phenomenon, where the typical declarative word order subject- auxiliary-verb is instead realized as auxiliary-subject-verb.” (Bruening, 2015, p.1) “The first linguist who analysed auxiliary verbs was Noam Chomsky (1957) and all theoretical accounts of subject auxiliary inversion is build upon his analyses.” (Bruening, 2015, p.3). Chomsky’s proposed theory is the I-to-C movement. “In subject auxiliary inversion the auxiliary moves to the position that is occupied by complementizers like *that* and *if* in subordinate clauses.” (Bruening, 2015, p.5)<sup>11</sup>.

The similarity with interrogative structures is only within the surface realization and similar word order. The questions are essentially different in the underlying structure. “Negative questions don’t require that negation moves up to C with the modal.” (Foreman, 1999, p.9). We can have negative questions that are not negated in the auxiliary, realized in the first position such as in example (53a) and the example with raised negation in (53b). This negative raising to the modal is necessary for NI to be well- formed, we cannot have NI as in (53c)

- (53) a) Will John not be going to the party? (Foreman, 1996, ex. 22a)  
b) Won’t John be going to the party? (Foreman, 1996, ex. 22b)  
c) \*Can nobody not beat ‘em.

The NI are much closer to extraposed negative sentences in general English. I will now present the inverted structures as they could be seen in general English beneath in examples (54)<sup>12</sup> contrasted with AAE inverted structures in (55).

- (54) a) On no account must you sleep at school.  
b) Under no circumstances should you be allowed to go to the cinema.  
c) Never should you forget who is your boss.  
d) Rarely have I seen such a treatment.
- (55) a) Can’t nobody say nothing to dem peoples! ( Sells, ex. 2a)  
b) Can’t nobody beat them. (Labov, ex. 367)  
c) Didn’t nobody see it, didn’t nobody hear it. (Labov ex. 271)

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<sup>11</sup> For further discussion on the topic of I-to-C movement see Bruening (2015).

<sup>12</sup> The examples in 52, are taken from the educational site:  
<http://www.englishsenses.com/inversion.html> accessed on Monday 14, November,2016 at 12:07 pm.

d) Didn't nobody want no tea. (Green, 2014 ex. 1b)

With the examples in (54) it is possible to observe either fronted prepositional phrase (a, b), negative adverb (c) or weak negative is placed in the initial position within the sentence. It is followed by inverted auxiliary structure which does not change the sentence into question. The sentence still gets declarative reading and the structure is related to topicalization. These sentences do have emphatic reading and that is why they do not occur very frequently in the language. They are used only when the speaker wants to add additional emphasis to the negation. The label for those regular inverted sentences would be general negative inversion (GNI), since the label for negative inversion (NI) has already been established by researchers to signal negative inversion in AAE, as we can see in example (56c).

There are several differences between those two types of negative inversions. NI starts with negated auxiliary. "GNI's first elements are either negated prepositional phrase, adverb, or weak negative." (Green, 2010, p.430). NI is closely associated with negative concord reading, GNI's other elements are practically never negated. It is not okay for questions or GNI to appear in complement clauses starting with overt complementizer *that* (56a, b), this property does not hold for NI (56c).

- (56) a) \*It seems that can't you pass me the salt?  
b) \*I know that never should you forget who's your boss.  
c) I know a way that can't nobody start a fight. (Labov, ex.370)

Labov (1968) mentions the uncertainty of clause preceding negative inverted clause. He had found only two instances of a sentences like this; *He's big and can't nobody check him and shit.* example (369) and *I know a way that can't nobody start a fight.* example (370). Labov admitted the lack of data in his research to conclude whether it is possible or impossible to have embedded structures. I present a set of my own examples, from collected data to enrich Labov's findings and to clearly portray the possibility for NI to occur in embedded clauses (57).

- (57) a) In jail there is no love and don't nobody care for you. (38:40) BSS 9x1  
b) I am happy that ain't nothing came up. (44:01) BSS 08x04  
c) If I do this, ain't nobody know I did this. (19:42) BSS 07x02



The number of embedded clauses I have collected is not conclusive, but this apparent change drove Sells et al. into reconsidering Labov's study. They have concluded that: "Auxiliary Inversion can occur in embedded clauses which themselves are introduced by complementizer." (Sells, 1996, p.602). This was not presupposed to be possible under AI, because particle *that* and negated auxiliary were thought to reside in the same spot. The collected examples are supporting the expanded CP theory. The embedding is nothing unusual in AAE's negative inversion.

Another differentiation factor is the difference connected with the DE. The auxiliary in questions and GNI can be raised over definite subject (58, a, b), meanwhile negative auxiliary in NI can't precede definite subject (58c). Example (58c) would be well-formed question, however it is ungrammatical if it is perceived as NI.

- (58) a) Aren't the teachers going to the party? (Foreman, ex.27c)  
b) No sooner had Jack got in the shower ... (Foreman, ex 27a)  
c) \*Can't you start a fight.

These surrounding information distinguish NI from GNI. Even though these two structures may appear to share certain features with one another, they are not the same. They share the initial position of negated auxiliary followed by negative quantifier which is the indefinite subject of the clause. They also share the emphatic use. GNI and NI are in most cases perceived as non-canonical. Which means they have special information packaging properties, other than syntactical.

### 3.3 Alternative Approaches

A fairly new outlook on the problem is presented by younger generation of linguist, namely Peter Sells (1996), John Foreman (1999), Jessica White-Sustaita (2010) and Lisa Green (2014). Peter Sells et al. established hypothesis about constraints and their hierarchical fulfilment. They called it “The Optimality Theory (OT)”. The OT is used to solve problems with double analysis, it brings a new way of looking at the problem of NI. By using differently ranked constraints they seek to explain the structure of NI and the syntactic changes that occurred since 1960’s. “In the Optimality approach to NI in AAE, the most optional derivation places negated auxiliary in initial position without movement.” (Green, 2014, p. 122) The five established constraints are ranked as follows: In the highest position is NegFirst which tells us that negative quantifier must be c-commanded by negation. Second one is FillSpec which dictates the specifier of IP to be filled. Third in hierarchy is MinProj which allows CP to be projected only if it’s head and specifier are filled. Fourth in the pyramid is PredInt which requires predicate nominal or head DP to remain in situ. The last constraint AvExp commands the sentences to be generated without the expletive subject (Green, 2010, p.122). This innovative approach is more detailed than Labov’s original analysis. Sell et al. tried to disprove the affective component of meaning stating that “The notion of affective meaning does not seem to us to be a promising direction for the solution to the two problems of why NI crucially involves negation and inversion.” (Sells, 1996, p. 596). One of their research questions was concerned by the impossibility to create positive sentences with inversion. Sadly, by rating the NegFirst constraint to be the at the top of all other constraints, there is clearly no way to create possible examples. After realizing the outcome of the theory, they were forced to admit that: “Although examples of the form *Nothin’ ain’t happenin’* are possible in AAE, they seem to lack the communicative effect of emphasizing the negation that is associated with NI.” (Sells et al. 1996, p.616). They had to confirm Labov’s original findings about emphatic reading, which they were so fiercely trying to disprove.

John Foreman concentrates on West – Texas variety, however some of his findings are also valuable and applicable for AAE. He proposes that “The negative indefinite subject moves out of internal VP into the syntactic subject position and the negated auxiliary moves from the lower NegP<sub>1</sub> to the head of higher NegP<sub>2</sub>.”

(Green, 2010, p.123). Jessica White-Sustaita fundamentally suggested a very similar approach. “Her negative indefinite subject moves to the specifier of NegP, leaving a negative trace, and the negated auxiliary is in inflectional position.” (Green 2010, p. 123). This set of movements satisfies so called ‘NegCriterion’ and ensures negative concord reading. Neg-Criterion was developed by analogy to WH-Criterion. Thus “In the same way that the WH-criterion gives rise to wh-movement, the Neg-Criterion may lead to Neg-movement” (Haegman, 2000, p.23) Sustaita’s proposal is driven by this NegCriterion, “...which is pragmatically motivated by the preference for negative indefinite NP to be latter in the utterance.” (Sustaita, 2010, p.444) Her theory can be perceived as somewhere in the middle of strictly syntactic account provided by Sells et al. and pragmatically driven analysis by Green. In her analysis she also mentions the diachronic approach, presenting examples from LME, where expletives occurred with negative auxiliary verbs such as shall and should, but under the lack of examples and evidence from other English varieties, concludes that historical relationship is unlikely.

