



**AFRICAN AMERICAN VERNACULAR ENGLISH
(AAVE): A WORD-FORMATION AND
PHONOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE NOVEL *PUSH*
BY SAPHIRE**

A THESIS

**In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for S-1 Degree Majoring Linguistics in the English Department,
Faculty of Humanities Diponegoro University**

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PRONOUNCEMENT

The writer honestly states that this thesis is written by herself without taking any works from other researchers in any university, in diploma degree, S-1, S-2, and S-3 degree. The writer also ascertains that the writer does not take any material from other works except the references mentioned.

Semarang, 1st October 2021

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Naftali Feby Krismayanti

MOTTO AND DEDICATION

People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.

Maya Angelou

Courage is not the absence of fear: it is the ability to act in the presence of fear.

Bruce Lee

This thesis is dedicated to

*The writer's beloved dad, mom, sister
and those who the writer loves the most*

APPROVAL

**AFRICAN AMERICAN VERNACULAR ENGLISH (AAVE): A WORD-
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*PUSH BY SAPPHIRE***

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Semarang, 1st October 2021

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Naftali Feby Krismayanti

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ABSTRACT

African American Vernacular English (AAVE) is one of the dialects which has its characteristics compared to the common English. This writing deals with word-formation and phonological aspect of AAVE in a fiction, *Push* written by Sapphire (1996). The purpose of research is to obtain and categorize the word-formation processes and phonology found in the novel. Theory by Laurel J. Brinton & Donna M. Brinton (2010) about word-formation and theory of phonological features in AAVE by Rickford (1999) are employed to gain the appropriate data. The writer applies descriptive qualitative approach for the observation. The finding of the novel there are 70 vocabularies in slang form, with seven types of word-formation processes. Clipping process brings an impact to phonology in phonemic transcription by removing the beginning, medial, or final sound. In conclusion, the data discovered in the book are so plenty that show the word-formation processes and phonological features in AAVE that differs from other dialects.

Keywords: AAVE, Word-formation, Phonology, *Push*, Novel, Sapphire

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

African American Vernacular English (AAVE) or Black English or Ebonics is one of the varieties of languages used by ethnic from African Americans (Reyes, 2010:398). Nowadays, AAVE has increased rapidly through music, media, communication or even in communication purposes and this language is also used by a certain social class as their daily conversation. But on the other side, it is also known as a non-standard variety of speech that makes AAVE looks different from common English which is mostly spoken by white people and considered as “bad” or “lazy” language according to Yule (2020:728). Because of its dissimilarity, many people try to overstate between Africans and white people dialect on grammar, syntax, phonology, and morphology. The history of AAVE also brings a controversy according to Millward (2012:359) and there are two theories debate about the origin of AAVE. Therefore, some researchers prefer to pick the common form of English rather than AAVE as their object of observation.

For that reason, the writer tries to fulfill the gap from earlier studies about AAVE by analyzing book *Push* and finding the word-formation process and phonological analysis. Through this study may create a new perspective of AAVE. The reason the writer choose this book because the narrator can not speak properly especially for the common form of English due to lack of education so she speaks in AAVE.

1.2. Research Problems

The problems of this study that will be answered in the next chapter are :

1. What are the word-formation processes of AAVE in *Push* novel ?
2. How do word-formation processes give impact in phonological features in AAVE ?
3. Which word-formation process that is used frequently in the novel ?

1.3. Objectives of the Study

The aims of this writing are :

1. To analyze word-formation processes in the novel.
2. To explore the impact of word-formation process to phonology in AAVE.
3. To seek process that is used dominantly in the novel.

1.4. Previous Studies

Research on AAVE word-formation and phonological has been carried out by Julie and Hollie (2002), Thomas (2007), Ismartono (2009), Adams (2009), Harini (2015), Novianti (2017), Islami (2017), Mainingrum (2018), Siregar (2019), and Hafiza (2019).

Julia and Hollie (2002) in *Morphosyntactic Forms of African American English Used by young Children and Their Caregiver* state that the similarities of dialect application between young children and caregivers are reflected in the pattern dialect that is transformed from caregiver to child as a form of children sensitivity in communication style. Adolescents invent more dialect variations than adults and younger children are influenced by the environment and language development especially from caregiver and family.

Thomas (2007) in *Phonological and Phonetic Characteristics of African American Vernacular English* finds that among phonetic and phonological aspects, especially consonantal variables are given more attention, while vowel variation receives considerable inquiry. Monophthongal form in vowel and prosodic rhythm have brought solution in creolist debate and vowel shifting holds a big role in convergence or divergence debate.

Ismartono (2009) in *A Phonological Analysis of Black English in 50 Cent's Song Lyrics in the Album 'Curtis'* finds eight characteristics of Black English and the deletion process gets first place in Black English phonological rules. In conclusion, the thing that makes AAVE different from Standard English (SE) is the phonological effect.

Adams (2009) in *An Acoustic Phonetic Analysis of African American English: A Comparative Study of Two Dialects* gains vowel quality and duration are different between AAE and Northern Cities Shift (NCS) in undocumented linguistic literature. In AAE gives a distinct quality feature of NCS for sound /æ/, although this feature does not exist in AAE, then AAE has a longer vowel length than NCS, in the other hand the tense vowels in AAE are shorter than the lax vowels. Tense in NCS has regular length in each tense vowel is longer than lax of vowel height. The length difference in NCS is a result of consonant deletion in AAE.

Harini (2015) in *Variasi Fonologis Bahasa Inggris Orang Kulit Hitam Amerika dalam Lagu – Lagu Alicia Keys* shows that there are some variations of AAVE for example reduction of final consonants clusters, deletion of word-final

single consonant, monophthongal, and realization. AAVE itself has its characteristics especially in grammar and pronunciation and most of songs from the thesis that is sung by black people have a unique variation due to their daily activities.

Novianti (2017) in *Word Formation Analysis of English Slang Language on Deadpool Movie* analyzes the type of word-formation process and also finds the English slang in the movie. This research gives information on English slang through the conversation in the movie. By the analysis, the writer finds five types of word processes, there are blending, compounding, clipping, initialism, and multiple processes, and compounding is the most frequent process. Besides that, the writer uses Corpus as the method of this study and concludes that not all the types of word-formations inside the movie existed in theory.

Islami, Nur, and Ardaniah (2017) in *Phonological and Morphological Processes of African American Vernacular English in the Nicki Minaj's Lyrics* find the phonological features found are progressive assimilation, insertion rules, and deletion rules. Second, the morphological features which are found are blending, and the reduced word in terms of clipping. Third, the processes which are frequently found are deletion and blending.

Mainingrum (2018) does a s about the morphosyntactic of AAVE in the *Moonlight* movie using non-participant observation and the comparative method. From the analysis, the writer finds that AAVE discovered in the movie had its distinctive features compared to the other. Based on the observation morphological features of AAVE are slang terms formation and morphemic

process. The processes are derivation, blending, compounding, conversion, clipping, reduplication, and root. In the other hand the morphophonemic types found are assimilation, the addition of sound, loss of sound, and vowel change.

Siregar (2019) in *A Phonological Analysis of Black English in Kendrick Lamar's Song Lyrics in the Album "Damn"* shows the phonological characteristics of Black English can be seen through the pronunciation, and the writer finds six Black English phonological characteristics. Those characteristics can be observed through the pronunciation of the Black English words in the lyrics. Two main forms of spelling variations between SE and AAVE are *g-dropping* and *unstressed initial syllable loss*.

Hafiza and Rosa (2019) in *An Analysis of Word-Formation of English Slang Used in Straight Outta Compton Movie* find that there are 6 types of word-formation in slang term. Those are compounding, coinage, clipping, blending, acronyms, and multiple-process. From 65 data, blending occupies the first place as the most dominant process with a percentage of 29.24%.

Comparing to the previous studies, this research uses a book as the object of analysis. Unlike the previous studies mostly apply songs, movies, or field experiments as the object research. By using book the writer hopes that will gain plenty data of AAVE because the main character can not write and read properly then she conveys in broken English and the data shall be easier to find. Viewed from several previous studies and just a few of them discussing both of its morphological or phonological features at the same time.

1.5. Scope of the Study

The purpose of this thesis is to analyze *Push* book by Sapphire (1996) and the writer tends to use morphology and phonology as one of the linguistic branches instead of applying other approaches because from the book the writer finds a lot of data of word-formation and phonological analysis in AAVE if seen from the theory by Brinton and Rickford.

