

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

It is commonly believed that vocabulary is actually the most significant aspect of learning a language besides grammar. However, the English teaching conducted by most of EFL teachers still emphasizes on learning grammar more than vocabulary. Therefore, lack of knowledge and/or using vocabulary will surely indicate the weaknesses of someone's language. Even a child, in their age, spends most of his/her time practically uses words, in the form of sound of surrounding. The more words he/she takes, the higher likely he/she turns his/her stage of being a child. As the result, by experiencing more vocabularies, the learners of second language will surely get more skilled in certain language that distinguishes them from the beginners.

Recently, some researchers have directed their attention to EFL vocabulary acquisition and emphasized the instruction of vocabulary in classroom practices, for example Channel, 1981; McCarthy, 1984; Nation, 1990; and Nattinger, 1980 (Hsu and Chiu, 2008). Besides, Lewis (Cited in Jeng Yih, 2008) proposed an innovative teaching method, *the lexical approach*, and then investigates the nature of lexis in second language acquisition. He then argued that "language consists of grammaticalised lexis, not lexicalized grammar" (Jeng Yih, 2008). It means that language is not grammar plus vocabulary as per the traditional view, but language is a process of selecting lexis or words that are appropriate. In other words, language is modeled as the "slot and filler" approach in which learners are knowing sentence level structures such as "subject + verb + object + adverbial", and then inserting words into the slots. However, how to make the insertion of

words into that structure has a good sense indicates that it must take into account the knowledge of collocation. For example, “I took a cup of wine last night” doesn’t make sense in the native speakers’ ear if compared with the sentence “I took a glass of wine last night” that is far more common.

In Lewis’ view, learning collocations, the input components of grammaticalised lexis, is equal to language learning (Jeng Yih, 2008). He simply explains that collocation consists of two words which are linked together in the memory of native speakers and occur together with some frequency in both written and oral discourse (Aghbar, 1990). For example, *catch a cold* and *severe cold* are two commonly used word combinations that qualify as collocations. The verb *catch* and the adjective *severe* recurrently co-occur with the noun *cold*. In addition to that, many also believed that knowing a word includes knowing its collocations (Lewis, 2000; Nation, 1990, 2001). Many scholars, for example Aston, 1995; Fillmore, 1979; Kjellmer, 1991; Pawley & Syder, 1983, have maintained that collocation knowledge is one important factor that contributes to the differences between native speakers and foreign language learners. Particularly, failure to use collocations accurately for EFL learners is a major indicator of foreignness (McArthur, 1992; McCarthy, 1990; Nattinger, 1980; Wu, 1996). The strongest position held so far is that collocational competence is an indispensable component in the process of second/foreign language acquisition (Lewis, 1997, 2000; Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992; Richards & Rogers, 2001).

The relationship between collocation and the Language Proficiency (Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing) has been conducted by some researchers. For example, Zhang (Hsu and Chiu, 2008) was exploring the possible correlation between knowledge and use of English collocation and the quality of college freshmen’s writing. After Zhang,

Al-zahrani (Hsu and Chiu, 2008) further investigated the knowledge of English collocation and the participant's general language proficiency. Besides that, Sung (Hsu and Chiu, 2008) examined the knowledge and use of English lexical collocation in relation to speaking proficiency. To this point, the results of these study all showed positive correlations between learners' collocation knowledge and their language proficiency.

In addition to that, the study of knowledge of collocation has also been related to the effect of explicit collocation instruction on language skills. Some of them are which were conducted by Liu (Hsu and Chiu, 2008) who investigated the effect of collocation instruction on students' writing performance. After Liu, a teacher in a private Taiwanese University, Hsu (Hsu and Chiu, 2008) also conducted an intensive business English workshop to investigate whether collocation instruction would strengthen students' development of the knowledge and use of collocations, as well as promote language proficiency. Moreover, L. Hsu (Hsu and Chiu, 2008) studied the effects of explicit collocation instruction on EFL learners' listening comprehension.

Further, Lien (Hsu and Chiu, 2008) investigated the effects of collocation instruction especially on Reading Comprehension of 85 Taiwanese University students. Among these studies, the results generally showed that direct collocation instruction was positively correlated with and possibly improved EFL language learners' language performance as well as positively displayed learners' attitude toward collocation instruction.

The investigated study is about the correlation between the knowledge of collocation and reading comprehension. Since there has been the investigation that concerns with the effects of collocation instruction on reading comprehension in the Taiwanese setting (L. Hsu, 2003), it is worth noting that the present study, therefore, examines whether or not

Indonesian EFL learners' knowledge of lexical collocations is related to their reading comprehension without any instruction given to them. The reason is that it is worth to say that the participants in this study are not given the instruction beforehand in order to estimate their knowledge of collocation since they have experienced three years formal academic learning. The sample of the data will be English students of Indonesian University of Education.