The third innovative approach has been described by Lisa Green (2014). Her approach elaborates on Labov’s statement that: “Negative Inversion is an optional process which gives additional prominence to the negative, and takes different forms in different dialects. It has a strongly affective character wherever it occurs.” (Labov, 1968, p.288). Green’s evaluation gives attention to context and prosodic features of the sentences more than any other study conducted before. Thanks to linking pragmatics with the structural position, she adresses the question whether inverted and non-inverted structures carry the same meaning. “Introducing [NegFoc] feature which provides insight into the role of negated auxiliary in initial position and tells us if NI differs from un-inverted constructions.” (Green, 2014, p. 138) The [NegFoc] feature attracts negated auxiliary to complementizer phrase, to focus nod on the left periphery. Following the structure of CP proposed by Rizzi (2000,2004) she further differentiates CP into several nods to which, features such as intonation, tense, mood and illocutionary force, are assigned. Her emphatic approach does exclude ‘true’ existential sentences as well as Susutaita’s theory. The sentences such as *It don’t be nothing happening* are then labelled as existential and differentiated by the expletive position in SpecIP.

These two innovative interpretations exclude existential sentences from their theories. They try to arrive at at unifying theory that would cancel the need for two distinct overlapping analyses, but in each of them we see they have excluded

certain sentences. In Sustaina's approach the copular sentences were excluded at the very beginning. OT is also not applicable to all sentences. By the exclusion of existential constructions, we are basically admitting what has Labov proposed. The need for two analyses for the reason of two separate structures.

In the sub-chapters below a brief description of proposals by Jessica White-Sustaita and proposals by Lisa Green, will be given. We have purposefully omitted John Foreman's NegP<sub>2</sub> approach. The reason being his primary focus in the paper is on West Texas English and not AAE. Another omitted approach will be Sell's Optimality Theory (OT) for various reasons. One of them being that their theory involves five constraints and it is essentially a theory of non-movement, where the fulfilment of constraints should guarantee the acceptability and grammaticality of statements.

### 3.3.1 Jessica White – Sustaita's Proposal

This analysis differs in several factors, namely in the placement of negative auxiliary and subject of the clause. The auxiliary inversion analysis places the negated auxiliary in the head of Complementizer Phrase (CP), this approach states that the negated auxiliary remains in the head of Inflectional Phrase (IP). The existential analysis places the negative subject in SpecVP, Sustaita places it in the specifier of NegP. She draws upon the NEG-Criterion, which first introduced by Haegman (1994). "In this analysis the negative subject raises out of the specifier VP to the specifier of NegP, it leaves a trace of negative head thereby satisfying the NEG-Criterion and ensures negative concord reading." (Sustaita, 2010, p.442) There are two negative elements that may reside in specifier of NegP. The covert operator and overt operator. "The negative Noun Phrase (NP) checks with negative feature on the head of NegP." (Sustaita, 2010, p.443). Focusing on subject in English we can observe two types of its position. The canonical subject position (Subject-Verb) and non-canonical subject position (Verb-Subject). By following the guidelines that weak indefinites and new information are better suited for non-canonical subject positions and old information call for canonical subject position, we can explain why DE holds in both NI and existential constructions. "It is directly linked to the preference to realize non-canonical subjects as VS." (Sustaita, 2010, p. 444)

Even though the existential construction and NI may seem to have the same structure, the position of elements within clause differs. In existential constructions the expletive resides in SpecIP, the auxiliary being in I. The logical subject of the clause (NP) is located in SpecVP. In other words, "In the existential constructions<sup>13</sup> the subject is no higher than Spec VP, in NI structures the negative indefinite NP is merged into specifier of NegP." (Sustaita, 2010, p. 445). This analysis allows expletives to occupy the open position in the Spec IP. Sustaita found the link

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<sup>13</sup> In her search for unifying approach Sustainta (2010) immediately excludes sentences such as as not being true negative inversion constructions.

(1) *Ain't nothing happenin'* (Sustainta, 2010, ex. 18)

She admits that those sentences are equivalent to there-constructions and the initial expletive is the result of phonological deletion or syntactically motivated expletive absence (Sustainta, 2010, p.432).

amongst expletives, negation and modal auxiliaries in Late Middle English (LME). According to Ingham (2000, 2003) there were auxiliaries, that occurred with expletives and negative indefinite subjects (59).

(59) Ther shall no thyng hurte hym. (Ingham, 2003, ex.413 as cited in Sustaita, 2010, p. 446)

Ingham claims that “Existential constructions occurred only with negative NPs and that negative indefinite NPs had the option to reside in the specifier NegP or in the usual DpecIP position.” (Sustaita, 2010, p.446) The question is: “Why are the expletives supposedly prohibited in today’s AAE and allowed in other varieties allowing NI, such as Appalachian English, Smoky Mountain English etc.?” Sustaita’s explained this anomaly by the inflectional morphology differences between other English dialects mentioned above and AAE. Following her conclusion, it is also possible to distinguish between early AAE and modern AAE. Thus in early AAE expletives were allowed but they are prohibited in present day AAE.

The role of expletive is to specify the thematic subject and agreement with the verb. In modern day AAE the verbal marking on main verb is absent in present tense. It is also unanimous on main verbs, even in 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular, present tense. In example (60) we observe a single verb form which is used with singular and plural subjects.

(60) I <u>eat</u> beans.	We <u>eat</u> beans.
You <u>eat</u> beans.	You <u>eat</u> beans.
She <u>eat</u> beans.	They <u>eat</u> beans.

This unity is not only visible on main verbs, but also auxiliary word *ain’t* unifies the verb morphology and is attested to unify present, future and past tenses in AAE, as shown in examples below in table 1.

<b><u>AIN'T</u></b>			
<b>GE</b>	<b>I am not going to buy it.</b>	<b>I didn't buy it.</b>	<b>I am not buying it</b>
I	<i>I ain't gonna buyt it.</i>	<i>I ain't bought it.</i>	<i>I ain't buying it.</i>
You	<i>You ain't gonna buy it.</i>	<i>You ain't bought it.</i>	<i>You ain't buying it.</i>
He / She	<i>She/He ain't gonna buy it.</i>	<i>She ain't bought it.</i>	<i>She ain't buying it.</i>
We	<i>We ain't gonna buy it.</i>	<i>We ain't bought it</i>	<i>We ain't buying it.</i>
They	<i>They ain't gonna buy it.</i>	<i>They ain't bought it.</i>	<i>They ain't buying it.</i>

-Table 1-

If we take in consideration the verbal morphology in modern AAE, it would be safe to conclude there is no expletive needed to specify agreement, because there is no morphological agreement to be specified. The language must be understood as a continuum, where on one side we have AAE that is closer to GE and on the other more vernacular form of speech. This might account for the occasional appearance of 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular distinction –s or expletive occurrence. “Speakers closer to GE will distinguish 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular and speakers closer to vernacular will not.” (Rickford, 2000 as cited in Sustaita p.449). The evidence from the early AAE signals certain changes in verbal morphology towards simplified system. This accounts for poorer to non-existent verbal morphology in modern AAE.

At the beginning of her analysis, Sustaita strictly distinguished existential clauses and claims they are not negative inversion constructions and should not be analysed as such. This distinction helps her with resolving remaining issue pointed out by Green (2006) about acceptability of sentences (61, 62) containing aspectual be.

(61) It don't be nobody drinking tea.

(62) \* It don't nobody be drinking tea.

The example (61) is an existential construction where the NP is still within VP. In the first case, the NP precedes aspectual be and resides in NegP. According to her distinction, (61) is not an example of true NI but has existential construction thus it allows expletive subject due to weak subject verb agreement. The example (62) on the other hand is true NI which undergoes NEG-Criterion operation. “Expletive

is not allowed because there is a zero agreement on main verb.” (Sustaita, 2010, p. 451).

Her analysis brings interesting findings and is a valid source for further research. By the detachment of ‘true’ existential sentences, she arrived at explanation as to why expletives are allowed in other English varieties but not AAE. This unified analysis starting point is then based on the findings that existential constructions vary immensely from NI in the subject position, thus cannot be analysed with the help of single analysis. To the NI alone the Neg-Criterion was proposed to explain the construction. The negative subject is raised to the NegP, leaving SpecVP. It does not move to the head CP as presupposed in other approaches. The specifier IP remains unfilled, therefore further instance of NI with expletive, should we find such an example, produces no problem at all. Sustaita admits that: “The approach is pragmatically and semantically motivated by a preference for negative indefinite NP to be positioned later in the utterance.” (Sustaita, 2010, p. 444) Nonetheless dismisses any affective emphasis or negative focus reading to in any way influence the syntactical structure of the NI construction.