1.6. Writing Organization

This thesis consists of four chapters which are structured as follow:

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter consists of background of the study, research problems, objectives of the study, previous studies, scope of the study, and writing organization that will describe what this thesis will be observed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER II

THEORY AND METHOD

The second chapter includes the brief of AAVE, the concept of morpheme, word process by Brinton, the overview of phonology, phoneme, reduction, and deletion by Rickford. This chapter also discusses how the writer collects and analyzes the data by applying some methods which are appropriate to the goals of this study.

CHAPTER III

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This chapter provides the final analysis of the new findings of word formation and phonological rules that are found in the book based on the theoretical framework.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

The last chapter reemphasizes the results presenting in preceding chapter by describing the outline of the findings.

CHAPTER II

THEORY AND METHOD

2.1. Theoretical Framework

2.1.1. African American Vernacular English Overview

African American Vernacular English (AAVE) or Ebonics is significantly studied over three decades. This variety is neither a geographical dialect nor the dialect of all African Americans, but it is an ethnic and socioeconomic variety of language by the social position and education of the speaker according to Holmes (2017:358). This variety is used in informal speech rather than formal situation and term vernacular is a unstandardised variety and does not have official status in accordance to Holmes (2017:77). Since AAVE is applied to describe African people who live in the United States of America, many literary works use it as the representative of African Americans in their works.

Holmes (2017:188) also states that AAVE is actually spoken in the northern cities of the USA, and its linguistic distinctions describe the symbols of ethnicity. Baugh and Cable (1993:362) states that there are some features exclusively of AAVE in phonological and morphological form. The reduction of final consonant clusters (*lis'* for *list*), another feature is the loss of postvocalic /r/ (*ca'* for *car*) as the most usual context for deletion of consonant. AAVE differs from other varieties in having a higher rate of deletion before vowel. In standard or non-standard form, suffix *-ing* /ɪŋ/ occurs as *singin'*. Lisa J. Green (2002:103) in her book states that morphological features of AAVE are marking past, habitual, and genitive.

2.1.2. Morphology, Morpheme, and Word Formation

Laurel J. Brinton & Donna M. Brinton on *The Linguistic Structure of Modern English* (2010) explains if morphology is a study of the way new words or new lexemes are coined into language which is varied depending on how they are implemented in sentences. It is always linked with the term morpheme. Morpheme is the smallest unit of a word that is not able anymore to be divided semantically or functionally. It is classified into four main classes according to Brinton (2010:83-84) those are free, derivational, inflectional, and bound morpheme. In the other hand word-formation is defined as a process how word is creating into a new word. Brinton (2010) divide word-formation processes into some types, they are:

1. Derivation

It is called the addition of a word-forming affix. It can be phonological change, orthographic change to the root, semantic change, and change in word class.

2. Reduplication

It is similar to derivation, the initial syllable or the entire word is doubled with a slight phonological change e.g *boo-boo*, *choo-choo*

3. Conversion or functional shift

A functional shift involves the conversion of one part of speech to another without the addition of a suffix. In literature, conversion is also called zero derivation and then combining with affixation.

4. Compounds

It is a combination of two or more free roots, stems, and bases. The second word takes the semantical meaning so it is called *right-headed*.

5. Blending

It can be defined as combining more than two morphemes into forming a new word.

6. Clipping or Shortening

A new word is created by shortening the existed word. It is a result of deliberately dropping part of a word, usually either the end or the beginning, or less often both with the same meaning and word class.

7. Coinage

It may be able to form a new word from the whole of the old word. This kind of process is difficult in finding a new word due to that word does not give the clue from the meaning of the word.

2.1.3. Phonology

Based on Wiese R (2006:562-564) on *Encyclopedia of Language & Linguistics*, the focuses of phonology are discovering systematic properties of sound structure and finding principles inside individual language or language in general. The function of phonology is to make linguistic items clear because they are delivered in abstract symbols so they can be pronounceable and understandable.

2.1.4. Phoneme

Wiese R (2006:562) states that phoneme is the smallest unit of sound that can clarify the meaning or also can be defined as the first invariant of the

categories in phonology. The general functions are to classify lexical items from each other terms.

2.1.5. Phonological Rules

Phonological rules take a big role in communication through language either spoken or written which analyzes how sounds change during vocal communication. According to John Gold Smith (1995:1), phonological rules are divided into two different levels of phoneme, the abstract and the phonetic forms. The functions of phonological rules are to change features, add new features, delete segments, and add segments. The first formers that launch phonological rules are Chomsky and Halle (1965:97) who intends to bring the ability for native for understanding utterances precisely, so they divide them into five types:

- Assimilation happens when one sound causes a nearby sound to be more similar in order to be ably pronounced easily i.e *hot potato* is often spoken as /,hɒppə'tetəʊ/.
- Dissimilation means a sound changes its features then becoming less similar to the next sound.
- Deletion is defined as a phoneme that is not pronounced in certain situations.
- Insertion appears when a new sound is inserted. The reason is about various articulators have different timing.
- Metathesis is two nearby sounds switch their place.

2.1.6. Phonological Features in AAVE

According to Rickford (1999:4-5), there are eighteen distinctions of phonology characteristic between AAVE and Standard English (SE). Here the writer lists some features on AAVE :

- Reduction of word-final consonant clusters especially those ending in /t/ or /d/ (alveolar) i.e. *han'* for SE *hand*
- Deletion of word-final single consonant after a vowel. For example *ma'* for SE *man*.
- Realization of final *ng* as in gerunds i.e. *walkin'*
- Deletion of unstressed initial and medial syllables, as in '*fraid*' for SE *afraid*
- Realization of voiceless *th* /θ/ into /t/ or /f/

2.2. Research Method

In reaching the maximum data, in doing research some steps are needed to lead into the right procedure. Method is a way the writer used to answer the problems of this study. According to Darmadi (2013:153), the research method is a scientific way to obtain data.

2.2.1. Type of Research

This observation is a kind of descriptive qualitative research because it focuses on humanism problems and literature and the whole details of the study will be explained in words or pictures without using numbers or diagrams. This type of research tends to state commitment in studying as far as possible within context of the research field according to Vieckie and Clinton (2012:255). It draws the current phenomenon with a scientific procedure. The writer considers

this method as the most possible way to reach the purpose of the study because the object of the writing is a book.

2.2.2. Data

Data explain what are inside of the research, and they sum the effect according to Hart (2004, and Yin (2011) also states that data can be the smallest unit produced by experiences, experiments, and observations. The primary data are words related to word-formation and phonology of the book *Push*. For supporting the analysis, the writer reads some journals, books, and articles found on the internet related to word-formation and also phonological aspects of AAVE. The intention of using this data is considered that will simplify the analysis of the problems in this research.

2.2.3. Population and Sample

To get the precise data, the population regarding the research is based on the book *Push*. Population itself is the whole of the relevant object and closes up to the research problems or total data that is desired to be analyzed based on Kabir (2016:169). The population of this research are all of the words related to the purpose of the study.

Kabir also states that sample is defined as a part of the population which are considered to represent the whole of the population. In this study, the sample are the population itself which are described in 175 vocabularies which appear in morphological and phonological analysis of AAVE said by the narrator.

2.2.4. Sampling Techniques

In this study, the writer employs total population sampling which is a type of purposive sampling technique to examine the whole population that have a certain characteristics because the amount population and sample that are used in the thesis is equal and will be used to analyze the data according to Sugiyono (2014:124). The writer implements this sampling method for gaining vocabularies with specific features of AAVE to get the validity and efficiency because this sampling technique is considered to be suitable method for qualitative research.

2.2.5. Methods of Collecting Data

The writer adjusts library research to collect data through reading, recording, and processing the research materials and the purpose of this thesis is about AAVE morphological and phonological analysis of the book *Push*. The writer tries to download the e-book of the book on the internet, reads it closely, then seeks vocabularies that contain AAVE features, and marks them.

2.2.6. Methods of Analyzing Data

After collecting the data, this research observes the book as the object of observation with applying the deductive method. This method actually creates a hypothesis based on the existing theory and makes a strategy to test if that theory is valid in gained circumstances based on Wilson (2014:7). The data will be classified based on their process found in the book using word-formation theory by Brinton (2010) and phonological features theory in AAVE by Rickford (1999). After the data have been analyzed, the writer searches for the most used type of both aspects and also their phonemic transcription.

CHAPTER III

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Word-Formation Processes in AAVE

From the data, it can be seen if the new words which are formed through the word processes are mostly in slang terms and the writer tries to look for the definition in the online Urban Dictionary (1999) by Aaron Peckham. The analysis shows there are seven types of word-formation process in AAVE comparing with the theory of Laurel J. Brinton & Donna M. Brinton (2010) in their book, commonly there are ten word-formation processes. They are derivation, blending, compounding, conversion, coinage, reduplication, and clipping. The most frequently used process is compounding.

