CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of background of the study, statement of the problems, objectives of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation, and definition of the key terms.

1.1 Background of the Study

As an international language, English has been used around the world and widespread in different countries such as Australia, Britain and the USA (Yule, 2006). People can use variation of English, there are Indian English, Australian English, New York English, West Country English, African American Vernacular English, Non-Standard English, BBC English, and so on (Wardaugh, 2006). Because of that, largely people have accepted the fact that every language has a lot of variation.

Language variation is influenced by the factors such as age, sex, social class, and ethnic background. Those factors make them speak differently. It is not only lies on the words meaning (lexical) but also on the sound (phonological) and the words construction (grammatical). The uniqueness language ethnicity in a single region refers to dialect. Every region has a differentiation in dialect. People in a social group have different dialect which associated with specific colloquial language, known as vernacular (Wardaugh, 2006).

Vernacular is a topic to start. Vernacular is the language variation which refers to non-standard language. Holmes (1995, p.80) says that it is usually the first language learned by people in multilingual community for informal situation. Vernacular generally refers to a language which has not been standardized and has not an official status. Furthermore, Meyerhoff (2006, p.37) states that amount kinds of vernacular used as a local language such as, Vernacular Variety of German, Standard German (Hochdeutsch), White American Vernacular English (WAVE), Vernacular Varieties of Arabic and Haitian, African American Vernacular English (AAVE).

In United States, African American Vernacular English (AAVE) is a kind of another variation of American English. Green (2002, p.6) defines that AAVE has a list of labels, they are: Negro Dialect, Nonstandard Negro English, Negro English, American Negro Speech, Black Communications, Black Dialect, Black Folk Speech, Black Street Speech, Black English, Black English Vernacular, Black Vernacular English, Afro American English, African American English, African American Language, African American Vernacular English (AAVE). The last four are more commonly used today. However, people more often heard those beginning with "Black".

AAVE was born by the history of tobacco and cotton plantations in United States where the slaves of African were a closely contact with the White American. Many White American use Standard American English (SAE) to speak with African slaves in their daily language. On that account,

those languages influenced one another until today and they share certain features (Sladkova, 2013).

Studies about AAVE have been done with different focuses. Pullum (1999) describes several features of AAVE uttered by African American in California school board. In conclusion, they talk about vernacular forms which mostly occurs systematic differences from SAE in the domain of words, structures, and sound. Deak (2007) observes the status of using AAVE in California school board educational practice. Ezgeta (2012) studies grammatical variations of selected AAVE, those are the third person singular –s absence, the plural –s absence and generalization *is* and *was* to plural and second pronouns in ten African American public figures. Ningrum (2014) focuses on grammatical pattern, phonological pattern in AAVE, and 4 types of slang word process in the Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain.

AAVE is not only used in daily conversation such as in a movie, television and radio but also in a novel, short story and drama script. Since the writer's experience as an English department's student, it is not easy to understand non-standard American English in literary works given by the lecturer. Sometimes, the authors like Mark Twain, Thomas Dixon, Margaret Mitchell, William Faulkner, and Richard Wright use uncommon English in some literatures.

Richard Wright was born in Mississippi where many African Americans live there. He was an African American author of controversial novels, short stories, poems and non-fiction. Much of his literature concern of the racial themes, especially involving the plight of African American during the late 19th to mid-20th centuries. His literary works consist a lot of non-standard American English.

The writer chooses short story *The Man Who Almost A Man*. The short story tells about Dave, a young African American who works in the American's field. He lives with his parent, both are African American. Nigger Characters in this short story represent non-standard American English in conversations.

Unlike the previous studies, systematic grammatical pattern of AAVE in written form is unique to be analyzed. The writer support the newest previous study that has successfully shows AAVE pattern. For the present study, the writer tries to deep dig about grammatical pattern in Richard Wright short story, *The Man Who Almost A Man*.

The most language in *The Man Who Almost A Man* is mostly different from Standard American English. For example, *Ah tol yuh t git outta here! Yuh ain gonna toucha penny of tha money fer no gun! Thas how come Ah has Mistah Hawkins t pay yo wages t me, cause Ah knows yuh ain got no sense*, the language in those sentences little bit difficult to understand for linguist and non-linguists. Therefore, the writer wants to study AAVE in the work by Richard Wright. Since object of this study taken from written form, the writer only focus on grammatical pattern, then phonological pattern and lexical will be left.

The AAVE grammatical pattern is arrangement of non-standard American English words in sentence construction usually used by African American community. In AAVE, negation such as *don't*, *no* and *nothing* can be used multiple in a single negative sentence. For instance *I didn't see nothing*. Based on AAVE, two negators *didn't* and *nothing* in one sentence is grammatical correct. On contrary, a perspective rule from SAE states that double negation in one sentence are ungrammatical correct, because they make a positive one (Green, 2002). The correct sentence for SAE should *I didn't see anything*. The writer focuses on AAVE grammatical pattern, in addition, the writer also provides SAE forms which correspond to the utterances that containing AAVE grammatical pattern.

