CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a brief introduction of the research, including background, research questions, aim of the research, scope of research, significance of the research, clarification of terms, and organization of the paper.

1.1. Background

One of the most important aspects in learning a language is learning the vocabulary of the language and its appropriate use, including collocations, how words occur together with other words (Woolard, 2005, p. 6). It has been widely known that collocation plays essential roles in language use as it helps the learners to communicate effectively, especially in writing. In addition, it is believed that collocational proficiency leads the learners to achieve native-like competence and fluency (Farrokh, 2012). However, collocation is considered quite challenging, particularly for non-native speakers. Collocation is not simply putting words together, because words cannot be combined freely or randomly into phrases and sentences (Pecina, 2005; Dzierżanowska, cited in Martyńska, 2004). Therefore, a great attention should be paid to this matter.

Collocation has become one of the primary concerns in EFL teaching and learning for decades (Darvishi, 2011). It has been discovered that learners of English as a foreign language (EFL), despite having a large number of words in the second language (L2), are not fully capable of putting words together in the way that native speakers naturally do (Phoocharoensil, 2011). In other words, EFL learners can be said to lack collocational competence in L2. Consequently, they often face problems as they commit errors in producing English collocations. Some previous studies investigating second language acquisition of English collocations have shown that EFL learners' problems are due to different factors (e.g. Darvishi, 2011; Phoocharoensil, 2011). One of the major causes of collocational errors is first language influence (e.g. Darvishi, 2011; Phoocharoensil, 2011; Li, 2005; Parastuti, et al., 2009; Ridha & Al-Riyahi, 2011),

in which the learners rely heavily on their mother tongue in their acquisition of English collocations. Additionally, some researchers have also discovered that EFL learners depend on certain learning strategies which also contribute to the learners' errors, such as synonymy, and overgeneralization, (e.g. Phoocharoensil, 2011; Li, 2005; Darvishi, 2011) etc.

However, most of previous studies mentioned above focused on the nature of collocational errors and on learners with high proficiency as they only focused on college students (e.g. Phoocharoensil, 2011; Darvishi, 2011; Parastuti, et al., 2009; Li, 2005, Hama, 2010, Ridha & Al-Riyahi, 2011). Also, there have not been many studies examining learners' errors in their interlanguage with regard to collocation learning, particularly in Indonesian context. Focusing on Indonesian EFL high school students' collocational errors in their interlanguage, this study attempts to investigate the nature of collocational errors made by the learners, with regard to the learning strategies they use to produce English collocations in their writing. It is expected that the results of this study will give a contribution to pedagogical implication in which the teachers can provide the students with appropriate ways in teaching English collocation. It is also expected that the early identification of collocational errors and the learning strategies the EFL learners apply will give contribution to prevent the learners' language from being fossilized.

1.2. Research Questions

As mentioned in the previous explanation, this study attempts to answer the following questions:

a. What are the collocational errors Indonesian EFL learners made in their writing?
b. What are the learning strategies on which Indonesian learners depend in their English collocation learning?

1.3. The Aims of the Research

Relevant to the research questions, this research is aimed to meet the following purposes:

a. To investigate the collocational errors found in Indonesian EFL learners' writing.

b. To investigate the learning strategies, on which Indonesian EFL learners depend, in their English collocation learning.

1.4. Scope of the Research

This research concerns the analysis of collocational errors found in Indonesian EFL learners' writing as well as the learning strategies, on which they depend, in their English collocation learning. About 35 twelfth grade students at a senior high school in Bandung will be involved in order to collect the data for this research.

1.5. Significance of the Research

As this research aims at investigating collocational errors made by Indonesian EFL learners in their writing as well as the learning strategies on which they depend in their acquisition of English collocation, it is expected that the results of the study give significance in some areas, such as theory and practices.

Theoretically, this research will enrich English literature, particularly on collocational errors made by EFL learners and the learning studies they apply in their acquisition of English collocation. In addition, it is expected that the results of this research can be a reference for other researchers studying the topic.

Practically, it is expected that the results of the research will contribute to pedagogical implication in which the teachers can provide the students with appropriate ways in teaching English collocation. In addition, it is expected that

the early identification of collocational errors and the learning strategies the EFL learners apply will give contributions to prevent the learners' language from being fossilized.

1.6. Clarification of Terms

In order to avoid misunderstanding, several terms are clarified as follows:

a. Collocation is a combination of words that often occur together in natural text with greater than random frequency (McCarthy and O'Dell, 2005, p. 6; Mccarten, 2007, p. 5; Chapelle & Hunston, 2009, p. 317).

b. Error is inappropriate utterance which results from learners' lack of L2 knowledge (Saville-Troike, 2006, p. 188). In this study, error is referred to any deviation of collocations the students produce in their writing.

c. Interlanguage is intermediate states or interim grammars of learners' language as it moves toward the target L2 (Saville-Troike, 2006, p. 190). In other words, it is the state in which the learners' language system is between the native and target language. In this study, the term interlanguage is used to refer to the learners' language.

d. Learning strategies refer to the behavior and techniques that individuals apply in their efforts to learn L2 (Saville-Troike, 2006). In this study, learning strategies are certain ways or techniques the students apply in their attempt to produce English collocations, such as synonymy, L1 transfer, and overgeneralization.

1.7. Organization of the Paper

This paper is organized into five chapters:

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter presents a brief description of the contents of the research, including background, research questions, aims of the research, scope of the

research, significance of the research, clarification of terms, and organization of the paper.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter elaborates some theories relevant to this research, including collocation, error analysis, and learning strategies in collocation acquisition. In addition, some relevant studies on the topic are reviewed.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

This chapter explains the methodological aspects applied in this research. It includes research design, research site and participant, data collection and data analysis.

Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion

This chapter presents and discusses the results of the research. Additionally, the interpretation of the findings is provided in this chapter.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Suggestions

This chapter presents the conclusion and suggestions of the research. The conclusion section is based on the findings and discussion in the previous chapter. Meanwhile, the suggestions are addressed to future research on related topic.

1.8. Concluding Remark

This chapter has presented the underlying principles of the study covering background, research questions, aim of the research, scope of research, significance of the research, clarification of terms, and organization of the paper. The next chapter will review the literatures relevant to this study.