Table 3.1 List of AAVE Word-Formation Process found in the book *Push* by Sapphire

NO	Word Formation	Total
1.	Derivation	4
2.	Blending	17
3.	Compounding	26
4.	Conversion	3
5.	Clipping	3
6.	Reduplication	1
7.	Coinage	16
Total		70

3.1.1. Derivation

The data of this book are gained through word process which is called derivation. Derivation found in the book is the word with suffix *-less* and *-ness* that automatically changes the word category and the meaning of the word itself.

- a. *wit* + *ness* = verb → noun
- b. *ugly* + *ness* = adjective → noun
- c. *rest* + *less* = verb → adjective
- d. *home* + *less* = noun → adjective

Witness means someone who is always struggling and failing in life. *Restless* is defined as when you want to settle down but your mind is bouncing off the wall. *Ugliness* has a meaning as the property of physical things that makes someone unappealing. *Homeless* is meant when someone exhausts and on the way being insane, sleeps in the shelter and walks in dreams.

3.1.2. Blending

A blend is defined as combination of two or more free words into a new form. Usually, this process takes the initial, middle or final sound of the morpheme and merges to the end of other word for reaching a new word.

From the data, blending process comprises into three types. They are deletion, additional and change of sound.

3.1.2.1. Blending with Deletion of Sound

This kind of blending usually exists in the final of the first morpheme, in the initial of the second word or it can be both of them. The data explains that

deletion of sound occurs in the final sound of the first morpheme. From the analysis, the deletion can be seen in pronouns, determiner and auxiliary.

a) Deletion of Final Sound of the First Morpheme

The final sound of the first morpheme in this process is taken off, while the other morpheme is unaffected.

e.g: *Y'all* in AAVE from *you all* (pronoun-determiner)

$/ju:/ + /ɑ:l/ = /jʌ:.ɑ:l/ \rightarrow /jɑ:l/$

It can be observed if the final sound of the first morpheme /u/ is deleted and combined with the second morpheme.

b) Deletion of Final Sound of the First Morpheme and Initial Sound of the Second Morpheme

This process involves both the first morpheme or the second morpheme. They will be mixing into a new word by having deletion in the final sound of the first morpheme and initial sound of the second morpheme.

e.g: *Thas* from *that is* (determiner-auxiliary)

$/ðæt/ + /ɪz/ = /~~ðæt~~.ɪz/ \rightarrow /dɑ:z/$

This blending involves the final sound of the first morpheme /t/ and the initial sound of the second morpheme /ɪ/ goes through the same deletion. Initial sound of the first morpheme also transforms from /ð/ into /d/.

3.1.2.2. Blending with Vowel Change

Assimilation takes a big role in this process by changing the nearby sound especially for the vowel change in the final sound of the first morpheme and the initial sound of the second morpheme which will affect each other in forming a

new word. This process can be seen in word categories such as verb and pronoun.

The example can be seen in the following :

- a. *Lemme* from *let me* (verb-pronoun compound)

$/let/ + /mi/ = /let.mi/ \rightarrow /lemmi/$

This blending occurs progressive assimilation where the end consonant sound of the first morpheme /t/ is influenced by the initial consonant sound of the second morpheme /m/. This kind of assimilation flows from the left to the right.

3.1.2.3. Blending with Vowel Change, Addition, and Deletion of Sound

This process can occur in two or more than two morphemes. It can be seen in the first, second, or third morpheme.

- a. *Gotta* from *have got to* (auxiliary-verb-preposition compound)

$/həv/ + /gɑ:t/ + /tu/ = /həv.gɑ:t.tu/ \rightarrow /gɑ:tə/$

- b. *Coulda* from *could have* (auxiliary-verb)

$/kʊd/ + /həv/ = /kʊd.həv/ \rightarrow /kʊdə/$

- c. *Outta* from *out of* (preposition-preposition compound)

$/aʊt/ + /ɑ:v/ = /aʊt.ɑ:v/ \rightarrow /aʊt.tə/$

- d. *Lotta* from *lot of* (noun-preposition)

$/lɑ:t/ + /ɑ:v/ = /lɑ:t.ɑ:v/ \rightarrow /lɑ:t.tə/$

From example (a), it can be seen if deletion happens in the whole of the first morpheme and the final sound of the second morpheme /t/, while the final sound of the third morpheme is switched into /ə/. Blending process in (b) looks a little bit different due to deletion occurs in the initial sound /h/ and final sound /v/ of the second morpheme without any change in the middle sound. The deletion in

(c) only appears in the final sound /v/ of the second morpheme then the vowel change is undergone to sound /ɑ:/ of the second morpheme which transformed into sound /ə/. In this example also there is addition sound /t/ which is the duplication from the previous sound /t/. Blending in (d) looks similar to the previous example which the deletion appears on the final sound of the second morpheme and addition sound /t/ in the middle as a result of duplication.

e. *Usta* from *used to* (verb-preposition compound)

/yu:zd/ + /tu/ = /yu:zɔ̃.tu/ → /yu:ztə/

f. *Hafta* from *have to* (auxiliary-preposition compound)

/həv/ + /tu/ = /həv.tu/ → /hæftə/

g. *Hadda* from *had to* (auxiliary-preposition compound)

/həd/ + /tu/ = /həd.tu/ → /hæddə/

h. *Musta* from *must have* (verb-auxiliary)

/məst/ + /həv/ = /məst.həv/ → /məstə:/

i. *Kinda* from *kind of* (adjective-preposition compound)

/kaɪnd/ + /ɑ:v/ = /kaɪnd.ɑ:v/ → /kaɪndə/

Deletion in example (e) appears on the final sound of the first morpheme /d/ where the suffix *-ed* is not spoken and for the second morpheme the change of vowel is undergone in the final sound /u/ into /ə/. Blending (f) happens when the final sound /u/ of the second morpheme experiences the vowel change into sound /ə/, while the final sound of the first morpheme is also transformed from /v/ into /f/. The first morpheme in (g) is unchanged. In the other hand the second morpheme both in the initial or the final sound undergoes vowel change, deletion,

and addition of sound. The initial sound /t/ is removed and sound /d/ is added to fill the space. For the final sound /u/ is transformed into /ə/. In (h) deletion and vowel change are only found in the second morpheme both in the initial /h/ or the final sound /v/ and rests the vowel /ə/ which will be transformed into /ɑ:/. In (i) the vowel change only happens in the final sound of the second morpheme where sound /v/ is removed and sound /ɑ:/ is switched into sound /ə/.

j. *Gonna* from *going to* (verb-preposition compound)

/gou.ɪŋ/ + /tu/ = /goʊ.ɪŋ.tu/ → /gənə/

k. *Tryna* from *trying to* (verb-preposition compound)

/traɪ.ɪŋ/ + /tu/ = /traɪ.ɪŋ.tu/ → /traɪ.nə/

l. *Imma* from *I'm going to* (pronoun-aux-verb-prep compound)

/aɪm.goʊ.ɪŋ.tu/ → /aɪmə/

m. *Wanna* from *want to* (verb-preposition compound)

/wa:nt/ + /tu/ = /wa:nt.tu/ → /wɑ:nə/

Between example (j) and (k) have the same process by deleting the final sound of the first morpheme /i/ and /ŋ/ and also the initial sound /t/ of the second morpheme. Because of the deletion, addition of sound arises in this process. In this case, sound /n/ is added to fill the space. The vowel change happens in both morphemes which in the first morpheme sound /oʊ/ in *gonna* is transformed into /ə/ while in the second morpheme sound /u/ is switched into sound /ə/ while in *tryna* only the final sound of the second morpheme undergoes vowel change into /ə/. On the other hand, the first morpheme in (l) is not transformed. To form *Imma*, the first thing is deleting the entire of the second morpheme and the initial

sound /t/ in the third morpheme and changing the final sound /u/ in the last morpheme into /ə/. For reaching *wanna*, deletion involves the final sound of the first morpheme and the initial sound of the second morpheme, sound /t/. In the other hand final sound of the second morpheme experiences vowel change where sound /u/ transformed into /ə/.

3.1.3. Compounding

Compounding also has the same purpose that is to make a new word by compounding two or more morphemes from different word class categories into a new word without any affixation or sound removal but still producing new meaning.

3.1.3.1. Verb-preposition Compounding

The data in the book states if some prepositions are involved in this kind of compounding with the main verb. The first morpheme takes control in reaching the new meaning. The preposition *up*, *down*, *off*, and *over* are found. The structure can be seen as “Verb + Preposition → Verb”. The data for this compounding are *catch up*, *live down*, *back off*, and *get over*.

