CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides the basic idea which is related to the introduction of the study. It presents background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation, and definition of the key terms.

1.1 Background of the Study

English is one of international languages to communicate in this world. It becomes the first foreign language in Indonesia. By language, people can interact and share their knowledge, feeling, emotion, and build the relationship with other nations. Brown (2000:5) declares that language is a system arbitrary conventionalized vocal, written, or gesture symbols that enable members of given community to communicate intelligibly with one another. Therefore, learning English is important for the students, the government stated that it had been taught to all the student’s level from elementary school up to university. Students have to learn English component such as vocabulary, pronunciation, spelling, grammar. Besides, the students have to master 4 English skills, such as; listening, reading, speaking, and also writing.

In listening, the listeners are not only recognizing the sound. They have to focus on the person’s speaking and must respond to the questions and directions.
Reading as the second skill mentioned is a process of constructing meaning from written text which makes readers accept a lot of information and knowledge. The third skill is speaking which becomes one of the productive skills in learning English.

Speaking is a productive skill which makes the learners understand how to produce specific points of language such as grammar, pronunciation, or vocabulary in oral ways (Burns and Joyce, 1997). It means that speaking is an ability to express messages and to deliver ideas in order to provide understandable information to the listeners.

Writing the last skill mentioned, is a process of exploring ideas to share with the readers through written language. Leki (1998:3) stated that writing is communicating. Good writing helps your reader understand your ideas as clearly as possible. It means that readers cannot understand what the author’s idea if writer cannot provide a clear writing products.

That it is important to note that writing is a process, not a product. It means that writing is not easy (Oshima and Hogue, 1999:3). It required study and practice to develop this skill. So that, writing is considered as the most difficult skill to learn because the learners not only write what they feel but also need to convey a message to the reader. Based on the daily class activities and the researcher experience, one of the difficulties in writing is no one checking the writing products in detail. It makes the learners cannot understand what are the mistakes they have done.
Consequently, since the learning of writing is not easy, teachers are demanded to understand and eradicate the problems occurred in the learning and teaching activity of writing. They should train and develop their knowledge in order to find the way of helping to solve their students’ difficulties. A trained teacher also will understand their each student’s needs. According to Coffield, (2004) if the teachers want to reach a success in both improving their students’ performance and solving their students’ difficulties, they will pay attention to the individual necessities. Therefore, Instructors need to choose the most appropriate method, deliver the lessons effectively, concern of students’ academic development, and try to match the teaching activity with students’ needs in order to achieve the goal of the teaching and learning activity.

Identifying students’ needs means detecting their characteristic and their preference in learning that is called style. According to Herod (2004), Learning styles are the ways the person takes in, understands, expresses, and remembers information. Another definition states, ‘Learning style is the biologically and developmentally imposed set of characteristics that make the same teaching method wonderful for some and terrible for others’ (Oxford, 2003:2). Every student has his or her own style in taking and processing the information. Students will choose their own learning style since it makes them enjoy and easy to gain and process the subject given. Not all of the teaching activities that are given by the instructors will be compatible for all students. Therefore, it is necessity for educators to recognize their each student’s learning style in order to avoid the mismatch between themselves and the students in the class.
Students with low achievement can be categorizing as low achievers. Low achievers are students who have limited abilities due to different reasons in the education process (Bakr, 2011). Occasionally, students with low achievement do not perform well in the classroom and do not get an achievement as expected by the teacher. In this case, they cannot achieve the minimum standard of scores. Sometimes it is due to their life background, environment, illiterate parents, being avoided by the parents in early childhood, and inadequate teachers.

A recent research on students’ learning styles done by Aminah (2012) entitled “A Study of Learning Style of English Department Student Academic Year 2008/2009 at University of Muhammadiyah Malang” found that the students mostly applied a visual style (63%) in learning English. Kurniawati (2008) “A Study on the Students Learning Style in learning English at SMA NEGERI 1 Kawedanan, Magetan” found that the most dominant learning style in learning English at SMA Negeri 1 Kawedanan Magetan, was the auditory learning style. Based on the statements above, it can be concluded that students’ difficulties, students’ achievement, and students’ learning styles have a positive correlation with what the teachers do in the class. Learning styles take the important role in successful learning and teaching since they are the preferable ways for students to accept the information easily. Hence, the researcher is interested in doing the investigation of low achiever students’ learning styles in writing class of English department of University of Muhammadiyah Malang.

Finally after this study is completed the writer hopes that the students will take advantages from this research finding. At least if the students intimate with
their own learning style will understand the strength and weakness of their style. And then balance it by trying other style or set some strategies or tools that the goal of learning will gained. Furthermore it can be meaningful for the next period study in college.

1.2 Statement of the Problems

The problems of this research are formulated as follows:

1. What are learning styles used by the low achievers in Writing class at English department of University of Muhammadiyah Malang?
2. What are the problems faced by the low achievers’ in applying their learning style in Writing class at English department of University of Muhammadiyah Malang?
3. How do the low achievers’ solve their problems in applying their learning styles in Writing class at English department of University of Muhammadiyah Malang?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

Related to the statement of the problems, the purposes of this research are stated as follows:

1. To investigate the learning styles used by the low achievers in writing class at English department of University of Muhammadiyah Malang.
2. To investigate the low achievers’ problems in applying their learning style in writing class at English department of University of Muhammadiyah Malang.
3. To investigate the low achievers’ solutions with their problems in applying their learning style in writing class at English department of University of Muhammadiyah Malang.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The result of this research is hoped to give a contribution for both teachers and students in relation to the teaching learning process of writing class. For the teachers, by knowing the learning styles of their students who have low achievement in writing, they can select appropriate or more effective strategies for the teaching and learning process. Consequently, teachers can take the right stages in helping and curing their students’ problems by adapting student’s preferences in studying.

For the students, it is hoped that they can identify their strengths and weaknesses in studying writing by knowing their learning styles. Then, they can adapt it with their learning strategies in order to be successful in learning Writing. In addition, the result of this research will be useful for academic reference especially for the next researchers.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

The scope of this research is focused on the analysis of learning styles, the students’ problems and their solutions of the problems in applying their learning styles in writing class at English Department of University of Muhammadiyah
Malang. It is limited on the students Writing II class I at English Department of University of Muhammadiyah Malang.

1.6 Definition of the Key Terms

1. **Problem** is a difficulty to understand or deal with something. (Oxford, 2010:350)

2. **Learning styles** are not abilities; rather, they are preference in how people use their abilities (Santrock, 2001). Learning styles are the students approach in taking and gathering the information based on their like and preferences.

3. **Low achievers** are those students who have limited abilities due to different reasons in the education process. Sometimes it is due to their life background, illiterate parents, environment, being avoided by the parents in early childhood, and inadequate teachers (Bakr, 2011). **Low achievers** can be determined as the students who reported a score 60 below (McCoach, 2001). In this research, students who get the score 60 or below based on the structure assessment are categorized as low achiever students.