### ***3.3.2 Lisa Green’s Proposal***

This analysis is unique in a sense that it takes into consideration the contextual parameters of the utterance. Green proposes a view “In which syntax plays prominent role in derivation and interpretation.” (Green, 2014, p. 116) However she also suggests that it is important to study the entire chunks of conversation, with their prosodic features. Never before have the researchers took pragmatic features into consideration and linked pragmatics with syntax in the way Green did. By elaborating on Labov’s earlier statement about emphatic meaning of NI, Green demonstrates a clear distinction between inverted and un-inverted structures and their negative reading. “The emphasis in this case does not mean more negative. It has nothing to do with negative concord. It is simply a type of negative focus, which may be characterized as absolute negation.” (Green, 2014, p.138) In AAE, there are several strategies how to put additional emphasis on the sentence. Negative Concord is not one of them, because it had become almost obligatory. The ways of adding emphasis within AAE may be adding negative modifier to object: “*I ain’t got no business at no two a clock in the morning looking for no*



*damn bread.*” (*Steve Harvey HBO Special, 09:20*) or modification by nothing: *That girl didn’t eat nothing.* (Green, 2014, ex 9b). Those negative quantifiers have only scope over a particular NP, VP or PP within the sentence, not over the entire sentence. “Negation can take scope over the whole sentence only if it occurs at the surface structure in a position from which it c-commands the Tense Phrase” (Horn, Kato 2003, p.6) Which is the case of NI. The scope of negation is over the entity of a sentence, thanks to stylistical fronting. In this analysis we see that negative auxiliary is in C position, where it is attracted by feature called negative focus, ([NegFoc] further on).

The similarity of yes/no questions and NI has been discussed earlier. The common denominator is the apparent auxiliary inversion. So does the negated auxiliary undergo I-C-movement as in question making? The answer is little more complex in AAE variety. Yes, there is movement to C, but no it is not necessarily the same movement as in question making. “Inversion signals question in general English but non-inversion in yes/no questions and wh-questions in AAE is typical and norm.” (Green, 2014, p. 119). There are sentences without the inversion that are perfectly understood as questions (63).

- (63) The mailman den<sup>14</sup> passed? (Green, 2014, ex.5)  
 When the mailman passed? (Green, 2014, ex.6)  
 What that is? (BSS 04x02, 28:46)

It is agreed that there is auxiliary movement involved in NI. The auxiliary is moving to C where it is attracted by [NegFoc]. The negated auxiliary in left periphery is directly linked to the meaning of NI, which is proved by posing the two structures beside each other (64).

- (64) a) Don’t nobody ride that bus.  
 b) Nobody don’t ride that bus.

The example (64a) is a clear example of NI. “Negative Inversions are argued to have additional prominence or emphasis thanks to preposing of negated auxiliary.”

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<sup>14</sup> “den is a verbal or tense aspect marker that indicated that event is in the resultant state – that it is over. It usually occurs preceding verb ending –ed.” (Green, 2002, p.62)

(Green, 2014, p.125) The reading is absolutely negated, meaning not a single person wants to ride the bus. We will employ the context of the utterance to clearly see that the sentence would be unacceptable if another sentence was added. (65a). On the other hand, if to the example (64b) we added the same additional sentence the reading would be just fine (65b).

(65) a) ?Don't nobody ride that bus number 201, just the three people who live in the country. Most of the students in this class ride bus number 99.

b) Nobody don't ride that bus number 201, just the three people who live in the country. Most of the students in this class ride bus number 99.

Green, 2014, ex. 7

Non-inverted structures are used when there is a weaker negation reading. Nobody in non-inversion means 0 or very small amount of people, but it does not have the same pragmatic meaning as nobody in NI, where the reading is absolutely zero, no exceptions. From the examples above it is clear that (65b) is ambiguous in a sense that the first negated sentence allows itself to be slightly refuted by the contradictory sentence: *just the three people*. The second allows no ambiguity and signals negative focus reading without any exceptions. The two structures are usually not interchangeable, when additional utterance added.

Structurally it works as follows. The negated auxiliary undergoes movement to the leftward periphery, under CP nod and takes wide scope over negative indefinite NP. The CP is differentiated on the basis of Rizzi's (2000) perspective onto: Force P, which takes illocutionary force, Topic P which accounts for intonation, in Focus P resides new information and Finiteness P where tense and mood are placed. (Green, 2014, p.125). The negated auxiliary then resides in CP nod, more specifically it is placed to FocusP defined by [NegFocus] feature, which results in auxiliary-subject word order. In previous study by Sustaita, the auxiliary resided within IP. Auxiliary inversion also put negated auxiliary into CP, however within this analysis it was not entirely possible to account for embedded structures. The extended CP approach gives us additional positions for preposed elements. "The structural position of the moved elements correlates with the absolute negation/ strong domain interpretation." (Green, 2014, p. 125) Not only that this leftward movement gives us explanation about the scope of negation being over the entire sentence and not just over certain clause, another advantage might be

within its use among children. It is argued that elements in the left periphery are acquired later during child's language development. This leftward movement hypothesis would also account for the late acquisition of NI, however further research is needed to prove or disprove this presupposition.

Green's analysis also touches on a problem of subjects in NI. The subjects are more frequently negative quantifiers but some non-negative subjects are acceptable as well. To explain the acceptability of limited amount of quantifiers as subjects the "quantifier scale" is introduced. This scale differentiates between strong and weak quantifiers. Strong include words such as *no*, *none*, *hardly* etc. on the negative side and *every*, *all*, *few* on the positive side. Weak on the other hand include words such as *not all* on negative side and *many*, *several*, *some* on the positive one. "Taking into account the negative reading of NI sentences, the subject of NP should be created by the strong quantifiers. The compatibility is between the meaning of NI "absolutely zero" and the strongest values on the scale." (Green, 2014, p.130) Examples below supports the quantifier scale idea, when ungrammatical sentences are formed by adding weak quantifier into the subject position (66).

- (66) Didn't but a few people show up. (strongest negative quantifier)  
Didn't all people show up. (strongest positive quantifier)  
\*Didn't some people show up. (weakest positive quantifier)  
\*Didn't not all people show up. (weakest negative quantifier)

The explanation accounts for examples with positive NP and discards the assumptions that only negative quantifiers are required for NI constructions.

To get back to the main topic of this subchapter, that is the discussion whether inverted and non-inverted sentences are replaceable we have found that similar conclusion within the NI analysis was reached by Foreman (2015). His analysis also studied inverted and non-inverted sentences and was focused on to what extent they differ in use. He described the non-inverted sentences to be potentially ambiguous, presenting the example sentence (67a) and non-inverted counterpart (67b)

- (67) a) Didn't many boys in town like to hunt. (Foreman, 2015, ex.142)  
b) Many boys didn't like to hunt.

The second example allows the possible ambiguous reading that there are boys that like to hunt and boys that don't. It could be followed by distinguishing sentence *but many did*. On the other hand, the NI reading is absolute and creating sentence such as "*Didn't many boys in town like to hunt, but many did*" is nonsensical. The logic of the first sentence would be refuted by the second one. Both linguist support the perspective of 'emphatic reading'. Judging based on this evidence form Green and Foreman it would be safe to conclude that "Negative Inversions are not only driven by grammatical requirements but also by the semantic ones." (Foreman, 2015, p. 143)

To briefly summarize Green's analysis, we can say that by the positioning the negated auxiliary under expanded CP, she explains the absolute negative reading. On the grounds that negative elements must C-command TP in order to take scope over the whole sentence. This analysis also justifies the possibility of non-negative subjects, by introducing a quantifier scale. It does not come up short when the sentences are embedded, because it can account for that as well with expanded CP. Green's inquiry of un-inverted sentences seems to be a unique and would need further research, because even though NI seems to be studied extensively, researchers do not take into consideration their un-inverted counterparts.

## 4 Data Applied

### 4.1 Methodology

For the purpose of demonstrating examples, I have collected data from reality show. I consider reality shows in general better than completely scripted TV shows. The reality show from which I have the biggest amount of data is called *Beyond Scared Straight*. It is about problematic teenagers that are taken through jail for one day. The inmates talk to them, scream at them to show them the worst case scenarios of prison life. There are many extremely tense situations in which any scripting would be impossible. The monologues and dialogues between the inmates and teens are priceless for my study. They represent ‘real time’ utterance, usually not interrupted by editor’s cuts. I have chosen penitentiary environment for simple but unfortunate fact. In the United States, there are approximately 12-13% African-American citizens, but shocking 72% are incarcerated.<sup>15</sup> Therefore for me it was the safest environment to record AAE features. Some may call the numbers of collected examples to be inconclusive, but it is crucial to understand that NI does not occur extremely frequently in language. According to a study conducted at Dartmouth College<sup>16</sup>, where they have studied African American syntax in Twitter, the numbers for NI occurrence is less than 20%. Making negative inversion the least frequent feature of AAE on Twitter. Leading feature being copula deletion closely followed by habitual be and negative concord. They had computer generated data from overall 1, 135,019 users.

