CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This part introduces the present study. It describes background of the study, problems of study, objectives of the study, significances of the study, scope and limitation of the study, and definition of key terms.

1.1 Background of the Study

Language is a wonderful thing to acquire and used for communication. The functions of language are as interactional function, which is commonly used to convey the expressions, like: greetings, regrets, fear, etc., and transactional function, language as the linguistic competence that is used to share knowledge, ability, and information (Yule, 1985: 5). It is used to convey wishes and commands, to tell truths and lies, to influence our hearer, to vent our emotion, and to formulate our ideas which could probably never arise if we have no language.

Language is a style of speaking and a social phenomenon that becomes the most important of all the forms of human communication. There are three variations which exist in the society in terms of the language use. In sociolinguistics, variation is a central (Maglacan, 2005: 15). The variation commonly occurs based on the uses, the users, the participant, and the situation. As explained by Holmes, (1992: 245) "Language varies according to its uses as well as its users, according to where it used and to whom, as well as according to who is using it".

It's also explained by Halliday, et all., as quoted by Maclagan (2005), that language variation is divided into two categories: variation according to the user

and according to use. Variation according to the users contains aspects of language which reveals the speaker's place of origin, gender, age, social class, ethnicity and education. Meanwhile, language variation according to use is related to changing of speech situation or event (Margareth, 2005: 15).

Then, Maglacan (2005) stated that ones of the interesting variations are about language and ethnicity. There are some varieties of English which is associated with ethnic group, such as Navajo English, Appalachian English, Puerto Rican English, and African American English or African American Vernacular English. However, African American Vernacular English is the most interesting subject for linguists for a number of years (Thomas, 2001: 318).

African American Vernacular English (AAVE) covered by several labels including Ebonics, Black English, African American English, Black vernacular, Black English vernacular and Black Vernacular English. All of which describe the English that is primary, but not exclusively associated with the speech of African Americans.

Labov (1968) stated that many linguists use the label "African American English (AAE), but the addition of term "Vernacular" meaning is common everyday language. Since the world distinguish it from the formal English spoken by many African American. Furthermore, Green (2004: 76) stated that African American English is a system with specific rules for combining sounds to form words, phrases, and sentences. It has different features which are different from Standard American English. These linguistics differences act as symbols of ethnicity. These express the senses of cultural distinctiveness of many African

Americans. The dialect usually is used in the Northern cities of the United States (Holmes, 2001: 177).

The mental dictionary of AAE speakers includes the information needed to use words and expressions grammatically: their pronunciation, part of speech, possible position in a sentence and meaning. The vocabulary of AAE can be viewed in three parts: words and phrases used by speakers in a range of age groups that generation boundaries; special verbal markers and slang (Lisa Green, 2004: 79).

Furthermore, the characteristics of AAVE are phonological, grammatical, and semantic features. Phonological features of AAVE refer to the AAVE pronunciation system which is restriction on the occurrence of combination of consonant sounds, especially, at the end of words. (Lisa Green, 2004, p.79). For instance, transposed "sk" and "sp" like: *aks* in "ask", or stopping of word-initial voiced *th*, likes *dese* in "these". Moreover, semantic features of AAVE, refer to words which have two levels of meaning, "one black and one white", like "she is a strong woman". It has positive meaning: "a person of highly desirable character" or negative meaning "a person of undesirable character".

Some grammatical features of AAVE involved morphology and syntax features. One of the most distinctive features of AAVE is the complete absence of copula verb *be* in some social and linguistic context. Holmes gives the example of African American speaker's speech. They usually omit the verb *be*, like in the sentence: *She very nice* (American Standard English: She is very nice), that a teacher, etc (Holmes, 2001: 177). Then, Green stated that many characteristic features of AAE are from the part of linguistic system that put

together to form sentence. She gives the example of AAE speaker's sentence: Did'nt nobody ask me do I be late for class. From this sentence we can analyze that it has three AAE features: inversion / multiple negation, embedded yes or no question, and habitual be.

Green (2004: 88-89) stated that in the 1994, film 'flesh' used African American characters of all age groups use features associated with AAE. Now, there are some American movies that use AAVE. One of them is in *Rush Hour 2* movie.

