#### **CHAPTER 1**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, the researcher will give explanation about background of the study, problem of the study, objectives of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation, and definition of key terms.

### 1.1 Background of Study

English is one of the languages which are used by many people in the world. In reality, there are many people coming from different background of English as their daily communication. As the result, the variation of English appears. People who were coming to America, have different way in speaking English if they are compared to British English, Australian English, or Black English. When Black people speak English, it is called as Black Vernacular English (hereafter, BVE). It is one of many English varieties that still exist. The speakers of this language are also still many, they spread all over America.

Actually, there are some technical terms for this variety. In Green (2004:77) found the following:

"Among the many labels used to refer to this variety over the past forty years are "Negro dialect", "American Negro speech", "Black communications", "Black dialect", "Black street speech", "Black English", "Black Vernacular English", "African American language", "African American English", and "African American Vernacular English" (AAVE). One observation about these labels is

that they coincide with the social climate, so the periods during which *Negro*, *Black or African American* appeared in the label coincide with the periods during which the speakers were referred to as "Negro", "Black", or "African American"

The researcher concludes that BVE is one of the varieties in English language which is used by African Americans (even not all) and has its own characteristics which are different from other varieties. Green in Pramana (2011:3) argued that "Historical Discussions about the origin of BVE often start at the point which African slaves were thrust into a linguistic situation in which they had to learn English. BVE, the linguistic variety spoken by many African Americans or Black people in the USA, is a system with specific rules for combining sounds to form words and words to form phrases and sentences".

At the first time this kind of language is used by lower class Black people, but today BVE is also used by high class Black people. For instance, Missy Elliot, the famous rap black singer, who writes song lyric using BVE, and also Oprah Winfrey, TV presenter, sometimes uses BVE on her show.

Previous research on BVE conducted by Elfa Kusuma (2007) focuses on linguistic features by showing the amount and percentage of each features. Junaidi (2011) and Andharini (2005) analyzed the kind of AAVE and the Standard English in novel and songs. Galuh (2011) found the syntactical, phonological and morphological features of AAVE. Finally, Ningrum (2014) studied about the AAE and slang. None of the researcher above tried to

combine the analysis of linguistic features, the standard form and also the percentage on each features.

Some previous research on BVE above collected data from written texts, some other other research of BVE collected data from daily conversation in the society. Kinzler and DeJesus (2013: 1146) investigated the development of American children's attitudes about Northern and Southern accented American English. The study showed the fact that five-to six-year-old children in Illinois preferred the Northern-accented speakers as potential friends, yet they did not demonstrate knowledge of any stereotypes about the different groups; five- to six-year-old children in Tennessee were did not show a preference towards either type of speaker. Nine- to ten-year-old children in both Illinois and Tennessee evaluated the Northern-accented individuals as sounding "smarter" and "in charge", and the Southern-accented individuals as sounding "nicer."

Similar to Kinzler and DeJessus (2013: 1146), Snell's (2013: 110) study of dialect, interaction and class positioning at school in The Northern England showed the fact that the use of Teesside dialect (North-east England) Primary School and in Secondary School. In primary school, the pupils allow to use dialect in school whether it is during in class (reading poems and stories which are written in ethnic dialect) and outside class (when the pupils are on the playground or having lunch). But in Secondary School, pupils do not allow to use dialect in their written work.

The researcher in this study cannot find the society that used BVE in daily conversation, so she decided to take novel as her data since the data are available. Also, the previous researches show the dialect toward children's attitudes and dialect toward class positioning at school. Thus, in the first time, the researcher wants to investigate the type and impact of BVE which is used by Bigger Thomas. But then, after she gained the data, the researcher only find one point which show the impact, that is, the increasing of segregation.

This study's contribution is to enrich previous study in analyzing BVE. In this study, the researcher chooses the topic about BVE because of two reasons. First, BVE is unique. It has different linguistic features from Standard English. Second, in reality, there are many people use BVE in daily life.

The researcher is interested in studying BVE in Richard Wright's Native Son because the novel provides available data. Since the characters in this novel especially the black one often applies BVE in having communication in their daily conversation. Furthermore, because of applying BVE, the communication consists of variety style. The researcher feels interested because at the first time she reads the novel, there are many words in BVE that are unique. For example the word "awright", "Gal, you crazy!", "'bout" etc, which in Standard English is "all right", "Girl, you are crazy!", "about". From the examples, the researcher thinks that in BVE is like just writing the word based on its phonological as Francis (in Kerr and Aderman,

1971:327) said that "BVE is often marked as such by attempts to represent their pronunciation by disorted spelling.