I, on the other hand, had not used electronic corpora and used the old fashioned way of writing down what I have heard, greatly reducing the number of collected data. I have spent over 30 hours of careful listening to collect 60+ examples of negatively inverted sentences.

Apart from field work, reality shows in general offer real life situations, which ensures that the language is not scripted and thus it is the closest to the language generated during field studies. My previous interviews from Texas 2014, for the purpose of my bachelor’s diploma thesis, the collected data are also included here. The examples from either TV shows or my interviews will be always

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<sup>15</sup> The data were taken from annual report of U.S. Justice Department, 2014

<sup>16</sup> For more details of this study see: Ian Stewart, *Now We Stronger Than Ever: African-American Syntax in Twitter*, 2014

labelled and time stamped. Collecting data out of reality and TV shows had proven overtime to be a valid type of research, however I had prepared sociolinguistic field work. I planned to conduct interviews with African Americans in Gatlinburg, Tennessee. Unfortunately, all of the potential interviews failed to take place. I have chosen people living in ghetto, drug dealers and citizens with lower education. They all had refused to talk to me on record. When I finally managed to set up an interview with amusement park worker, he never showed up. I saw him leaving through employee back entrance where there was a car, right by the door, waiting for him. I account this to my non-American origin, my race, the settings and the maturity of the respondents I have chosen for my interviews.

For this reason, I am adding previous interviews recorded in northern part of Texas, near Oklahoma borders in a city called Wichita Falls. The interviews took place in Cornerstone Baptist church. The volunteers were collecting kids throughout the town and its outskirts. The kids I have interviewed were from city ghetto and were brought in by church vans. There were three girls age ranging from 12-14. Another interview took place in home of a preacher Starkovich and his wife Carla F. The reason I am adding this particular interview is the absolute lack of any AAE features. These speakers spoke with no sign of copula absence, negative concord or any other characteristic of the AAE variety. My last interview was recorded back in Czech Republic. The interviewee was a forty years old man from Brooklyn, New York. These interviews will be added in MP3 format on CD that is attached to the thesis.

## 4.2 Focusing on Labov's analyses

In the practical part seventeen collected examples are presented. In these we can detect apparent negative inversion. Starting with ten examples with auxiliary *ain't*, followed by the negative quantifier. Another seven examples involve auxiliaries such as *don't* and *can't* in the initial position. The first ten examples (68) should theoretically be good candidates to undergo the existential analysis, since they all contain copular *be*. As mentioned above, the sentence differentiation is not so clear cut and not all the copular sentences can be explained with the help of the existential analysis. The differentiation is described in the following text.

- (68) a) Ain't nothing you can do in there. (7:15) BSS 01x04  
b) Ain't nothing bad about me. (3:18) BSS 05x07  
c) Ain't no coming back. (18:20) BSS 08x03  
d) Ain't nothing you can't do. (10:30) BSS 06x03  
e) Ain't nobody in my family good. (38:36)  
f) Ain't nothing mama don't do for us. (3:05) BSS 06x02  
g) Ain't no win in here. (23:03) BSS 01x04  
h) Ain't nothing nobody can do for you. (13:11)  
i) Ain't no police or nothing gonna see it. (23:38) BSS 02x07  
j) Ain't nobody there for you. (18:40)

In the examples (68) we can observe the usage of *ain't*, which is a form of the verb *be*. Those can be understood as existential sentences. In example (69) we can recognize that it is impossible for most of the sentences to create non-inverted sentences, without *there* insertion. There are four exceptions to this rule differentiated by #. Those would be peripheral sentences adhering to both hypotheses. There has been reported cases of sentence containing the verb *be*, that were unable to create existential sentence. The sentences were reported by John Foreman (1999, p.8)<sup>17</sup> and would most commonly contain non-negative quantifiers.

- (69) a) \*Nothing ain't you can do in there.

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<sup>17</sup> The examples are: "Ain't every student here yet." and "Didn't half of the students do their homework."

- c) \**No ain't coming back.*
- e) \**Nobody ain't in my family good.*
- #b) *Nothing ain't bad about me.*
- #e) *Nobody ain't in my family good.*
- #i) *No police or nothing ain't gonna see it.*
- #j) *Nobody ain't there for you.*

In examples under (70) we can witness the possibility to form positive examples only if *there/it* is added. Notice that they all occur with indefinite subjects in this case *something*. The sentences hold the DE. This effect permits only indefinite subjects to appear within the clause.

- (70) a) There is something you can do.
- b) There is something bad about me.
- c) There is something you can do.

#### ***4.2.1 Existential Derivation Analysis***

The first theory described in the thesis is the underlying existential theory. It accounts only for sentences containing form of the verb *be*. To filter sentences out we need to go over some rules of EA. "In EA the NI subject does not move out of its VP-internal position." (Foreman, 1999, p.6). Within the existential structures, it is possible to insert relative pronoun, which signals the appearance of relative clause. As seen in examples (71). Two verbs in example a) namely *ain't* and *do* signal a bi-clausal structure which can only be accounted for under EA. Auxiliary Inversion has mono-clausal structures and only one case of IP. The relative pronoun inserted has restrictions for deletion in general English, which is not the case in AAE. In addition, the existential expletive *it* must not endanger the well-formedness of the sentence. Here (71) sentences are presented from (68) transformed to standard existential sentences with expletive *it* and relative pronoun inserted.

- (71) a) (It) ain't nothing (that) you can do in here.
- b) (It) ain't nothing (that) is bad about me.
- a) (It) ain't no coming back.



- b) (It) ain't nothing (that) you can't do.
- c) (It) ain't nobody in my family (that) is good.
- d) (It) ain't nothing (that) mam don't do for us.
- e) (It) ain't no win in here.
- f) (It) ain't nothing (that) nobody can do for you.
- g) (It) ain't no police or nothing (that) is gonna see it.
- h) (It) ain't nobody (that) is there for you.

The constraint for a sentence to be interpreted under AI analysis is that the sentence must have un-inverted counterpart. There are several sentences containing the verb *be* that can be interpreted under both analysis, because they fulfil requirements for both being interpreted under EA and AI analyses. The four sentences that fulfil both restrictions are sentences under (72 b), e), i), j) where we see bi-clausal structure and b'), e'), i')

- (72)        *b) It ain't nothing that is bad about me*  
               *b') Nothing ain't bad about me*  
               *e) It ain't nobody in my family that is good.*  
               *e') Nobody ain't in my family good.*  
               *i) It ain't no police or nothing gonna see it.*  
               *i') No police or nothing ain't gonna see it.*  
               *j) It ain't nobody that is there for you.*  
               *j') Nobody ain't there for you.*

For illustration I am also adding an example from Sells, that can also be analysed under both existential and auxiliary inversion hypotheses (73). It can be realized as bi-clausal sentence i) and create un-inverted counterpart as seen in i')

- (73) *Ain't nothing happening.*  
       *i) It ain't nothing that is happening."*  
       *i') Nothing ain't happening.*

There are two sentences c) and g) from set of examples in (68) contain *be*, which only allow an expletive deletion analysis. There is no additional movement present. Those are copular existential sentences, which do not allow complementizer to be

added. They have a single clause structure but are incapable to form un-inverted counterpart. So only EA analysis would apply to sentences such as those.

There is an issue with existential sentences which stains this valuable theory. It the issue with tag questions. In the EA analysis, the subject remains in the VP-internal position. “Tag questions only agree with element that is actually occupying the syntactic subject position in the surface string, and does not agree with any underlying subjects other than in the surface position.” (Foreman, 1999, p. 9). So in the example (74a) the true subject of the sentence is *nobody* and not expletive there (it). The subject pronoun *they* is used to replace noun. The example below comes from Foreman, 1999, p.8

- (74) a) Ain't nobody doing nothing wrong, are they?  
b) \* Ain't nobody doing nothing wrong, is it?

On contrary the sentences that are said to be derived only from existential constructions, show expletives in tag questions (75).

- (75) a) Ain't no coming back, is it?  
b) Ain't no win in here, is it?

