# CHAPTER II

# REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter consists of theoretical framework related to the research and review of several previous studies.

## 2.1 Degree Adverbial

Degree adverbial is one of the categories of circumstance adverbials. In the book Longman Student Grammar of Spoken and Written English, Biber et al (2002, p.362) divide circumstance adverbials into seven categories. As it is illustrated by Biber et al (2002, p.362), there are place, time, process, contingency, degree, addition/restriction, and recipient. Each category then falls into more subcategories which provide answers to particular questions. (see Figure 2.1)

| category | subcategories |
|---|---|
| place | distance, direction, position |
| time | point in time, duration, frequency, time relationship |
| process | manner, means, instrument, agent |
| contingency | cause/reason, purpose, concession, condition, result |
| degree | extent (amplifier, diminisher) |
| addition/restriction | addition, restriction |
| recipient | — |

**Figure 2.1 Biber et al's semantic categories of adverbial circumstances. (Source: Biber et al. 2002, p.362)**

This research is focused on the degree adverbials and its subcategories. As seen in Figure 2.1, degree adverbial category is divided into two subcategories to serve a function, in which, to answer 'how far/much/many?' or 'to what extent?'. Biber et al (2002, p.366) furthermore explain that degree adverbials which function to intensify or strengthen the message in the clause are called as amplifiers. On the

contrary, degree adverbials which exist to lower or reduce the strength of a claim are called as diminishers. There are many terms that can be applied to these two categories, Quirk et al (1987) define them as amplifiers and downtoners, while others would define them as reinforcers and attenuators. However, to ease the elaboration, the researcher will use the term of amplifiers and diminishers from this point on. Among many amplifiers and diminishers that exist and can be used interchangeably, those which become the focus of this research is *very, really, quite,* and *pretty*.

A further elaboration regarding these degree adverbials is explained by Paradis (1997). According to Paradis (1997, p.16), *very* is identified as one of the degree adverbials. In which, based on entries taken from Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary (henceforth COBUILD), have a maximizing sense, as in:

a. That's *very* nice of you.

Whereas *really* (in Paradis, 1997, p.19) is stated to be one of the degree adverbials which functions in a similar manner with *very*. Hence, it can be used in a context like:

b. She's a *really* bad actress.

On the other hand, the third degree adverbial, which is *quite,* is defined as one of the degree adverbials which included in more than one category. Paradis (1997, p.18) adds that *quite* is indeed a problematic word and more dependent on the adjective they combine with. It can indicate either a moderate degree or a maximum degree of something. Accordingly, she specifies that in becoming

amplifiers, *quite* would co-occur with either limit or extreme adjectives like the following example:

     c.  You're *quite* right.

While as a diminisher, *quite* would likely to co-occur with scalar adjectives, as in:

     d.  He was *quite* young.

For the final degree adverbial, *pretty,* Paradis (1997, p.28) places it in the same category with *quite* as diminisher. Besides, the entries taken from COBUILD indicate that *pretty* is synonymous with *fairly* and *kind of,* in which they have a similar manner to diminisher *quite.* It can be used in context as follow:

     a.  She is *pretty* good in writing.

## 2.2 Collocations

In analyzing the semantic prosody of a certain lexicon, ones have to see the collocational pattern. Stubbs (1995, p.1) explains the notion of collocations as "a relationship of habitual co-occurrence between words (lemmas or word-forms)". Later on, Sinclair (2003, p.171) echoes the view by describing it as a general term for the way in which two or more words are often being used at the same time, occurring near each other in the same context and the same texts. Hence, collocation is the relationship between two or more words which often appeared together in the same context.

The illustration of collocation can be seen in Partington's previous research. Partington (2004, p.147) elaborates that from his analysis using Cobuild corpus, maximizer *utterly* often appeared and used together with words which express either the sense of absence of a quality or change of state. Those words which

included in the former category are *helpless*, *useless*, *unable*, and *forgotten.* While words which included in the latter category are *changed* and *different*.

