CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

The Genre Based Curriculum states that writing is one of the four language skills that must be taught at Junior High Schools. The aim of teaching writing is to enable students to master the functional texts and monologue texts in the form of descriptive, procedure, recount, narrative, and report.

Writing is important in the teaching learning process because it accelerates students in the use of the target language. It is estimated that 75% of all international communication is in writing and 90% of internet contents are in English (Schutz, 2005: 4). It means students use English as a medium for transferring information and technology.

Harmer (2004: 33) points out that writing is frequently useful to help students perform different kinds of activities in listening, speaking, and reading. A teacher can use writing such as a dictation in listening. The teacher can also use writing such as a free writing related to the topic in pre–speaking. Writing in a composition can be used in post reading as well.

Moreover, writing is one of the two skills which are tested in the national final examination. Therefore, it is assumed that writing skill is one of the most important skills in the teaching English in Indonesia.

Mukminatien states writing skill plays important roles in the English foreign learning, but most of students are not interested in it and the performance on writing is unsatisfactory (Mukminatien, 1991: 130) In general, people think
that writing is the most difficult skill to master when they learn foreign language. According to Simpson (1998: 34), the difficulty is due to the fact that a writer needs to have enough language and general intellectual skills to generate and organize ideas and puts those ideas into coherent, logically ordered, intelligible sentences, paragraphs and essays. It is supported by Richard and Renandya that state writing is not only to generate and organize ideas using an appropriate choice of vocabulary, sentence, and paragraph organization but also to turn such ideas into a readable text (Richard & Renandya, 2002: 303). Besides, students also have difficulties transferring ideas from their native language into the target language.

Most of SMP students in SMP 2 Kudus have problems when they have to write texts. It is proved by the mistakes that they do when they have to produce written texts. The mistakes are various, like misspelling, the wrong use of grammar, punctuation, organization, and vocabularies.

There are some factors that influence the students’ skill in writing. First, the students are lack of knowledge related to vocabularies, grammatical rules, punctuation, spelling, and organizing ideas. Moreover the students do not have any idea to write. They also get problems in expressing their ideas and organize them logically. They are not able to develop their ideas into good paragraphs.

The other factor that influences the writing skill is the teachers do not give enough attention and proper time on the developing writing skill. Writing activity is given to the students as an out of class activity which is done in the students own pace. The teachers lack monitoring on the process of the students’ writing.
activity. The teachers do not have good skill and effective strategy in the writing teaching and learning process. The teachers do not give clear and specific instruction either. They tend to use direct instruction model to teach writing. The teachers become the center of the teaching and learning process. They do not know how to teach writing effectively. They often ask their students to write without giving any guidance how to write the text well.

The other factor that causes the students get problem in writing is their interest. The students do not like writing because their attitude and motivation toward writing is low. They are not active and enthusiastic to join the writing activity. They are afraid of presenting their writing works because they do not want their works being read or known by the class. Consequently, they have no motivation to develop their writing skill.

Interest plays important role to support the students in joining the teaching learning process. It makes them be more interested in learning and makes them pay more attention in the writing activity. The high level of interest will determine students’ success. It is in line with Hurlock. Interest provides a strong motivation to learn (Hurlock, 1956: 403)

To cope with the problems mentioned above, the researcher uses mind mapping in the teaching of writing skill. The model can facilitate the teachers to monitor the process of the students writing activities. The students keep some information in their mind and they can take them out from their mind easily. The students are able to improve their creativity through their free imagination. The free imagination is produced by using various interesting pictures, colorful letters

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or words, jokes and provocations. The students also have to write a key word about the topic in the middle of the paper. Then, they develop it using tree diagrams using interesting pictures, bubbles, and colorful letters or words. They develop every paragraph in each branch of the tree diagram.

