

## ABSTRACT

Lauw Siek Mee: *The Existence of Black American English as a Vernacular.*

Language is a means of communication. BE came up because of the need to communicate. In the U.S., Africans came as immigrants with different cultures and languages. When they came in the U.S., they faced a situation in which they had to communicate with people who had a completely different culture and language. In that situation, BE came out. At the first phase, the language was much influenced by their native tongue, African dialects. And then BE changed gradually, from Pidgin to Creole. Since the situation in the country changes, the blacks encounter the standard language more often. The result is decreolization. The creole is gradually merging with the standard language. It is changing slowly over time and acquiring many of the features of standard language. BE is unique however. It has its own characteristics which cannot be found in other dialects. Moreover, the 'gift' cannot be abolished and the speech habit remains to keep BE unique as a dialect.

BE really exists. It is one of American English dialects. An English teacher should be aware of this variety so as to make a little use of it in teaching. The application of BE in class can promote students learning and motivate them more to learn English. The implications of knowing BE as a variety of American English can broaden the teachers' knowledge of English varieties so as to take part in deciding which dialect is the most demanding to teach.

The material compiled for this research is obtained from a series of desk reseach, interviews, and correspon-dece. The history of BE is derived from history of America and several novels that use black speech. The features of

BE are derived from articles discussing those features and the examples are derived from books, novels, poems, and songs.

Finally, one can be sure of the existence of BE as a vernacular. It is a result of language change. As an independent language, it has its own right. It has its own features, besides the shared features with the Standard and other nonstandard dialects.

