CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background of the Research

As a functor word, preposition holds an important role to construct phrase and sentences together. Preposition is the crucial point in the sentence since it used together with other word classes to create such concrete meaning. It used in front of nouns or noun phrases, pronouns or gerunds to express a relationship between one person, thing, event, and another (Alexander: 1988). Prepositions are a kind of small word and cannot stand alone in the sentences. They may or may not need an object in the form of word or phrase to represent a meaning.

Morley (2000) states that prepositions have the feature of being accompanied, indeed normally followed, by a completive element in the form of a (single or multiple word) phrase or a clause. This completive element can be noun phrase, adjective phrase, adverbial phrase, further prepositional phrase, subordinate clause, pronoun, and gerund. The combination of preposition and those completive elements form a prepositional phrase. Prepositional phrase comprises a preposition as the headword plus a second, complement or completive element which is integral to the structure of the phrase (Morley: 2000).

Quirk and Greenbaum (1973) state that most of the common English prepositions, such as *at, in,* and *for*, are simple, i.e. consist of one word. Other prepositions, consisting of more than one word, are called complex e.g. *apart from,*

out of, owing to, together with, except for, because of, instead of, in view of, in addition to, in spite of, on behalf of (Morley: 2000).

Those various form of prepositions are changing over the time and it makes either ESL (English Second Language) or EFL (English Foreign Language) learners are still confused in determining the correct preposition. Although they have achieved a high level of proficiency in English, they still get difficulty to study even memorize it. There are some causes that make learners have difficulty in understanding preposition such as: many English prepositions have nearly the same meaning: e.g. *beside, by near, next to,* or: *above, on top of, over,* many of the words described as prepositions can also used as other parts of speech and it make ambiguous in interpreting meaning, as exemplified in this sentence: *She **swept off** the stage departed majestically*. This sentence can have either of two meanings, depending on whether *off* is analyzed as part of the particle *swept off* which means 'cleaned', or is a preposition heading a prepositional phrase *off the stage*.

Besides, Boquist (2009) added that "certain prepositions can be applied in one form, but not another". For instance: *class can meet **on** Tuesday **at** 7:40*, but it cannot *meet **at** Tuesday **on** 7:40*. Additionally, one could leave out the preposition *on* from this phrase, but could not omit *at* (*class will meet Tuesday **at** 7:40*). Similarly, *I can meet you **in** but not **on** the house*, while *I can meet you **on** the corner*, but not ***in*** it. With these spatial examples, if you do tell someone you will meet him or her *on* the house; he or she will expect to find you on the roof. If you tell someone to meet you in the corner, he or she might assume you are in time-out in the corner of a room. *On*

is a rather tricky preposition. We can say, "*Be **on** time*" but we cannot say, "*Arrive **on** 3:00*." We can say "*Christmas is **on** December 25th*" but we cannot say, "*Christmas is **on** December.*" We can say "*On Friday*" but not "*On the morning*." In all of these cases, *on* is substituted with *in* or *at*. It would be nice if we could say that the three words are on a continuum, such as *in* is the most specific and *on* is the most general (Boquist: 2009).

Some prepositions (e.g. *at*) also perform different functions – for example, they express relationships in time *(at six o'clock),* space *(at the bank)* and other relationships as well (Alexander: 1988) – because they do not have a neat set of rules governing their use. These rules are often complex, and may not be able to ensure accuracy (Wahlen: 2001). On the other hand, Evans and Tyler (2005) point out that "each culture will take a certain traditional view of the image. The way a culture views that scene will determine the way it expressed in the language". So, culture and language of that culture determines which preposition to use and how to use it. If two cultures/languages view a scene from different angles, they will use different prepositions.

From some causes above, the writer interested in analyzing those various and ambiguous prepositions to find out distinction of using and meaning of preposition. Therefore, the writer chooses personal essay in Reader's Digest as source of data. Personal essay is one of various columns in Reader's Digest which has free style writing, full of idiomatic expressions, and certainly has a lot of prepositions – either transitive (take an object) or intransitive (do not take an object). Nordquist (2015)

added that personal essay is a short work of autobiographical nonfiction characterized by a sense of intimacy and a conversational manner.

1.2   Identification of the Problem

In this research, the writer focuses on two points as reflected in these following questions:

1. What are the forms and functions of prepositional phrase in personal essay columns in Reader's Digest syntactically and semantically?

2. How to sort prepositional phrase in a clause of personal essay columns in Reader's Digest?

1.3   Objectives of the Research

This research aimed to:

1. Sketch out some forms and functions of prepositional phrase in personal essay columns in Reader's Digest both in syntactic and semantic, then

2. Describe the resolution of prepositional phrase in a clause of personal essay columns in Reader's Digest.

1.4   Scope of the Research

This research was focused on the form, function and word meaning of prepositional phrase as found in personal essay columns in Reader's Digest. Form of prepositional phrase was analyzed using Morley theory, while in analyzing the function of prepositional phrase the writer adopted Quirk and Greenbaum theory, then for the primary study that is word meaning or semantic representation the writer refers to Tyler and Evans' point of view. Interestingly, in their book *The Semantic of*

English Prepositions, Tyler and Evans used the term spatial particle to subsume a number of formal distinctions characterized by prepositions, verb-particle constructions (VPCs or phrasal verbs), adpreps, and particle prefixes. However, from those spatial particle's forms, the writer restricted this research only on the semantic representation of preposition proposed by Tyler and Evans.

1.5 Method of the Research

1.5.1 Population and Sample

As Sudaryanto (1988: 21) said that population is the whole of data - whether it is chosen as sample or not- found by the writer in the source of data, while sample is a part of population which is chosen to represent the population as the data of the research. The data of this research is prepositional phrase found in three personal essays in Reader's Digest and the sample of this research consisting of preposition as the object of research plus noun phrase.

1.5.2 Source of Data

The written data were taken from American magazine namely Reader's Digest published monthly. This magazine borrowed from American Corner library in Andalas University. This magazine contains several passages in various columns such as cover story, national interest, science, personal essay, reader favorites, art of living, and so on. In this research, the writer only focuses on the personal essay columns which have free style writing, a lot of prepositions, and full of idiomatic expression.

This essay was derived from June until September 2015 edition where July and August edition were combined in one magazine. Each essay was written by different author in various word lengths. June edition (*Bit by the Fitbit)* written by David Sedaris into 1.595 words, July/August edition (*Give a Girl a Fish*) written by Vicki Glembocki into 700 words, and Gary Soto wrote *The Plot Thickens* into 747 words in September 2015.

Sudaryanto (1988:10) formulates data formation as shown below:

$$\mathbf{D} \quad = \quad \mathbf{G + C}$$

D denotes Data, G stands for Gegestand or object of research and C stands for Context. Gegestand in this research is prepositional phrase along its completive element; generally NP whereas the context of this research is simple clause belongs to the category of preposition along with its completive element. Preposition and its completive element (NP) will determine whether that prepositions belong to transitive (take an object) or intransitive (do not take an object).

1.5.3 Research Procedure

In conducting this research, the writer applied three research procedures based on Sudaryanto's (1988) point of view. The procedures are collecting data, analyzing data and presenting the result by delivering the analysis both formal and informal way.

Dealing with this thesis, the writer collects the data from three personal essays in Reader's Digest magazine using non-participant observation and note taking techniques (Sudaryanto, 1993). In non-participant observation technique, the writer

reed only on the personal essay at least three times (skimming, understanding the story, and underlining the preposition and its completive element). By using note taking technique the writer copy paste and re-type just part of clause along with its preposition then bold only on prepositional phrase constituent.

After that, in analyzing data, the writer sorted the constituent using labeled bracketing system proposed by Radford and describes the meaning of the constituent. Radford (2009) defined labeled bracketing as a technique for representing the categorical status of an expression, whereby the expression is enclosed within a pair of square brackets, and the left hand bracket is labeled with an appropriate category symbol – e.g. [$_D$ the] to indicate what category the word belongs to, as exemplified below:

... stash my haul [$_P$ on] [$_{NP}$ a bookshelf].

The words in bold bracket are prepositional phrase consists of P (on) + NP (a bookshelf). Preposition *on* denoting place where the haul is saved by the writer (in the sentence) and *a bookshelf* is a completive element (object) of that sentence.

Finally, in presenting the result of analysis, the writer used formal and informal method. As Sudaryanto (1993) said that formal method is used to represent an artificial language (sign and symbol) while informal method is used to represent a natural language. In this case, the writer uses formal method to spells out the data in form of labeled bracketing, table, and picture, and then interprets the meaning of prepositional phrases by using informal method.