

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Studies

There are two varieties of English. They are Standard English and non-Standard English. "Standard English is a variety of English which is usually used in print such as book and dictionary and also which is normally taught in school". Meanwhile, Non – Standard English is a language variety spoken by a group of people at the lower end of the social class which the members are classified into "poor, powerless, and uneducated" (Trudgill, 1994).

One example of Non – Standard English is African American Vernacular English (AAVE). It is used by some groups of people in the United State. This dialect has a number of characteristics which are not found in standard mainstream American English. AAVE is commonly used in the northern cities of the United States. The characteristic of AAVE is unique because there are many distinctive aspects. One of its most distinctive features is the complete absence of verb *be* in some social and linguistic context, while the speakers of Standard English use shortened or reduced forms of the verb *be*. In other words, people do not usually say *She is very nice* but rather *She's very nice*. They reduce *is* to *s*. On contrary, AAVE speakers will say this sentence by *She very nice*.

Since AAVE has many distinctive features, many scholars are interested in conducting a study on AAVE. First, a study by Adharini (2005) aimed to analyze

the grammatical features of AAVE such as nonfinite verb and finite verb in Missy Elliot's *Supa Dupa Fly*. Second, a study by Marliahadi (2007) found that the AAVE had special features, for example, in morphology (the absence of *to be* such *am, is, and are*), in syntax (the use of *ain't* replacing *didn't*), and in phonology (the use of sound [n] which replaces sound [ŋ]). These AAVE features are also found in the conversation of the characters in *Guess Who* movie series. Third, a study conducted by Kusuma (2007) discussed AAVE used by 50 Cents in his lyrics of songs. He found that in the lyrics of 50 Cents songs, the sound [n] replaces sound [ŋ]. Besides, Pramana (2009) analyzed the characters of AAVE utterances in Richard Wright's *Big Boy Leaves Home* novel. He found the linguistics features like phonology (the use of g-dropping), morphology (multiple negation), and syntax (subject – verb agreement) level. Finally, Tejo (2011) who studied AAVE in the characters of *White Chicks* movie, found that there were many uses of *ain't* and non – standard past tense forms.

According to the studies mentioned above, there are some similarities. Those studies show that AAVE features can be seen in phonology and morphology features. The most common feature is the sound of [n] at the end of the word which is replaced by [ŋ]. Other common features are multiple negation and non – standard present and past tense forms.

From the explanation of the studies above, indeed, AAVE is interesting to be researched. It is not only found in the novel and movie, but it is also found in the music. The use of AAVE is very popular. It can be seen that people like to listen

to the lyrics of songs which are categorized as R&B, hip hop, and rap music. The lyrics of songs that have AAVE are almost found in the Nicki Minaj's lyrics of the song. Nicki Minaj is an African American singer. According to entertainment site *Grape Juice* news, one of the official music websites in the United States, it is stated that Nicki Minaj's on *Pink Friday: Roman Reloaded* album has been sold 726,875 copies in first week and it got top ten position on Billboard. Because of her album sale and its eligibility to reach a top ten position in Billboard music, she becomes a famous African American singer.

The lyrics of Nicki Minaj's songs are interesting. Some of her lyrics are *Anyway, lil' nigga don't test the kid, oohh the girls, they wanna ride with us tonight and lemme hear that boy*. From the short lyrics of Nicki Minaj, the writer found that there are some words that are not available in the dictionary generally such words *lil', nigga, wanna, and lemme*. On those italic words, the writer found that there are some linguistic features which are not mentioned in the previous studies: Adharini (2005), Marliahadi (2007), Kusuma (2007), Pramana (2009), and Tejo (2011). Those studies do not include phonological process and a new word formation in AAVE. These differences make the writer interested and eager to conduct a study which aims to analyze the process of the phonological alternation and word formation of AAVE. Therefore, she decided to choose 27 lyrics of songs in Nicki Minaj's 3rd album, *Pink Friday: Roman Reloaded The Re-Up* as her research data.

1.2 Statement of the problem

According to the background of the studies above the statements of the problem are:

1. What are the phonological processes and morphological processes of AAVE found in Nicki Minaj's lyrics of the songs?
2. Which phonological processes and morphological processes of AAVE are mostly found in Nicki Minaj's lyrics of the songs?

1.3 Objective of the Study

1. The writer wants to find out the phonological and morphological processes in Nicki Minaj's lyrics of songs.
2. The writer also wants to find out the frequently phonological and morphological processes in Nicki Minaj's lyrics of songs.

1.4 Significance of the study

The writer expects that the result of this study can contribute to the linguistic studies especially linguistic feature in song lyrics. The writer hopes that the readers who like to listen to rap music by African or Black people will be easier to understand the meaning of the lyrics. The lyrics of rap music often use non Standard English and it is intonated very fast. Consequently, the second language learners feel difficult to understand the meaning. Through this study, the writer hopes that the readers especially students of English Department obtain more knowledge about linguistic features of African American Vernacular English especially in rap music. Besides, it could make students interested in studying

about linguistic features in other variety languages. Therefore, the writer expects that learning about African American Vernacular English is also found in music and the result of the study can be used as a reference for further study.

1.5 Definition of Keyterms

- 1. Vernacular: A language which has not been standardized and which does not have official status. Vernaculars are usually used as a mother tongue or first language by certain group of people in multilingual communities and they use it in certain situation such informal situation (Holmes, 2008)**
- 2. African American Vernacular English: the dialect spoken by almost African American people. Theirs background life such ethnic and socioeconomic categorized as uneducated of its speaker (Trudgil,2004)**
- 3. Phonology : the study of how speech sounds system form patterns in human languages (Fromkin, Rodman, and Hyams, 2003)**
- 4. Morphology : the study of word formation, including the ways forms of words are varied depending on how they are used in sentences (Lieber,2009)**

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE RIVIEW