CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Research

Language is an inseparable part of the human being. It is a means of communication in which people express their ideas, emotion, and willingness. People need language to interact among themselves and with another outside of their society. In reverse, language expresses ideas and shapes thought.

Language reflects society's behaviour and way of thinking. As mentioned by Woolcock, language is one of the most prominent emblems of social behavior (Woolcock, et al., 2008). Language enables us to recognize the social background of a speaker. Accent or dialect, even choice of words, allows us to identify someone's origin, education, and social status. Literary work is one of the aspirations of society's thought, which is a reflection of real life. This is historically one of mankind's oldest methods of processing information and representing reality Literature can be described as a process of interpreting a phenomenon or expression of human dilemmas and understandings. Using language, literary work can be written or heard by the public and applied in real life by concluding the literary work itself.

Thus, the usage of language may reflect, among others, racism. As Moore (1975, p.167) mentioned, there are differences in the usage of words between the Europeans and other ethnicities, especially in warfare. If the European wins, it will be called 'victory'. On another side, if ethnicity wins, it will be called 'massacre'.

Language is also used as a decision to one object and symbol (Kulaszewicz, 2015, p.33). For example, the word 'white' is described as positive energy (pure or good) but 'black' as negative energy since it is associated with bad, evil and so on.

These two words are also used to refer to human's races based on skin colour. The skin colour-based distinction which is implemented in various social inequality is called racial discrimination.

Racism is an ideology when one social group claimed as superior group than others. This ideology usually occur in each country when minorities have unequal treatment from the majorities. For example, minorities with different race or religion will get different treatment from the majorities.

According to Clair (2015, p.857), racism is different from racial discrimination and racial inequality. Racial discrimination is defined as treatment of one race that is different from another detrimental race, while racial inequality is defined as unequal treatment starting from the welfare of the community and its services. Racism is defined and involved in both processes when unequal treatment and unequal outcomes have collaborated.

In short, racism is a belief (ideology) that humans are divided into contexts such as personality, intellect, and morality. For example, teachers in the village are treated unfairly in most developing countries, such as Indonesia because of facilities and income that are not equal to the teachers in the city.

Furthermore, race is not equal to racism. As mentioned by Clair and Denis (2015, p.857), 'race' is generally understood as a social construct. It is defined as self-identity in one society or national identity and absolutely a social construct that made one person become one group of social identity.

Racism already exists for a long time and not a modern concept, when Apartheid arises in South Africa, or the genocide of the Holocaust in Germany. During World War II, many innocent Jews were subjected to persecution and genocide (Yahya, 2017). As the effect of the genocide, millions of Jews were tortured and murdered in the Holocaust and it is a horrific period for mankind in history. Meanwhile, South Africa develops an Apartheid under European colonials which was part of the colonial area in the nineteenth century (Mhlauli, et al. 2015). The European influenced by Darwin's theory, which places the white people at the top of evolutionary with advanced technology and imperial expansion. Apartheid is not only racial discrimination system, but also an imposed separation or segregation between black people and white people in the government area, labor market, and residency. Since Apartheid developed in South Africa, all aspects of life were divided in form of racial separation and segregation between black people and white people.

Toni Morrison is an African-American who tries to portray this racism in her novel '*The Song of Solomon*'. The novel which won the Nobel Prize in 1993 is set in North Carolina in 1918. It describes the struggle of the African-American people who face racial discrimination against white people. Toni Morrison is an African-American try to portrays this racism in her novel '*The Song of Solomon*' which won the Nobel Prize in 1993. Racism is reflected through the language, which is, among other, in the conversations between the characters in the novel. For example, when Mrs. Bains talked to her grandchildren about Mr. Dead and she said and mentioned "A **nigger** is terrible thing to see. A terrible, terrible thing to see" at page 48.

The writer was interested to study further this language use phenomena, which

is one part of sociolinguistics object of study. How language is used in a particular social context of text, such as novel, is part of register. Register is language phenomena that are set and associated in discrete occupational or social groups (Wardhaugh, 1986). Language is used when register is a study about giving a label by one group to another group with their expressions by Holmes (2013, p.262). Register usually can be found anywhere such as in company, federation, and reality show, which is the casts are giving expression or opinion to the object.