The issue of tag question will need further analysis. The great variability of tag questions delays further conclusion other than agreeing on their inconclusiveness. The usage and acceptability sparked my interest therefore I have conducted my own mini research. I have posted a question on linguistic group on social network Facebook. The question was: “Could an AAE speaker complete a tag question for a sentence (76)” Majority of respondents replied with completely different tags than would be expected (75 a,b,c,d)

- (76) “Ain't nothing went down”  
a) Ain't nothing went down, innit?  
b) Ain't nothing went down, nah mean? (you know what I mean)  
c) Ain't nothing went down, aight? (appeared twice)  
d) Ain't nothing went down, righ?

Only after I have proposed the answer with *did it*, which I thought would be the syntactically correct answer, respondents agreed it would be acceptable. Not a single respondent gave me this answer first. One respondent started asking about the pragmatic purpose of the statement and the intonation pattern. She stated that rising tone would signal nervousness making the tag question "...right?". I am accounting the answers to two phenomena. Firstly, I account it to the "highly pragmatic meaning of tag questions and their primary function in signalling the relationship between participants." (Algeo, 1988, p. 171) Secondly, to the limited syntactic knowledge of the respondents. This is one of the headaches for non-native researchers. We have to be careful when asking public opinion concerning the grammaticality or possibility of expressions. Lay people provide important insight into the language itself but are unaware of the syntactic operations behind the structures. It is often better to ask professional linguist, not general public for opinion. To my defence I have asked the group that should gather linguist all around the globe, but the result remained the same.

#### 4.2.1.1 Expletive Deletion

Following the ideas from previous research we have to assume that the insertion, followed by deletion can not occur in all sentence inversion types. Only a certain amount of examples would allow *it* added to the beginning of the structure. Those are examples that were mentioned under (68) with the two mentioned exceptions. For the convenience I have chosen four of them and repeated them here under the numbers of (77, 78, 79, 80). This analysis then works with those structures only.

(77) Ain't nothing you can do in here.

It ain't nothing you can do in here. (GE – There is nothing you can do...)

(78) Ain't nothing that mama don't do for us.

It ain't nothing that mama don't do for us. (GE –There is nothing mama wouldn't do for us.)

(79) Ain't nobody in my family good.

It ain't nobody in my family good. (GE- There is nobody in my family good)

(80) Ain't nothing nobody can do for you.

It ain't nothing nobody can do you you. (GE- There is nothing somebody can do for you.)

Following the rule of canonical subject position in this analysis the SpecIP contains null expletive as a result of phonological de-stressing. The similarity of general English expletive and AAE expletive was pointed out by many researchers, thus it is safe to assume that the expletive authorizes changes in the sentence structure. The linear realization of the example (77) is showed in example (81). The thematic subject that immediately follows auxiliary does not moves to the specIP, because the null expletive took its place in order to specify the S-V agreement. We have mentioned before that the verb morphology is zero, thus the null expletive has no distinctive features. Meaning there is no person nor time marking.

(81) [ <sub>SpecIP</sub>∅ [ <sub>T</sub> ain't [ <sub>NegP</sub> Neg [ <sub>NP</sub> nothing [ <sub>VP</sub> you can do [ <sub>PP</sub> in here]]]]].

Parrott (2000) takes the analysis one step further and proposes the idea of 'NEXPLetive'. Introducing expletive with additional feature, that general expletive lacks. The feature is negativity, which needs to be realized in the sentence. This negative expletive has no phonological realization and would explain the NI of sentences with the verb *be* and also the ones without it. It also accounts for the optionality between negative inversion and un-inverted sentences. To put it simply Parrott follows Chomsky's analysis (1998) and focuses on interaction between Lexical Array and the preference for Merge over Move. If the expletive is in the lexical array it will prevent any movement within the sentence and will merge to the surface. On the contrary if the expletive is not present in the lexical array, the more complex operation will take place. It will account for the movement and displacement of the original sentence structure. Within AAE the expletive carries that one additional feature – negation. This negation causes NI thought a process similar to the processes in general English. This means that example (78) would be derived according to Parrott as follows (82)

(82) [ <sub>TP</sub> NEXPL [ <sub>T</sub> [ <sub>NegP</sub> Neg [ <sub>VP</sub> ain't [ <sub>sc</sub>[ <sub>NP</sub> nobody] [ <sub>PP</sub> in my family good]]]]]  
 (Parrott 2000, p.421)

I would like to present one more example and that is one of the four sentences that could undergo both analyses (83).

(83) *Ain't nobody there for you.*

[<sub>SpecIP</sub> ∅ [<sub>I</sub>'Aint [<sub>NegP</sub> Neg [<sub>NP</sub> nobody [<sub>pp</sub>there [<sub>NP</sub> for you]]]]]]

As it can be observed that the *it* deletion explains the structures without complex movements. It also adds up with the theory of language economy that deletion of meaningless *it* is much simpler than any additional movement. The view about deleted expletive was proposed by Martin (1992). He argues that the deletion of expletive was due to the stress pattern. Where stress would occur strongly on negative element in the clause it would result in de-stressing the initial element, which only adds to Labov's claim that NI is used to add emphasis.

#### 4.2.2 Auxiliary Inversion Analysis

The problem with Labov's existential theory occurs when sentences do not involve any form of the verb *be*. To account for those sentences, he proposed a second analysis which offers an explanation for sentences in (83). According to Labov there is an involvement of auxiliary movement.

- (84) a) Can't nobody take that away from you (40:22) BSS 06x04  
b) Can't nobody save you. (4:11) BSS 06x01  
c) Can't nobody tell you nothin'. (22:05) BSS 08x03  
d) Don't nobody throw nothing on me. (24:58) BSS 08x03  
e) Don't nothing just make nobody mad all the time. (32:04) BSS 08x03  
f) Don't none of you scare me. (03:14) BSS 6x8  
g) Don't nobody care about you, when you are in prison. (24:33) BSS 3x12

The examples in (84) are able to create perfectly grammatical structures when non-inverted (85). Their positive counterparts are created without there expletive added (86), unlike in the examples of (68). Those could not be created in positive sentences without *there* there. Note that examples with *be* and without hold the DE, meaning they both are ungrammatical or at least questionable, when adding definite subjects (87)<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>18</sup> The distinction is not so clear cut, there are few cases with definite articles such as: "*Don't many of them live around here*" or "*Its against the law that's why don't so many people do it.*" (Labov, 1968, p.286-7).

- (85) d) Nobody can't take that away from you.  
 c) Nobody can't save you.  
 i) Nobody can't tell you nothing.  
 g) Nobody don't care about you.
- (86) c) Nobody can save you.  
 i) Nobody can take that away from you.  
 j) Nobody can tell you nothing.
- (87) c) \**Can't John save you.*  
 d) ?*Ain't one thing you can't do.*

This second analysis involves the movement of auxiliary verb. The auxiliary moves over to subject into complementizer phrase (CP). According to this approach NI sentences are generated from the sentences in which the subject moves to the normal S position. The structural position is represented below:

[CP[c can't IP[NP nobody I [I trace VP [save [NP you.]]]]]]

The negative auxiliary is in C-command over negative quantifier, auxiliary moves out of IP to the head C. Negative indefinite subject is in SpecIP, which is a usual landing site for expletives. Thus this approach bans the expletives.

The sentences that are able to undergo auxiliary inversion can also appear in embedded clauses which themselves are introduced by complementizer.” (Sells, 1996, p.603) as it is demonstrated in the example from Sells and mine as well (88).

(88) I know a way that can't nobody start a fight.

I was happy when they told me that ain't nothing come up. (43:51) BSS 8x4

Those sentences were at first problematic, because of their bi-clausal structure they would be interpreted only under EA. However, the lack of the verb *be* would argue for AI. The AI analysis at first had a hard time supporting this phenomenon, because the complementizer would appear to be in a same spot as the negative subject, namely the SpecIP. With Expanded CP theory, we can easily explain why

the inversion and complementizers are not in the complementary distribution and account for negative inversion in embedded clauses. The expanded CP allows us to account for embedding structures. The fronted negative phrase occupies SpecFocP and complementizer resides in ForceP head, which is placed above FocP. This theory is further developed by Green (2014).

To summarize Labov's theories, we can conclude that both analyses bring valuable findings into the research, however further analyses are needed mainly because neither of those two are completely flawless and they leave open questions. The complex differentiating of structures together with many exceptions to the rules create an unclear boundaries and confusion within theories. There are only few sentences strictly requiring only one analysis, the rest are peripheral cases that can be interpreted under both analyses. Sells et al. admits that with this evidence it is safe to conclude that "both the AI and EA are simultaneously available in AAVE." (Sells, 1996, p. 603) The analyses further differ in their outlook on expletives. Where the acceptability of expletives is predicted by EA meanwhile within AI expletives are prohibited because, their landing site, SpecIP, is already filled. EA allows complementizers, because their bi-clausal structure allows it to contain two IP's. AI would originally prohibit the relative clause because the spot for complementizers, head CP, was thought to be filled by negated auxiliary. This issue was resolved by expanded CP under which there are more nodes for additional elements within CP. Even though some structures can be interpreted under both analyses. It is not possible for all of them which understandably causes more confusion than unified analysis or at least double analysis which clearly disambiguates the two structures.

