

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter reviews the theoretical and empirical literature from the field of relevant analysis of students' beliefs, which is divided into two main parts which present a discussion of the theoretical framework that supports beliefs, learners' beliefs and writing skills and the second part discusses previous research studies.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

2.1.1 Beliefs

There are many variations on the some studies on the definition of beliefs. According to Pehkonen and Pietilä, (2003) a belief is a kind of knowledge that is subjective and experience-based. Raymond (1997) defined the term belief as a personal judgment formed from experiences. According to Rokeach, (1972) and (Gilakjani, 2012), a belief is any premise that starts with the term "I believe that." Beliefs that are related to other beliefs are regarded as "core" or "central beliefs". If a belief is associated with other beliefs, it will have more outcomes to them. Beliefs are conceptual portrayals that signal a reality, truth, or trustworthiness to its holder to ensure reliance upon it as a guide to personal thought and action (Cabaroglu & Roberts, 2000). According to Peacock (2001), beliefs are psychologically held appreciations, assumptions, or theorems about the world that are felt to be correct. (Huang, 1997) defined beliefs as preconceptions language learners have about learning a language.

According to Kunt, (1997) and Wang, (1996), the terms “opinions” and “ideas” or “views” refer to “beliefs” beliefs are judgments and evaluations that we make about ourselves, others, and the world around us. They are personal ideas based on observation or rational thinking (Khader, 2012).

Another definition of beliefs is presented by Alexander and Dochy (1995) who obtained a definition of beliefs by interviewing individuals from the U.S. and the Netherlands. Results suggest that individuals understand beliefs as being part of a level of perception, rather than constituting knowledge or being part of a tangible reality. These results also support Brown and Coney’s (as cited in Pajares, 1992) differentiation between beliefs and knowledge. Richardson (1996) defined beliefs as psychologically held understandings, premises, or propositions about the world that are held to be true. Beliefs are central constructs in every discipline which deals with human behavior and learning. Beliefs help individuals to define and understand the world and themselves, and they are instrumental in defining tasks and play a critical role in defining behavior (White, 1999). Beliefs about language learning, as well as other cognitive and affective variables, have become an interest of researchers in the field of second language acquisition because of assumptions that “success depends less on materials, techniques, and linguistic analyses, and more on what goes on inside and between the people in the classroom” (Stevick, 1980, p.4). According to Stevick, what goes on inside learners, which includes learners’ beliefs, seems to have a strong impact on learners’ learning process.

Beliefs about ESL writing instruction have always been changing and they are influenced by both first language writing pedagogy and ESL research findings. Hedgcock (2005) stated that there has been a substantial shift in ESL writing toward the implementation of the process approach in teaching writing. This method emerged as a reaction to the traditional approach which was mainly employed to reinforce oral patterns and grammatical knowledge. There are different examples of writing approaches which are believed to offer beneficial frameworks of instruction for the development of writing skill such as writing across the curriculum which tries to integrate writing assignments throughout content areas. Myhill and Locke (2007) revealed that the writing discipline research was classified in a variety of ways by different people. Hyland (2002), for example, outlined three concrete different approaches to writing. The first approach was referred to as a “text-oriented” and was described to deal in different ways with the product of writing. The second one was seen as a “writer-oriented” and was described as a way of dealing with the cognitive process and self-expression. The third one was described as a “reader-oriented” approach and it emphasized the role of the writer as both an active reader and writer.

One way to define beliefs is to focus on the claim that a person believes that, a certain statement is true. For example, a belief can be seen as a type of knowledge that is “subjective, experience-based, and often implicit” or as a personal judgment formulated from experiences (Osterholm, 2010). Beliefs are defined as a group of ideas which are shaped in persons by their experiences

and the overlapping of notions during the learning processes (Khader, 2012). Beliefs are reflections that involve all subjects that we do not have enough knowledge about them but we have enough confidence to work on them (Barcelos, 2000; Khader, 2012). Beliefs are defined as the teachers' arguments and their views on teaching and learning (Haney, Lumpe & Czerniak, 1996; Khader, 2012). Besides that definition of beliefs also comes to some various studies, such as according to Bernat & Gvozdenko (2005) cite a number of different terms used by researchers who have studied language learning beliefs, including 'conceptions of learning' (Benson & Lor, 1999), 'assumptions' (Riley, 1980), and 'mini-theories' (Hosenfeld, 1978). Wenden (1998) has also referred to the same construct as 'metacognitive knowledge'. While these terms have been used specifically in terms of language learning, learning psychology has also looked at learner beliefs about knowledge and knowing in general, also known as 'epistemic beliefs' (Beuhl, 2008).