Catch up means providing the latest news. *Live down* means to wipe out the memory or effect of making a mistake. *Back off* means to be explained to mind your business or to stop doing something based on Urban Dictionary. *Get over* means feeling normal again after being ill or having an unpleasant experience.

3.1.3.2. Verb-noun Compounding

This compounding requires two or more morphemes which are mixed into one form, while the head or the controller is in the second morpheme. The formula can be “Verb + Noun → Noun”, the example are *bedspread* and *workfare*.

Bedsread means a naughty girl who is brought into a room, takes her clothes off and lies on the bed. In the other hand the etymology for *workfare* is *work* + *welfare* which means a program by requiring people to work to get money from government in other particular things such as housing, food, medical costs, etc.

3.1.3.3. Noun-preposition Compounding

The first morpheme in this compound type has function as the controller where it comes from combination of nouns and prepositions. According to the data some examples found are *lookout*, *fuck up*, *shit out*, *live in*, *bug out*, and *pull up*.

Lookout means someone whose job is to watch someone carefully. *Fuck up* means someone or something which is very messed up or in failure. *Shit out* means a bad situation. *Live in* means an unmarried couple who lives together and has sex. *Bug out* means an act of freaking out (overreacting). *Pull up* means an invitation to come in.

3.1.3.4. Noun-noun Compounding

This type of compounding involves the combination between noun and noun, and the head is noun of the second morpheme. The process in this type is

“Noun + Noun → Noun”. The data are *motherfucker*, *crack addict*, *gingerbread house*, *coconuthead*, *bullshit*, *homeattendant*, *dickhead*, *cornrow* and *oatmeal*.

Motherfucker means a common insult and it can have no meaning at the same time or it also can be used as a compliment. *Crack addict* means someone who wants to have sex and they will go find and pay for it. *Gingerbread house* is meant as a sexual position. *Coconut head* means a person whose head is empty except they only interest in sex. *Bullshit* means a lie or unbelievable story. *Home attendant* means a nonlicensed person who works in personal care and environmental services. *Dickhead* means an idiot or jerk. *Cornrow* means a traditional hairstyle of black male that braids the hair and *oatmeal* means as a breakfast with warmed oats and water.

3.1.3.5. Adjective-noun Compounding

This compounding happens by combining the adjective and noun and the head is in the second morpheme. The process can be analyzed as “Adjective + Noun → Noun”. The examples in the book are *lightskin*, *dreadlock*, *daydream*, *sourball* and *redbone*.

Lightskin means an African-American individual or a black person with a light complexion. *Dreadlock* means a hairstyle popularized by Rastafarians which consists of section of hair knotted together. *Daydream* means a creative, non-logical thought when some people get bored. *Sourball* means accumulation of sweat and scent due to lack of ventilation and *redbone* means an African American female/male origin who has light skin with red undertones.

3.1.4. Conversion or Functional Shift

In this type of word process, the main purpose is to change the word class category into a new one but without any affixation (zero derivation). From the analysis, there are two main types of conversion.

3.1.4.1. Verb to Noun Conversion

The function of this conversion is to switch a particular word from verb category into noun category. So the morphological process can be seen as $V \rightarrow N$.

Piss as in “*Jermaine give Rhonda a piss on your look*” (p.48)

The verb word *piss* commonly means urinating. But here, *piss* means a vulgar way when someone sees another person.

3.1.4.2. Adjective to Noun Conversion

The last type of conversion is transforming word class category adjective into a noun ($Adj \rightarrow N$).

Fool as in “*Yeah, safe from dese fools on the street...*” (p.24)

Alternative as in “*This the alternative? That bitch heard...*” (p.27)

Adjective *fool* means as stupid but here, *fool* as noun means a term for friend or buddy that is mostly used by non-white ethnicities.

Alternative means as reserved in adjective, but when it undergoes conversion it becomes a group or person who does not fit into any labeled group.

3.1.5. Reduplication

Actually, in English language reduplication can not be found in any category. But in this data, it occurs when the first morpheme is doubled but the initial vowel of the second morpheme is different.

e.g : *dingle-dangle* – “*Carl’s dick dingle dangle in my face and now the flat-face baby*” (p.19)

The reduplication is found in verb category and using the partial reduplication where the word is doubled but the vowel between first morpheme and second morpheme is different. *Dingle-dangle* in Urban Dictionary means putting the penis into their partner’s mouth (oral sex).

3.1.6. Root Creations or Coinage

The last step to form a new word especially slang word is through root creations or coinage. Because this process has an unpredictable process, so it can be seen if coinage does not have a certain pattern in forming a new word. Most word processes are influenced by their surrounding environment but coinage occurs because of the variation by the speakers.

1. Hot to trot (adjective) : *ready and willing to have sex.*
2. Hoe (noun) : *person who uses their looks and charms for manipulating their partner to gain benefit.*
3. Chile (noun) : *child.* Usually used to show disbelief, disgust, or shock.
4. Wump (verb) : *act of humping someone with clothes on (dry humping) and then becomes wet.*
5. Cow (noun) : *an annoying, stupid, or bitchy woman.*
6. Pig (noun) : *gay slang for someone who gets off sexually by doing raunchy things.*

7. Heifer (noun) : *a prodigiously large female about the same size as a cow.*
8. Whore (noun) : *a girl or guy who sleeps with multiple people.*
9. Bitch (noun) : *a naughty girl.*
10. Cracker (noun) : *a poor or mean white person.*
11. Puta (noun) : *a pretty girl in France.*
12. Morena (noun) : *Spanish word for calling a black girl.*
13. Tecata (noun) : *a heroin user.*
14. Jack in the box (noun): *a psychopath.*
15. Shinola (noun) : *a brand of shoe polish.*
16. Goddam (adjective) : *expressing the negative feeling.*

3.1.7. Clipping or Shortening

The purpose of this word process is to make a shorter or simpler new form by removing some parts either in the beginning, middle, final or the three of them. It can occur in any word class category and the function is not to change the word category but the focus refers to the sound and pronunciation transcription. There are three primary types of clipping seen from the word cutting position they are fore-clipping, back-clipping, and middle clipping. But the data only appears in two types.

3.1.7.1. Fore-clipping

For this process, a new word is formed by removing the beginning syllable of the morpheme but does not change the first meaning of the morpheme. Some particular words that undergo this process, are :

a) Omission of the Initial Sound

This appears when the initial sound of the morpheme is deleted.

e.g: *'nother* from *another* (pronoun)

/ə'nʌðər/ → /'nʌðər/

From the example sound /ə/ is removed, but the meaning of *about* does not change.

b) Omission of the Two Initial Sounds

This process takes the first two sounds of the morpheme.

e.g: *'fore* from *before* (adverb)

/bɪ'fɔ:r/ → /fɔ:r/

It can be seen if sounds /b/ and /ɪ/ are removed while the other sounds do not change.

3.1.7.2. Back-clipping

It looks similar to the fore-clipping, but in this process the final sound of morpheme is removed and it can occur in any word class category without influences other sounds.

e.g : *Nigga* from *nigger* (noun)

/'nɪgər/ → /'nɪgə/

It can be seen from the example if the final sound /r/ disappears.

3.2. Phonological Features in AAVE

The previous explanation has already told word-formation process in AAVE, it brings an impact for phonemic transcription in phonology as well the pronunciation especially for the clipping or shortening process that is related to

phonological rules deletion and realization by removing and switching a particular sound in a morpheme. The deletion appears in the initial, medial, and final sound. If in the previous subchapter tells the word-formation process in AAVE while in this subchapter the writer focusses on the phonemic transcription due to clipping process seen from phonological features theory by Rickford.

Table 3.2 List of AAVE Phonological Features of the Book *Push* by Sapphire

NO	Phonological Rules	Total
1	Reduction and Realization of Word Final Consonant (Alveolar)	22
2	Consonant Deletion in the Final Sound	6
3	Realization of the Final Sound /ŋ/ into /n/	39
4	Realization of Voiced and Voiceless Sound	13
5	Deletion Sound /r/ After Vocal Sound	4
6	Deletion of the Unstressed Initial Syllables	15
7	Deletion of Medial Syllables	5
8	Deletion in the Initial and Final Sound	1
Total		105

For gaining the phonemic transcription, the writer applies the oxford learner online dictionary for the common form of English and <https://tophonetics.com> for AAVE. Each process will be explained in the following:

3.2.1. Reduction and Realization of Word Final Consonant Cluster

(Alveolar)

a. Deletion of Voiceless Alveolar

This deletion comes up in the final voiceless alveolar sound /t/ especially for words that have two final consonant sounds with the one morpheme.

fac’ from *fact*

/fækt/ → /fæk/

Reduction appears in the final sound /t/ and it is not pronounced due to this process.

b. Realization of Voiced Alveolar

The realization is found in voiced alveolar sound /d/ for the suffix *-ed* as past participle which is changed into voiceless alveolar sound /t/.

kilt from *killed*

/kɪld/ → /kɪlt/

The purpose of this reduction is to switch the final voiced alveolar sound /d/ over voiceless alveolar sound /t/.

c. Deletion of Voiced Alveolar

Other deletions happen where the voiced alveolar sound /d/ is deleted. This type of deletion appears when the word has two final consonant sounds.

secon’ from *second*

/'sekənd/ → /'sekən/

The voiced alveolar sound /d/ in this word is disappeared as one of phonological features in AAVE.