### 4.3 NI as an emphatic structure

In this subchapter I am going to develop the theory which “connects the structural position of elements in NI and their pragmatic meaning.” (Green, 2014, p.116) In the light of research done by Green and Foreman, I will provide not only the exemplary sentences collected from the reality show but also the immediate context in which they appeared and judge whether the reading is more emphatic than in un-inverted form. This will also shed a light on the question whether the NI structure has an optional character thus can be mutually supplemented.

For this analysis I have randomly chosen five sentences without any differentiation of auxiliaries or copulas as it would be necessary with previous analyses. Following the observation of Green and Sustaita, we have excluded true existential constructions in which the auxiliary is existential *be*. These constructions are argued to allow expletives all across the dialects (Sustaita, 2014, p.432). The following examples were recorded with containing expletives (89). These expletives were recorded and not later on added by myself as in previous cases. Examples of such sentences are following:

(89) a) It ain't nothing to it, man. (04:53) BSS 6x4

*There is nothing to it, man.*

b) It ain't nothing fabulous about it. (22:39) BSS 02x02

*There is nothing fabulous about it.*

c) There ain't no wrestling on the ground. (27:15) BSS 04x02

*There is no wrestling on the ground.*

d) There ain't nothing behind here for you. (11:07) BSS 05x04

*There is nothing behind here for you.*

The five exemplary NI sentences are introduced below (90,91,92,93,94), excluding existential constructions, in broader context of the utterance and immediate situation. The examples in which were made cuts were purposefully omitted mainly because they were lacking the discourse following NI constructions. The immediate context is described and broader utterance provided below to sketch the frame in which NI usually occurs.



(90) CAN'T NOBODY SAVE YOU. (BSS 06x02, 04:11)

It ain't nothing that mama don't do for us. You gotta change your attitude, your nasty ways so don't nobody owe you nothin'. You grow and then there comes the real deal then. Disappointments that I done have from going down the road, its not a pretty sight. *I am telling you cuz when you get that far away, can't nobody save you, not me, not your mother.* Ain't nobody in your work that can save you.

In the example (90) we argue that the negation is absolute, meaning not a single person in the entire universe can save you. The follow up sentence confirms this proposal. In this particular context an older brother tries to talk to his sister about being obedient to her parents. By stating not even him nor her mother can help her afterwards. Here we see that the additional sentence, that actually occurred in the utterance does not flaunt the sentence preceding. It is expected that this sentence would be questionable in a different environment such as (90a), because *can't nobody save you* has been violated by *only me and your mother*.

- (90 a)? *I am telling you cuz when you get that far away, can't nobody save you, only me and your mother.*

On the other hand, if we had a sentence with un-inverted structure this proposed ending of a sentence would be accepted.

- (90 b) *I am telling you cuz when you get that far away nobody can't save you, only me and your mother.*

This sentence can be used in a context where there is a possibility that someone will be able to save her, so the negation ranges from 0 to a very small amount of people. The reading is then not absolute and allows exceptions, which sound strange with the inverted structure where the negation is absolute and there is no range other than zero. In this case we can suppose that the auxiliary is overtly fronted in the case of NI and in un-inverted structure the fronting is covert. This particular NI structure is not interchangeable thus cannot be used in the same environment, even though they are both negative they differ in the scope of negation.

There are of course cases when NI and un-inverted structures can overlap as show in example (91). “Both NI and un-inverted structures may appear in context, where the negation is absolute, however the NI cannot be used in a context where the negation ranges from 0 to a very small number.” (Green, 2014, p. 128) The reason being that NI construction would be disproved by additional positive sentence as in example (90a). In the exhibit (91), there is an underlined element that received prominent stress. I do not suppose that with un-inverted example the stress would occur on the same element.

(91) DIDN'T NOBODY TELL YOU TO PUT IT UP.

NOBODY DIDN'T TELL YOU TO PUT IT UP.

P.O: Go and get your mat.

CH: Yall broke ass motherf\*\*\*\* can have all this.

P.O: Get your mat, because didn't nobody tell you to put it up.

Get your mat, because nobody didn't tell you to put it up.

(92) AIN'T NOTHING NOBODY CAN DO TO CHANGE YOU.

It's crazy isn't it? Gunshot wounds, stabs. This is gladiator school. You don't need that in your life. You need to start thinking about these choices that you can make to prevent a situation like this to EVER being part of your life. *If you decide this is for you, that you like this lifestyle, ain't nothing nobody can do to change you.* But I think there is more inside of you than this.

- (92 a)? *If you decide this is for you, that you like this lifestyle, ain't nothing nobody can do to change you, but someone can.*

“It appears that pragmatics seems to play major role in the use of there constructions - at least in the case of AAE” (Green, 2014, p.129). Placing the negative feature into the structure differentiates between NI an un-inverted examples. We either have the feature in the sentence in which case it triggers the auxiliary attraction into CP or we don't have it in the structure and auxiliary remains in the canonical SV position. “The un-inverted counterparts may have different meaning or be potentially ambiguous and NI resolves this ambiguity.” (Foreman, 2015, p.142). The [NegFoc] disambiguates the negative reading to

absolute zero and that is why it should not be possible for NI to be followed by contradictory statement (93, 94) as it is observable with un-inverted sentences.

(93) Ain't nobody in here your friend. (BSS 09x06, 28:42)

a) ?Ain't nobody your friend in here, but Mary is.

b) Nobody ain't your friend in here, but Mary is.

(94) Can't nobody control me. (BSS 09x03, 07:31)

a) ?Can't nobody control me, but my dad.

b) Nobody can't control me, but my dad.

The different pragmatic reading is supported by the stylistically marked word order of NI sentences. Together with Neg-Criterion this approach offers unified theory (after existential construction exclusion) and accounts for all types of constructions without complicated analyses and constraints. There are advantages of this approach over the Neg-Criterion. Even though they both draw upon Haegman's why-criterion in which auxiliary carries a question element in specifier-head nod and causes the raising of auxiliary into a specifier position of a focus phrase within CP in the left periphery and are very similar in the construction matter, this approach takes into account the broader context of the utterance. Another advantage is the description of un-inverted forms and the substitution in the same surrounding which provides clear evidence that those two constructions are not completely similar thus in most cases they cannot be used in the same environment.

## 5 Discussion

In the field of negations within AAE variety I have focused on the negative inversion. It is apparent that there are various issues concerning the structure of this particular type of negation. Mainly the issue of having two separate analyses for seemingly one structure. By the description of various approaches, I have created a unifying work concerning NI topic. This work characterizes highlighted hypotheses and gives overview of their development. The oldest hypothesis coming from W. Labov in 1970's and the youngest by J. Foreman 2015. The work gives us a unique opportunity to see how the syntax of negative inversion developed. By comparing and reviewing the hypotheses we can clearly see the different points of view the researches took. The main hypothesis was support the statements about the emphatic structure of NI. Whether the limited data was convincing enough or not, I will leave to the reader. The work itself should not discover a brand new approach, however it's goal is to offer an overview of all the current hypotheses with the stress on the emphatic reading proposed firstly by Labov and later on by Green and Foreman.

I am convinced that until today the approaches have not reached a unitary consensus. Each and every one of them explains the possible structures and their derivations, however a unified approach that would resolve the problem of having two analyses for one phenomena was not completely reached. The issue still remains whether it is completely necessary to have two analyses for seemingly similar constructions. The answer, based on the reading is yes, there is a need for separate analyses. We must differentiate between the existential structures and the ones in which auxiliary movement is involved.

As to the question of having two separate analyses, which was originally assumed by Labov, there are advantages and disadvantages to both; the existential and auxiliary inversion one. There are advantages in existential analysis, which in my opinion, only deepens the distinction between existential sentences and auxiliary ones. Amongst many I have chosen to mention the acceptability of expletives, which are proven to be acceptable with existential structures even in negative inversion constructions within AAE. Another advantage of existential analysis is its accountability for occurrence of NI in embedded structures. The embedding of NI was also found in the examples provided, thus it is safe to assume it is completely natural way of constructing a sentence. The definiteness effect,

which is proven to hold within NI is phenomena from existential sentences and also points toward EA analysis.