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). The term *metacognitive knowledge* originates from Flavell's metacognitive theory and refers to the individual's beliefs or knowledge (cognitions) about (his or others') cognitive processes (Flavell, 1979). Then for the term of *mental and social representations* has been widely referred to in many studies which have looked into language learners' beliefs, more often the term has been use

to refer to common knowledge such as stereotypes, attitudes, prejudices, images and so forth (Zarate, 2004). While from the term *self-belief* has become a real research, according to Bandura these beliefs comprise a self-system, and the individual's behavior is the result of the interaction between this system and external influences (Bandura, 1986). The last theory is *control-beliefs*, its mean belief about the presence of factors that may further or hinder performance (Ajzen, 2002).

2.1.2 Learners Beliefs

A scan of the literature, learners' beliefs' have reveals concept of trust goes under many aliases such as; attitudes, perceptions, values, philosophies and ideologies. Because of this diversity, defining beliefs' is a difficult task. Learners' beliefs are defined as "psychologically held understandings of student, premises, or propositions about the world that are perceived to be true" (Richardson in Bernat, 2005), and to be powerful filters of reality" (Arnold in Bernat, 2005). Learners' belief can be simply defined as learners' state of mind or learners' thinking, learners' representation of interpretation in reality; deeper than just thinking, but learners' beliefs has a causal role in the behavior of believers (Arnold, 1999). Belief of learners also involve ones of past experience, present (currently held beliefs) and future (Wintaka, 2015).

Besides that, learners' belief also reviews by different theories and conceptualizations. Learners' beliefs appear in various rubrics and categories such us: a) learners' metacognitive knowledge b) mental and social

representative such self-confidence, such as self-concept beliefs, and self-efficacy beliefs (Pajares & Schunk, 2020); d) control beliefs, such as self-regulation beliefs and the focus on beliefs-control (Dornyei & Otto, 1998); e) attributions, means individual's beliefs about causes (Weiner, 1986).

Language learners' beliefs about the degree to which they have control over the learning process and their ability to learn a language influence their motivation to attend language classes and attain higher proficiency levels. The state of mind in which language learners think that they can improve and gain proficiency needs to be predicted to understand their motivations, attitudes, and behaviors. Language learners' perceptions about the degree to which they have control over the learning process affect learning performance. Students/learners with higher perceived control over the learning process attend classes more regularly, study more and achieve higher levels of proficiency. Of course, the level of perceived control itself constitutes a belief, and this may affect attitudes and/or other beliefs. Wenden's studies (1986, 1987) were a springboard to other studies of learners' beliefs, attitudes, strategies, and motivations. For example, Yang (1999)²⁴) investigated the relationship between EFL university students' beliefs about language learning and their strategy use with multiple methods.

White (1999)²⁹) investigated how learners experienced and articulated their experience of a solo distance language learning context and found that tolerance of ambiguity can be seen as related to the learners' particular locus of control. In order to investigate sources of beliefs and the factors that help learners construct, develop, and modify beliefs about learning, researchers

should investigate learners' learning contexts, including teachers, peers, parents, and their learning experiences. Most studies of learners' beliefs have produced empirical evidence, but theories explaining learner beliefs were rarely proposed. Some researchers, however, have proposed theories regarding how learner beliefs are developed, modified and fixed. Examples include a study investigating agency in language learning histories using attribution theory, students' perceptions of language study using a socioeducational model, and relationships between students' self-efficacy and their use of learning strategies (Yang, 1999).

Learners' beliefs have proved to influence both the actions and experiences of language learners (Horwitz, 1999). Empirical findings have demonstrated that beliefs that language learners hold about a target foreign language and its culture affect their attitudes towards that language and together with other variables play a role in their L2 motivations (Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005; Gardner, 2001; Gardner, 2004; Masgoret & Gardner, 2003). In the same vein, Castellotti and Moore (2002) claim that social group' shared images (representations) about other languages and learning these languages can influence learners' attitudes towards other languages and finally their interest in learning these languages. On the other study, according to Gardner & Miller (2002), students' beliefs are their own goals, attitudes and decisions to learn and this affects how they approach their learning. Therefore, their beliefs about learning or learner autonomy can greatly from one to another. Cognitive assumptions explain that learners beliefs refer to learners' attitudes

and behavior are conditioned by a higher order of mental representations of students themselves (Gardner & Miller, 2002).