Rush Hour 2 is a 2001 martial arts buddy action comedy movie. This is the second installment in the Rush Hour series. A sequel to the 1998 film Rush Hour, the film stars Jackie Chan and Chris Tucker who respectively reprise their roles as inspector Lee and Carter embroiled in a counterfeit scam involving the triad. Rush Hour 2 was released August 3, 2001 becoming the eleventh highest-grossing live-action martial arts movie of all time (Wikipedia, 2015).

Black American, usually use their language, which is different from Standard American English (SAE). It's known as African American Vernacular English (AAVE). It will be interesting to study of unique characteristics of AAVE. Therefore, the researcher would like to analyze "A Grammatical Analysis of African American Vernacular English in Rush Hour 2 Movie".

The topic are selected because it has crucial reasons. First, 'a grammar as the subject' because grammar is the most important one of the language. S. Kane (68: 2008) stated that "Grammar is a set of prescriptive notions about correct use of language". Second, it is interesting to analyze the language of African

American Vernacular English because it is not bad English but a kind of dialect in English. As explained by Jones (2014) in the article:

"It is emphatically not bad English. It is a full-fledged dialect of English, just like, say, British English. It is entirely rule-bound -- meaning it has a very clear grammar which can be (and has been) described in great detail. It is not simply 'ungrammatical'. If you do not conform to the grammar of AAVE, the result is ungrammatical sentences in AAVE".

In addition, Thomas (2007) stated that African American Vernacular English is a dialect of English like any other, but suffers extreme stigma due to the history of race in America. It has a systematic, coherent, rule-bound grammar. It also has some grammatical features that allow it to communicate complex ideas in fewer words than other dialects of English.

Third, in analyzing grammar of African American Vernacular English, it is found that there are many utterances in *Rush Hour 2* movie by Mr. Carter, such as between Mr. Carter and Mr. Lee, Mr. Carter and Ricky Tan, etc. Chronologically, it portrays the life's story of human about heroism and abduction, begin with Mr.Carter and Mr. Lee respectively reprise their roles as Inspector Lee and Detective Carter in saving the life of the Chinese counsel's daughter in Los Angeles. Thus, this research focuses on the grammatical characteristics in Rush Hour 2 movie which contain African American Vernacular English.

1.2 Problems of the Study

Based on the explanation in the background study above, the problems are formulated as follow:

- 1. What are the characteristics of grammatical features produced by Mr. Carter in Rush Hour 2 movie?
- 2. What are the differences of grammatical features of African American Vernacular English (AAVE) in Rush Hour 2 movie from Standard English (SE)?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

According to the research problems, objectives of this research are aimed:

- 1. To explain the characteristics of grammatical features produced by Mr.

 Carter in Rush Hour 2 movie.
- 2. To describe the differences of grammatical features of African American Vernacular English (AAVE) in Rush Hour 2 movie from Standard English (SE).

1.4 Significances of the Study

The significances of this research theoritically give specific information to linguistic students who are interested in 'grammar' about AAVE in Rush Hour 2 movie, and had understood on both the characteristics of AAVE and the the differences of grammatical features of AAVE from Standard English.

It is hoped that this study can be a valuable reference for the linguistics teachers as a material or reference of educational teaching about certain language, especially about grammatical characteristics of AAVE. In addition, the findings of

this research is expected to be references for future researches to conduct related research with different focus.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study is related to the linguistic features of certain variety of language. The data can be analyzed through its phonology, morphology, syntax and semantic. However the analysis is limited to analyzed a grammatical analysis because African American Vernacular English has its grammatical features which are different from Standard English.

Furthermore, the data are only taken from the script of Mr.Carter utterances in *Rush Hour 2* movie who is the only character producing African American Vernacular English.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding about the use of terms: it is important to give the suitable meaning of the key terms. Some terms are defined as follow:

- 1. Grammatical feature is an item which has identifiable features (Grammatical categories), like: the absence of copula, the use of invariant be, etc (Trudgill, 1999).
- 2. African American Vernacular English feature is an item of African American Vernacular English which has identifiable features (Grammatical categories), like: the absence of copula, the use of invariant be, etc (Trudgill, 1999).

- Vernacular is a social dialect spoken by a lower status group. It is usually considered to have less authority due to its differences compared to Standard English (Sidnell, 2015).
- 4. African American Vernacular English is a variety of speech adopted by working-class descendants of US slaves in colloquial context (Murfwene and Green in Howe, 2005).
- 5. Standard English is the form of English language used by educated speakers and regarded as representing correct usage in grammar, spelling, vocabulary, and punctuation (Bloomsbury, 1999).