CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, the scope and limitation, and the definition of the key term.

1.1 Background of Study

Language is important in human life as a means to express the ideas in a social communication. People use language to share ideas, to express the feelings, and to communicate with other people. The information can be transferred through spoken or written language or even gestures. Callander and Lindy (2010) stated that language is a systematic use of symbols to enable us to communicate meaning to one another. Moreover, facial expressions, body languages, gestures, and vocalizations contribute significantly to communication. As a medium of expressing the ideas and feelings, language has very close relationship with culture.

Culture cannot be separated from the society. Culture is the identity of a particular group. The word culture has many definitions. It refers to an art, belief, behaviors, race, ritual, tradition, etc. According to Matsumoto (1996: 16), “Culture as the set of attitudes, values, belief, and behaviors shared by a group of people, but different for each individual, communicated from one generation to the next.” It means culture is all of things or activities done by a group of people inherited from generation to generation.

This definition is almost similar to the definition stated by Samovar and Richard (2001: 49), but in different way. They said that culture is shared learned
behavior which is transmitted from one generation to another with the purpose of promoting individual and social survival, adaptation, growth, and development. It means culture teaches us how to behave and how to interact in a group. Learning culture can help us to adapt and survive in our environment. Further, culture is a symbol of regionalism that has significance for the owner. It can be defined that culture is the “identity” of a particular group. Culture and language had relationship each other. Language, which is used in society also reflects the culture of the society. Every society has different culture. So, the using of language is different too.

In using language, people sometimes use body languages as a means of communication. Body language could be applied in any communication, whether it is conversation, drama, theater, or even dance. Body language in dance is about the whole body speaks. Body language is non-verbal movements as a part of how we communicate.

Gesture refers to specific body languages that carry meaning. As Pease (1988) said, gesture is like a single word and a word may have several different meanings. According to Samovar and Richad (2001: 175), “Gesture can communicate different meanings from culture to culture.” It means, one gesture has different meaning in different country. For example, the way someone say “OK”. In United Stated, people say the word “OK” by making a circle with one’s thumb in index finger while extending the others. But it has different meaning in Japan in Korea; it signifies money (okane). While in Mexico and Germany, and to the Tunisian this gesture has a vulgar meaning. Its means “I’ll kill you”.
Gesture is also a symbol; between gesture and symbols are related to each other. According to Pease (1988: 13), “Gesture comes in ‘sentences’ and invariably tells the truth about a person’s feelings or attitudes.” Symbol is something like a thing, a sign, or a word that is spoken or through movement to convey a meaning. According to Kottak (1991: 40), “A symbol is something verbal or non-verbal, within a particular language or culture that comes to stand for something else.” So, a symbol is difficult to understand, because it has various meanings and connotations. It will have a meaning through the agreement of the society as the user.

Symbol can be found in traditional dances. It can be seen from the movements that each of those has meaning. For example, there are several symbols used in some dances, such as symbols of clothes, offerings, and gestures. Each dance has different symbol like symbols found in Javanese traditional dance. Javanese traditional dance is one of dances that involve body language through the movement. It is also a culture in Java which is part of Indonesia, it develops from the past to the present that reflects Javanese daily life.

Javanese traditional dance involves by the movement of all parts of the body that have meaning. It is considered a legacy of Java community. In the past time, particularly in East Java, the dance was performed in the palace by people who have been associated with the royal family. It served as a means of ceremonies, for example, to celebrate important events. Now, Javanese traditional dance is performed on stage but the movements still convey the message. According to Brakel and Papenhuyzen (1995), traditional Javanese dance or
usually called as classical dance is a medium for expressing ideas, values, and problems which are shared by the Javanese as a group of people.

One of the traditional dances of Java is Gandrung dance. Gandrung comes from the word “Gandrung”, which means “crazy” or “love all-out” in Javanese. According to Dariharto (2009), Gandrung Javanese traditional dance is a kind of dance dominated by the typical of Banyuwangi region located at the eastern tip of Java Island, and it becomes the identity of the region. Therefore, Banyuwangi is also called Gandrung City.

Related to the analysis of gesture on traditional dance, there was a research conducted by Christina (1999) entitled Body Language in Gambyong and Srimpi as the Javanese traditional dances, it was found that those dances have meaning in each movement. The result of Christina’s study showed that there were several of body languages in the Gambyong and Srimpi dances. In Gambyong dance there were Srisig or Trisik, Ulap-Ulap or Ulat-Ulatan, Ngroe Remo, and Laku Telu. In Srimpi dance there were Sembahan or Mangenjali, Laras, Srisig or Sirig, Sawega, and Nancap.

Regarding to the explanation above, the writer intends to investigate the Gandrung Javanese traditional dance, especially the gestures used by the dancer in Gandrung Javanese traditional dance. The writer is interested to analyze this study because not all of Banyuwangi society knows the meaning of the gestures used by the dancer in Gandrung Javanese traditional dance. So, it is very important to show to all of society what the meanings of each gestures used by the dancer in Gandrung Javanese traditional dance.
1.2 Statement of Problems

Based on the background of the study, the writer has two problems that are formulated in the following questions:

1. What kind of gestures are used by the dancer in Gandrung Javanese traditional dance?
2. What are the meanings of the gestures used by the dancer in Gandrung Javanese traditional dance?

1.3 Purpose of Study

In general, the purpose of the study is to understand the meaning of the gestures used by the dancer in Gandrung Javanese traditional dance. While the specific purpose of the study are:

1. To describe the gestures used by the dancer in Gandrung Javanese traditional dance.
2. To describe the meanings of the gestures used by the dancer in Gandrung Javanese traditional dance.

1.4 Significance of Study

The result of the study is expected to give contribution for:

1. English Department Students
   The result of this study can be used as one of references when they conduct the research related to Linguistics.
2. The reader
   The reader will get a clear description and explanation about the meaning of gesture used by the dancer in Gandrung Javanese traditional dance.
3. The next researcher

The result of this present study can be used by English Department students who want to analyze gestures in different dance, it also can be inspiring study.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

This study is focused on the three steps of gesture used by the dancer in Gandrong Javanese traditional dance. The first step is *jejer*, the second is *ngibing*, and the last is *seblang subuh*. Arts performance Gandrong Javanese traditional dance always starts after the implementation of prayers Isya' and to be completed before the dawn so as not offend the implementation of worship for Muslims. Therefore, in this study, the writer limits on the first step that is *jejer*.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

The definition of key terms given in this study aims to avoid misconceptions used. The term which are necessary to be defined are as follows:

1. **Gesture** is a form of non-verbal communication made with a part of the body, and used instead of verbal communication (or in combination with it) (WordIQ.com: 2010).

2. **Symbol** is something verbal or nonverbal, within a particular language or culture that comes to stand for something else (Kottak: 1991).

3. **Traditional Javanese dance** or usually call by classical dance is a medium for expressing ideas, values, and problem which are shared by the Javanese as a group of people (Brakel and Papenhuyen: 1995).

4. **Gandrong Javanese traditional dance** is a kind of dance that is dominated by the typical of Banyuwangi region located at the eastern tip
of Java Island, and it became the identity of the region. It has three steps of
gesture used by the dancer in Gandrung Javanese traditional dance. The
first step is *jejer*, the second is *ngibing*, and the last is *seblang subuh*
(Dariharto: 2009).

5. *Jejer* is the first step in *Gandrung* Javanese traditional dance. It is an
opening dance. *Jejer* means begin which indicates that art performance
activity is started (Dariharto: 2009).