

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the study

Nowadays, many fundamental differences are found between men and women, including in terms of education. Many researchers often found differences in learning styles between men and women. The differences included speech differences, social status explanation, politeness, confidence, and interaction which were influenced by many aspects including gender (Holmes, 2013).

Based on the researcher's experience whichever asked a man about what he feels about learning a language, he said that learning a foreign language (English) is easy, also he will not use the language in his daily routine, so he does not need to take it seriously. On the other side, when the researcher asked a woman the same question, she said that learning a new language (English) is hard but she tries her best because she will use the language in her daily routine (in social media), so she takes it seriously.

In conclusion, researchers found that men and women have different perceptions about English learning. In this case, man has lower motivation to study English, this lower beliefs make him lazy and argue that learning English is not important. In contrast, the woman has higher beliefs that drive her to have higher and better motivation to master English.

Horwitz (1987) argues that beliefs refer to learners' language learning perceptions during the learning process. This belief may have important effects on students' behavior and actions. Belief about learning English requires an exceptional capacity may affect the language learning process negatively.

For example, a student who believes that learning English is easy will do it easier than who thought English is hard to understand. This is similar to someone who beliefs that English has to use the correct grammar, they will hard to speak or write in English because of that perception.

In addition, the students who believe the statement about "People who are good at mathematics or science are not good at learning foreign languages", will affect their perception about learning another language. If the students feel they are good at math, they will feel bad in learning language and get a lower score in the language learning aspect.

The last, students who believe the statement “Everyone can learn to speak a foreign language”, will get higher scores in language learning even they only have one day to learn the language. In conclusion, the students who have higher beliefs about language learning will get a higher score. On the other hand, the students who have lower beliefs about language learning will get a lower score in learning a foreign language.

Because of the problems, the researcher wants to know if there are any language learning beliefs differences between males and females. In collecting the data, the researcher will use Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) questionnaires by Horwitz (1987). The questionnaire includes 34 items divided into five aspects of students’ beliefs: 1) English language motivation and expectation, 2) Communication strategies, 3) The nature of language, 4) Difficulty in language learning, 5) Aptitude for learning EFL. This study will use a qualitative research method with Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 22.0) to analyze the data.

B. Research Questions

Based on the problems above, the research questions in this study are:

1. What do MTs Al-Ihsan students’ beliefs about EFL learning?
2. Do male and female students have differences in their EFL learning beliefs?

C. The Objective of The Study

1. To know the student’s beliefs about EFL learning.
2. To know the different beliefs between male and female students.

D. Significant of The Study

The result of this study expected to be useful for the teachers and students to improve classroom activities and classroom interaction.

1. Theoretically

This research gives general differences in students’ beliefs in English learning.

2. Practically

- a. For Teacher

By reading the result of the study, hopefully, the teacher will choose the better method to teach both genders which can make the lesson more valuable not only for girls but also for boys.

b. For Students

By knowing the result of the study, the students can improve their skills based on the five aspects which they need to improve.

E. Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding in this study, the researcher feels necessary to explain several definitions.

1. Language learning in this term is the teaching-learning process of developing the ability to understand and use the English language in society.
2. Gender in this term is the student's gender pertaining on masculinity and femininity.
3. Beliefs refer to learners' language learning perceptions and assumption during the learning process.