1.2 Statements of the Problems

The problems to be discussed in this paper will be summarized in the following research questions:

1. What is the students' level of mastery of reading comprehension?
2. What is the students' level of lexical knowledge of collocations?
3. Is there any correlation between the students' mastery of reading comprehension and their lexical knowledge of collocation?

1.3 Aims of the Study

Given the research questions, the research paper is aimed at the following matters:

1. To investigate the students' level of mastery of reading comprehension.
2. To investigate the students' level of lexical knowledge of collocations.
3. To find out the correlation between the students' mastery of reading comprehension and their lexical knowledge of collocation.

1.4 Significance of the study

The problem to be considered in this paper is chosen due to several reasons. First, lexical competence especially that related to producing a large amount of vocabularies in

combination, called collocation, is a necessary element of communicative competence. Lexical competence therefore is very important for someone to communicate successfully and appropriately. In line with that, Sonaya stated (Taiwo, 2007) that lexical errors are perceived by native speakers as more serious because not having the ability to choose appropriate and accepted words will make the communication ineffective.

Second, reading is one of the essential skills in language and most of the information in the present day is written out (Maskar, 2008). For that reason, lexical knowledge must be considered essential to L2 learners (Taiwo, 2007). According to DeCaprio, learners should master the vocabularies earlier of at least two thousand words in combination (Keiko, 2007). Therefore, it can help EFL learners to a better understanding of language, specifically in comprehending reading text.

For that reason, it is essential to find out the correlation between lexical knowledge of collocation and reading comprehension and how the knowledge of collocation improves reading comprehension.

1.5 Scope of the Problem

The study specifically concerns on discovering the sixth semester English Literature Department Students' lexical knowledge of collocation and reading comprehension. Besides, the study wants to find out whether or not there is a significant correlation between reading comprehension and lexical knowledge of collocation.

1.6 Research Method

The study uses mixed forms of research design (Nunan, 1993: 6); specifically the exploratory-quantitative-statistical research design. It means that the study is non-

experimental in nature, while the type of data yielded by investigation is a quantitative one. In addition, the study is analyzed using a statistical analysis. In this case, the researcher will make claims about the population based on the data obtained from the sample of that population (Nunan, 1993: 28).

1.6.1 Population

Population can be defined as “a large ... group about which some information is desired” (Kranzler and Moursund, 1999: 77). In this study, the population is the characteristic of sixth semester English literature students of UPI in the mastery of reading comprehension and their collocation knowledge.

The following terms are the research procedures to be applied in this paper:

1.6.2 Sampling Technique

The sampling technique taken up in this paper uses purposive sampling. Arikunto (2002: 117) defines purposive sampling as a technique to get sample based on the purpose of the study with certain characteristics on its subjects. Accordingly, the subjects taken here are 30 students of English literature in the sixth semester. The sample is chosen for the following reason: firstly, the purpose of the study is to examine the correlation between lexical knowledge of collocations and their general reading comprehension, and secondly, with at least 6 semesters formal English training in the university, the students must have learned a certain number of collocations and would have had many opportunities to practice them.

1.6.3 Data Collection Procedures

The procedures to be used in this research are as follows:

1. Preparing the instrument

The first procedure is to prepare the instrument in collecting the data. Arikunto (2002) suggested that the instruments have two categories: test, and non-test. This study will use the test as the instrument. Since the study is about the correlation between collocational knowledge and reading comprehension, the test will comprise into two tests: collocation test and reading comprehension test. Collocation test will examine the mastery of students' knowledge of collocation and reading comprehension test assesses students' comprehension of reading as one of language skills. For both testing, there are some criteria in the following passage.

2. Trying out the instrument (validity and reliability)

To have the tests that are valid and reliable, the tests should complete the requirements of validity and reliability of measurements. In this case, the raw tests that have been made are assessed to the subjects that are not the participants of the study, but still they have the same criteria and the same level of knowledge by using the formula of *Pearson product-moment* and *Spearman-Brown*. After this process has been completed, the tests are ready for use to assess the target of the participants.

3. Testing the Participants

After the instrument have been checked its validity and reliability, then, it is handed in to the subjects being tested. The test will be done in two sessions: reading test and the test of collocation, both of them are held in one go. The reason for this is to

make the data valid and reliable, so that there will be no bother with the time that will affect the originality of the subjects' ability. It is in line with Arikunto (2002) who stated that the condition of the subjects being tested will be different because of the time.

