CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

Human being as social creatures cannot live alone without the help of others. The thing that we cannot deny when we are in contact with others is communication. We use language as a tool to communicate. Language is what the members of a particular society speak (Wardhaugh, 1986:1). In this case, language has relation with people, especially to speak. By using a language, we can convey our opinions, ideas, suggestion and make our communication easier. As a system, language is constructed in such a way that it characterizes the knowledge of the language.

Sociolinguistic research is used to analyze some aspects in the field of social linguistics. It includes the aspects of linguistics and the connection between language and society and the way people use language in different social situation. Sociolinguistics is the study of language in its social contexts and the study of social life through linguistics (Jaworski and Coupland, 1997:1). So the study of sociolinguistics cannot be separated from language and social interaction. Because the function of language is a tool to communicate with others, to make other people understand what they mean. It is very important to learn more about language, especially language that is used to communicate in social contexts. If we learn a language in social contexts; we will find many varieties of language.
Hudson (in wardhaugh, 1986:22) defines variety of language as a set of linguistic items with similar distribution; a definition that allows one to say that all the following are varieties: English, French, London English, the English of football commentaries, and so on. According to definition above, the particular important variety is a specific set of ‘linguistic items’ or ‘human speech patterns’ like sounds, words and grammatical features which we can associate with some external factors, like a geographical area or a social group. So the point of variety language is to identify such a unique set of items or patterns for each group. These language varieties are not only as a sign of speech community differentiation but also as indication of language situation and reflect purpose, topics, norms, and mode of language. They include language and dialects, regional dialect, social dialects, styles and register. Based on the classification above, slang comes in varieties of language.

Slang is informal and often ephemeral linguistic forms (Trask, 1999:279). Slang expressions are usually introduced by the members of a particular social group; they may remain the property of that group and serve as a badge of group identity, or they may instead become much more widely known and used. According to Aderson L. and Trudgill P. (1990:69) the most important aspect of slang is language used below the level of stylistically neutral language usage. Slang is often to be found in areas of the lexicon that refer to things considered taboo for example on streets and jails. It is often used to identify with one's peers and, although it may be common among young people; it is used by people of all ages and social groups. The concept of stylistically neutral language is not well defined, and what is below this level must
therefore vague, because typical of slang is used in informal situation. As we use the term slang, it refers to colloquial as vulgar language.

According to Sanjaya (2010) in the research analyzing the slangs in the movie “The Longest Yard”, most of slang words are used in the conversation between actors in the informal situation, such as: inmate and inmate, guard and inmate, inmate and warden. It also happens between the guard and the warden, because slang is typical of informal conversation, and in movie, we can find words or expressions of slang.

Movie is a combination of photographs projected onto a screen to create the illusion of motion and continuity. Movie not only gives us entertainment but also educates people who watch it. From a movie, we can get any kind of information for example life style, tragedy, football and so on. There are many people who are interested in using a movie as the medium for studying, for example to improve their listening and speaking skills. With a movie, we can study people’s speech related to language.

In this study, the writer is interested in analyzing the words or the expressions of slang used by the main characters in “American Gangster” movie, which the film tells about a person who buys drugs (blue magic). In this movie, the main characters often use slang to communicate with others.
1.2 Problems of the Study

Based on the background of the study above, the problems are stated as follows:

1. What are the words and expressions of slang used by the main characters of “American Gangster” movie?
2. What are the meanings of the slang words and expressions used by the main characters of “American Gangster” movie?

1.3 Purposes of the Study

The purposes of the study should be stated clearly from the beginning as the principle guidance. They are formulated as follows:

1. To find the words and expressions of slang used by the main characters of “American Gangster” movie.
2. To describe the meanings of the slang words and expressions used by the main characters of “American Gangster” movie.

1.4 Significance of the study

The result of this study has both theoretical and practical values. Theoretically, the writer expects that the result of this study can give contribution to the readers to learn and develop their knowledge especially in using slang. Practically, this is important for the readers, because slang is often used by people in
informal situation. We can find them through television, newspapers, books and people’s speech.

The writer hopes that the result of this study can be used as reference for readers who want to study and share their knowledge to others about slang. Also, this study can help to the next researchers to develop and continue with other analysis.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

The scope of this study is the slang used by the main characters of “American Gangster” movie, focusing on the words and the expressions. This study is limited to the discussion of the slang and the meanings.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

There are several key terms used in this study that must be clarified in order to avoid misunderstanding. The writer defines the key terms as follows:

1. *Analysis* is the separation of a material whole into constituent parts for individual study (the American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language).
2. *Slang* is informal and often ephemeral linguistic forms (Trask, 1999:279).
3. “American Gangster” is the title of the movie.
4. Movie is a combination of photographs projected onto a screen to create the illusion of motion and continuity (the American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language).