CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents about: background of the study, statement of the problems, purposes of the study, significances of the study, scope and limitation and also definition of key terms. Each section is presented as follows:

1.1. Background of Study

English is a foreign language that should be learned by students from primary school until university. Not only in Indonesia, English has big advantages to learners in the whole world. It happens because English is an international language that is used as formal or informal communication in the world. So, English is a subject which is taught in the school’s curriculum in schools in many countries.

English which is taught in Indonesian schools has four skills, which are listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Listening and reading belong to passive skill, because these skills just involve understanding words or sentences or item recognition. Whereas, speaking and writing belong to active skills, because these skills are included in productive skills.

In this case, productive skill has important role in teaching learning activity. By applying productive skill, students can improve their English more active. In especially writing skill, this skill can improve all students’ ability such as grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, syntax, word choice, etc. Raimes
(1983:6, in Anchalee and Pongrat, 2008) identified the different components for producing a clear, fluent, and effective piece of writing: content, the writer’s process, audience, purpose, word choice, organization, mechanics, grammar, and syntax. In addition, correct language, punctuation mechanics, and logical content are considered important to communicate in written work. So, writing is included in complex skill because it consists of some abilities that should be mastered by students at the same time.

The complexity of writing often leads some students to make some errors in making written work. White and Arndt (1991, in Zainudin, 2004) argue that writing is far from being a simple matter of transcribing language into written symbols. Writing is a thinking process in its own right and certainly needs a great intellectual effort which usually takes place a considerable period of time. Because writing is complex language skill, the error level in making written work is very high. Meanwhile, the meaning of the error itself is a systematic deviation that happens when a learner has not learnt something and consistently ‘gets it wrong’ (Norrish, 1983, in Anchalee and Pongrat, 2008).

Furthermore, the most dominant errors made by students are making an essay. Essay is a written work that consists of some paragraphs, namely, introduction, body, and conclusion paragraph (Hogue: 2007). Essay is a complicated composition because essay should have coherence and unity in each paragraph. Students should choose the spatial order to make each paragraph united and coherent. Then, they should organize the paragraph into three parts namely, introduction, body, and conclusion paragraph. Each paragraph has rules. The
introduction paragraph should have general and thesis statement; body paragraph should have main topic sentence and supporting sentence; and conclusion paragraph should have summaries of the whole of the paragraphs.

To avoid some errors in making an essay, teacher should have technique to teach the students. For the example, the teacher begins to ask the student to make an essay outlining or essay planning in order to make their essay coherent and united in each paragraph before they write their essay. After that, to minimize those errors, teacher can ask the students to do self editing and then peer editing. It has advantages to add student’s knowledge about the element of essay.

In this study, the researcher just focuses on errors on the descriptive essay written by the sixth semester students at the English Department of University of Muhammadiyah Malang. The researcher chooses descriptive essay because descriptive essay is complicated and most students often make errors. It is because writing descriptive essay needs more concentration, and it requires the students to combine their five senses to work together. Students should have the ability to write the condition of something, and it should be well organized, because they should make the reader not confused with their essay, and really imagine that thing to be described.

There are three descriptive strategies to make a wonderful descriptive essay: namely strategies-naming, detailing, and comparing.

Naming as purpose to divide the thing into the concrete or abstract thing. In looking for the right word to name something, you can usually choose from a variety of words. Some words may be concrete (referring to tangible objects
or actual instances), while other are abstract (referring to ideas or qualities). And then for detailing, it has purpose to make the thing more specific. Although nouns can be quite specific, adding details is a way of making them more specific, and thus describing something more precisely. And for comparing has purpose to make the thing or object more evocative. Comparison makes language even more precise and description more evocative (Axelrod and Chooper, 1991).

In descriptive essay, the student should explain the object clearly such as, how the object looks, feels, smells, tastes, and sounds. Descriptive essay is an essay that tells how something looks, feels, smells, tastes, and sounds (Hogue: 2007). So, to write descriptive essay the students should use their five senses, such as, the sense of sights, smells, touches, and tastes. If there are three basic descriptive strategies-naming, detailing, and comparing, there are many language resources, and some limitations, for reporting sense impression. These resources help convey sights, sound, smell, touches, and tastes (Axelrod and Chooper: 1991).

