



## PORTRAYING STUDENTS' BELIEF IN BUSINESS WRITING 3 CLASS IN STARKI

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### Abstract

Learning beliefs play an important role in learning. Students achieve and grow differently since every student has a different belief. As belief is a motivation, having a constructive belief helps the students perform well. This belief also drives the students to find a way creatively to face the challenges in learning. On the other hand, having a shallow belief drives students to do dishonest actions. This study reveals Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Komunikasi dan Sekretari Tarakanita, known as STARKI, students' belief in Business Writing 3 class. The data was taken from the assignment submitted by the students in 2 classes from 4 classes of Business Writing 3. This research was inspired by the fact plagiarism always happens in Business Writing classes. This study found out that STARKI students had a belief that getting a good score to avoid retaking the same course in Business Writing 3. Beliefs that writing is the hardest skill to learn and they would not be able to achieve a high level of writing skills also become the reason why the student chose to commit plagiarism.

**Keywords:** *learning belief, STARKI students, Business Writing 3 class, plagiarism*

### 1.1 Introduction

In every academic writing, from the class assignment or paper to dissertation and academic publication, originality and uniqueness in writing is the focus of discussion. An academician is expected to be able to produce their original writing showing his original and unique thought toward a certain case. Seeing there is always a phenomenon of plagiarism even though the lecturers have emphasized that the example is not the only right thing, plagiarism is considered an educational crime, proud of student's ability and achievement.

Upon reading two articles about the purpose and importance of education, the researcher questioned the students' belief in learning in Business Writing class. The first article that the researcher read is "What is the purpose of learning?" Teaching at an EL Education School Helped Me Find the

Answer written by Sydney Chaffee (2018). She shared her experience teaching at Codman Academy in Boston. From this experience, she realized that the purpose of learning is empowering students. Learning should go beyond just getting a good grade.

The second article is entitled The Importance of Purpose in Education by Matthew Howell. He shared the purpose of education is to facilitate students to know their true interests and passion. Students will feel that the educational process is rewarding if they mark their learning process. To achieve that, a student needs to discover his growth.

Each student has his growth. Some can achieve good grades and find their interest through learning, while others feel they are failing since they cannot get a good grade and cannot discover their true passion. Related to those two articles, especially the second article, the different

output and experience in learning to depend on students themselves. In education, the term belief refers to motivation. If a student has a motivation driving him to perform well, he must find a way to achieve better.

This study aims to reveal Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Komunikasi dan Sekretari Tarakanita, later will be referred to as STARKI, students' learning belief in Business Writing 3 class, and how this belief affects the students' behavior in the learning process. The behavior being discussed is plagiarism. This research found out that committing plagiarism reflects the STARKI student did not have a positive motivation toward Business Writing 3 class.

## 2.1 Literature Review

The meaning of belief was expressed differently among the experts. Carrero and Pongutá (2010) conducted a study about students' beliefs. They claimed that belief is a part of the motivation. Fishbein & Ajzen 1975 and Ajzen 1988 as cited in Bernat and Gvozdenko (2005) defined belief as a central construct in all disciplines that drives a person in doing something. Since it is a part of motivation, belief can be regarded as the basic reason for the whole learning process. Concerning learning, students' achievement, then, is the result of their belief in learning.

Being regarded as a motivation, belief drives students' behavior towards the learning process. As motivation is defined as a reason for doing something, as well as learning belief gives the reason for a student is doing something. Breen (2001, as cited in Bernat & Gvozdenko, 2005) added belief in classroom context contributes to students' learning process and success. Thus, having a motivational learning belief enhances students' success in the learning process.

Having a positive belief in learning indeed encourages students to [perform better. Maulina (2019) found out that the students with a positive belief toward language learning influence their performance. Her respondents stated that

since they saw the difficulty in learning English as a challenge, they find a way creatively based on their preference to overcome the challenge. They used media such as BBC, VOA, and even applications to help them learn English.

## 3.1 Methodology

This study is a discourse analysis study. Discourse analysis is the study of analyzing language use in its socio-cultural context. Gee (2011) explained language use reveals the performance of social activities and social identities; in other words, language use is always political. The language user shows his belief through the language he uses. In deeper implication, the hearer can see the speaker's intention and wish through the language the speaker is using. To do so, certain analyses in language use such as the diction and test structure can be done to reveal the speaker's belief.

The data is students' work and attitude in doing the assignment in Business Writing 3 in the class academic year 2021-2022. The work being the data of this study is the works that have similar language and expression even the same piece of writing. The researcher found similar and the same language expression in two or more pieces of writing written by different students. Through the data that their works are similar to each other, this study portrayed their learning belief in Business Writing 3 class. This learning belief, then, was used to see the rationale behind their behavior in this class.