So learners' beliefs are as part of metacognitive knowledge that has a positive or negative effect on learning practice. It is mean learners' deep belief about the learning process, their own talents and the use of effective learning strategies will aid their learning and help them to develop a more active and independent attitude that allows them to take care of their own learning (Bernat, 2005). However, uniformed beliefs about learning can lead to dependence on less effective strategies, leading to poor cognitive performance, class anxiety and negative attitudes towards autonomy (Wintaka, 2015). In several study, according to Cotteral, (1995) in his study that identifies belief dimensions based on learners' responses to her questionnaire that learners' beliefs talk about learner independence, learner confidence in study ability, experience of learning, and approach to studying. He also adds that the beliefs and attitudes the learners hold have an important influence on their learning behavior, they may either contribute to or impade the development of learning process (Cotteral, 1995).

In short definition, learners' beliefs about language learning are defined as individual learners' thoughts about what they think is right or wrong in relation to themselves as language learners, the nature of the language being studied and learning process (Wintaka, 2015). In this study, these learners' beliefs were raised and recorded through the opinions of feelings of learners'

difficulties, the presence of foreign language attitudes and the nature of language learning to acquire English language skills (Pang, 2011).

2.1.3 Writing Skill

Writing has always been seen as an important skill in ESL classes. It is the area in which learners are expected to be offered adequate time to develop their writing skill. Writing is certainly an important element of learning English as a second language. This importance is eventually derived from the fact that it reinforces grammatical structures, vocabulary and idioms that we have been teaching to our students. Writing should receive more attention in ESL classes in order to prepare learners to cope with the communicative demands of real life situations. Undoubtedly, the purpose of teaching writing skill is to prepare ESL learners to become better writers. Exposing them to the writing process itself is then a better way for achieving this goal. Writing skills can be developed when the learners' interests are recognized and when they are exposed to situations where they can produce authentic piece of writing (Ismail, 2010).

Writing is an act of expressing ideas and ideas through a series of words into a sentence and paragraph. Writing indirectly will help students learn because in the process of writing students use their eyes, hands, and ability to think together. Therefore, writing is one of the important skills to master. It is in line with the opinion of Raimes who revealed several reasons for the importance of mastering writing skills (Cole, Jenny & Feng, Jay, 2015). Bailey (2003), in particular, mentions that writing skill is the course which is designed

for college students to learn how to write effectively as they have to do the college writing assignments for exam, coursework, thesis, or final project report. The process of writing skill is started from choosing a topic, writing an introductory paragraph, paragraph development, and concluding paragraph. All those paragraphs can be in the form of argumentative, descriptive, narrative, expository essay, paper, report, project portfolio, a case study or a dissertation (Redman & Maples, 2017). Since writing is a kind of communicative behavior, creating a successful piece of writing is complicated and requires controls of different language systems at the same time.

Writing a good piece of essay, especially in English or other second languages, requires several factors. In addition to all aspects of language proficiency including vocabulary, grammar, and correct expressions, the writer needs to possess appropriate thinking and reasoning skills, as well as logical and interesting thoughts. Writing is, therefore, considered an advanced skill which requires formal instruction. This is different from other skills, such as listening or speaking, which learners can pick up from the environment and do not need to be taught, if language learning occurs in the situation where the learners are exposed to a great deal of target language input. Sasaki and Hirose (1996) found that there were some factors that were predictors of success in L2 writing: L2 proficiency, ability in L1 writing, and metalanguage about L2 writing as well as writing strategies. Writing is the production of communication, linking ideas, and information development, or giving arguments to a particular reader or a group of readers (Hedge, 2005). This

definition implies that writing is the production of the ideas expressed in the written form. Before producing the writing, the writer needs to receive and process information as much as possible. This assumption is in line with Kellogg's ideas that writing is a major cognitive challenge, because it is at once a test of memory, language, and thinking ability (Kellogg, 2018).

Writing is an individual activity similar to JoMcDonough and ChristopherShaw (1993) said that writing, like reading, is in many ways an individual, solitary activity. Similarly, TrishaPhelps-Gunn and DianaPhelps-Terasaki (1982) said that writing is useful, effective, enjoyable, and above all necessary component of modern world. It provides the pleasure of sending a personal message to a friend. It assumes career and financial importance in the composition of a resume or a business letter. They also said that writing is the most complex language mode, being four times removed from inner language, and adds the component of written expression to the earlier abilities. To Martha Heasley Cox (1962), writing is composed of successful development in three other language modes, deriving its focus from aural, oral, and visual, receptive components. From the opinion above, writing is the way of thinking or sending message from the writer to the reader which becomes the part of language or language skills and it also means communication.

Writing is one of the skills languages that is important in our lives, including as students. Through writing, we can inform others, make transactions, persuade, anger, and tell how we feel. However, we know that writing or learning to write especially in a second language is not just about

"writing something down". It is one of the four basic skills which are very complex and difficult to learn. Writing is now seen more as a means of communication to practice grammar. In this case, both students and teachers need to understand the theory and principles of writing and may need to be trained in teaching these skills (Padgate, 2008). Writing is also one of the important skills in teaching English. It always occupies a place in most English courses. Meyers, (2005) says that writing is a way to produce language, which you do naturally when you speak. Writing is communication with other people non-verbally.

Writing is also the act of finding and organizing your ideas, putting them on paper and reshaping and revising them. In another definition also comes from Pretty and Jensen (1980) argue that writing is a process of expressing thoughts, thoughts and feelings and shaping experiences, and is an important medium for self-expression, for communication, and for discovery of meaning. The next definition given by Harris, (1993). Writing is a process that occurs over a period of time, particularly if the writer takes account the sometimes extended periods of thinking that precede initial draft. According to Byrne, (1997). He states that writing is producing a sequence of sentence arranged in a particular order and linked together in certain and ways. Bell & Burnaby in Nunan, (1989) say that writing is extremely complex cognitive activity in which the writer is required to demonstrate control of a number of variables simultaneously, at the sentence level these include control of content,

format, sentence, structure, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling, and letter formation.

From some of the definitions of the various studies above (Meyers, 2005; Pretty & Jensen, 1980), it can be concluded that writing is one way to get to the product language that comes from our thinking. By using writing, we can share ideas, feelings or whatever is on our minds. It is written on paper or on a computer screen. This is influenced both by the personal attitudes and social experiences the author brings to the writing and the influence of specific political and institutional contexts. Based on the theories stated above, it can be concluded that writing is a process that occurs over a period of time to produce a sequence of sentences arranged in a particular order and linked together in certain ways that is cohesive and coherent. In writing, there are some aspects that should be concerned by a writer to write well. They are content, organization, word choice or vocabulary, language use, and mechanics (spelling and punctuation).

2.2 Previous Study

There have been many studies on learners beliefs that have been carried out by several researchers both locally (Hadi, 2020; Lestari, 2015; Ermerawati, 2016; Abdi & Ashadi, 2015) and internationally (Atmaca, 2016; Dincer, 2017; Li, 2004; Liao, 2006; Inccay & Dollar, 2011; Ismail, 2011; Padgate, 2008). Several related studies show how important it is to know learners' beliefs in the student learning process, from the results of previous study in Indonesia regarding student confidence in writing skills in the process of learning foreign

languages (Ermerawati, 2016; Hadi, 2020; Lestari, 2015; Abdi & Ashadi, 2015).

The results of previous studies describe several different focuses, including focusing on learners' beliefs in responding to difficulties in writing skills (Ermerawati, 2016; Hadi, 2020). 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). Then also several studies focused on what strategies learners' belief can develop their writing skills in foreign language learning (Lestari, 2015; Abdi & Ashadi, 2015).

Based on the results of Lestari's research, (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).

Then apart from the local level, at the international level, learners belief is also a topic of discussion (Atmaca, 2016; Dincer, 2017; Li, 2004; Liao, 2006; Inceciay & Dollar, 2011; Ismail, 2011; Padgate, 2008; Zhang, 2019) some of the results from these studies have different focuses, including student beliefs about the benefits of writing in foreign language learning (Li, 2006; Ismail, 2011), then learners' beliefs about the difficulties and ease of writing skills, especially in the foreign language learning process (Dincer, 2017; Padgate, 2008). 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). As well as learners' beliefs about developing abilities in writing skills (Chen, 2013; Ismail, 2011; Zhang, 2019). 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).

From several previous research results, both in terms of local and international levels, there are several similarities in focus, namely most of the previous researchers only focused on students' beliefs regarding difficulties and convenience in writing skills (Ermerawati, 2016; Dincer, 2017; Hadi, 2020; Padgate, 2008).) and also which only focuses on learning strategies that students believe can develop their writing skills (Abdi & Ashadi, 2015; Chen, 2013; Ismail, 2011; Lestari, 2015; Zhang, 2019). Unfortunately, previous research did not explore students' beliefs, so the researcher was interested in conducting research that focused on exploring students' beliefs about writing skills, especially in learning English. Researcher hope, by conducting this research can be useful for teachers and students in developing teaching and learning methods for teachers and students.