CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Writing is one of the four important skills that is necessary to be mastered by students. Ridha (2012) states that writing is a complex process which demands the combination of linguistic synthesis and cognitive analysis. Moreover, Allen & Corder (1974, p.177) note that writing is the most difficult language abilities to acquire because it is "intricate" and complex task. Furthermore, there is no possibility in written compositions to negotiate the meaning as it happens in conversation (Allen & Corder, 1974). Therefore, there will be some problems that occur when the students produce some written compositions if they do not master writing skill very well.

Written text is complicated because it is written and systematic. It contains of some sentences and paragraph. As we know, one paragraph should be consists of four or five sentences. They must be organized and coherent which contain of one single topic and some supporting details. It is common to see that students' writing is longer than the real text. Therefore, it should be arranged into good paragraph. This is because paragraphs show a reader where the subdivisions of an essay begin and end, and thus help the reader see the arrangement of the essay and grasp its main points.

According to Longman dictionary of language teaching and applied linguistics (3rd edition), essay is a longer piece of writing, particularly one that is

written by a student as part of a course of study or by a writer writing for publication which expresses the writer's viewpoint on a topic. It is also stated by Shiach (2009) that an essay consists of three main sections: the opening paragraph, the development or body of the essay, the conclusion. An essay must have a definite opening, a considered development and an emphatic conclusion. All three sections have to be integral to the whole and be linked. The body of the essay will be much the longer section of the three, but this main section must be preceded by an opening section and succeeded by a closing section.

Writing skill is not a naturally acquired skill but it is usually learned or practiced through experience. Writing also involves composing, which implies the ability to tell or give information in the form of narratives or description, or to transform information into new texts. It can create problems for students, especially who write in a second language (L2) in academic contexts. Compared to students writing in their native language (L1), however, students writing in their L2 must also acquire proficiency in the use of the language as well as writing strategies, techniques and skills. In order to make a good written composition, students must be aware of two important aspects in constructing a good sentence; grammatical and lexical aspects. Grammar possesses a role in controlling the distribution of words which makes the written composition understandable to the reader. Grammar also influences the written communication in understanding the content of the written text. On the other hands, a good written text should be able to help the writers in transferring their ideas to the readers.

Lexical aspect deals with vocabulary which is the second important aspect in constructing a good sentence. Llach (2011) argues that vocabulary is a fundamental element of language for communication. Dagut, Laufer, and Meara's study (cited in Llach, 2011, p.46) indicate that grammar will be an important part if followed by words. Word also acquires an essential rule in expressing the meaning of the written text. Shalaby, Yahya, and Komi (2009) also said that the incorrect uses of words might be an ambiguity. In this case, students cannot neglect the role of lexical aspect in producing a good composition. However, most of the students do not give any significant attention to the role of lexical aspect in written text (Chamimah, 2007 and Naba'h, 2011). Certainly, there will be some problems as the result of the insignificant attention from the students to the role of lexical aspect in written text.

The most common problem in writing is lexical error. Hemchua and Schmitt (2006) say that errors production in learner's performance is widely accepted because it is a part of learning language. Laufer (cited in Naba'h, 2011) also claims that learning lexical items depends on the core of language learning and that language acquisition of first, second and foreign language cannot take place without vocabulary acquisition.

Lexical errors in writing become a crucial issue since the students almost unavoidably produce several of types of lexical errors. Besides, lexical error has become the numerous types of errors in learner's performance (Shalaby, Yahya, and El-Komi, 2009) and also plays an important role in the process of vocabulary acquisition in second language (Ander & Yildirim, 2010). Furthermore, lexical

errors can give some impacts to the reader such as misunderstanding about the context of the text. Ridha and Riyahi (2010) find that native speakers considered lexical errors as serious problem than all other error types because it lies in the choice of words, which makes an effective communication obstructed. Another student's problem in writing is determining the right lexical items. This phenomenon occurs because lack of vocabulary. Despite the impact of lexical errors, lexical errors can be useful as the indicators of learners' written composition and also as predictors in determining learners' vocabulary progress, lexical proficiency and general academic achievement (Llach, 2007).

