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NA'ABUKO: A CONSTRUCTED LANGUAGE INSPIRED BY AFROFUTURISM

Lauren Madison

*Fairmount College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
Social Sciences & Humanities Poster Presentation*

Abstract: An alien race has come to earth. Their announcement is that all members of what is now known as the Black diaspora were deposited by them onto Earth millions of years ago. This foreign alien race has now come back to return their people to their planet of origin. The language that results from years of assimilation and co-mingling after relocation on this new planet is Na'abuko.

This project investigates two primary research questions: How would members of the Black diaspora's language change as they learn the language of their ancestors and how would an alien language and African American Vernacular English (AAVE) evolve over time into one language? This investigation aims to look at linguistics and the development of a new language through the lens of afrofuturism - a movement in literature, music and art that features futuristic or science fiction themes that incorporate elements of Black history and culture with the hopes of creating positive racial dynamics for the future.

The language of Na'abuko takes inspiration from Swahili, Arabic and AAVE, languages that are commonly spoken throughout the Black diaspora. This new language takes traits from the Swahili class system for referring to nouns instead of the feminine and masculine forms of nouns common in Romance languages. Na' abuko also uses the reduplication system for pronouns from Swahili. Additionally, Na'buko takes its word order of Verb-Subject-Object from the Arabic language along with their dentalveolar and fricative phonemes such as /t̪ʰ/ and /d̪ʰ/. This new language also incorporates the double negatives, tense and aspect, as well as indexical elongation of vowels to indicate superlatives that is common in AAVE. Because this language was developed in space, atmospheric factors create sounds that are more guttural and airy such as /ʔ/ and /h̥/.

Faculty Mentor: *Dr. Mythili Menon*