3.2.2. Consonant Deletion in the Final Sound

This type of consonant deletion pops up in the final sound that has only one consonant. Here sound /ʊ/, /t/ and other sounds with more than one final consonant sound are removed.

kno from *know*

/nəʊ/ → /no/

Sound /ʊ/ as the final sound after a vowel in word *know* is not spoken due to this process.

leʹ from *let*

/let/ → /le/

The final sound /t/ after a vowel undergoes the deletion and is not pronounced.

asʹ from *ask*

/ɑ:sk/ → /ɑ:s/

Other example word *ask* that has two final consonant sounds so voiceless velar sound /k/ as the final sound is removed.

3.2.3. Realization of the Final Sound /ŋ/

Data in this book can be seen if some particular words have the final consonant velar sound /ŋ/ which is not alveolar changed into sound /n/ which is alveolar and the final velar stop /ŋ/ experiences alveolarization.

keepin from *keeping*

/'ki:pŋ/ → /'ki:pɪn/

There is a change in the final nasals velar sound /ŋ/ that is transformed into alveolar sound /n/.

3.2.4. Realization of Voiced and Voiceless Sound

a. Realization of Voiceless /θ/ as /t/

If we see the data, It happens in the final sound where the voiceless fricative sound /θ/ is switched into alveolar voiceless sound /t/ in some particular words.

wit from *with*

/wɪθ/ → /wɪt/

The final sound /θ/ in AAVE is replaced with sound /t/ which is changed the pronunciation of *with* into /wɪt/.

b. Realization of Voiceless /θ/ as /f/

Another data found in the book is the transformation of the final voiceless fricative interdental sound /θ/ into voiceless fricative labiodental sound /f/.

underneaf from *underneath*

/,ʌndə'ni:θ/ → /,ʌndə'ni:f/

The final sound /θ/ is deleted and substituted with sound /f/.

c. Realization of Voiced /ð/ as /d/

This kind of realization appears on the initial dental sound of morpheme which replaces voiced fricative interdental sound /ð/ into voiced alveolar sound /d/.

dey from *they*

/ðeɪ/ → /deɪ/

The phonological variation erases sound /ð/ and is switched with sound /d/ due to the realization process.

3.2.5. Deletion Sound /r/ After Vocal Sound

From the data, this deletion shows if the morpheme has retroflex alveolar sound /r/ as the final sound will disappear and usually happen after the vocal sound.

yo' from *your*

/jɔ:r/ → /jəʊ/

The final sound retroflex alveolar /r/ is vanished after a vowel in this process.

mo' from *more*

/mɔ:r/ → /məʊ/

The deletion of sound /r/ also can be found when sound /r/ is between two vowels and not pronounced.

3.2.6. Deletion of Unstressed Initial Syllables

Some words experience this kind of deletion where their initial sound is removed. It can delete one, two or even three sounds as well in the beginning.

'bout from *about*

/ə'baʊt/ → /baʊt/

That example shows if there is just one eliminated sound that is /ə/ as the initial sound.

'em from *them*

/ðəm/ → /əm/

It can be seen if at the beginning the voiced fricative interdental /ð/ is removed and only the rest of morpheme is left.

'less from **unless**

/ən'les/ → /les/

The example points out if there are two eliminated sounds in the beginning. Sound /ə/ and /n/ undergo vowel reduction in word *unless*.

'fare from **welfare**

/'welfeər/ → /'feər/

There are three initial sounds which are cut off those are /w/, /e/, and /l/ and leaving half of morpheme.

steadda from **instead of**

/ɪn'sted əv/ → /'stedɑ:/

This kind of deletion also appears in word that has two morphemes. The example above shows if the initial sound /ɪ/ and /n/ are removed, while for the final voiced fricative labiodental sound /v/ of the second morpheme also eliminated. Other process found in this word is realization sound /ə/ in the initial sound of the second morpheme into /ɑ:/. Word-formation process blending is also involved in this morpheme especially for the addition of sound where voiced alveolar sound /d/ is doubled.

3.2.7. Deletion of Unstressed Medial Syllables

Basically, this reduction just involves one sound in the middle of morpheme and is usually a vowel.

b'long from **belong**

/bɪ'lɒŋ/ → /b'lɒŋ/

The medial sound /ɪ/ or the vowel *e* disappears.

comp'tant from ***combatant***

/'kɒmptənt/ → /'kɒmbətənt/

Here, the middle vowel sound /ə/ is eliminated and also occurs the realization of voiced bilabial sound /b/ into voiceless bilabial sound /p/.

3.2.8. Deletion of Unstressed Initial and Final Syllables

The data found in the book state that if there is another kind of deletion where involves two or more deletion sounds in one morpheme.

'ceptin from ***excepting***

/'septɪn/ → /ɪk'septɪŋ/

In the beginning, there are sound reduction /ɪ/ and velar voiceless /k/ while in the end there is realization from velar nasal sound /ŋ/ into nasal alveolar sound /n/.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

From the analysis of the previous chapter, both morphological and phonological aspect shows the correlation between clipping or shortening process to the deletion and realization especially for the phonemic transcription. In the morphological analysis, there are 70 vocabularies predicted experiencing the word-formation process. From the original mentioned theory by Laurel J. Brinton & Donna M. Brinton (2010) about word-formation process, there must be 10 types of morphological process but the writer states that there are 7 types morphological processes are found in the novel. Those are derivation, blending, compounding, conversion, clipping, coinage, and reduplication and the most frequently used process is compounding as many 26 vocabularies. The writer concludes if mostly those vocabularies are in slang term therefore the writer implements the online Urban Dictionary to reach the definition of each term.

The effect of one of the word-formation processes, clipping or shortening brings a change to the phonemic transcription by deleting the particular sound if seen from phonological features in AAVE theory by Rickford (1999) and 105 data found in the novel have phonological features deletion and realization. The deletion and realization happen in the initial, middle, and final sound. There are eight types of phonological features Those features are reduction and realization of word-final consonant cluster (alveolar), consonant deletion in the final sound, realization of the final sound /ŋ/, realization of voiced and voiceless sound,

deletion sound /r/ after vocal sound, deletion of the unstressed initial syllables, deletion of medial syllables, and deletion in the initial and final sound.

In this thesis, the writer observes the morphological and phonological view and from this analysis the writer hopes that other researcher will also bring the new highlight about AAVE and make the bad perception about AAVE disappears by continuing the same discussion about AAVE and hope that this thesis will be a reference for everyone who wants to write the same topic. The writer suggests that other students especially English Department will do further research related to word-formation and phonology in AAVE. This thesis might be far from being perfect hence criticisms, comments and suggestions that are given will be highly appreciated. The writer also expects that this thesis will provide enough explanation about AAVE that mostly gains the bad perspective because its characteristics are different contrasted with the common English.