And also, the researcher limits to analyze Bigger Thomas only because he is the main character and also, in most of dialogue, there is his dialogue. Therefore, the researcher hopes by analyzing Bigger Thomas, she can represent what kind BVE used by other black character since he always takes turn in the dialogue. In the story, Bigger commits two ghastly crimes and is put on trial for his life. Bigger struggles to discuss his feelings, but he can neither find the words to fully express himself nor does he have the time to say to the white people.

The researcher chooses Richard Wright because he was an African-American author of sometimes controversial novels, short stories, poems, and non-fiction. Much of his literature concerns racial themes, especially those involving the plight of African Americans during the late 19th to mid-20th centuries. Some believe his work helped change race relations in the United States in the mid-20th century. In addition, she chooses Native Son novel because the story tells us about 20-year-old Bigger Thomas, a black American youth living in utter poverty. Bigger lived in a poor area on Chicago's South Side in 1930 (as cited in Wikipedia.com). The researcher will try to analyze Bigger Thomas and other black character based on their words, sentence and utterances.

#### 1.2 Statement of the Problems

Based on the background of the problem above, the researcher states some problems as follows:

- 1. What kind of linguistic features based on syntactical features of Black Vernacular English are used by the Bigger Thomas in Richard Wright's *Native Son*?
- 2. What kind of linguistic features based on phonological features of Black Vernacular English are used by the Bigger Thomas in Richard Wright's *Native Son*?

## 1.3 Objectives of the Study

Through the problem of the study, the researcher presents the objectives of the study as follows:

- To identify the kind of linguistic features based on syntactical features
  of BVE which are used by the Bigger Thomas in Richard Wright's

  Native Son.
- To identify the kind of linguistic features based on phonological features of BVE which are used by the Bigger Thomas in Richard Wright's *Native Son*.

## 1.4 Significance of the Study

By conducting this research, the researcher hope that this research may widen the researcher's knowledge about the variety of English in use namely, BVE. The second, this study hopefully will be useful to other fellow students who are interested in BVE and the third, the researcher also hopes this research will give more information and knowledge for the readers in general and other researcher. The last is, by studying BVE the researcher is able to enlarge her knowledge.

# 1.5 Scope and Limitation

This study will only use the Native Son novel as a research data. Among the abundant black characters, the researcher will limit the object study to Bigger Thomas only; because he is the main character who brings the plot becomes a heart-warming story. Furthermore, the researcher limits her study on BVE and focus on linguistic features, showing the standard form and the percentage features which is used by Bigger Thomas.

The analysis is centered to find the linguistic feature which covered in syntactical and phonological of BVE in Bigger Thomas' utterence while having dialogue. This is based on Labov's (in Scheneider, 2007: 303) statement, "The features which increasingly separate black from white speakers are both phonological and syntactic in nature. This study is conducted with data of a novel. Therefore, it is limited to the written data

only. However, the researcher is still able to analyze the phonological features through the typing of the character's utterances provided in the novel.

## 1.6 Operational Definitions

- a. Linguistic feature: linguistic feature is a linguistic item which is used to analyze sentence or utterance by its lexical, grammatical, phonological, syntactical or morphological features.
- b. Black Vernacular English: Black Vernacular English is one of variety in English language which is used by African Americans (even not all) and has its own characteristics which are different with other variety.
- c. Syntactical feature: is a feature to identify the construction of words to sentences from a language that is used by its speakers.
- d. Phonological features: is a feature to identify the sound system of a language that used by the speakers of a language.
- e. Richard wright: is the author of *Native son* novel.
- f. Bigger Thomas: The main character in Native son novel.
- g. Native son: Native son is the title of the novel written by Richard Wright. The novel consists of three books. The three books of the novel describe Bigger Thomas progession to undestanding. "Fear", the first book, establishes the conditions that lead Bigger to violent reaction. During "Flight", he comes to realize that defiant rejection of society is the only independent action society has left him. The final

book of the novel, "Fate", introduces Max to organize Bigger intuitions into systematic statements (Reilly in Wright 2001: 396).