## 2.3 Semantic Prosody

The semantic prosody of a certain word can be seen from its collocations. The concept of semantic prosody has been elaborated by several notable linguists like Sinclair (1987), Louw (1993), Stubbs (1996), and Partington (1998). Sinclair (1987) first noticed the phenomenon of semantic prosody in the collocational behaviour of words, he found that some lexical items associated with others. Later, Louw (1993, p.157) introduced the notion to the public by defining it as "a consistent aura of meaning with which a form is imbued by its collocations". Another linguist, Stubbs (1996, p.176) emphasizes the semantic prosody as "a particular collocational phenomenon". Partington (1998, p.68) adds that what refers to the semantic prosody is "the spreading of connotational colouring beyond single word boundaries".

Based on those notions stated by several linguists, therefore, it can be concluded that semantic prosody is the atmosphere of a certain word which caused by the meaning of its collocations. Semantic prosody is described as two ideas accordingly to the semantic preference of the collocations of the given node. It is just as how Partington put it by stating:

> "One view would be that semantic prosody is a sub-category, or a special case, of semantic preference, to be reserved for instances where an item shows a preference to co-occur with items that can be described as bad, unfavourable or unpleasant, or as good, favourable or pleasant."
> ─ (2004, p.149)

In conclusion, if a certain word is often collocating with bad, unpleasant or unfavourable words, then its semantic prosody is unfavourable. On the contrary, if a certain word often collocates with good, favourable, and pleasant words, then its semantic prosody is favourable. Aside from unfavourable and favourable, there are cases where a certain word has a neutral semantic prosody. In this case, Partington (2004, p.136) assesses, if, in the context, the collocations are completely neutral, or the referent of the node was too general or indeterminate then the meaning would be labelled as neutral.

Following above categorization, on Partington's (1998, p.77) previous analysis, the word *impressive* mostly collocates with pleasant words like *achievement, best, talent, dignity, gains,* etc. Hence, the word *impressive* indicates to have a favourable semantic prosody. On the other hand, Partington (1998, p.67) found that the word *commit* indicates to have an unfavourable semantic prosody because its collocations are mostly unpleasant words like *offences, serious crime, foul,* etc. The example of neutral can be seen in Partington's (2004, p.136) case of *happened*. In his analysis, he found two excerpts which indicate that *happened* in the context have a neutral meaning. He claims that *happened* was neutral because of either what it refers to is completely neutral or its referent is too general to have any semantic colouring.

**2.4 Previous Studies**

There are two previous studies that motivate the researcher to conduct the present study. The first study is entitled "Semantic Prosody and Intensifier Variation in Academic Speech" conducted by Watcher (2012). She conducted this study in order to analyze the variation of adverbial intensifiers *very* and *really* in academic speech. She assumed that there are some possible factors which affect the use of *very* and *really* and she wanted to analyze which factor contributes the most to the variation of *very* and *really*. The data for the research was taken from Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English (MICASE). The result suggests that language-external factor of environment and possibly degree of formality is important in determining the variation used.

The second study that the researcher used for reference is entitled "A Corpus-based Study of Semantic Prosody Change: The Case of the Adverbial Intensifier" conducted by Zhang (2013). The study was conducted to analyze four adverbial intensifiers *terribly*, *awfully*, *horribly*, and *dreadfully*. Due to their negative tendencies, Zhang conducted this study to see whether there has been a change in their tendencies. The data for the research was taken from a synchronic and diachronic corpus of contemporary written and spoken texts retrieved from book sub-corpora of Bank of English containing texts from the 1980s on and Corpus of Late Modern English Texts (CLMETEV) which consists of texts from 1710 to 1920 respectively. The result indicates that indeed there are slight changes in their semantic prosody meanings. Negative meanings still dominate the four of them,

however, their percentage of positive meanings eventually increase after going through historical processes.

For the current study, the one corpus that the researcher used is Blog Authorship Corpus. The corpus consists of blog posts compilation, which is clearly different in genre from both previous studies. As for the analysis, instead of analyzing which factors determine the variation like how the first study was conducted, the current study is focused on how these chosen degree adverbials collocate in the corpus. That being said, the analysis is focused on their collocates as well as their pattern of co-occurrences based on said collocates. Furthermore, the current study also analyzes the four degree adverbials *very, really, quite,* and *pretty* closely to see their collocational preference and their semantic prosody. These degree adverbials are different from the second previous study *terribly*, *awfully*, *horribly*, and *dreadfully* in the sense that they bear no specific tendency due to their derivation.