

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 The Background of the Study

English as an international language has a large vocabulary which often confuses students or readers in understanding the language. The size of the vocabulary in this language is larger than that of Indonesian language. As a result, those who want to study or master English should be familiar with the thousands of words available in its stock of lexicon. This is then a big challenge for students to understand the various texts written in English.

It is clear from the linguistic point of view that when the vocabulary of the English language is familiar to the students, then, the problems of comprehending the written texts will be solved to some extent. In addition to mastering the grammar which includes the sentence structures and pronunciation, the students are supposed to understand the various and rich meanings of words in the language. In its real number, there are over four million words in English as compared with the one hundred thousand words in Indonesian. The difference in the lexical number can cause many problems in understanding texts in English.

Part of the vocabulary in English is found in the formation of collocations. In fact, collocations have created confusion for Indonesian students because their

meanings are not achieved through translation. It is obvious that many students love translating words from English into Indonesian and vice versa. The results of the translation are not satisfactory and even funny in the sense that native speakers of English will not understand the translation of the collocations. For example, the collocation “take medicine” is equal to “minum obat” which, if translated into English, will produce “drink medicine”. This collocation is not acceptable because there is no such collocation in English. In other words, there are acceptable collocations in terms of the cultural understanding of the language.

The acceptable collocations can be found in various texts in English such as a magazine and books. Reader’s Digest is a popular, international magazine that can provide the rich texts with collocations. If the students can understand the feature stories and articles written in this magazine, it is obvious that they have grasped some understanding of the language. There can be many unfamiliar words or collocations that they should read in the process of understanding the texts. This magazine can be an ideal source of information for students who one day will read many kinds of texts in their university studies. Therefore, it is good for them to be familiar with the many collocations available in the magazine.

To be familiar with the forms of collocations, students must read a lot. The collocations are many in different textual backgrounds. There are collocations for general purpose which are called the fixed collocations or idioms. Other collocations are flexible in the sense that their formation follows certain cultural norms of the language.

It is difficult to determine the rules of the formation. However, there are certain forms or patterns of collocations already established by linguists. There are seven common patterns of collocation. Each of these forms may be more productive than the others. It is important to find out which pattern is dominant so that in the teaching or mastery of the vocabulary, students can easily choose which pattern to be recognized and developed.

To master a foreign language, of course, includes the mastery of its vocabulary. In this case, collocations are part of the major vocabulary that must be familiar to all students who want to master English for communication. In writing, for instance, they should often use collocations to show their native understanding of the language. In other words, collocations can be an indication of how well the students have mastered the language. If they translate the collocations from Indonesian into English, the results will be meaningless. When the students can use the appropriate collocations in expressing their ideas, thoughts and feelings, then, they are in the process of mastering the vocabulary of the language. They need to know the various patterns and be able to recognize them as they read various texts in English.

The writer has observed the use of collocations in various written texts in English. As they are very often used to express certain meanings, she believes that collocations must receive the wide attention of students who want to develop their vocabulary. English is rich in collocations. This fact must be taken into account when learning or teaching the language for its mastery. The formation of

collocations must be familiar to the students so that they can easily identify them and use them in writing.

### **1.2 The Problem of the Study**

Since this study is concerned with the formation of collocations, the problem or research question to be addressed would be:

- 1) What is the dominant collocation used in Reader's Digest ?
- 2) What is the contextual background of the collocations used in Reader's Digest?

### **1.3 The Scope of the Study**

This study is limited to the investigation of only 4 patterns of collocations namely 1) *Verb + Noun* (e.g. take medicine), 2) *Verb + Adverb/Adjective* (e.g. work hard ), 3) *Adverb + Adjective* (e.g. physically impossible, 4) *Determiner + Adjective + Noun* (e.g. a beautiful woman ). The other 3 patterns are 1) *Subject + Verb* (e.g. the bell sings), 2) *Count Noun + of + Mass Noun* (e.g. a loaf of bread), and 3) *Collective Noun + Count Noun* (e.g. a bunch of keys). Idioms will be also included in the investigation according to the given patterns.

#### **1.4 The Objective of the Study**

This study is aimed at describing and explaining the use of English collocations with their contextual backgrounds in Reader's Digest.

#### **1.5 The Significance of the Study**

The findings in this study will be useful for:

- 1) Those who teach a foreign language like English by comparing the formation of collocations between two languages.
- 2) Those who want to master the vocabulary of English as a foreign or international language.
- 3) Those who are interested in linguistics especially investigating the formation of collocations.

