

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This study is intended to explore Learners' beliefs about writing skill during their learning in one of universities in Southeast Sulawesi. This chapter depicts the background, scope, research questions, and the purpose of the study. Moreover, it includes the significance of the study and the definition of the key terms used in this study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Over the last two decades, there has been a growing recognition of the need to understand EFL learners' belief about writing skill, because these relate closely to students' sense of being successful learners' second language and helping teachers or researchers to understand the development of individual learning strategies (Wan, 2014). Consequently, a lot of research has been conducted from the learner's point of view, namely the learner's beliefs about writing skill. This perspective has informed that learners' beliefs are very important to know, because learners' belief systems can affect on their motivation to learn (Dincer, 2017). Learners' beliefs about writing skills which are the result of one of the factors that can shape a person's thoughts and beliefs related to culture, context, and various other personal factors that can affect the student learning process (Bernat & Gvozdenko, 2005). Therefore, writing skill was believed to be the biggest factor that can affect the foreign language learning process in students, because writing skills are quite complicated skills because

they require a work plan, organize ideas, revise and grammar knowledge (Majchrzak, 2018).

Hativa and Goodyear, (2002) stated that research on learners' beliefs about writing skills has increased in volume in the last two decades. Majchrzak, (2018) in his research stated that the topic of students' beliefs about writing skills has become one of international relevance as part of the complexity of the problems faced by students. The concept of learner belief has become a focus issue for research in education. Several researchers have conducted a lot of research on student beliefs about writing skills, especially in China (Wan, 2014), Turkey (Atmaca, 2016; Incecay & Dollar, 2011; Dincer, 2017), Persia (Mohammadi, Birjandi, & Maftoon, 2015), Iran (Naseri, 2012), Thailand (Padgate, 2008), Arab (Ismail, 2011).The interesting thing in the research conducted by Padgate, (2008) which was conducted at a university in Thailand where the participants in this study consisted of 40 students majoring in English and 239 students majoring in English. Of course, each of these students has different beliefs, but most students at one of the universities in Thailand believe that writing skills are the most difficult part of learning a foreign language, especially English, they believe in limited vocabulary, lack of knowledge about sentence linking, Lack of knowledge of revising skills is the cause of writing difficulties, especially in English (Padgate, 2008).

In addition Ismail, (2011) also explained, the results of research conducted on 64 Academic Writing Course students at one of the Arab universities, the results of the study showed that there are several things that students believe can

help develop writing skills in foreign language learning, especially foreign languages. English is one of them with a writing challenge program, both scientific writing, research and others (Ismail, 2011). In a study conducted in China (Wan, 2014) in his research it was found that student beliefs were very influential in building learning motivation, many of the students there had their own concerns when they wrote in a foreign language, so this greatly affected the quality of their learning and also their knowledge later. Not a few students who scored below average were found. This causes many researchers from international circles to be interested in conducting research on student beliefs, especially in writing skills (Wan, 2014; Majchrzak, 2018; Li, 2004; Atmaca, 2016; Incecay & Dollar, 2011, Dincer, 2017; Naseri, 2012 ; Mohammadi, Birjandi, & Maftoon, 2015; Padgate, 2008; Ismail, 2011).

Research related to Learners' beliefs about writing skills is not only conducted at the international level, but also at the local level. Several other studies have been carried out in Indonesia regarding student beliefs, especially in writing skills in the last ten years (Toba, Noor & Sanu, 2019; Hadi, 2020; Lestari, 2015; Ermerawati, 2016; Pratolo, 2014). In general, learner beliefs are beliefs that language learners have about what is involved in language learning, how to learn it, and their language learning abilities (Ellis & Shintani, 2014) so it is important for us to know. Ermerawati, (2016) in a study conducted at a university in Yogyakarta found that most students had difficulties with grammar, limited vocabulary, and also punctuation. 60% of them believe that one of the difficulties in writing is limited vocabulary and also limited knowledge of grammar, 60% of