There is a phenomenon that the writer found related to lexical error in essay writing of English Department students. The phenomenon is that students are still confused in identifying lexical item such as classifying the lexical item according to the word class. For example: To be a successful college student, you must have certain qualification such as <u>critish</u> person and <u>discipline</u>. In this sentence, there is a lexical error that is the use of the word critish. The word critish is not used in target language, and it is loanword from Indonesian (kritis). It could be a critical and discipline person.

Despite the frequency and the seriousness of lexical errors, they remain under-researched. This may be related to the fact that lexical errors are categorized as the complex problem among the English second language (Hemchua & Schmitt, 2006). In Hemchua and Schmitt's study, they examined the production of lexical errors in the English argumentative writing of Thai students who were studying English in their third year. Among the few studies that have

been undertaken in this area, Shalaby, Yahya and El-Komi (2009) analyzed lexical errors made by female students of Tabiah University in their writing exam papers. Suetae (2010) investigated lexical errors produced by fourth-year students who were majoring English at Prince of Songkla University in written composition. Naba'h (2011) studied lexical errors made by in-service English language teachers in the final exam paper of English teaching methods.

Based on those previous studies, there are similarities relate to lexical errors. They have selected students at university level and teachers as the subject and lexical errors as the topic of their studies. In contrast, the present study investigates lexical errors in the essay writing as the object of the study. The writer uses basic essay writing as the object of the study because essay is a simple and short pieces of writing which consists of main idea and some supporting details. It is also stated by Tagg (2000) who defines an essay as "a fairly brief piece of nonfiction that tries to make a point in an interesting way."

Since problems related to lexical errors are significant and because it is an interesting topic to conduct a research on, the writer is interested in learning about the lexical errors occured in second language writing composition. The writer conducted a research on lexical errors in essay writing produced by first-year students of English Department 2013 at Universitas Airlangga. This study was concerned on lexical errors that proposed by James (1998). James proposed a taxonomy and distinguished lexical error in two major classes; formal and semantic error. In this research, the writer limited the study in formal error only. In addition, the analysis is focused on the classification of formal error found in

the essay writings of the first year students of English department 2013 at Universitas Airlangga.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

In relation to the background of the study, the writer is curious to formulate two research questions which are interesting to be analyzed further. The research questions are:

1. What types of lexical errors are found in the basic essay writing of the first-year English department students 2013 in Universitas Airlangga?

2. What is the most common lexical error found in the basic writing of the first-year English department students 2013 in Universitas Airlangga?

1.3. Objectives of the Study

The writer finds that there is a relation between lexical errors and students' writing skill. Therefore, the writer sees the necessity to dispose objectives of the study are as follow:

1. To find out the types of lexical errors found in the basic essay writing of the first-year English department students 2013 in Universitas Airlangga.

2. To find out the most common lexical error found in the basic essay writing of the first-year English department students 2013 in Universitas Airlangga.

1.4. Significance of the Study

By showing the characteristics of lexical errors in the basic essay writing produced by first-year English Department students 2013 of Universitas

Airlangga, this study is expected to give some contributions to the knowledge of second language acquisition. This study is hoped to assist the teachers and the students to recognize the types of lexical errors found in students' written compositions. Furthermore, the teachers can assist the students in minimizing lexical errors in their writings by providing an adequate portion of the vocabulary teaching and giving error connection during the classroom discussion. Therefore, the findings of this study can become a review for next researcher in conducting their research in second language writing.

1.5. Scope and Limitation

In this research, the writer limited the study in formal error only. In addition, the analysis is focused on the classification of formal error found in the essay writings of the first year of English department students at Universitas Airlangga.

1.6. Definition of Key terms

In order to avoid misinterpretation in understanding this study, the researcher provides the following key terms.

Lexical Errors	: Lexical error is the inappropriate use of lexical items in certain as the impact of the confusion between two words, owing formal or semantic similarity which consists of L1 or L2 influence (Llach, 2005, p.16).

Essay Writing	: (in composition) a longer piece of writing, particularly one that is written by a student as part of a course of study or by a writer writing for publication which expresses the writer's viewpoint on a topic (Longman dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics, 3rd edition, p.197).
ESL	: an abbreviation for English as a Second Language. English as Second language is a basic term with several somewhat different definitions. In a loose sense, English is the second language of anyone who learns it after learning their first language in infancy in the home. (Longman dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics, 3rd edition, p.180).

CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW