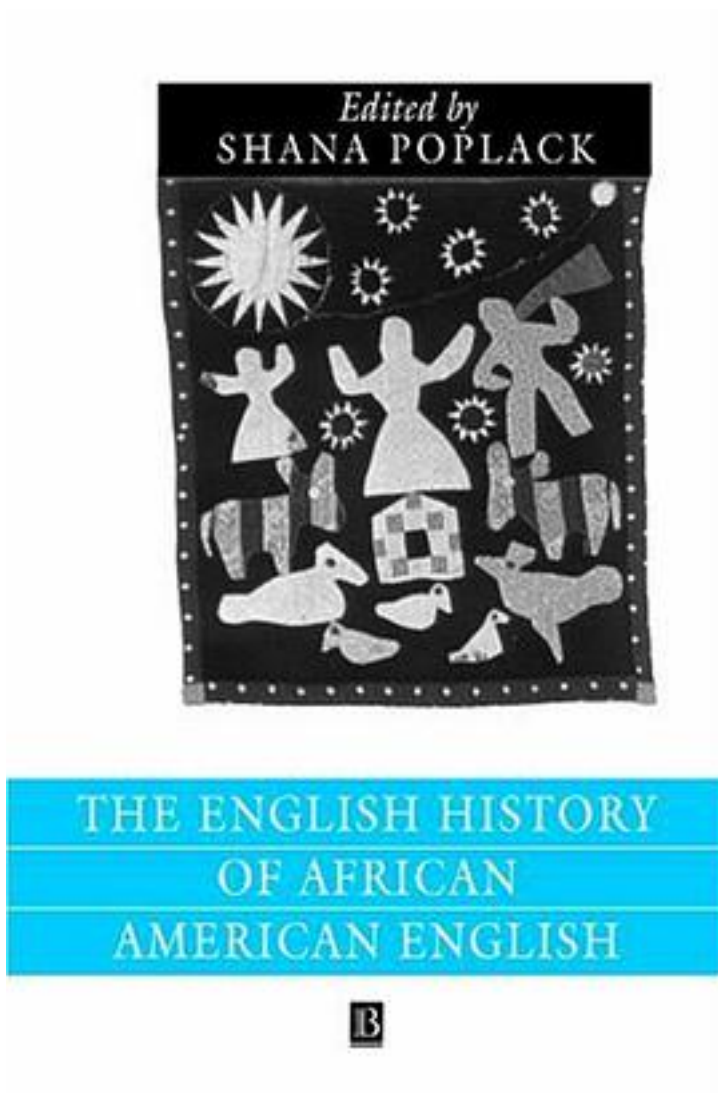


# The English History of African American English



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著者:Poplack, Shana 编

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Much scholarly work assumes that the structure of African American Vernacular English (AAVE) derives from an earlier plantation creole. This reader explores an alternative hypothesis: that the characteristic features were acquired from the varieties of English to which early speakers were exposed. Marshalling historical, dialectal and theoretical linguistic evidence, this work focuses on descendants of former slaves whose ancestors left the US in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries to settle in enclave communities where their language developed under conditions of social or geographical isolation. Six variable linguistic features, most previously considered evidence of creole origins, are traced across varieties of English brought to the US by British colonists. These features, and their linguistic patterning in discourse, are demonstrably part of the English of early African Americans, transmitted to and retained by their descendants long after their disappearance from mainstream varieties of English. Contributors include Shana Poplack, Sali Tagliamonte, Gunnel Tottie, and Salikoko S. Mufwene amongst others.

作者介绍:

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