



## Linguistics Colloquium\*

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**“ Variation and Development:  
The Question about Co-Existent Systems  
in African American English ”**

**Thursday, April 12, 2018 @ 5:15 pm**  
in KCB room 101 (565 Commonwealth Ave)

### Short Abstract:

One view of African American English (AAE) is that it is a variety that consists of two components, one that reflects the properties of general American English and an African American component that is the locus of properties that distinguish AAE from other varieties of English (Labov 1998). The general English component is a complete grammar, but the African American component is an additive. In the first part of the paper, I explain the pitfalls of a dual components approach to the study of AAE, especially the types of predictions it makes about the status of AAE speakers as bidialectal and as codeswitchers between AAE and general American English. In the second part of the paper, I explore claims about dual components from the perspective of data from the tense/aspect system of AAE. I discuss patterns in the development of the copula system and morphological marking of verbs in third person singular and past contexts, which raise questions about the development of variation within the AAE system, on the one hand, and shared properties with other varieties of English on the other.

For a longer version of the abstract, see: <http://ling.bu.edu/events/bu#Apr2018>

<https://www.facebook.com/events/557830537928986>