## 4.1 Finding and Discussion

### *The phenomenon of plagiarism*

One indicator of human development is the development of thinking ability. A child can only repeat the word and learn new words from it. As the child is getting older, he can produce a longer utterance. He can also include himself in the discussion, for example, on what he is going to wear or eat for dinner. Some children with good

nurture even can solve a problem at an early age.

As time goes by, when a child enters school and high school, he is expected to be able to use his brain capacity to the maximum level he can achieve. Some have the ability in science, some others are good at arranging words. The utterances are getting more complex and they can convey their own thought to a piece of writing.

In the university, each student is required to write a thesis to get the title. Even with a higher degree, they are supposed to be able to publish research in a reputable journal. This requirement, of course, serves the purpose to show and measure how well the thinking ability is developed. The university or other educational graduate are supposed to perform the thinking ability which does not only the ability to copy, for example, an idea into his writing but also implements the knowledge he has to produce his unique result of thinking.

Related to this, plagiarism is always an issue in academic practice. As a university graduate, one is expected to be able to produce one's original piece of scientific writing. This issue is also highlighted in Business Writing classes, including the Business Writing 3 class used as the data of this study. The purpose is to make the students aware that they need to produce their original writing because it shows how good their thinking ability is. Furthermore, they are expected to achieve create skill level on Bloom's Taxonomy as the requirement to graduate from university.

Business Writing 3 class is a compulsory subject for third-semester students. The materials in this subject are inquiry, quotation, making an order, collection letter, and complaint letter. The class is conducted by the lecturer giving the situation or the case to the students and asking them to make a business letter on the given situation.

Finding the phenomenon of plagiarism in Business Writing 3 class

shows that students have not reached the creation level yet as well as showing that they have not developed their thinking ability. At their age and educational level, they are supposed to create their piece of writing manifesting their logical thinking. Copying their friends' works reveals that they cannot create something, in this case, a business letter.

The reason they committed plagiarism is that they cannot or do not know how to express their thought in sentences. A small amount of students' event cannot understand the situation given by the lecturer; thus, they copied their friends' work to finish the assignment. No matter what the reason is or at what level her English ability is learning belief drove her to take an action.

The following data shows the plagiarism committed by some students:

#### Data 1

##### Student A collection letter

Dear Mr Agung

ACCOUNT NUMBER B-045

Based on journal book records, we found invoice no. B-045 is the amount of Rp. 4.050.000,00 for our plumbing service that you haven't paid since the due date of payment on 1 November 2021 and which is already a week overdue.

In connection with this, we have enclosed the B-045 invoice for immediately paying off the shortage through our BNI bank account No (00021876290) on behalf of Mr. Daniel. No later than one week after you receive this letter.

We will wait for your payment as soon as possible.

##### Student A replies to a collection letter

Dear Mr. Kaniwa

REPLY TO COLLECTION LETTER  
FOR ACCOUNT NUMBER SP30

We have received your collection letter for account number SP30 dated 7 November 2021. I am sorry for the late payment for account number SP30.

We have just started our company and things started to get busier. I admit that we forgot to pay for the rest of the payment because we are getting busier and some things got forgotten and left behind.

As you have stated in the letter before, I will settle the rest of the payment for account number SP30 within this week. I send you my apologies for this inconvenience.

Student B collection letter

Dear Mr. Lexy  
ACCOUNT NUMBER SP30  
According to our records, it has been a week since the due payment of your order number SP30 for our plumbing service. The amount of your unsettled payment is Rp.1.000.000. We have enclosed the SP30 invoice for the full information of your last order.  
Please send us the payment through our BRI bank account no. 821-872-839-094 on behalf of ALSA PLUMBER SERVICE. We hope to receive your payment before 11 November 2021.  
We are looking forward to receiving your payment as soon as possible.

Student B replied to a collection letter

Dear Mr. Malvin  
REPLY TO COLLECTION LETTER  
FOR ACCOUNT NUMBER SP30  
We have received your collection letter for account number SP30 dated 7 November 2021. I am sorry for the late payment for account number SP30.  
We have just started our company and things started to get busier. I admit that we forgot to pay for the rest of the payment because we are getting busier and some things got forgotten and left behind.  
As you have stated in the letter before, I will settle the rest of the payment for account number SP30 within this week.  
Once again, I send you my apologies for this inconvenience.

From data 1, it can be seen how similar those two works are. The topic for that assignment is writing a collection letter. Taylor (2012) explained collection letter is a letter sent by the seller to the customer confirming the late payment as well as asking the customer to finish the payment soon. This letter is sent as a statement that the buyer has a late payment. The last paragraph is only slightly different from one another. The situation given for that was writing a collection letter; there

was no specific information about the seller or the customer. Considering this kind of assignment, it is a miracle to have two works that were similar to each other. Henceforth, the only possible situation is one student looked at her friend's work and copied it with a little modification.

