CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of background of the study, problems of the study, objectives of the study, and definition of key terms.

1.1 Background of the Study

Many people assumed that adverbial is adverb and vice versa, however, that is not quite the truth. Adverbials differ from adverbs. Even if they have the same functions, that does not mean the two of them are the same thing. Strumpf (2004, p.133) assesses that an adverbial is without a doubt, an element of a sentence, which can be in the form of a word, phrase or clause, exists to modify, whereas an adverb is a type of word serves as a part of speech. Hence, an adverb may function as an adverbial, yet an adverbial is not necessarily an adverb. To ease the elaboration in the later chapter, the researcher uses degree adverbials to refer *very*, *really*, *quite*, and *pretty.*

Adverbials serve three specific functions. As Biber et al (2002, p.354) identify, they are to tell about the circumstances of the clause, to express the speaker's feeling on said clause, and to link the clause or some part of the clause with another clause. Consequently, three main classes of adverbial can be distinguished based on those functions, i.e. circumstance adverbial, stance adverbial, and linking adverbial. Those adverbial classes are then divided into some categories and subcategories, which function to answer several questions

regarding its sentence. According to Biber et al (2002, p.362), the most common adverbial class, circumstance adverbials, have seven categories under its wing. One of them is degree adverbial category. Degree adverbial is used in purpose to answer questions like 'how far/much/many?' and 'to what extent?' or simply to intensify a certain point in the clause. These degree adverbials seem to have the same functions and features as to what Quirk et al (1985) previously illustrated as intensifiers. Quirk et al (1985, p. 589) elaborate that intensifiers function to indicate a point on the intensity scale, which can be either high or low.

The category of degree adverbials is divided into more subcategories in accordance to their specific function. Biber et al (2002, p.366) state that the subcategories in question are amplifier and diminisher. Amplifier functions in purpose to strengthen the message in the clause or expresses a higher even an extreme scale of a certain point. On the other hand, diminisher is supposed to do the opposite, which is to reduce the strength of a claim in the clause or lowering the force of an item. These functions also applied for *very*, *really*, *quite*, and *pretty*, since the four of them are also included as degree adverbial. For example, in Blog Authorship Corpus, *very* is used as an amplifier in a context like 'I have a *very* good friend standing by my side'. In that context, the writer strengthens the quality of good. Whilst in the context, 'he is *quite* popular these days you know' diminisher *quite* is used to help the writer in lowering the quality of popular.

Based on those functions and illustrations of degree adverbials, there are many amplifiers and diminishers that can be used and often used interchangeably, making one assume that they are the same thing. However, several previous

pieces of research conducted by linguists actually suggested that every word has their own preferences in terms of collocation and semantic prosody. In one research, Partington (2004, p. 148) analyzed degree adverbials *utterly*, *totally*, *completely*, and *entirely*. The result shows that those degree adverbials are constantly followed by words like *oblivious*, *without¸ forgotten*, *different*, etc, which all describe the absence of a quality or a change of state. However, in this very same research, a different result comes up for the case of another degree adverbial, *thoroughly*. Despite being on the same page with the previous degree adverbials as it has a similar function as well as a similar sense of meaning, *thoroughly* is mostly followed by adjectives describing emotions or state of mind like *annoyed*, *enjoyed*, *happy*, *confused*, and so on.

Interestingly, in another research done by another linguist suggests that some amplifiers and diminishers often associated with either positive or negative preference. It is illustrated in the case of degree adverbial *utterly*. In his research, Louw (1993, p.160) found that *utterly* has a great negative preference or bad prosody as shown in the concordance drawn from 18 million words corpus at Cobuild. Displayed in its concordance lists, some words collocating with 'utterly' are *demolished*, *meaningless¸ stupid*, and *unreasonable.* These pieces of research implied that the analysis of degree adverbial could be based on its collocational preferences, motivating the researcher to conduct this research in order to identify its preferences, specifically its collocations and semantic prosody.

In this research, the researcher analyzed *very*, *really*, *quite*, and *pretty*. As the most common degree adverbials out of others, English writer often uses the

four of them interchangeably. Thus, their common occurrences make one hard to notice whether there is any specific tendency behind their usage or not. In addition, they do not bear a specific sense or meaning behind themselves to support their collocational tendencies as degree adverbials. Said specific sense can be seen from degree adverbials like *terribly* and *awfully* which hold a rather similar sense as "so as to cause terror or to make one shudder or tremble" according to Oxford English Dictionary (1989), as well as degree adverbials like *hardly* and *barely* which holds onto as "almost none" in Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (1978).