On contrary the auxiliary analysis accounts for ban on expletives within NI. Expletives are then acceptable only with intransitive verbs such as copular *be* and restricted with transitive verbs such as *write*. This allowance of expletives neatly differentiates the two structures and support the argument for need of two separate analyses. Auxiliary inversion also explains the occurrence of NI in embedded clauses but only with the help of extended CP analysis, where there are more nodes on the leftward periphery. The original thought was that relative pronoun *that* resides in the same position as negated auxiliary, namely in CP, would not account for embedded structures.

Because of rather turbulent analyses above, the alternative approaches are offered. The researchers mentioned here are Sustaita and Green. In both proposals they exclude true existential constructions from true NI clauses. Stating that existential structures allow expletive to appear in the constructions. Their approaches further on differ in the position of negated auxiliary.

Green's approach draws upon contextual situations of discourse as well as the prosodic features. Despite the fact this approach is the one I have chosen to be most plausible one, there are still issues that need to be addressed. My first issue concerns phonetics. I am not fully convinced that prosodic features could have a power over the syntactical position of elements in the sentence. They may highlight a certain word in the discourse and put emphasis on a chosen element, however syntactically they do not change the structure. Structure of the sentence may be changed by the information packaging and by the positioning of new information, not by prosodic features. Another issue concerns the pragmatic reasoning, which can differ from speaker to speaker. Two speakers can completely differ in a perception of a sentence. Thus it is acceptable that the NI sentences may appear to be emphatic for one and normal for another. Pragmatic draws upon the speaker's perception and not upon laws and constraints of syntactical theories. Further research is additionally needed regarding the non-inverted structures, because their structures are not discussed in concern with inverted ones. The question whether they occur in similar pragmatic context was discussed within this work, however there are remaining issues originating in the lack of research that would compare those two structures. Are they only a syntactic variants or are they completely different structures?

## 6 Conclusion

This diploma thesis had several goals to reach. First and foremost, the main purpose of the thesis was to support the theory of the emphatic reading of NI. In the critical overview of the main theories and ideas that were collected about the NI, I have chosen to start with the oldest research from Labov, portraying his conclusions about emphatic reading as a cornerstone for other linguists to build on. This has proven to be a good starting point, because his findings were often opposed by many for example Sells et al. or Sustaita, but as the time progressed researchers, namely Green and Foreman, decided to go back to his statement and elaborated more on the emphatic argument to prove that pragmatics has a say in the way NI is constructed. The construction is said to be in ‘absolute negation’, where no exceptions are allowed. The position of the negated auxiliary is in the leftward periphery, which provides a precise explanation as to why the negation takes scope over the entire sentence and can be labeled as absolute. This unique approach arranges the inverted and un-inverted structures alongside of each other, which highlights their diversity. NI structures result the potential ambiguity of non-inverted sentences and promotes stronger negation reading. However, the strongest point in the analysis is in the portrayal of the model sentences within bigger utterance chunks and the unacceptability of non-inverted structures in some environments. This argument is further on supported by the collected examples, where the unacceptability or at least questionability of the alternation between inverted and non-inverted structures is demonstrated.

The second goal was to provide a critical overview of the main theories and ideas. Reaching the second goal, I have systematically described the theories as on a timeline. Starting from the oldest to the most recent findings. The approaches differed within the position of elements in the structures as well as with the parallel structures from which the hypotheses originated. The existential analysis emerged from the existential sentences, where the initial expletive was not phonetically realized or was never originally inserted. The auxiliary inversion developed from yes/no question structures, where auxiliary was moved to the CP nod. These two approaches however strictly differentiated between NI with from of *be* and without it. It seems to be proper way of distinguishing between constructions, yet there were sentences adhering to both hypotheses. This created rather confusing situation and that is why the alternative approaches were developed. The alternative

proposals by Green and Sustaita were introduced. Green puts the negated auxiliary in the CP under negative focus nod in the leftward periphery, meanwhile Sustaita's negated auxiliary does not move to the CP, but remains in the head of IP. In a regard of optionality of NI both researchers agree that variation is not optional. The reasoning however differs. Green's decision is based on different reading of inverted and un-inverted forms, Sustaita's reasoning is facilitated by Neg-Criterion. Green's approach is based on pragmatic decisions of speakers to choose inverted forms over un-inverted on the basis of what the speaker wants to decide. Whether absolute negation or not. Sustaita's opinion is that "...the preference for inverted forms are pragmatically motivated by the preference for negative indefinite NP to be later in the utterance." (Sustaita, 2010, p.444)

The significance of this work lies mainly within the diversity of description of the NI phenomena. This thesis gives the reader not only the established theories but also brings new findings in the field. It also informs the reader about the wider surroundings of the language, by introducing a brief overview of the most highlighted features. This English variety, as was stated in the introduction, is still stigmatized and any work in this field helps lay people to understand that this language has its own rules and constraints and that it is not badly learned English.

## 7 České resumé

Cílem této diplomové práce je důkladně popsat systém tvoření záporu v Afro-americké angličtině (v práci označovanou pod zkratkou AAE). Během posledních let se způsobům negace v této anglické varietě věnuje velká pozornost a výsledky bádání nabízejí zajímavá zjištění. Mnoho výzkumných pracovníků studuje způsoby negace do detailů a jejich inovativní interpretace jevu, zvané negativní inverze (NI), přináší nové a nové výsledky. Je to právě negativní inverze na kterou se v této práci soustředím. Mezi lingvisty zabývajícími se tímto tématem můžeme najít jména jako jsou například Lisa Green, William Labov, Jeffrey Parrott, Jessica White-Sustaita, John Foreman, Peter Sells nebo James Weldon. V této práci se zabývám výzkumem nejznámějších lingvistů a nabídnu čtenáři kritický přehled hlavních teorií a myšlenek. V průběhu této práce se zaměřím na podporu hypotézy předpokládající že negativní inverze s sebou nese zvláštní pragmatickou negativní funkci. Tato teorie o takzvaném negativním ohnisku je podpořena výzkumem v odborné literatuře, kde je předvedena nesouměrnost invertovaných a neinvertovaných struktur. A dále je tato teorie rozvinuta na shromážděných příkladech. Tyto příklady jsou uvedeny nejen jako věty vytržené z kontextu, nýbrž v kontextu několika vět předcházejících a následujících. Tyto konstrukce, které jsou zde předloženy v kontextu jsou poté důkazem o nezaměnitelnosti konstrukcí.

V první části stručně vysvětluji jak se tato konstrukce rozezná. Negativní inverze má stejnou strukturu jako tázací věta v obecné angličtině. Liší se ale intonací a významem. V tázacích větách je tedy na prvním místě sloveso pomocné které je následováno podmětem a poté významovým slovesem, což je stejná struktura jako při negativní inverzi. V Afro-americké angličtině je však tato konstrukce chápána ne jako otázka nýbrž jako věta oznamovací, respektive záporně oznamovací.

V oblasti záporné inverze můžeme najít spoustu hypotéz o jejich skryté struktuře. Pro moji práci jsem vybrala čtyři hlavní hypotézy. Tyto hypotézy musí jsou podrobně popsány a zhodnoceny. Hypotézy jsou označeny následovně; existenční (EA), inverze pomocného slovesa (AI), negativní kritérium (Neg-Criterion) a negativní ohnisko (Neg-Focus). Teorie rozebíraná jako první v mé práci, se nazývá existenční hypotéza a ta vysvětluje zvláštní slovosled pomocí existenční věty, kterou negativní inverze obsahující sloveso *být* údajně připomíná. NI pak s pomocí této teorie obsahuje buď foneticky nere realizované nebo odstraněné



expletivum. Druhá teorie vysvětluje větnou stavbu s pomocní vět tázacích. V tomto případě pomocné sloveso prochází pohybem, který se podobá tvoření otázky – tedy pomocné sloveso se přesouvá z vnitřní slovesné fráze do pozice před podmětem. Teorie Neg-kritéria sdílí názor, že pomocné sloveso prochází pohybem ale jeho výchozí bod se stejně jako konečná pozice liší od teorie inverze pomocného slovesa. V teorii Neg-Criterion se pomocné sloveso přesouvá z vnitřní slovesné fráze do hlavy fráze inflektivní (IP). Mezitím teorii inverze pomocného slovesa se pomocné sloveso stěhuje do hlavy fráze komplementizační (CP). V poslední teorii – tedy v teorii negativního ohniska se pomocné sloveso umísťuje pomocný v levé periférii v rámci rozšířené komplementizační fráze (CP).