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APPENDIX

List of vocabularies which are found in the novel *Push*

NO	AAVE	Phonemic Transcription	Standard English (SE)	Phonemic Transcription
1.	nothin'	/ˈnʌθɪn/	nothing	/ˈnʌθɪŋ/
2.	talkin'	/ˈtɔːkɪn/	talking	/ˈtɔːkɪŋ/
3.	gon'	/ˈgən/	gonna	/ˈgənə/
4.	tryin'	/ˈtraɪn/	trying	/ˈtraɪŋ/
5.	fuckin'	/ˈfʌkɪn/	fucking	/ˈfʌkɪŋ/
6.	doin'	/ˈduːɪn/	doing	/ˈduːɪŋ/
7.	screamin'	/ˈskriːmɪn/	screaming	/ˈskriːmɪŋ/
8.	wif	/wɪf/	with	/wɪð/
9.	lyin'	/ˈlaɪn/	lying	/ˈlaɪŋ/
10.	thinkin'	/ˈθɪŋkɪn/	thinking	/ˈθɪŋkɪŋ/
11.	burnin'	/ˈbɜːnɪn/	burning	/ˈbɜːnɪŋ/
12.	comin'	/ˈkʌmɪn/	coming	/ˈkʌmɪŋ/
13.	dyin'	/ˈdaɪn/	dying	/ˈdaɪŋ/
14.	fryin'	/ˈfraɪn/	frying	/ˈfraɪŋ/
15.	goin'	/ˈgəʊɪn/	going	/ˈgəʊɪŋ/
16.	gruntin'	/grʌntɪn/	grunting	/grʌntɪŋ/
17.	mouf	/maʊf/	mouth	/maʊθ/
18.	motherfuckin'	/ˈmʌðəfʌkɪn/	motherfucking	/ˈmʌðəfʌk ɪŋ/
19.	wit'	/wɪt/	with	/wɪð/
20.	fartin'	/fɑːt ɪn/	farting	/fɑːt ɪŋ/
21.	norf	/nɔːf/	north	/nɔːθ/
22.	me's	/mes/	mess	/mes/
23.	beggin'	/ˈbeɪn/	begging	/ˈbeɪŋ/
24.	somethin'	/ˈsʌmθɪn/	something	/ˈsʌmθɪŋ/
25.	wifout	/wɪˈfaʊt/	without	/wɪˈðaʊt/

26.	gettin'	/'getɪn/	getting	/'getɪŋ/
27.	tho'	/ðə:/	though	/ðəʊ/
28.	feelin'	/'fi:lɪn/	feeling	/'fi:lɪŋ/
29.	breathin'	/'bri:ðɪn/	breathing	/'bri:ðɪŋ/
30.	teef	/ti:f/	teeth	/ti:θ/
31.	underneaf	/,ʌndə'ni:f/	underneath	/,ʌndə'ni:θ/
32.	chu	/tʃu:/	you	/ju/
33.	'nother	/'nʌðər/	another	/ə'nʌðər/
34.	comp'tant	/'kɒmptənt/	combatant	/'kɒmbətənt/
35.	'mergency	/'mɜ:dʒənsi/	emergency	/'mɜ:dʒənsi/
36.	readin'	/'ri:dɪn/	reading	/'ri:dɪŋ/
37.	writin'	/'raɪtɪn/	writing	/'raɪtɪŋ/
38.	'lectrik	/'lektɪk/	electric	/'lektɪk/
39.	'round	/'raʊnd/	around	/ə'raʊnd/
40.	mo'	/mɔ:/	more	/mɔ:r/
41.	jew'ry	/'dʒu:ri/	jewelry	/'dʒu:əlri/
42.	yo'	/jɔ:/	your	/jɔ:/
43.	keepin'	/'ki:pɪn/	keeping	/'ki:pɪŋ/
44.	drownin'	/'draʊnɪn/	drowning	/'draʊnɪŋ/
45.	dey	/deɪ/	they	/ðeɪ/
46.	dat	/dæt/	that	/ðæt/
47.	mornin'	/'mɔ:nɪn/	morning	/'mɔ:nɪŋ/
48.	'fare	/'feər/	welfare	/'welfeər/
49.	sho	/ʃə:/	show	/ʃəʊ/
50.	kno	/nə:/	know	/nəʊ/
51.	nex	/neks/	next	/nekst/
52.	don	/dɔ:n/	don't	/dɔ:nt/
53.	noddin	/nɒdɪn/	nodding	/nɒdɪŋ/
54.	dese	/di:z/	these	/ði:z/
55.	dancin	/'dɑ:nsɪn/	dancing	/'dɑ:nsɪŋ/

56.	walkin	/'wɔ:kɪn/	walking	/'wɔ:kɪŋ/
57.	steelin	/sti:lɪn/	steeling	/sti:lɪŋ/
58.	bafroom	/'bɑ:frɒm/	bathroom	/'bɑ:θrɒm/
59.	climbin'	/'klaɪmɪn/	climbing	/'klaɪmɪŋ/
60.	reachin'	/'ri:tʃɪn/	reaching	/'ri:tʃɪŋ/
61.	landin'	/'lændɪn/	landing	/'lændɪŋ/
62.	turnin'	/'tɜ:nɪn/	turning	/'tɜ:nɪŋ/
63.	shoutin'	/'ʃaʊtɪn/	shouting	/'ʃaʊtɪŋ/
64.	'shamed	/ʃeɪmd/	ashamed	/ə'ʃeɪmd/
65.	as'	/ɑ:s/	ask	/ɑ:sk/
66.	askin'	/'ɑ:skɪn/	asking	/'ɑ:skɪŋ/
67.	s'perior	/s'pɪəriər/	superior	/su:'pɪəriər/
68.	standin'	/'stændɪn/	standing	/'stændɪŋ/
69.	counsellin'	/'kaʊnsəlɪŋ/	counselling	/'kaʊnsəlɪŋ/
70.	sayin'	/'seɪn/	saying	/'seɪŋ/
71.	'steadda	/'stedɑ:/	instead of	/ɪn'sted əv/
72.	holdin'	/'həʊldɪn/	holding	/'həʊldɪŋ/
73.	monf	/mʌnf/	month	/mʌnθ/
74.	nigga	/'nɪgə/	nigger	/'nɪgər/
75.	kilt	/kɪlt/	killed	/kɪld/
76.	'n	/n/	and	/n/
77.	'em	/əm/	them	/ðəm/
78.	'less	/les/	unless	/ən'les/
79.	'bout	/baʊt/	about	/ə'baʊt/
80.	'fore	/'fɔ:r/	before	/br'fɔ:r/
81.	'sides	/ə'saɪds/	asides	/ə'saɪd/
82.	'cept	/'sept/	except	/ɪk'sept/
83.	'lympic	/'lɪmpɪk/	olympic	/ə'lɪmpɪk/
84.	b'long	/b'lɒŋ/	belong	/br'lɒŋ/
85.	'ceptin'	/'septɪn/	excepting	/ɪk'septɪŋ/

86.	ain'	/eɪn/	aint	/eɪnt/
87.	jus'	/dʒʌs/	just	/dʒʌst/
88.	han'	/hæn/	hand	/hænd/
89.	fac'	/fæk/	fact	/fækt/
90.	dere	/deər/	there	/ðeər/
91.	soun'	/sʌn/	sound	/saʊnd/
92.	secon'	/'sekən/	second	/'sekənd/
93.	roun'	/rʌn/	round	/raʊnd/
94.	an'	/n/	and	/ænd/
95.	foun'	/fʌn/	found	/faʊnd/
96.	leas'	/ləs/	least	/ləst/
97.	los'	/ləs/	lost	/ləst/
98.	pas'	/pɑ:s/	past	/pɑ:st/
99.	res'	/res/	rest	/rest/
100.	bes'	/bes/	best	/best/
101.	almos'	/'ɔ:lməʊs/	almost	/'ɔ:lməʊst/
102.	pult	/pʊlt/	pulled	/pʊld/
103.	behin'	/bɪ'hain/	behind	/bɪ'haind/
104.	aroun'	/ə'raʊn/	around	/ə'raʊnd/
105.	le'	/let/	let	/let/

Word- formation and Phonological Data in Sapphire's Novel *Push*

(p.1) I ain' did **nothin'**! My name is Claireece Precious Jones.

(p.2) But I'm gonna try to make sense and tell the truth, else what's the fucking use? **Ain'** enough lies and **shit out** there already?

(p.2) I actually don't mind maff as much as I had thought I would. I **jus'** fall in Mr Wiener's class sit down.

(p.3) He turn red. He slam his **han'** down on the book and say, "Try to have some discipline."

(p.3) I came here to learn maff and you **gon'** teach me." He look like a bitch just got a train pult on her.

(p.3) He say, "If you want to learn, shut up and open your book." His face is red, he is shaking. I **back off**. I have won. I guess.

(p.3) Everyday I tell myself something gonna happen, some shit like on TV I'm gonna break through or somebody gonna break through to me —I'm gonna learn, **catch up**, be normal, change my seat to the front of the class. But again, it has not been that day.

(p.3) He look like a bitch just got a train **pult** on her. He don't know what to do.

(p.4) In **fac'** some of the other natives get **restless** I break on 'em.

(p.4) "Shut up motherfuckers I'm **tryin'** to learn something." First they laugh like trying to pull me into **fuckin'** with Mr Wicher and disrupting the class.

(p.5) She staring at me, from behind her big wooden desk, she got her white **bitch** hands folded together on top her desk.

(p.8) Slut! Nasty ass tramp! What you been **doin'**! Who! Who! WHOoooo like owl in Walt Disney movie I seen one time.

(p.8) Whooo? Ya wanna know who— "Claireece Precious Jones I'm **talkin'** to you!" I still don't answer her.

(p.8) I was standing at this sink the last time I was pregnant when them pains hit, wump! Ahh **wump!** I never felt no shit like that before.