The explanations above make the writer not only curious, but also inspired to focus more on grammatical pattern of AAVE. Furthermore, the data are taken from utterances of Nigger characters in the short story. The unique one, there still no study deeper about grammatical pattern of AAVE. The writer focuses on nine types of AAVE grammatical pattern by Green (2002). In order to answer statement of the problems, the writer uses theory of language variation by Meyerhoff (2006), Wardaugh (2006), and Yule (2006), language and identity, language and social interaction by Edward (2012), and the theory of AAVE by Green (2002).

1.2 Statement of the Problems

- What are the grammatical pattern of African American Vernacular English (AAVE) found in the Richard Wright short story, *The Man* Who Almost A Man?
- 2. What are the reasons of African American characters using AAVE in this short story?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

- 1. To classify the grammatical pattern of African American

 Vernacular English (AAVE) found in the Richard Wright short

 story, *The Man Who Almost A Man*.
- 2. To describe the reasons of African American characters using AAVE in this short story.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study are supposed to give a valuable contribution theoretically and practically. To the theoretically, this study is expected to be one of the sources in sociolinguistics studies and gives more knowledge about African American Vernacular English (AAVE) variation by Green (2002) in Richard Wright work. Moreover, the writer hopes that this study useful for other linguistics researchers whom interested in studying AAVE.

To the practically, this study gives some information about AAVE and help the reader to define what the AAVE is. Especially for linguist and non-linguist students, they should know that language variation of English

in our environment is not only Standard English but also non-standard English.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

There are many patterns in African American Vernacular English, according to Green (2002, p.1) AAVE is a variety that has set phonological (system of sounds), morphological (systems of the structure of words and relationships among words), syntactic (system of sentence structure), semantic (system of meaning) and lexical (structural organization of vocabulary items and other information) patterns.

This study focuses on grammatical pattern used by Nigger characters which covered syntactic and morphological pattern. The writer chooses her analysis in Richard Wright short story, *The Man Who Almost A Man* published in 1960. The short story consist of some standard and non-standard American English in the narration and conversation. As a conclusion, the writer limits her study to the utterances in conversations uttered by the chosen characters.

Actually, the research about African American Vernacular English is suitable for spoken text which contains of voice and sound. Moreover, the writer using written text because the data for supporting this analysis are available in the written text.

1.6 Definitions of the Key Terms

In order to avoid misinterpretation about the use of the terms. It is important for the writer to give the suitable meaning of the key terms. Some terms are defined as follows:

- 1. English language variation is varieties of a language which used by particular social group in particular social context. It provides different specific human speech patterns such as sounds, words and grammatical pattern. English language variation includes dialect, jargon, register, slang, standard and non-standard English language.
- 2. Standard American English (SAE) is an international language that recognized as the correct language by the majority of people in America. This language has written in a grammar book, pronunciation and used in spelling conventions. SAE also used by media and other public linguistics such as the education system (Radford, Atkinson, Britain, Clahsen and Spencer, 2003).
- 3. Non-standard English is a language which often considered to be lazy, ungrammatical forms which betray a lack of both educational training and discipline in learning. Finch (2000, p. 217) claims that non-standard English are restricted in function and have no fixed orthographic form. It is usually used as daily communication with family, friends and non-formal activity.
- 4. Grammatical pattern of AAVE is arrangement of non-standard words in sentences. It usually used by African American in United

States. For example, negation such as *don't*, *no* and *nothing* can be used double in a single negative sentence. For instance *I didn't see nothing*. Based on AAVE, double negation *didn't* and *nothing* in one sentence is grammatical correct. On contrary, a perspective rule from SAE states that double negation in one sentence are ungrammatical correct, because they make a positive sentence (Green, 2002).

- 5. Vernacular is the first language learned by people in multilingual communities and they often used for relatively narrow range of informal situation. Jackson (2007, p.) defines, vernacular refers to a local, non-standardized language, and be learnt first by a child. It is also used in a wider sense to refer any language that is not designated as an official language. More widely, it refers to any colloquial variety used by a speaker, as against the standard language.
- 6. African American Vernacular English (AAVE) is a kind of another variation of American English spoken by almost majority of African American in a certain community. AAVE has certain differences from the Standard American English. Many Niggers in America regions use AAVE (Yule, 2010).
- 7. Nigger refers to the black people. Known in America as African American.

- 8. Richard Wright was an African American author of controversial novels, short stories, poems and non-fiction. Much of his literature concern racial themes, especially those involving the plight of African American during the late 19th to mid-20th centuries. His literary works consist a lot of AAVE.
- 9. The Man Who Almost A Man is the one of Richard Wright short