In this study, the researcher conducts experimental study entitled The Effectiveness of Mind Mapping to Teach Writing Skills Viewed from the Students’ Interest (An Experimental Study in the Eighth Grade Students of SMP 2 Kudus in the Academic Year of 2012/2013)

B. Identification of the Problem

Based on the background of the study, there are many problems that arise. The problems can be identified as follows:

1. Why do the students have low writing competence?
2. What factors cause the students’ low writing competence?
3. Are the students interested in learning English?
4. Are the students interested in learning writing?
5. Is mind mapping effective to teach writing?
6. Does mind mapping make students interested in learning writing?
7. Does the students’ interest influence their writing competence?
8. Does mind mapping make the students interested in learning writing?

C. Problem Limitation

The researcher realizes that it is impossible to answer all the problems. Therefore, the researcher limits the problems of the research which are supposed to influence the students’ writing skill and students’ interest.
The researcher pays attention on the effectiveness of mind mapping to improve the students’ writing skill. The ability of the students to organize the ideas is still low. Therefore, the researcher uses mind mapping to encourage them to increase their writing skill. It helps them to make their ideas well organized. The use of mind mapping is also intended to make the students both with high or low interest be more interested in developing their writing skill.

The researcher focuses his research on improving students’ writing skill on descriptive texts. Based on the content standard, descriptive texts are taught in grade seven of semester two and grade eight of semester one. The researcher takes the sample of the students in grade eight.

D. Problem Statement

Based on the background of the study, problem identification, and problem limitation, the researcher formulates the problems of the study as follows:

1. Is mind mapping model more effective than direct instruction model?
2. Do students with high interest have better writing achievement than students with low interest?
3. Is there any interaction between teaching model and students’ interests?

E. The Objective of the Study

This research is aimed to know the influence of teaching model and the students’ interests on the students’ writing competence. This research is particularly proposed to:

1. describe whether mind mapping model is more effective than direct
instruction model in teaching writing;
2. describe whether students with high interest have better writing achievement than students with low interest
3. describe whether there is an interaction between teaching model and students’ interests in terms of students’ writing competence

F. The Benefits of the Study

After the research is done, the researcher expects that the research will contribute to theoretical and practical benefits. Theoretically, the research is done to give significant data about the effectiveness of mind mapping in teaching writing viewed from the students’ interest. On the other hand, it is practically expected to give contribution for:

1. The Researcher

The result of the research encourages him to develop effective teaching model to help students improve their writing skill. By using mind mapping, the researcher could apply the interesting model that attract the students’ attention to develop their writing skill. Besides, mind mapping improves his understanding on appropriate teaching model, especially related to writing skill

2. Other Teachers

The result of the research are expected to encourage the other teachers to develop their creativity to improve teaching learning process. The teaching learning process works effectively if the students are interested and they get involved actively in it. Mind mapping facilitates the students to develop their
creativity and the teachers act as the facilitators. The teachers can improve their competence in conducting the teaching learning process. They are not as the center of teaching learning process, but more as the facilitators. The effectiveness of mind mapping is also hoped to motivate the teachers to find and apply new models in teaching writing effectively.

3. Students
The use of mind mapping in the classroom is believed that it has contribution in improving the students’ writing skill. By using mind mapping, the students get involved actively in the process of developing writing skills. They need to cooperate and work in group to revise their writing. By doing the revising process, they can check each other so their works get better. They also feel comfortable because they can develop their creativity. The students also can improve their skill in organizing the ideas and developing the students’ critical thinking.

4. Schools
The research is expected to distribute the benefits to schools. The students’ achievement is considered as the school’s achievement. If the students’ achievement is good, the school is considered good as well. It motivates the school to encourage their teachers to apply effective teaching model to improve their students’ achievement. Mind mapping is one of the effective teaching models.
5. Other Researchers

The result of the research can be used as the reference for the other researchers to develop the students’ writing skill. It provides understanding toward the effectiveness of mind mapping to teach writing. Mind mapping provides more opportunities to the students to develop their writing skill creatively. It is more effective than direct instructional model in developing writing skill. The result of the research gives useful practical experiences for other researchers as well.