

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 Background of the Problem

English is considered as the first international language because it is widely spoken in almost every country. There are 371 million people who speak English as a first language and 611 million people worldwide who speak it as a second language (Simons et al., 2017). However in Indonesia, the status of English is as a foreign language. This means English is not spoken daily. It is hard to find people using English except during lectures in the class.

English has three main components: grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary. Vocabulary is an important part in learning languages. A learner, who is bad at grammar, may still be able to send information through her sentences while a learner who doesn't find the right words to communicate may fail to do so (Farghal and Obiedat, 1995). In the case of learning vocabulary, it is better to learn it with its frequent word's partner/s or known as collocation. Learning words separately may be meaningless and may cause problems for learners (Boonyasaquan, 2009)

Collocation is a unique part of English language and according to Palmer (1961), as cited in Wangsirisombat (2011). It is one of the most difficult aspects in learning English as a foreign language (EFL) because of its restrictedness. If an EFL learner does not know about grammar, pronunciation, or meaning or a word, the

learner can simply reads a grammar book or consults a complete dictionary. However, when the learner has difficulties in collocation, it is different because the learner might have made a grammatically correct sentences but it sounds odd to a native speaker due to the errors in collocation. (Lubis, 2013)

An English Education Study Program is expected to be a place where students are trained to become qualified English teachers. A good English teacher has to master four skills of English: reading, writing, listening, and speaking and three components: pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. Collocation is a part of vocabulary, because collocation itself means a word that often combines together (McCarthy and O'Dell, 2005). Thus, collocation must be mastered by students of English Education Study Program in order to be a qualified teacher.

However, the importance of collocation is often neglected. In Indonesia, the number of special class teaching collocation is relatively limited. Based on the researcher's experience, collocation does not receive much attention among Indonesian EFL learners. Collocation is usually taught in a vocabulary class, but it only covers the minor part of collocation. There is no explanation about types of collocation, or even about the definition of the collocation itself.

Ignoring collocation may lead to the misusing of collocation in language (for example: bring her child to the doctor). The verb "bring" doesn't collocate with "doctor", but "take" does. We do not bring our children to the doctor, but we take

them to the doctor. This kind of mistakes results in unnatural or awkward expressions produced by the students.

A lot of researchers have paid special attention about collocation errors and the sources of the errors (Boonyasaquan, 2009; Lubis, 2013, Sirisombat, 2011; Shitu, 2015) but there are not many studies about collocation errors have done in Indonesia. Identifying the sources of errors is the effective way to prevent repetition of errors being made. Therefore, the sources of errors in collocations must be analyzed and known by the students and lecturers.

1.2 Statements of the Problem

1. What are the common types of collocation problems made by the students?
2. What are the possible sources of the collocation problems made by the students?

1.3 Objectives of the study

The purposes of this study are:

1. To find out the common type of collocation problems made by the students.
2. To find out the possible sources of the collocation problems made by the students.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to make the students of English Education Study Program Academic Year 2015 and 2014, who are expected soon to be teachers after graduating, become more aware of the collocation errors that are probably made, and to prevent them doing so in the future.

This study is also expected to make English lecturers, especially those in an English Education Study Program, become more aware of students' difficulty in collocation and will find a solution to the errors. By knowing the common collocation errors made by the students and their possible causes, the lecturers may take the result of this study as an input of their teaching. Therefore, the lecturers may become more conscious of the type of collocation errors and can prioritize teaching collocation.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

According to McCarthy & O'Dell (2005), collocation is a word that often combines together, or in another word, it is when the frequency of words occurring together is high without specific reason (Boonyasaquan, 2009). Heavy rain, commit a crime, get on the train are some of the examples of collocation. However, definition of collocation by Woolard (2000) is different: 'Collocation is group of words that people will not expect to find together'. *Heavy smoker* is predictable, but no one expects *heavy* with *furniture*.

People may use the word that doesn't collocate with the other and it is still understandable. However, it may sound odd for native speaker. A person may state that he brings his daughter to the doctor and it is understood by others, but it sounds unnatural for the native speakers.

There are two types of collocation as stated by Lewis (2000), lexical collocation and grammatical collocation. Lexical collocation consists of nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs. Grammatical collocation consists of verbs, noun, adjectives, and prepositions. In terms of its strength, there are four types of them: unique collocation, strong collocation, weak collocation, and medium-strength collocation.

According to Brown (2006), Error occurs frequently and cannot be corrected by the speaker when it is pointed out, which make it reflects speaker's competence. Touchie (1986) states there are two major sources of errors: interlingual errors and intralingual errors. Interlingual errors, or also known as transfer or interference errors, are errors caused by speaker's mother tongue interference, meanwhile Intralingual errors are errors caused by the difficulty of the target language.

1.6 Scope and Limitation

1. This study is focused on two types of lexical collocations: adjective + noun, verb + noun, and one type of grammatical collocation: verb + preposition. The reason of choosing adjective + noun and verb + noun is because of their high

frequency in language production (Lewis, 1997). Another reason why verb + preposition is chosen is because Indonesian learners have difficulty with this type.

2. This study is focused on two types of collocation strength: unique collocation and strong collocation. The reason of choosing those two types of collocation is to decrease the chance of the subjects being confused during the test.
3. The subjects of this study are the students of the English Education Study Program of Private University in Surabaya Academic year 2014 and 2015. The reason is because the students of Academic Year 2014 and 2015 have learned about collocations in Vocabulary class in previous two semesters respectively and have been exposed to authentic English learning materials for at least 2 years. The researcher assumes that the students are competent enough to answer the material given.

1.7 Definition of Key-terms

1. Error

According to Brown (2006), Error occurs frequently and cannot be corrected by the speaker when it is pointed out, which make it reflects speaker's competence.

2. Collocation

McCarthy & O'Dell (2005) describe collocation as a word that often combines together. Collocation determines the naturalness of someone's English.

1.8 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters. The first chapter is about the introduction and the reason why the researcher chooses to study on this topic, which includes the background of the problem, statement of the problem, objective of the study, the significance of the study, theoretical framework, scope and limitation, and the definition of key-terms. The second chapter contains the related theories that underlie the researcher's study on the topic, which includes review of the related theories and the previous study. On the third chapter, the researcher explains the research methodology of this study, which includes research methodology, subject, instrument, procedure of data collection and technique of data analysis. The fourth chapter discusses about the findings and the discussion of the study. Lastly, on the fifth chapter, the conclusion and suggestion are described.