In conducting this research, the researcher used the aid of corpus. Corpus (plural: corpora) is a large chunk of any written text or transcribed speech, which can serve as a basis for linguistic analysis and description. Hence, a corpus study in linguistics, which is well known as corpus linguistics, is a method of analyzing language using a large collection of text stored in corpora. However, it has to be noted that corpus is different from text archive or text database. A corpus is a systematic, planned, and structured collection of text, while in contrast, text archive is huge, accidentally collected, and not structured. It is just as Leech (1991, cited in Kennedy 2004, p.4) suggested, "the difference between an archive and a corpus must be that the latter is designed or required for a particular 'representative' function".

Representative function means clear purposes. Throughout the years, corpus linguistics methods have been used for many purposes. Kennedy (2004, p.3) specifies that its functions are designed for either general descriptive

purposes or specialized purposes. One example for these purposes is by using corpus linguistics to define the collocations of the word and analyze the semantic prosodies like the one the researcher propose in this research. In which, is done by using the aid of corpus, analyzing the pattern which shown in the concordance lists, and determining the collocations of the word.

Collocation was first proposed by Firth (1957) decades ago before developing years after years by many other linguists. Sinclair (2003, p.171) defines it as 'a general term for two or more words occurring near each other in a text'. While semantic prosody is defined by Louw (1993, p.157) as "the consistent aura of meaning with which the form is imbued by its collocations". Later on, Stubbs (1995, p.253) then expands the notion of semantic prosody by claiming that words also can collocate with semantic sets, as well as with positive or negative grouping words. In other words, some certain seemingly neutral words may have either positive or negative association through frequent co-occurrences with particular collocates. That being said, the collocates of degree adverbials *very*, *really*, *quite*, and *pretty* in the chosen corpus will reveal the tendencies of their collocational preferences. Since Blog Authorship Corpus is a corpus consists of blog posts, correspondingly, the results may illustrate a little bit about the language used in blogs. In addition, as the researcher only focuses on the use of these four degree adverbials based on their collocational preferences, the social background of the writer in said corpus has no significance in the analysis.

Given these points, the researcher hopes that this study can be beneficial for the reader. Be it future researchers of English department who are interested in

doing research about collocation and semantic prosody or anyone else who is intrigued by how corpus linguistics work. This research can be an important addition to linguistics field by giving the reader a better understanding about these degree adverbials, particularly in their collocation and their semantic prosody. Finally, yet importantly, this research is expected to give the reader another perspective that the use of these degree adverbials may depend on their collocational preferences, which in some ways are found to be helpful for English teachers and learners in learning degree adverbials.

1.2 Problems of the Study

Based on the background of the study, the problems of the study proposed in this research are:

1. How does each of degree adverbial *very, really, quite,* and *pretty* collocate in Blog Authorship Corpus?

2. What is the semantic prosody of each degree adverbial *very, really, quite,* and *pretty* based on their collocations?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

In accordance with the problems of the study, the objectives of the study in this research are:

1. To identify how each of degree adverbials *very, really, quite,* and *pretty* collocates in Blog Authorship Corpus.

2. To figure out the semantic prosody of each degree adverbial *very, really, quite,* and *pretty* in Blog Authorship Corpus based on their collocations.

1.4 Definition of Key Terms

1. **Degree Adverbials** : An element of a sentence, which serve to provide answer to questions like 'how far/much/many?' and 'to what extent?'. (Biber et al, 2002)

2. **Semantic Prosody** : The collocational meaning that arise from the interaction between a given node and its typical collocates. (Xiao & McEnery, 2006)

3. **Collocation** : A general term for two or more words occurring near each other in a text. (Sinclair, 2003)

4. **Corpus-driven Approach** : A branch of corpus linguistics method whereby the corpus serves as an empirical basis from which lexicographers extract their data and detect linguistic phenomena without prior assumptions and expectations. (Tognini-Bonelli, 2001)

5. **Blog Authorship Corpus** : A corpus consists of the collected posts of bloggers gathered from blogger.com in August 2004. (Schler et al, 2006)