CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

English language is divided into standard and non-standard English. 'A language which has undergone some regularization or codification (for example, in grammar and a dictionary) is called standard language' (Holmes, 1992: 76), while a non-standard language is the opposite of standard language; the language which is different from the standard language and has its own rules. Usually this language is used by the minority people in the country which spoken English especially in the United States.

Black English is one of the non-standard languages in the United States. It has certain phonological, morphological and syntactic characteristics. In Black English, 'words like *thing* and *this* may be pronounced as */tɪŋ/* and /dɪs/. *Bath* may sound like *baff*, *cup* for *cub*, as final stops are devoiced. In morphology, because the final /t/ and /d/ are often unpronounced, there may be no overt signaling of the past tense, so that I *walked* sounds just like I /walk/. A form like *he go* signals that there is no third

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person singular in the present tense of the verb. Syntactically, Black English has special uses of 'be', or lack of 'be' (the zero copula), as in contrast between 'He nice' ('He is nice right now') and 'He be nice' ('He is nice sometimes')' (Wardhaugh, 1986: 334).

The characteristics of Black English are so obvious and widespread that they can be easily recognized, as Wardhaugh says:

> There are some categorizations which American people prepared when they are talking on the phone, so they can judge that someone who contacts them by telephone as either black or non-black using speech alone as the criterion and most such categorizations are correct. In cases of mis-categorization, it is usually because of special circumstances: a black person has been brought up very closely with non-blacks, or non-black has been brought up very closely with blacks.
> (Wardhaugh, 1986: 337)

Black English is often found in rap songs which originate from the Black community. This kind of music began in Bronx, a poor black neighborhood in New York. The first rap record describes the hopelessness of the American black ghettos at that time. Since then many rap songs have been sung by black people who use Black English in their daily interactions. Consequently, when black people sing a rap song, they usually use Black English, because the language reflects their own identity and interactions in their daily life.

'Eminem is the first white American who becomes a rapper and he is also a very controversial artist in the music industry. He is certainly one of the most unique stars of entertainment today and, without doubt, he will still be one for a number of years to come'(www.eminem.net). Every song that Eminem has written uses Black

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English, regardless of the fact that he is not black. This makes me interested to analyse further the Black English he uses in his songs as well as the reasons why he uses this variety of English.

Through this thesis, I would like to show that not only black people but also non-black people use this Black English in their daily life. Moreover, through the songs I can also know about the song writers and the reasons why they write the songs. In this way I can appreciate their songs more. Furthermore, I would also like to show that people can learn more about Black English through songs.

There are six linguistic areas covered in my research: Syntax, Semantics, Morphology, Phonology, Pragmatics and Sociolinguistics. 'Syntax is the study of the internal structure of sentences and the relationships among the internal parts, while Semantics is the study of meaning in language. In Morphology people can study the word formation, while Phonology studies the structure and systematic patterning of sounds in human language' (Akmaijan, et al, 1995: 12). 'Pragmatics is the study of the relation of signs to interpreters' (Schiffrin, 1994: 190). 'Sociolinguistics is a study of relationship between language and society. The study explains why we speak differently in different social contexts, and it is also concerned with identifying the social functions of language and the ways it is used to convey social meaning'. (Holmes, 1992:1). Through Sociolinguistics, I am able to know some of the reasons why a non-black like Eminem uses Black English in his songs.

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Statement of the Problem

The problems that will be analyzed in this thesis are:

1. What are the linguistic forms of Black English in Eminem's songs?

2. What is the influence of Eminem's background in using Black English?

Purpose of the Study

By doing the analysis, I intend:

1. To show the linguistic forms of Black English in Eminem's songs.

2. To show the influence of Eminem's background in using Black English.

Methods of Research

The method of research used in this study follows this procedure. Firstly, I search in the Internet for Eminem's song lyrics and Eminem's biography. Secondly, after collecting the song lyrics and biography, I read and select the lyrics which contain many data which can be analyzed. Thirdly, I process the data which are suitable with the topic. Fourthly, I classify the data based on the linguistic areas and the approach that I use. Fifthly, I discuss them, focusing on the linguistic forms and the background which have influenced Eminem in using Black English and finally, I draw a conclusion based on my discussion.

Organization of the Thesis

I divide the thesis into four chapters, which are preceded by the Preface and the Abstract. Chapter One is the Introduction, which contains the Background of the Study, the Statement of the Problem, the Purpose of the Study, the Methods of Research, and the Organization of the Thesis. In Chapter Two, I provide the theories on Black English and its varieties. Chapter Three contains the study of Black English in Eminem's songs. Chapter Four is the Conclusion. This thesis ends with the Appendices, consisting of Eminem's Biography and lyrics of the songs.