# CHAPTER I
# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Background of the Study

English is a language which is used by people in most countries all over the world. English has gained the role of a global language and become a *lingua franca* from the past century. Jenkins (2009, p. 200) stated that a *lingua franca* is a language which allows communication between speakers with different first language. In other words, English is being used among non-native English speakers from expanding circle. In result, there are variations of English in many multilingual countries, including Asia.

Nowadays, there are many English varieties other than British and American. Those varieties are acknowledged as the World Englishes. Holmes (2012, p. 80) stated that the different varieties of English is referred to as World Englishes. It is different forms and varieties of English which is used in various Sociolinguistics contexts and different parts of the world. Likewise, Kachru (1992, p. 3) distinguished three types of varieties, such as inner circle, outer circle, and expanding circle.

The variation of English language has raised various perceptions as well. One variety of World Englishes in Asia which has raised different societies' perceptions is Singapore English. Leimgruber (2009, p. 8) stated that English is one of four official languages in Singapore aside Malay, Mandarin and Tamil. Furthermore, there are variations of English used in Singapore such as, Standard Singaporean English (SSE) and Singaporean Colloquial English (SCE). Standard Singaporean English is the kind of English that typically be used in more official

contexts such as in politics, the courts, education, news or in Television programmes. Whereas, Singaporean Colloquial English or most famous known as *Singlish* is tend to be used in informal situation such as among family and friends.

Singlish has been influenced by the surrounding languages, such as Malay, Mandarin and Tamil (Leimbgruber, 2009, p. 16). Therefore, there are significant differences between the Standard Singaporean English (SSE) and Singaporean Colloquial English (SCE) or Singlish. For instance, in the Standard English it is said "Can you give me a lift?", but in Singlish it is said "Can I follow your car?." Additionally, instead of saying "Turn on the light, please", a Singaporean would says "On the light, please."

Due to the striking differences, Singlish has received various valuations, even most of them are bad perceptions or attitudes. Cavallaro and Ng (2014, p. 380) revealed that many Singapore societies give negative attitudes toward Singlish. This English variety is also widely criticised by policy makers as "bad English" because it threatens the proficiency in Standard English. Cavarallo et al. (2014, p. 380) also conveyed that a large number of Singapore public view Singlish (SCE) as 'bad' or 'broken' English. Likewise, Ahn and Lee (2020, p. 14) revealed that Singaporeans who study in overseas believe that Singlish cannot be understood by foreigners and it might cause embarrasement. It can be said that not all Singaporean have a good attitude toward their own language (Ahn and Lee, 2020). Attitudes mean how people react to something exist or happen around them. Similarly, Garret (2010, p.20) stated that an attitude is an evaluative orientation to a social objects of some sort, whether it is a language, or a new government policy, etc.

The variation of attitude to language may occur because people will have random assessment or valuation when they listen to an accent or language they never heard before. Baker (1992, p. 9) pointed out the significances of language attitude are on the restoration, preservation, and death of language. Thus, a survey of language attitude may provides an indicator of thoughts and beliefs, preferences and desires of the community.

As students who learn English and use English in college, English Department students should know, if not learn, different varieties of English language. This is particularly true that now there is an acknowledgment to English other than the British and American English. This acknowledgement has led to the development of new field of study which is called World Englishes, whose main interest is varieties of English in the world. In English Department, World Englishes is introduced to the students in Sociolinguistics class. However, Sociolinguistics class is an elective subject which means that not all English Department students took this subject. Likewise, those students who took this subject are simply introduced to the knowledge of Singlish rather than Singlish as a language that has been used for communication. Therefore, this research is conducted to see the thoughts and preferences of twenty English Department students toward Singlish.

Related to the knowledge of different varieties of English and attitude towards a language, the researcher intends to know whether Singlish is recognized by the students of English Department Students and whether they have positive or negative perception towards this variety of English. Thus, this research is going to

investigate their knowledge and attitude towards the Singaporean Colloquial English (SCE) or most known as Singlish.

## 1.2. Research Questions

This research is intended to answer the following questions:

1. What is the knowledge of English Department students of the 2020 Sociolinguistics class about Singlish?

2. What is the attitude of English Department students of the 2020 Sociolinguistics class toward Singlish?

## 1.3. Objectives of the Study

Based on the research questions above, the objective of this study are as follow:

1. To investigate the knowledge of English Department students of the 2020 Sociolinguistics class about Singlish.

2. To identify the attitudes of English Department students of the 2020 Sociolinguistics class toward Singlish.

## 1.4. Scope of the Study

This study focuses on seeing the knowledge and attitudes of twenty students of English Department who took Sociolinguistics class in 2020. Hence, this research will examine the perception of the respondents from the Sociolinguistics perspective using Direct Approach by Peter Garret (2010). In the direct approach, the reasercher will directly measure language attitude with interviews and/or questionnares.

