

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

English is a foreign language that becomes a compulsory subject in most schools and the learners are concerned with some variables that influence their capability in learning English. There are four skills in English that should be studied. They are: listening, speaking, writing, and reading, but those skills will not be perfect if they are not supported by solid structure mastery. The most effective way of using the right English especially in writing and speaking is by paying attention to the use of grammar.

This study deals with English prepositional phrases. A prepositional phrase is defined as a group of words consisting of a preposition and its object, including any modifiers of that object (Brown et al, 1984:46). It begins with a preposition and ends with a noun or pronoun as the object of the preposition. The object is most typically in the form of noun phrase. Due to its function, a prepositional phrase may serve as modifiers of noun, of verb, of adjective, of adverb, and of other prepositions. Besides it may also serve as subject complement and object complement in a larger construction.

Prepositional phrase is one of variables of grammar. Prepositional phrases in their distribution may be of various functions. The functions of prepositional phrases have close relationship with the elements which characterize these prepositional phrases in the structure of a sentence. Consequently, the Indonesian

equivalents of prepositional phrases are determined by those functions which they serve in the sentence. The following examples may clarify the discussion:

1. Our work *in science* covers many things. (Yates, 1968: 219)
2. Someone *in this room* is responsible. (Mifflin, 1983: 316)
3. I wrote *for information*. (Yates, 1968: 431)
4. The children were tired *from the game*. (John, 1968: 221)
5. The tour guide led the visitors down *to the lowest deck*.  
(Brown, 1984: 47)
6. She was *in tears*. (Frank, 1972: 191)

The prepositional phrase *in science* in the first sentence is a modifier. It modifies the noun phrase *our work*. Consequently, it functions as an adjective. In the second sentence, prepositional phrase *in this room* is also a modifier. It modifies the pronoun *someone*. In this case, *someone* is an indefinite pronoun. So, it functions as an adjective. Prepositional phrase *for information* functions as a modifier in the third sentence. It modifies the verb *wrote*. So, it is an adverb. The prepositional phrase *from the game* in the fourth sentence is a modifier. It modifies the adjective *tired*. The prepositional phrase *from the game* functions as an adverb. While, in the fifth sentence, the prepositional phrase *to the lowest deck* is a modifier. It modifies the adverb *down*. So, it classified as an adverb. Functionally, the prepositional phrase *in tears* is a complement in the sixth

sentence. It describes the subject *she*. Consequently, the prepositional phrase *in tears* functions as a subjective complement.

The prepositional phrases which occur in those six sentences are totally different. They are different in function. The prepositional phrases in the sentence (1) and (2) function as an adjective because it modifies noun and pronoun respectively. In the sentences (3), (4), (5), the prepositional phrases have adverbial function because they modify a verb, an adjective, and an adverb respectively. While, in the sentence (6), the prepositional phrase functions as a subjective complement.

These proofs stimulate the writer to conduct some research on the functions of prepositional phrases and to find out their equivalents in Indonesian.

## **1.2 The Reason of Choosing the Topic**

The use of prepositional phrases and their equivalence in Indonesian is chosen as the topic of the discussion in this research because the learners of English often face the difficulty in comprehending prepositional phrases. Furthermore, the writer himself also finds that the use of prepositional phrases has so many complicated problems, such as their functions and their equivalents in Indonesian. Understanding those problems, the writer wants to analyze the prepositional phrases deeply in order to get detailed information.

### **1.3 The Statement of the Problem**

Concerning the topic of the study, the researcher formulates two problems to discuss:

1. What functions do the English prepositional phrases serve?
2. What are the similarities and differences and their equivalents of those prepositional phrases in Indonesian?

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

In line with the problems stated above, this research aims to answer the two questions:

1. To determine the functions of the prepositional phrases.
2. To describe the similarities and the differences and the equivalents of those prepositional phrases in Indonesian.

### **1.5 The Scope of the Problem**

It is very important to limit the scope of the problem in this study in order to get detailed understanding about prepositional phrases in English sentences. We know that a phrase may be in the form of infinitive phrase, gerund phrase, participle phrase, verb phrase, adjective phrase, adverb phrase, noun phrase, prepositional phrase, and appositive phrase. But this study would analyze prepositional phrases only. Prepositional phrases here are discussed from their functions in sentences such as, adjective and adverb as well as their equivalents in Indonesian.

### **1.6 The Significance of the Study**

It is hoped that the result of this study may contribute something valuable for the readers especially those who are interested in English prepositional phrases. To be more specifically, it is beneficial for the readers since it may stimulate them to observe prepositions more comprehensively. In addition, it may encourage other researchers to do a further research on this topic.

### **1.7 The Meaning of Key Terms**

1. **Preposition.** It is a word that expresses a relationship between a noun or a pronoun and another word in a sentence. (Brown, 1984:26)
2. **Phrase.** It is a group of two or more related words not containing a subject and predicate.(Opdycke,1982:232)
3. **Prepositional Phrase.** It is a preposition and its object, with or without modifiers.(John and Yates, 1968:444)
4. **Function.** It is the relationship between a linguistic form and other parts of the linguistic pattern or system in which it is used.(Crystal, 1980:155)
5. **Equivalent.** It refers to the fidelity of the source language text to target language text. (Nida and Taber, 1974: 12)
6. **Newsweek.** It is one of English magazines weekly published by Newsweek Inc.