4. Analyzing the data.

After applying the test, then the data is immediately collected and then analyzed. The next passage will explore some steps in analyzing the data.

1.6.4 Data Analysis

The analyzed data are adhered to the following steps:

1. The tests, including reading comprehension test and collocation test, are handed in to the students and then scored.
2. The process is continued to find out the normality of the two tests. In terms of simplicity, the computation uses SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) with the equations of *Kolmogorov-Smirnov* and *Shapiro-Wilk*. The results will be in two conditions: If the data is normally distributed, the calculation for the correlation uses parametric statistic (by using Pearson-product moment). However, if the data is not normally distributed, the computation of the correlation must use non-parametric statistic (by using Spearman Correlation for Ranked Data).
3. The process is continued by locating the level of the participants' mastery of reading comprehension and collocation knowledge. It is done by calculating the mean of each test, and the average score of each test will be found. In that case,

the students' mastery of each test will be known. Here are some formula for computing the mean of each tests:

$M_x = \frac{\sum x}{N}$	$M_x = \text{Mean } x \text{ (collocation knowledge)}$
	$M_y = \text{Mean } y \text{ (reading comprehension)}$
$M_y = \frac{\sum y}{N}$	$\sum x = \text{The sum of } x \text{ scores}$
	$\sum y = \text{The sum of } y \text{ scores}$
	$N = \text{The number of participants}$

4. After the values of mean of each variable have been found, the process goes on finding out the correlation between the two subjects. As stated before, the data will be computed based on kinds of normality of the data. If it is normally distributed, the computation employs *Pearson Product-Moment*. The formula is as follows:

$$r = \frac{N \sum XY - (\sum X)(\sum Y)}{\sqrt{[N \sum X^2 - (\sum X)^2][N \sum Y^2 - (\sum Y)^2]}}$$

r = Correlation coefficient	X and Y variables (variable X and variable Y)
N = The numbers of pairs of measurements.	\sum = Sum

Nevertheless, if the data are not normally distributed, the computation is supposed to use Spearman Correlation for Ranked Data. The formula will look like this.

$$r_s = 1 - \frac{6 \sum D^2}{n(n^2 - 1)}$$

Where:	D = The difference between each pair of ranks
	D^2 = The square of those differences
	n = The number of pairs of rankings

5. Then the analysis is carried out determining whether there is a correlation between the two tests or not. Although there is a correlation, it must be investigated further as to whether it is significant or not. The decision of whether it is significant or not is made by comparing the value r (correlation coefficient) or r_s with the level of correlation in *Pearson Correlation* (for the data that is normally distributed) or in *Spearman Correlation* (for the data that is not normally distributed). The level for the correlation will be .05. The value is common for use in social science.

6. The last, the process goes on at interpreting and discussing the findings and obtains the conclusion followed by the likely recommended suggestions.

1.7 Clarification of Terms

Collocational: consists of two words which are linked together in the memory of native speakers and occur together with some frequency in both written and oral discourse (Hsu and Chiu, 2008).

Comprehension: is defined as “power to understand something” (Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, 2003: 248). Reading comprehension,

accordingly, is an understanding of what is the text about through some process of reading method.

Correlation: is defined as a connection between two things in which one thing changes as the other does (Oxford Learners Dictionary, 2004: 94). In this case, It has an important assumption that one variable will go together with another variable. Therefore in this study, the correlation will be between learners' collocational knowledge and their reading comprehension.

Knowledge: is defined as "the facts, information, understanding and skills that a person has acquired through experience or education (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2003: 714). Knowledge of collocation therefore is knowledge of how the words go together naturally in the minds of native speaker.

Mastery: is defined as "complete knowledge or great skill" (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2003: 788). Mastery of collocation, therefore, would mean the knowledge of collocation as one aspect of lexical items that need to be comprehended for effective communication.

Reading: is defined as "the action of a person who reads" (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2003: 1053).

1.8 Organization of the Paper

This research will be presented in five chapters. Chapter One is the introduction that contains the background of the study, statements of the problem, aims of the study,

importance of the problems, limitation of the study, research method, clarification of terms, and organization of the paper. After that, Chapter Two provides theoretical foundation. It contains some theories related to make the research strong and reliable. The next is Chapter Three that describes the methodology employed in this research. In this section, methods to be employed are provided and explained as to the data collected. Chapter Four presents findings and discussions of the study. In the study, the result of the research is then displayed in this part including the analysis of the data, and the discussion. Finally, Chapter Five provides conclusions and suggestions for further research to be investigated.

