

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is divided into five sections. The first section deals with the background of this study, the second deals with the statements of the problem, the third deals with the objective of the study, the fourth deals with the significance of the study, and the fifth deals with the definition of key terms.

1.1 Background of the Study

The film industry has been developing rapidly not only in the United States but also all over the world. Until today, it has become the industry that draws the interest of many people. A film series is also called a film “franchise”, which consists of a number of films based on the same characters (Rowan 2016). Watching films or series is one of the most popular entertainments for people who live in the modern and globalized era which is full of problems. Although the audiences know what they watch from the series is only a delusion or fantasy, they still enjoy it. Some even make it an exciting hobby. Oftentimes, they are even amazed and inspired by the story or values they might draw of a movie.

As a medium to channel the creativity and imagination of humans, films are created in many types or genres. The theme and objective of a film are adjusted to the genre determined by its author. According to Chandler (1997), the word ‘genre’ comes from the French (and originally Latin) word for “kind” or “class.” There are a lot of movie genres in cinema or television. The film genres which are most interesting for scholars are those with a long historical lineage, such as

“comedy”, “drama”, “thriller” and “horror”, alongside others which had clear formal coherence, such as the “Western”, “war”, and “crime” (Brown, 2013).

At the beginning of the 21st century, the market for movie-renting was not very fast. In fact, the company could benefit from rapid success due to little competition between businesses that provide the service. Hastings stated, “We were targeting people who just bought DVD players. At the time our goal was just to get our coupon in the box. We didn’t have too much competition. The market was underserved, and stores didn’t carry a wide selection of DVDs at the time” (Shih, Kaufman dan Spinola 2009). Streaming media is a new mechanical practice that is altering everyday uses of media, media industry practices, and transnational cultural geography. Streaming, concomitantly, is an audience tactic and a strategic logic of the industry. Netflix is one of many kinds of streaming media, or we can say web television. Netflix is a media services provider or DVD sales and rental by mail. Netflix offers the consumer online streaming of a library of films and television programs. People nowadays prefer to watch on their phones rather than on their televisions.

Society is made out of people with diversity in backgrounds. The differences come in terms of age, gender, religion, power, economy, ethnicity, and others. Language as the essential part of life is also affected by those differences. As a result, language has many variations according to each user’s region, gender, social class, ethnicity, and so on. One of several factors that affect language is ethnicity. Therefore, language could vary from one ethnic group to another because every ethnic group has its own characteristics that make each language

different. Language is also used to define characteristics of ethnic group membership through the different varieties of the same language (Trudgill 1983). The example of a variety that is affected by ethnic group is the African American Vernacular English (AAVE).

African American Vernacular English has its own characteristics that make it different from Standard English. The grammatical deviation is one of the differences presented in African American Vernacular English characteristics. Since African American Vernacular English (AAVE) is used to describe African people who live in the United States of America, there are many literary works that use it as the representative of African Americans in their works. There are many characters that represent African Americans movies. Those characters do not explicitly say they are African American, yet the author shows it through their pronunciation, language use, and the appearance that is somehow African-like. This case often happens in animated movies where there are human and non-human creatures.

African American Vernacular English has been at the center of a series of controversies, all of which are enlightened by evidence from morphology and syntax. One is well known among sociolinguists: the ‘creolist/anglicist controversy’, which is concerned with the origin of African American Vernacular English, whether as a plantation creole or as working-class speech acquired from plantation overseers or perhaps a mixture of the two or even from another source, substrate influence from West African languages. Much discussion of this controversy e.g. J. Rickford (1999.) and Shana (2000) was concerned with

morphosyntax, but, as argued by (Bailey dan Thomas 1998), (Sutcliffe 2003) and (Thomas, R dan Carter 2006), segmental and prosodic variables analyzable in ex-slave recordings (Bailey, Maynor, and Cukor-Avila 1991) can provide vital clues as well. There have been other important controversies, too.

African American Vernacular English (AAVE) is a variety of speech that is mostly spoken by the descendants of American African slaves in the United States (Reyes 2010). African American Vernacular English has its own characteristics that make it different from the standard English. Linguistic features are one of the differences presented in African American Vernacular English characteristics. Since African American Vernacular English (AAVE) is used to describe African people who live in the United States of America, there are many literary works that use it as a marker of African Americans in their works. There are many characters that represent African Americans in movies. Those characters do not explicitly say they are African American, yet the author shows it through their pronunciation, language use, and the appearance that is somehow African-like.

It is now generally recognized that African American Vernacular English differs substantially from any European and American vernacular, even in the South. Studies of speech production conducted with vernacular speakers in the South – for example, demonstrated that there were significant differences (Walt 1974). This evidence is reviewed in Bailey (2001). Furthermore, speech identification experiments have shown that listeners are usually quite good at distinguishing the two ethnicities, with accuracy rates sometimes reaching the point of saturation; see the review in Thomas and Reaser (2004).