This study is focused on the use of language in a novel, which deals with the register of the novel, particularly by the characters of different racial background.

1.2. Identification of the Problem

The present study specifically investigated the use of language in the Toni Morrison's novel, The Song of Solomon. It will be described from sociolinguistics point of view, which is register. This is based on the observation on the language usage that potrays racism existing in the society in the novel. This can be seen in the choice of words used to address black people by the white men.

1. Macon Dead   : "Come down outta there, **nigger**!"   p.55

2. Porter   : "And you, you **baby-dicked baboon**"   p.55

3. Pilate   : "You all must be the **dumbest** unhung Negroes   p.73
                    on Earth. What they telling you in their school?"

The word '**nigger**' in Macon Dead's statement (1) is widely perceived as an insult by African-Americans because this word has an offensive connotation. According to the dictionary (Longman), 'nigger' is racial word, especially for black people. According to Sanjaya (2018, p.46), '**nigger**' is opposed to African-Americans, which is treated to lower level than the other races. The phrase '**baby-**

dicked baboon' in sentence 2 is received or perceived as an insult by black Americans because it underestimates them. The phrase is composed by three words: baby, dicked, and baboon. '**Baby-dicked**' is a compound word that has a meaning 'a baby boy'. The word '**baboon**' means animal such as monkey. When the phrase, '**baby-dicked baboon**' is used to human being. It is considered as an insult. Furthermore, the word '**dumbest**' (sentence 3) means 'the most stupid person or people'. If the word is used to somebody it is meant to insult or look down the person. Since these kind of expression is used by the white to the black, it can be categorized as racial discrimination.

This research attempts to answer the following questions:

a. What are linguistic forms reflecting racism in the novel *The Song of Solomon*?

b. What social factors that might contribute to the emergence of racism in the novel *The Song of Solomon*?

1.3. The objective of the Research

Therefore, the objectives of the research are:

a. To identify the linguistic forms reflecting racism in the novel *The Song of Solomon*.

b. To identify the social factors that might contribute to the emergence of racism in the novel *The Song of Solomon*.

1.4. Scope of the Research

Sociolinguistics studies language use in society. As mentioned by Holmes (2013, p.1), language provides clues to others about who we are, where we come

from, and what kind of social experience that we have. Social factors occur when people's speech in different background of societies and also investigates among other language use in certain speech communities. Language has variety of ways when express or saying the same things; addressing, greetings, describe things, and give thoughts. Novel is mainly considered as a reflection of society in the real situation. The use of language in the novel is also claimed to represent the use of language in real life.

This study is focused on the use of language in the novel, which deals with the register of the novel, particularly by the characters of different racial backgrounds. It portrays social and racial discrimination in American community in 1918.

1.5. Methods of Research

1.5.1. Data and source of data

This is a library research (Booth, 2003) in which data are taken from a novel entitled *The Song of Solomon*. There are two types of data used in this study primary and secondary data. The primary data is taken from her novel being studied, while this research is done in three steps, they are data collection, data analysis, and presenting data analysis.

1.5.2. Data Collection

The primary data is collected from the novel by reading the novel and then identify all sentences and conversations containing expressions that reflect racism. All the expression are listed and categorized into table based on its syntactical categories. This is done to help the writer match the expression with their meaning in the analysis.

The secondary data is obtained by reading relevant sources to get information for description that help describe the meaning and the social context of all racial expressions.

1.5.3. Data Analysis

The use or choice of words by the characters in the novel is studied from the theory of register by Wardaugh (1986). Semantic theory, which is lexical, syntactical, and contextual meaning is applied to examine the meaning of racial expressions. The lexical meaning is checked using the online Longman English Dictionary while the Syntactical meaning is concluded from the meaning that can be grasped from the sentence, and contextual meaning is determined by studying the social and historical context of the speech.

1.5.4. Presentation of Data Analysis

The data are presented in dialogue, and all words or statements indicating racism are written in bold. All expressions containing racism is grouped based on its syntactical categories: lexicon, sentence, and context, and presented in tables. All descriptions of social factors is described descriptively.