students believe that this causes their writing skills to be very low and writing skills are considered the most difficult part of learning English. Then of the 60%, 40% of them believe that there are three difficulties in writing skills, namely limited knowledge of grammar, lack of vocabulary and also determining the right punctuation (Ermerawati, 2016). Lestari, (2015) in her research conducted at a training center at a university in Yogyakarta, she found that the majority of students believed that the way to develop foreign language writing skills was in two ways, namely a lot of practice and also a lot of reading, practicing writing in English. English can develop one's ability to master writing skills, besides practicing students also believe that by reading a lot we will automatically be able to develop grammar skills, enrich vocabulary and also expand knowledge, with that students believe it can really help them in developing their writing skills (Lestari, 2015).

From some of the results of previous research (Toba, Noor & Sanu, 2019; Hadi, 2020; Lestari, 2015; Ermerawati, 2016; Pratolo, 2014) found some similarities, where previous research discussed a lot about the weaknesses and difficulties of Indonesian students in learning to write in language foreigners (Toba, Noor & Sanu, 2019; Hadi, 2020; Lestari, 2015; Ariyanti & Fitriana, 2017). Ariyanti & Fitriana, (2017) also wrote from the results of their research that had been carried out at a private university in East Kalimantan, the result of their research saying that EFL students' writing skills in foreign languages are still categorized as unsatisfactory, it was found that students were not able to organize paragraphs, diction and misspellings of vocabulary.

This is indicated by the results of student assessment that were below average. Base on the results of the research findings above, in this study the researcher will conduct research on learners' beliefs in writing skill by exploring things that are difficulties, weaknesses and also students' learning strategies in writing skills. Therefore, the researcher wanted to conduct research on EFL students 'beliefs about writing skills with the aim of exploring students' beliefs about writing skills in the learning process. Conducting this research, the researcher hopes that knowing student' beliefs about writing skills can help teachers and students to overcome problems that occur in students writing foreign languages. That way, students can learn in the way they want and like so they can develop their writing skills.

1.2 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on beliefs about writing skills in the learning process of EFL students in the classroom. This study only involved second semester students from the Department of English Education at one of the universities in Kendari. This study only involved class a students consisting of 20 EFL students. Collecting data in the researcher used a reflection sheet containing 5 questions about students' beliefs in learning writing skills in class.

1.3 Research Questions

Based on the focus of the research described above, the researchers formulated the research question “What are EFL learners’ beliefs about writing skill in learning English?”

1.4 Purpose of the Study

Based on the research background, this present study aims to explore learners' beliefs about writing in their learning English.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study was attempted to contribute to the existing knowledge in this field. This study was focused on contributing to students and teachers. At this level, this study is expected to provide information about students' belief problems in writing skills. By knowing students' writing beliefs, it is hoped that this study can help students improve the quality of their learning with new learning methods or strategies. Apart from students, with this study it is hoped that teachers can improve the quality of their teaching so that it can influence the direction of student and teacher education programs in the future.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

For the purpose of this study, the terms to be defined are listed as the following:

Beliefs: This study defines reflection as a state or habit of mind in which trust or confidence is place in some person or thing. Basically beliefs also has several theories and categories in literature, such as: a). L2 metacognitive knowledge; b) mental and social representations; c) self-belief such as self-concept beliefs and self-efficacy belief; d) control-beliefs, such as self-regulatory belief, locus of control-beliefs (Gabillon, 2014).

Learners' Beliefs: In this study learners' beliefs can be defined as the perception of students related to issues that can affect to learning motivation for example about learning in the class, how they like the lesson, easy and hardest things they feel and what the strategies that they use when they learn. Learners' beliefs hold about a target foreign language and its culture affect their attitudes towards that language and together with other variable play a role in their L2 motivations (Masgoret & Gaedner, 2003).

Writing Skill: In this study defined of writing skills are specifics abilities which help writers put their thoughts into words in a meaningful form and to mentally interact with the message. Writing is an integral part of a larger activity where the focus is on something else such as language practice, acting out or speaking (Harmer, 2007). So writing skill is including all the knowledge and abilities related to expressing ideas though the written word.