The differences appear to span all realms of pronunciation, including consonantal and vocalic variation, prosody, and probably voice quality. Another controversy is the ‘convergence or divergence controversy’ over whether African American Vernacular English and European American vernaculars are currently becoming more or less like each other, or perhaps maintaining a roughly constant distance from each other Labov and Harris (1986), Ralph W Fasold (1987), Bailey dan Maynor (1989), Butters (1989), and Wolfram and Thomas (2002) are the most essential readings on this controversy. The failure or slowness of African Americans to adopt vowel shifting patterns that spread among European Americans has been cited as key evidence favoring the divergence position. Most recently, the ‘uniformity controversy’ has arisen. This controversy involves how uniform African American Vernacular English is across the USA, whether it has a single set of norms to which young African Americans aspire, and whether any geographic variation in African American Vernacular English is dependent on or independent of variations in the vernaculars of European Americans and other ethnic groups. Some special considerations relate to African American Vernacular English. First, African American Vernacular English is often distinguished from African American English (AAE). African American Vernacular English relates specifically to a vernacular form, spoken principally by working-class African Americans. African American Vernacular English refers to the speech of all African Americans, including middle-class African Americans. Middle-class African American English most often lacks the more stigmatized morphosyntactic variants, although some middle-class speakers may employ them for stylistic

effect or express solidarity. Most pronunciation variables are not as stigmatized, however, and, for many of them, there may be no meaningful distinction between African American Vernacular English forms and AAE forms.

Throughout this article, the writer used African American Vernacular English when referring specifically to vernacular forms. Variation exists among African Americans for all the variables described here. What the author discusses are the linguistic features or, in some cases, uncommon variants that happen to occur more frequently in African American Vernacular English. Third, African American Vernacular English has a unique migration history. They originated in the South, and specifically in the Coastal Plain and Piedmont sections of the South, and were at first tied to a rural lifestyle. However, beginning before World War I and continuing through World War II, the Great Migration occurred in which large numbers of African Americans migrated to cities outside the South in order to find work and to escape Jim Crow laws (see, for example, Ellison 1974; Grossman 1989). A result was that the focus of African American culture shifted to urban life.

The study of African American Vernacular English linguistic features can be conducted from every aspect of our lives and the media. Radio, television, newspaper, novel, series, and even movies can be part of the media. The influence of mass media, especially media service providers on the shaping our culture and everyday lives cannot be stated enough. There are several ways to conduct the study of African American Vernacular English. Therefore, the writer chose to analyze a character in a Netflix movie series. According to Larsen, streaming as a

technological process is nominally defined as multimedia continually delivered to a user (2007). Therefore, the writer chose a drama-comedy series entitled *Orange Is the New Black* Season 1 (2013) to be analyzed. Specifically, the writer chose the supporting character, Suzzane as the object of the analysis. *Orange Is the New Black* Season 1 (2013) was released in July 11, 2013. From this series the supporting characters Suzzane played by Uzo Adoba obtained so many nominations and won some awards, making Suzzane more interesting to be analyzed than the main characters. Other than that, *Orange Is the New Black* had been nominated at several categories, which proves that *Orange Is the New Black* (2013) is a highly appreciated movie.

Orange Is the New Black is an American comedy-drama web television series created by Jenji Kohan for Netflix. The series is based on Piper Kerman's memoir, *Orange Is the New Black: My Year in a Women's Prison* (2010), about her experiences at FCI Danbury, a minimum-security federal prison. *Orange Is the New Black* premiered on July 11 2013 on the streaming service Netflix; it was the third premiered show produced by Netflix Originals. Suzzane is the supporting characters she called the crazy eyes. Suzzane, a supporting character, is one of the prisoners who lived at FCI Danbury. The way they act and talk is interesting because they actually live at the prison for a long time.

1.2 Statements of The Problem

Based on the background of the study above, the research questions are devised as the following:

1. What are linguistic features of African American Vernacular English produced by Suzzane Warren and Tasha Jefferson in *Orange is the New Black* Netflix series?
2. What linguistic feature is mostly produced by Suzzane Warren and Tasha Jefferson in *Orange is the New Black* Netflix series?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1. To find out the linguistic features of African American Vernacular English produced by Suzzane Warren and Tasha Jefferson in *Orange is the New Black* Netflix series.
2. To find out the linguistic feature which is mostly produced by Suzzane Warren and Tasha Jefferson in *Orange is the New Black* Netflix series.

1.4 Scope of Limitation

In *Orange Is the New Black* Netflix series, there are a number of female cast. Yet, this study focuses only on one supporting character Suzzane Warren and Tasha Jefferson to discover the linguistic features of African American Vernacular English. This research might not generally describe the language phenomena from all over the world, even similar ones.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The aim of this research is to find out the linguistic features of African American Vernacular English used by Suzzane Warren and Tasha Jefferson in *Orange is the New Black* Netflix series and the factors underlying the use

of African American Vernacular English linguistic features. For practical use of conducting this study, this analysis is designed to those who would like to conduct similar studies. The writer hopes the findings would be beneficial for those who wanted to use a series and concentrate on kinds of language variation, especially African American Vernacular English.

Further, this study is to enrich the sociolinguistic discussions under the topic of African American Vernacular English, especially to enrich topics on linguistic studies at Universitas Airlangga.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

1. AAVE : African – American Vernacular English in the USA which shares a set of grammatical and other linguistic features that distinguish various other American dialects (Fought, 2006).
2. Linguistic Feature : A linguistic item which has identifiable features (Wardough, 2002)
3. Sociolinguistics : The study of the relationship between language and society (Holmes 2013).
4. *Orange is the New Black* : A series about experiences at FCI Danbury, a minimum-security federal prison; this is an American drama and comedy web television series (2013).