This research is limited to investigates the knowledge of and the attitude toward Singlish as a variety of World Englishes. The subjects of the research is limited to English Department students batch 2017. The students are 20 students who have taken Sociolinguistics class in 2020. This requirement is decided because Singlish is introduced in Sociolinguistics class. Therefore, this research is expected to reveal the students' knowledge and attitude toward Singlish. In other words, this research is conducted to see whether the students recognize Singlish as a variety of English or not and to examine what is their perceptions or attitudes toward Singlish.

## 1.5. Methods of the Study

### 1.5.1. Data and Source of Data

This research employs quantitative method in collecting data. Thus, the source data of this research are the reponses of the respondents to the questions given in the questionnares. The data are obtained from a survey conducted to some students of English Department Students of Andalas University. The respondents are limited to the registered students batch 2017. The source of data is chosen because the students are in the eighth-semester which means that they have studied English for almost four years in college. They are those who have taken Sociolinguistics class in which language attitudes and World Englishes is introduced.

This reseacher also uses a *purposive sampling* to choose the source of data. This technique is identifying and selecting individual or groups of individuals that are especially knowledgeable about or experienced with a

phenomenon (Creswell & Clark, 2011). Thus, the researcher selected 20 students who have been introduced to Singlish in Sociolinguistics class. The reseacher believe that they are knowledgeable about Singlish and language attitude.

### 1.5.2. Method of Data Collection

In this research, the data are compilled by using Direct Method proposed by Peter Garret (2010). The data are obtained by using questionnares in the form of Google Form. Respondents answered the questions based on their own knowledge.

Data are collected in two main steps. Firstly, the researcher gave the respondents an audio recording of Singlish speaker. The researcher firstly informed the respondents that it was a native Singlish speaker. An audio recording is chosen in order to avoid a bias attitude if they see the appereance of the speaker. As claimed by Holmes (2012, p. 410) people will develop attitudes towards language which indicate their views about who spoke the languages, the contexts and the functions. Thus, the researcher decided to give only the audio.

The audio is converted from a video performance of a Singapore commedian, namely Kumarason Chinnadurai or well known as Kumar. The video is entitled Kumar-Dogs and Marriage-Fifty50 Tour 2019 with the link: https://youtu.be/xjBlp8LBjbg. The video is chosen due to Kumar uses Singlish in his performance. Moreover, the video is one of the most attractive video of Kumarason Chinnadurai performance in YouTube which has been viewed by more than 1,2 million viewers.

Secondly, the researcher asked the respondents to answer some questions in form of questionnare. The questions are grouped into two categories: knowledge of Singlish and attitude towards Singlish. The questionnare design was developed and inspired by the list of questions of Abidin (2012) used to study EFL students' attitude towards learning English language.

The Attitude-rating scales, which is Liket Scale, is used to code the responses. The format of indicating level is five-point scale which are agree, strongly agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. As the research was conducted in the New Normal situation, the questionnares were given in form of Google Form.

### 1.5.3. Method of Data Analysis

In the process of analyzing data, the researcher used Direct Approach by Peter Garret (2010). The responses were analysed in four main steps. Firsly, all the responses were tallied to know the number of responses in each type of value. Then, the number of responses were counted. Secondly, the responses were valued based on the score on a scale one to five. The most favorable is scored five, while the least favorable is scored one. Thirdly, the data were calculated by using *Microsoft Excel 2010 software*. The mean and percentage of the data were calculated by using the formula proposed by Bungin (2005, 181-182).

$$M = \frac{\Sigma fx}{N}$$

M   = Mean

$\Sigma fx$ = number of frequencies

N   =number of items

In order to determine the category of the respondents' attitude, the researcher used TCR (Total Cumulative Ratio) formula below:

$$TCR = \frac{Mean}{5} \times 100\%$$

Fourthly, the researcher categorized the respondents' attitude. The value of respondent's attitude is categorized into Arikunto's (2010) category of language attitude.

76% - 100 % = positive

56% - 75% = neutral

<56% = negative

## 1.5.4 Method of Presenting the Result of the Research

Since this research is a quantitative research, the result of the analysis is presented both in the form of number and description. The results of the analysis are presented in the form of tables and diagrams. The quantitative data are described descriptively and interpreted quantitatively.