In Fentis’ study (2011), she found that there were 230 grammatical errors recognized from the composition. It was divided into 86 errors or 37, 39% errors of omission, 23 errors or 10% errors of addition, 89 errors or 38, 70% errors of misformation, and 32% errors or 13, 19% errors misordering. Based on the total percentage of each type of errors, it was concluded that the dominant error in descriptive paragraph made by the second year students of SMP Muhammadiyah 06 Dau Malang was information error. There were 89 or 38, 70% errors of misformation. These errors were caused by overgeneralization in which the students made the deviant structure based on their experience in the first language
to the target language, ignorance of rule restriction, and incomplete rule application.

There are many reasons why students often make grammatical errors in their writing. There are differences between grammar rules in English and those in Bahasa Indonesia. For example, English has concept of tense for verb and subject agreement, while grammar in Indonesia does not have any. Then, English has different formation of regular plural nouns and irregular, but not in Bahasa Indonesia. Besides, Bahasa Indonesia does not have gender pronouns, and the pronouns are not as various as English in which pronouns depend on their position in the sentence (Maulidiyah: 2008, in Frenti: 2011)

In summary, descriptive essay is a written work that describe about something and tells how something looks, feels, smells, tastes, and sounds. The students should use their five senses to explain something. This essay should has three paragraphs, namely introduction, body, and conclusion paragraph. The students also should master to make each paragraph in this essay united. Then the students should explain something well organized. So, the reader can really imagine those things. From those complex rules, sometime students do some errors in their written work, such as; wrong punctuation, inappropriate spatial order, etc.

From those phenomena, the researcher is interested in choosing “An error analysis on the descriptive essay written by the 6th semester students at the English department of University of Muhammadiyah Malang” as the title of this thesis.
1.2. Statement of Study

Based on the background that has been discussed above, the writer formulated the problems as follow:

1. What are types of errors found in descriptive essay written by the 6th semester students at the English department of University of Muhammadiyah Malang?

2. What are the most dominant errors found in the descriptive essay written by the 6th semester students at the English department of University of Muhammadiyah Malang?

1.3. The Purpose of Study

1. To identify what types of errors found in descriptive essay written by the 6th semester students at the English department of University of Muhammadiyah Malang.

2. To identify the most dominant errors found in the descriptive essay written by the 6th semester students at English department of University of Muhammadiyah Malang.

1.4. The Significance of the Study

The writer hopes this study will give the information to the teachers about the types of errors and the most dominant errors that is usually done by their students in writing the descriptive essay. The result of this study can improve teacher’s teaching technique and preparation to use the best technique to teach student about descriptive essay. So, the students do not do those kinds of errors again.
Also, the writer hopes this study will give the information to the reader who wants to write descriptive essay by reading some errors that are presented. So, the reader can avoid those errors and read some explanations about descriptive essay to make a good descriptive essay.

1.5. Scope and Limitation

The scope of this study is the descriptive essay, while the limitation of this study is the descriptive essay written by the 6th semester students at the English department of University of Muhammadiyah Malang.

1.6. Definition of Key Term

To avoid misunderstanding of the terms used in this study, it is necessary to define the key term as follows:

1. **Error** is a systematic deviation that happens when a learner has not learnt something and consistently ‘gets it wrong’ (Norrish, 1983:7, in Anchalee and Pongrat, 2008).

2. **Mistake** refers to a performance error that is either random or a slip of the tongue, in that it is failure to utilize a known system correctly (Brown, 2007:257).

3. **Error Analysis** is the process of determining the incidence, nature, causes, and consequences of unsuccessful language (James, 1998:1, in Anchalee and Pongrat, 2008).

4. **Essay** is a written work that consists of some paragraphs, those are; introduction, body, and conclusion paragraph (Hogue 2007:148).
5. **Descriptive essay** is an essay that tells how something looks, feels, smells, tastes, and sounds (Hogue 2007:61).