(p.8) "Slut! **Goddam** slut! You fuckin' **cow!** I don't believe this, right under my nose. You been high tailing it round here."

(p.8) Then she KICK me side of my face! "Whore! Whore!" she **screamin'**. Then Miz West live down the hall.

(p.9) The look on my face **musta** hit her, which is what I was gonna do if she said one more word. Come to my house! Nosy ass white bitch! I don't think so!

(p.9) The pain stabbing me **wif** a knife and this spic talking 'bout relax.

(p.9) Some mens, these ambulance mens, I don't see 'em or hear **'em** come in. But I look up from the pain and he **dere**.

(p.10) I was heavy at twelve too, nobody get I'm twelve **'less** I tell them. I'm tall.

(p.10) I can tell. It's something about being a **nigga** ain't color. This nurse same as me.

(p.13) She bedda not hit me, I ain' **lyin'**! If she hit me I will stab her ass to def, you hear me!

(p.13) "You **thinkin'** while I'm talkin' to you?"

(p.13) She say this like I'm **burnin'** hunnert dollar bills. The buzzer ring.

- (p.13) Don't nobody ring our bell 'less it's crack addicts trying to get in the building. I hate **crack addicts**. They give the race a bad name.
- (p.14) Now her white ass out on Lenox Avenue talkin' 'bout she wanna talk to me about my education.
- (p.15) And that's what white shit like Mrs Lichenstein **comin'** to visit result in.
- (p.15) I press talk 'n say, "Git outta here Mrs Lichenstein **'fore** I kick your ass."
- (p.17) Baby's face is smashed flat like pancake, eyes is all slanted up like Koreans, tongue **goin'** in 'n out like some **kinda** snake. "Mongoloid," other nurse say. Nurse Butter look hard at her.
- (p.18) What difference it make whether **gingerbread house** on top or bottom of the page? I disappears from the day, I jus' put it all down—book, doll, jump rope, my head, myself.
- (p.19) I'm lying on the floor shaking, crying, scared she gonna kill me. "Get up Miss **Hot-to-Trot**," Mama say.
- (p.19) "Fat cunt bucket slut! Nigger **pig** bitch! He done quit me! He done left me 'cause of you
- (p.21) So back to the kitchen, git her pies, pile my own plate higher than the first time, know if I don't she just **gonna** make me go back again. I sit her pies down on the tray.
- (p.21) I keep eating till the pain, the gray TV light, and Mama is a blur; and I just fall back on the couch so full it like I'm **dyin'** and I go to sleep, like I always do; almost.

(p.22) For past couple of weeks or so, ever since white bitch Lichenstein kick me outta school shit, 1983 and 1987, twelve years old and sixteen years old, first baby and this one coming, all been getting mixed up in my head.

(p.24) No "Yo Big Mama" 'n "all dat meat and no potatoes" shit. I'm safe.

(p.24) Yeah, safe from dese fools on the street but am I safe from Carl Kenwood Jones?

(p.25) He mess up dream talkin' 'n gruntin'. First he mess up my life fucking me, then he mess up the fucking talkin'.

(p.25) But I keep my mouf shut so's the fucking don't turn into a beating.

(p.26) People done started to gather round me. "That bitch crazy man!" a skinny dude in baggies say real loud to tall boy next to him.

(p.29) Our students have to meet certain income, residential, and academic requirements before we can le' them in the program.

(p.29) "Said to be on the lookout for you, you might be coming our way." She fumble with some papers on her desk, "Are you Claireece P. Jones?"

(p.30) "Not this baby! I got another one sides this one coming."

(p.31) "Then," Cornrows smile at me, "you should have no problem." "What's the problem?"

(p.31) I like light-skin people, they nice. I likes slim people too. Mama fat black, if I weigh two hundred she weigh three.

(p.31) I know thas where I b'long, "Thas where I b'long," I tell her.

(p.32) The tesses paint a picture of me an' my muver—my whole family, we more than dumb, we invisible.

- (p.34) Her man? Please! Thas my **motherfuckin'** fahver! I hear her tell someone on phone I am heifer, take her husband, I'm fast.
- (p.34) I see something, somebody. I got baby. So what. I feel proud **cept** it's baby by my fahver and that make me not in picture again.
- (p.34) I hear her tell someone on phone I am **heifer**, take her husband, I'm fast. What it take for my muver to see me? Sometimes I wish I was not alive.
- (p.36) So really all she did was add my baby to her budget She already on the 'fare **wit** me so she just add my daughter.
- (p.36) I could be on the **'fare** for myself now, I think. I'm old enuff.
- (p.36) **Crackers** is the cause of everything bad. It why my father ack like he do.
- (p.37) I am so pretty, like a advertisement girl on commercial, **in** someone ride up here in car, someone look like the son of that guy that got **kilt** when he was president a long time ago or Tom Cruise or anybody like that **pull up** here in a car and I be riding like on TV chile—JeeZUS! It's 8 a.m.
- (p.38) On top my dresser is notebook. **Y'all** Cornrows say bring self, pencil, and notebook.
- (p.38) I got self, pencil, and notebook. Can I get a **witness**! I'm outta here! I always did like school, jus' seem school never did like me.
- (p.39) So I jus' stop getting up. What for? **Thas** when I start to pee on myself. I just sit there, it's like I paralyze or some shit.
- (p.39) So I stop talking. What for? **Secon'** thas when the "**Imma** joke" start.
- (p.39) When I go sit down boyz make fart sounds wif they mouf like it's me **fartin'**. When I git up they snort snort hog grunt sounds.

- (p.40) Give race a bad name, lost in the hells of **norf** america crack addicts is.
- (p.41) Call me shoe shine **shinola**. Second grade I is fat. Thas when fart sounds and pig grunt sounds start.
- (p.43) My head is big **lympic** size pool, all the years, all the **me's** floating around glued shamed to desks while pee puddles get big near their feet.
- (p.44) "I beg your pardon," say teacher but you can see she ain' **beggin'** nothin', she mad.
- (p.44) I see right now Jo Ann is clown—"but I jus' want to say, do anyone need an extra notebook I **foun'** in the chicken place?" "It's mine!" I say.
- (p.47) I look around the circle, it's six people, not counting me. A big **redbone** girl, loud **bug-out** girl who find my notebook at chicken place.
- (p.47) She don't talk funny at all like how **coconut head** peoples do. "My favorite color is blue, I cook good."
- (p.48) "Yeah yeah," like why even mention **somethin'** so basic. "Curry goat!"
- (p.52) I want to tell her what I always wanted to tell someone, that the pages, 'cept for the ones with pictures, look all the same to me; the back row I'm not in today; how I sit in a chair seven years old all day **wifout** moving.
- (p.52) I get up with the rest, goes out in the lobby. It's empty **ceptin'** us. The other classes don't be here till 12, Miz Rain say.
- (p.53) This like you know she **los'** her welfare check after it jus' been cash or somethin'.
- (p.56) Miz Rain say she be in little office, get up, then say unsure like, I never seen teacher unsure ('less you **gettin'** ready to hit 'era).

- (p.56) Her voice got a country **soun'** to it. Jermaine says, "I like that, Rain." Don' nobody else say nothing.
- (p.62) I ain' got no education even **tho'** I not miss days of school.
- (p.62) This baby feel like a watermelon between my bones getting bigger and my ankles **feelin'** tight cause they swoled.
- (p.63) Other times I start to go a huh a huh ahuh ahuh A HUH A HUH and I grab my chess 'cause I can't breathe, then I aint **breathin'** bad.
- (p.63) "Fix us some lunch, it's way **pas'** lunch. you done ate?" "I had some potato chips."
- (p.65) Miz Rain tryin' to git her to 'cept herself for where she at. She ain' no G.E.D. girl, **leas'** not yet.
- (p.67) I reads: "Little Mongo on my mind." **Underneaf** what I wrote Miz Rain write what I said in pencil.
- (p.68) But I not retarded. I bet **chu** one thing, I bet chu my baby can read.
- (p.69) I look out window at dirt bricks of other building, no sky like school. I got **'nother** poster on wall now.
- (p.69) Thas Harriet **nex'** to Farrakhan. She leaded over 300 black people out of slavery.
- (p.69) I put my han' on my stomach. I sit here, **res'** awhile 'fore Mama call me to fix dinner or clean up.
- (p.70) This my baby. My muver took Little Mongo but she am' taking this one. I am **comp'tant**.

