

**Adults' perceptions of Black children's narrative quality: A mixed methods study**

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**Abstract**

**Purpose:** In this mixed-methods study, we address two aims. First, we examine the impact of language variation on the ratings of children's narrative language. Secondly, we identify participants' ideologies related to narrative language and language variation.

**Method:** 40 adults listened to and rated six Black second-grade children on the quality of 12 narratives (six fictional, six personal). Adults then completed a quantitative survey and participated in a qualitative interview.

**Results:** Findings indicated that adults rated students with less variation from mainstream American English (MAE) more highly than students with greater variation from MAE for fictional narratives but not for personal narratives. Personal narratives tended to be evaluated more favorably by parents than teachers. Black raters tended to assign higher ratings of narrative quality than did White raters. Thematic analysis and conversation analysis of qualitative interviews supported quantitative findings and provided pertinent information about participants' beliefs.

**Conclusion:** Taken together, quantitative and qualitative results point to a shared language ideology among adult raters of variation from MAE being more acceptable in informal contexts, such as telling a story of personal experience, and less acceptable in more formal contexts, such as narrating a fictional story prompted by a picture sequence.