In addition, there is an interesting finding while checking the students' works. As the topic for Business Writing 3 class is the business letter related to commercial, each student is expected to produce a series of commercial business letters: inquiry, reply to an inquiry, quotation, order, invoice, collection letter, reply to a collection letter, complaint letter, and reply to a complaint letter. Usually, the lecturer asks the students to use the same name to experience the communication between the seller and the customer. Student A from Data 1 did not use the same name for seller and buyer as well as the account number. Unlike student A, student B used the same name for buyer and seller and account number as well.

Considering this peculiarity, plagiarism is most likely to be done by students to finish the assignment. The sad truth is they even did not bother to check whether the work was correct. They admitted that they looked at their friends' work as examples. However, seeing that they only copied and pasted the letter shows that it was just an excuse they made to cover their dishonest deed. If they truly saw their friends' works as an example, then they should have paraphrased the sentence or so.

Data 2

Student A

Many thanks for your inquiry of 13 September. I have today mailed our print catalog and price and we will send it to your home address.

Student B

Many thanks for your inquiry of 13 September 2021. I have today mailed our print catalog and price to your company address.

A student copied her friend's work in some parts of the letter. As is shown in data 2, one of the students copied the background part of the letter. The topic for data 2 is inquiry. Similar to the situation given for the collection letter, each student was supposed to make their unique situation. Thus, it was suspicious that two students had the same date; they have choices among 365 days a year anyway.

### *Students' belief in learning*

As was stated in the previous part of this writing, research conducted by Maulina (2019) shows positive learning belief affects students' behavior. The phenomenon of plagiarism in Business Writing 3 class reflects STARKI students' belief in learning Business Writing 3 class. Committing plagiarism indicates STARKI students do not have a positive belief toward this class.

Talking with the students, the researcher found out that the Business Writing class is seen as a difficult subject learned in STARKI. The students admitted that they were lack of exposure to business expression. They were given the handout and sourcebook containing all materials they are learning. The lecturer gave the syllabus serves as the guideline for what material was learned at each meeting.

During the classroom activity, the lecturer explained the material, asked the students to make their piece of writing, and gave feedback on their writing. Feedback is given to make the student improve their performance. As an example, when a lecturer gave feedback on how to write a good letter subject then on the next assignment the mistake in writing the letter subject will not occur. As well as when the lecturer mentioned that a letter must have a reference, then on the next letter students are supposed to write a reference they did not put on the previous assignment.

### Data 3

ENQUIRY LETTERS → check the format, what do you inquire about?  
REPLYING TO YOUR → Ø ENQUIRY LETTER, check the format



Picture 4.1 Format in writing a subject  
Source: Taylor (2012, p. 57)

From Data 3, it can be seen how the same student did not seem to feel encouraged to perform better after receiving feedback. The lecturer mentioned that this student wrote the subject of the letter wrongly; the subject must be written in the same font size as the body of the letter and it is not written in bold. This phenomenon reflects how students see the lecturer's feedback. They regard the feedback as the lecturer's obligation to check their work and to make the worth of the money the lecturer earns. It is a paradox when they did not value the lecturer's feedback the same; they should have regarded the feedback as an encouragement to improve since they have spent time, effort, and money studying in college.

They tried to use google translate, but the result of the writing was bad and they did not know how to correct it. At the same time, they did not know another tool that can help them translate the Indonesian expression they had in mind into English. There are other applications that they can use that correct your English. If the students are willing to walk an extra mile to improve their English, they will not stop admitting the translation or their English is bad. They are supposed to spend an extra minute checking their expression using the free application they can find.

Facing these challenges and not having a good attitude toward the subject made the students focus on how to get a good score. Their learning belief drives them to do dishonest actions, in this case,

plagiarism. They copied their friends' works with the hope that the submitted work is a good product. They were too lazy to, as it was mentioned earlier, walk an extra mile to produce their piece of writing.

In addition, the students saw the writing assignment as just a duty and requirement to pass the class. Assignments given by the lecturers are supposed to be regarded as a means to evaluate their performance. The score given by the lecturer is just a recognition of the students' improvement in learning, not as a goal of learning. If a student gets a bad score or feedback on their work, they should be encouraged to perform better in the future. This improvement process will not happen if a student does not have a good learning belief.

### 5.1 Conclusion

Belief has an important role in learning. Students who believe that getting a good score and fulfilling the duty to finish the assignment tend to commit plagiarism. This belief drives the student to choose the shortcut in completing the class. Those who believe that learning is a process of improving skills will see the assignment as a way to improve themselves.

As the students do not have a positive belief toward Business Writing 3 class, they did not have a positive behavior while taking this course. Committing plagiarism and being lazy to spend extra time to finish the assignment by themselves portrayed they did not have a positive learning belief. This kind of belief also made them see the

assignment as a burden. They succumbed to the temptation of doing dishonest actions just to finish the assignment and submit it on time.

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