- (p.78) You are a wonderful young woman who is **tryna** make something of her life. I have some questions for you: Where was your grandmother when your father was abusing you?
- (p.81) I got new baby boy in my arms 'n she calling me bitch **hoe** slut say she gonna kill me 'cause I ruin her life.
- (p.81) I turn down piece of pavement lead to **mergency**. Then I turn back, go through front door, 'n say I wanna visit maternity ward.
- (p.81) I don't even think, my feets just take me back to Harlem Hospital. You know Koch **wanna** close it, say niggers don't need no hospital all to theyself.
- (p.82) No, I gonna be queen of those ABCs— **readin'** 'n **writin'**.
- (p.84) The armory is like a dungeon of bricks, damp, wif a few **lectrik** lightbulbs hanging from ceiling.
- (p.85) **Live down** the hall from us, stop Mama from kicking me to death when Mongo being born. She like me. I always did go to the store for her since I was little.
- (p.87) I can tell by Ms Rain's face I'm not gonna be **homeless** no more. She mumbling cursing about what damn safety net, most basic needs, a newborn child, A NEWBORN CHILD! She going OFF now.
- (p.91) I don't know what "realism" mean but I do know what REALITY is and it's a motherfucker, **lemme** tell you. Mama come to 2way house.

(p.92) I'm on threshold of stepping out into my new life, an apartment for me, Abdul, and maybe Little Mongo, we see on that one, **mo** education, new friends.

(p.93) No matter how fly my braids is, how I grease my skin, scalp, no matter how many **jew'ries**, this is my mother.

(p.94) She look over where I'm at. "**Yo** huzbn, Carl, my real daddy?" I ask.

(p.97) Song loud now real loud. I stop running. It's grass green all **aroun'**.

(p.102) Only now I the one who say "keep on **keepin'** on!" to new girls.

(p.103) Then Rhonda's brother raping her since she was a **chile**, her mother fine out and put Rhonda, not brother, out.

(p.103) Consuelo did leave but Jermaine didn't follow **behin'** her. Jermaine stayed on.

(p.105) And I cry for my son, the song in my life. The little brown penis, booty, fat thighs, **roun'** eyes, the voice of love say, Mama, Mama he call me.

(p.105) Ms Rain say, You not writing Precious. I say I **drownin'** in river.

(p.107) Jermaine say not necessarily rally (Whutevr Ms Rain say Jermaine **don** agree)

(p.109) For a **monf** it bin like this. I feel daze. Ms Rain see it say you not same girl i **kno**.

(p.110) N that giv me time to walk throo Harlem in **mornin'** to school mostly pepul goin to work.

(p.103) Some bitches get down, some **bullshit**. When I hear Rhonda's story, Rita Romero's story, I know I not the worse off.

- (p.111) Rita say das a lie. She Kathlic. I say God. **Sho** me god.
- (p.113) But what I confuse about is this. Itz so uglee dope addicks—dey teef, **dey**
underwater walkin, steelin.
- (p.112) Maybee pass nigger wif needle in his arm **noddin** in the wind. Drops of
blood drip down, maybe pass sex sicko wif peniss out, flashlight eyes
shine sperms on you.
- (p.113) I wood hav liked to go to **dancin** scool when I was young. Its too late now.
I'm eighteen.
- (p.113) Itz so uglee dope addicks—dey teef, dey underwater walkin, **steelin**.
Spred AIDS an heptietis.
- (p.117) It's this guy on one-twofive, Franco, he done painted pictures on the steel
gates that's over **almos** all the store windows.
- (p.117) How it git so ugly is people throw trash all in it. City don't pick it up; dogs
doo doo. Peoples wif no barroom piss 'n shit. **Ugliness** grow multiplied
by ten.
- (p.117) Keep **walkin'** down Lenox to one-twelve you pass projects. I never did
live in projects.
- (p.119) Afterward I go **bafroom**. I smear shit on my face.
- (p.119) But my pussy popping like grease in **fryin'** pan. He slam in me again.
- (p.121) But all the time I'se been a-**climbin'** on, And **reachin'** **landin'**s, And **turnin'**
corners, And sometimes goin' in the dark.
- (p.121) And after I finish everyone goin', Yeah! Yeah! **Shoutin'**, Go Precious!
And clapping and clapping and clapping.

- (p.122) What is a normal life? A life where you not **'shamed** of your mother.
Where your friends come over after school and watch TV and do homework.
- (p.123) Me and Ms Weiss in counsel room. She **as'** me what's my earliest memory of Mama. Huh?
- (p.123) I can't move, speak. It's like second grade again, paralyzed. Tired of this honky **askin'** me questions.
- (p.124) Advancement House rules—staff do not give clients money (let's face it some of these bitches who act so **s'perior** 'n shit usta be crack addicts).
- (p.126) Call Jermaine, she home, don't tell her what I done did, jus' say it's real important can she **get over** here. She say yes. When she git here I pull file out backpack, don't know why I didn't want to read it alone.
- (p.127) "Git a grip and gon' read the report and don't get all emotional about what this piece of shit white bitch got to say. Anyway, if your shit wasn't dope you wouldn't be **standin'** up here readin' what, what's her name?"
- (p.128) Despite her obvious intellectual limitations she is quite capable of working as a **home attendant**."
- (p.129) If you want to focus on the topic introduced by Precious—" "What topic?"
Aisha, loud India girl from Guyana. "**Workfare** and education."
- (p.130) Rhonda **usta** hafta go all the way out to Brighton Beech wher she work for them motherfuckers.
- (p.132) What kinda title is that! Jermaine done wrote it like a poem. She **bes** writer.

- (p.135) I am going to put it all behind me and never say it again. I don't blame nobody. I just want to say when I was twelve, TWELVE, somebody **hadda** help me it not be like it is now.
- (p.136) Me 'n Rita get the 102 downtown. Rita done got her **teef** fixed.
- (p.140) Girls, old women, white women, **lotta** white women. Girl's younger sister murdered by the cult? Jewish girl, we had money on Long Island (like Westchester), my father was a prominent child psychiatrist.
- (p.141) It's a black girl across the table from me with long pretty hair in **dreadlocks** like Ms Rain. But not wild like Ms Rain.
- (p.141) That's what I do fix people's hair and makeup." She **gimme** a card! Rita ask me do I want another hot chocolate.
- (p.142) Got on big orange-color sleeveless dress, torn under the arms. Hair **fuck up**. Eyes look stupid wifout red evil light on to hit you.
- (p.142) Probably Mama think coming here talking to Ms Weiss in **counselin'** session gonna git me back, me 'n Abdul.
- (p.143) I gotta be out of this **motherfucker** soon. I wanna finish at Each One Teach One 'n gone get my G.E.D.
- (p.145) "Yeah yeah thas right. My little Scorpio chile! Scorpio's crafty. I ain' **sayin'** they lie, jus' you cain't always trust 'em.
- (p.148) "I was gonna take my journal book and write on the bus, **steadda** taking the train."
- (p.150) I'm in dayroom at Advancement House, sitting on a big leather stool **holdin'** Abdul.

- (p.151) He pulling on my earring, want me to stop **daydream** and read him a story before nap time. I do.
- (p.153) what's there for baby is good **oatmeal** cream wheat rice cream appul sauc or egg toast.
- (p.154) Not santeria—throw shells, yellow flowers for Oshun and all that but more the gypsy trip—cards and crystal ball. Always people in and out our house; nice people, give me a caramel or **sourball**, pat on the head.
- (p.155) I ever catch I kill you **whore**, hear me I kill you. Then he grab me, hold out my arm next to his, see SEE.
- (p.155) Look he says you are WHITE. You are not no nigger **morena** **puta** WHORE.
- (p.157) Puta **tecata** puta tecata. But I tell you what I want, it's my book— we had a nice place, velvet things, lace curtains, the crystal ball.
- (p.160) You know, mother daughter, but it didn't happen that way. She was screaming 'bout how I was the oldest **coulda** **shoulda** stopped him.
- (p.163) At the Y this woman from Trinidad tell me about ol' white bitch in Brighton Beach she taking care of but she gonna **hafta** quit cause she got something better on Upper West Side wheeling some doctor's children to the park.
- (p.165) But today I don't care, I don't wanna be homeless again. It happen again I might not get up from it. I **gotta** do something.
- (p.166) I figure I better get moving **'fore** the fog is too thick to see my way out. Kimberton is walking behind me now saying stupid things.

(p.171) I am pressed close to her against the wall in her room we will fall on the still pink in some places chenille **bedspread**.

(p.172) And his arm flew out like a **jack-in-the-box** and snatched the Bible from her and threw it in her face HARD.

(p.175) I knew from day one I should be in G.E.D. class but I know I never woulda wrote this story with those **dickheads** in there. I never would have stayed.

(p.177) It's a prison days we **live in** at least me I'm not really free baby, Mama, HIV where I wanna be where i wanna be?