Po části teoretické, tedy po analýze těchto čtyř teorií jsou prezentovány vlastní příklady které nám pomáhají ukázat praktické využití negativně invertovaných struktur. Ilustrace v praktické části jsou buď z mého vlastního výzkumu, rapových písní, online videí, nebo z dostupné literatury. Větné příklady v teoretické části jsou převážně z předložené literatury a příklady v mé praktické části jsou má shromážděná data. Sebrané příklady jsou vždy citovány a časově specifikovány. Právě v části praktické se zabývám hlouběji teorií absolutní negace. Na příkladech prokazují, že v negativní inverzi není možné přidat větu, která by částečně odporovala negaci ve větě první, což je možné u neinvertovaných struktur. Tím tedy dokazují, že invertovaná a neinvertovaná struktura je nezaměnitelná a tudíž se jejich výběr řídí pragmatickým kontextem a nikoliv pouze preferencí mluvčího. Negativní inverze není proces náhodný, ale její použití vyžaduje speciální podmínky. V absolutní negaci je možno použít pouze konstrukci s negativní inverzí, zatímco v kontextu s negací neabsolutní je možno použít konstrukci neinvertovanou. Tato teorie je dále podpořena příklady kde se prokazatelně ukazuje tento směr analýzy jako správný. Teorie má své slabé stránky a proto další výzkum , speciálně zaměřený na podobnost invertovaných a neinvertovaných struktur je nezbytný.

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## Appendix 1.

### Data Collected from Beyond Scared Straight (BSS) and other sources

examples	state	episode	time	speaker M/F	existential	ain't	other
Ain't gonna be like no inmate making me cry.	Georgia	BSS 09x11	1'33	child - boy	no	yes	yes
Ain't never no Folks (gang name).	Illinois	BSS 06x04	14'37	inamte - M	Yes	Yes	No
Ain't no "because".	Virginia	BSS 04x03	46'15	parent - Male	yes	yes	no
Ain't no "come on".	Virginia	BSS 03x07	31'56	police officer -M	yes	yes	no
Ain't no betting to it.	California	BSS 07x03	21'36	police officer -M	yes	yes	no
Ain't no black people voting for you Donald.	Jimmy Fallon Tonight Show			M	yes	yes	no
Ain't no coming back.	Illinois	BSS 08x03	18'20	inmate	yes	yes	no
Ain't no friends got you no MFing weed.	Georgia	BSS 09x06	14'25	inmate	yes	yes	no
Ain't no guns in here.	Virginia	BSS 03x09	15'30	inmate	yes	yes	no
Ain't no jailmates in here.	Virginia	BSS 03x09	02'08	inmate	yes	yes	no
Ain't no kid coming in here.	Georgia	BSS 07x06	29'02	inmate	yes	yes	no
Ain't no kids like me, ain't no child to compare.	Georgia	BSS 09x06	03'30	child- girl	yes	yes	no
Ain't no magic tricks, this ain't Harry Potter.	California	BSS 07x03	16'28	inmate	yes	yes	no
Ain't no need to cry.	Virginia	BSS 04x03	06'51	police officer -M	yes	yes	no
Ain't no police in here.	South Carolina	BSS 09x07	18'30	inmate	yes	yes	no
Ain't no police or nothin' gonna see it.	Illinois	BSS 02x07	23'38	inmate	no	yes	yes
Ain't no privacy, no nothing	Illinois	BSS 04x06	34'16	inamte - M	yes	yes	no
Ain't no ugly ass white man getting' his face on no legal MF pa	The Wire	01x01	39'14	M	yes	yes	no
Ain't no walking around a fence.	Oklahoma	BSS 08x01	40'16	inmate	yes	yes	no
Ain't no way nobody is going through what you are going thro	Oklahoma	BSS 05x03	16'21	police officer -M	yes	yes	no
Ain't no way nobody is taking me though no jail.	Georgia	BSS 09x10	26'28	child - boy	yes	yes	no
Ain't nobody gonna catch me.	Doctor Phil		03'05	F	yes	yes	no
Ain't nobody gonna disrespect my sister	Virginia	BSS 06x05	12'46	child - girl	yes	yes	no
Ain't nobody gonna do nothing about it.	Michigan	BSS 02x02	10'56	inmate	no	yes	yes
Ain't nobody gonna have your back better than her.	Virginia	BSS 03x07	28'00	police officer -M	yes	yes	no
Ain't nobody gonna stop me from smiling.	Virginia	BSS 06x05	03'19	child - girl	yes	yes	no
Ain't nobody gonna treat you like your mama treat you.	Illinois	BSS 08x03	14'08	inmate	yes	yes	no
Ain't nobody I wouldn't whop.	Georgia	BSS 06x08	31'27	child - girl	yes	yes	no
Ain't nobody in here your friend.	Georgia	BSS 09x06	28'42	inmate	yes	yes	no
Ain't nobody in my family good.	South Carolina	BSS 06x03	38'36	child -boy	yes	yes	no
Ain't none of mine.	Georgia	BSS 09x06	26'23	police officer -M	no	no	no
Ain't nothing bad about me.	Illinois	BSS 05x07	03'18	child -boy	yes	yes	no
Ain't nothing good about this place.	South Carolina	BSS 01x04	23'02	inmate	yes	yes	no
Ain't nothing in between.	Georgia	BSS 09x06	14'48	inmate	yes	yes	no
Ain't nothing that mama don't do for us	Virginia	BSS 06x02	03'50	inmate	yes	yes	no
Ain't nothing you can do in here.	California	BSS 01x04	07'17	inmate	yes	yes	no
Ain't nothing you can't do.	South Carolina	BSS 09x11	10'30	inmate	yes	yes	no
Ain't worth shit, send him away!	Georgia	BSS 09x02	30'20	police officer -M	no	no	no
Can't nobody control me.	Virginia	BSS 09x03	08'34	child - girl	no	no	yes
Can't nobody save you.	Virginia	BSS 06x02	04'11	police officer -M	no	no	yes
Can't nobody take that from you.	Illinois	BSS 06x04	40'22	white P.O. -M	No	No	Yes
Can't nobody tell you nothin'.	Michigan	BSS 02x02	18'16	police officer -M	no	no	yes
Couldn't nobody tell me to take my mother**** shoes off.	Virginia	BSS 03x09	27'06	inmate	no	no	yes
Don't nobody care about you, when you are in prison	Oklahoma	BSS 03x12	24'33	inmate	no	no	yes
Don't nobody else tell you, what l'mma tell you.	South Carolina	BSS 06x03	16'50	inmate	no	no	yes
Don't none of you scare me.	Georgia	BSS 06x08	03'14	child - girl	no	no	yes
Don't nothing just make nobody mad all the time.	Illinois	BSS 08x03	32'04	white P.O. -M	no	no	yes
Don't no damn bunkmate I get get to eat no trays, I eat them	Georgia	BSS 09x02	24'25	inmate	no	no	yes
Don't nobody need no closet organized	The Cleveland S.	05x05	01'00	F	no	no	yes
Don't nobody throw nothin' on me.	Illinois	BSS 08x03	24'58	child - girl	no	no	yes
Get your mat, because didn't nobody tell you to put it up.	Georgia	BSS 09x01	16'50	police officer -F	no	no	EMBED.
I am happy that ain't nothing come up.	Georgia	BSS 08x04	44'01	child - boy	yes	yes	EMBED.
If I do this ain't nobody know I did this.	South Carolina	BSS 07x02	19'42	inmate	yes	yes	EMBED.
In jail there is no love and don't nobody care for you.	Georgia	BSS 09x01	38'40	inmate	no	no	no
It ain't no OR.	Georgia	BSS 09x06	15'20	child -boy	yes	yes	EXPL.
It ain't nothing good come out of it.	Illinois	BSS 08x03	17'23	inmate	yes	yes	EXPL.
It don't make you wanna change?	Virginia	BSS 06x05	21'35	police officer -M	no	no	EXPL.
Nobody don't wanna hear that.	South Carolina	BSS 09x07	31'04	inmate	no	no	UNINV.
Once she's gone, there ain't nobody there for you.	Georgia	BSS 07x06	18;40	inmate	yes	yes	EMBED.
There ain't no wrestling on the groun.	Georgia	BSS 04x02	27'15	inamte - M	no	no	EXPL.
There ain't nothing behind here for you.	Maryland	BSS 05x04	11'07	inamte - F	no	no	EXPL.
We all might think we are too good for this, but ain't nobody t	Georgia	BSS 09x02	30'55	police officer -M	yes	yes	EMBED.
What that is?	Maryland	BSS 05x04	28'46	child - boy	no	no	UN. Q.
Yeah, don't look back boy, don't nodody tell you to turn your h	Illinois	BSS 04x06	24'51	inamte - M	no	no	yes