A STUDY ON THE ABILITY OF THE SECOND YEAR STUDENTS OF SMAN 08 SIAK IN WRITING APPLICATION LETTER FOR AN ADVERTISEMENT

Kartini, Effendy Gultom, and Supriusman
English Study Program of FKIP Riau University

Abstract: Writing is one of the English language skill that have to be learned by the students, so that, it needs great attention not only from the teachers but also from the students. In this case, the students are given a chance to use their creative and critical thinking to express their ideas and opinions. This research is a descriptive research. This research was intended to analyze the ability of the second year students of SMAN 08 Siak in writing application letter for an advertisement. The writer asked the students to write letters of application in business according to an advertisement from 'Jakarta Post'. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the students' ability in writing application letter for an advertisement is in "good" level.

Keywords: *descriptive research, writing skill, application letter*

INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the English language skill that have to be learned by the students, so that, it needs great attention not only from the teachers but also from the students. According to Petty (1990:362), writing is a process of expressing thought and shaping experiences. It means that we can express freely what comes to our mind, feeling, and experience in a written form.

Angelo (1980:5) states that writing is a form of thinking, but it's thinking for a particular audience and occasion. According to him, writing can help someone to think critically. It enables us to perceive relationships, to deepen perception and to solve the problems. He also adds that writing can help one to discover at she or he really thinks and feels about people, ideas, issues and events only in the actual process of writing. In addition, Tarigan (1982:3) says that writing is an activity which is productive and expressive. He adds that writing skill does not come automatically, but it needs a lot of practice in order to be able to use the elements of writing and

to know the purpose of writing itself.

In this globalization era, the ability to write becomes increasingly important, because communication among people becomes more intense and to maintain close cooperation between them can be made through written form. Moreover, writing is one subject that must be studied by the students especially at junior high school, senior high school and university. The students are expected to be able to write in a number of common writing styles.

One kind of writing skills that will be increasingly important now is writing letter especially writing business letter. A business letter is a formal means of communication between two people, a person and a corporation or two corporations. According to Wishon (1980:360), there are four types of letters, they are: letter of order, request, application and recommendation. Here the writer focuses on application letter. The application letter is a letter that used to express the applicant's wishes to get the position in a company or institution which includes his/her selling point information, such as education, skill and experience.

On the other hand, writing application letter have taught in the curriculum of writing subject for the second year students at senior high school. It means, the students are demanded to have skill in writing an application letter such as, skillful in using the format of the letter that consists of heading, inside address, salutation, body, closing and signature.

Therefore, in this research the writer wants to know the ability of the second year students of SMAN 08 Siak in writing application letter for an advertisement.

Hopefully, the result of this research will give some contributions for English teachers and English learners about the difficulties faced by the students in learning writing business letter especially in writing application letter. Beside, this research will help the students to overcome their difficulties and provide helpful information about the students' ability in writing application letter.

METHODOLOGY

The population of this research is the second year students of SMAN 08 Siak. The number of the students is 25 students. Because the population is large enough, it is necessary to have sample. According to Gay (2004),

sampling is the process of selecting number of individuals for a study that represented the larger group from which they were selected. In this research, the writer use cluster random sampling technique. Cluster random sampling is sampling in which groups, not individuals, are randomly selected. The reason for choosing this technique is less time and easier to obtain permission to use all the students in certain class than several students in many classes. So, the writer takes only one class out of 5 classes as the sample of this research. The process of choosing the class is by using lottery.

To get the data of the students' ability in writing an application letters, the writer used an advertisement taken from "Jakarta Post". The writer asked the students to write letters of application in business. In scoring the students' compositions, the writer uses the scoring system based on Christine Bauer (2007) and asked three raters to evaluate the students' ability in writing application letter.

The Evaluation Aspects of Application Letters (Christine

The Aspects of Application Letter that should be Evaluated	The Score Range
Format/Layout Letter	5:4:3:2:1
Organization/Form	5:4:3:2:1
Vocabulary	5:4:3:2:1
The Accuracy in Grammar	5:4:3:2:1
Mechanics	5:4:3:2:1

To analyze the level of the students' writing ability, the writer uses the formula according to Hughes (1993:91) as follows:

S = G + V + M + O + F

S = Students' Score

G = Students' ability in grammar

V = Students' ability in vocabulary

M = Students' ability in mechanic

O = Students' ability in organization

F = Students' ability in format/layout

To know the real score of the students the writer used the formula as the following:

$$RS = \frac{TS}{25} \times 100$$

RS = Real Score
TS = Total Score

After getting the real score, the next step is to know the percentage of the students' ability in writing application letters according to the three raters using the following formula:

$$P = \frac{CR}{R} \times 100$$

P = Percentage
CR = Number of the students' correct
R   = Number of total students

(Hatch & Farhady, 1982:63)

Then, to find out the *Mean*score of the students' ability in writing application letters, the data was analyzed by using this formula:

$$X = \frac{\Sigma X}{N}$$

X   = The average score of the test
"x = The total score of the students
N   = The number of the students   (Hatch & Farhady, 1982:55)

The last, to see the ability level of the second year students of SMAN 08 Siak in writing application letter, this classification is used:

The Range of Real Score	Classification
81 – 100	Excellent
61 – 80	Good
41 – 60	Mediocre
21 – 40	Poor
0 – 20	Very Poor

(Hughes, 1993:91)

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

After collecting the data, the students' score were evaluated by the writer. There are five components of writing application letter thatwill be evaluated, they are: the format of the letter, the accuracy in grammar, organization, vocabulary, and mechanic. The result of the students' ability in writing an application letter for an advertisement can be seen in the table 1 below:

Table 1. The Students Score in Writing Application Letter According

No.	The Real Score			Total of Real Score	The Average Score of Three Raters	Level of Ability
	Rater 1	Rater 2	Rater 3			
1.	76	80	76	232	77.3	Good
2.	56	60	64	180	60	Mediocre
3.	56	64	56	176	58.67	Mediocre
4.	56	60	64	180	60	Mediocre
5.	60	56	64	180	60	Mediocre
6.	60	56	64	180	60	Mediocre
7.	60	52	68	180	60	Mediocre
8.	72	80	84	236	78.67	Good
9.	60	60	60	180	60	Mediocre
10.	56	56	68	180	60	Mediocre
11.	80	84	88	252	84	Excellent
12.	60	56	56	172	57.33	Mediocre
13.	60	60	60	180	60	Mediocre
14.	56	60	64	180	60	Mediocre
15.	60	52	60	172	57.33	Mediocre
16.	76	72	76	224	74.67	Good
17.	80	76	80	236	78.67	Good
18.	76	72	72	220	73.33	Good
19.	60	60	60	180	60	Mediocre
20.	80	80	80	240	80	Good
21.	60	56	48	164	54.67	Mediocre
22.	72	68	84	224	74.67	Good
23.	56	56	64	176	58.67	Mediocre
24.	76	72	84	232	77.33	Good
25.	84	84	80	248	82.67	Excellent

Table 1 shows that 2 students are in *excellent* level, 8 students are in *good* level, 15 students are in *mediocre* level, and no student is in *poor* level and *very poor* level.

Then, the writer found out the students' average scores for each aspect of writing. The result can be seen in the table 2:

Table 2
The Students' Average Scores for Each Aspect of Writing According to Three Raters

Table 2 shows that the lowest scores for each aspect of writing is in the mechanic aspect. The average score for mechanic aspect is 3.0. While the highest score for each aspect of writing is in organization aspect. The students' average score for organization is 3.56. The students' average score for format/layout is 3.32, and the students' average score for vocabulary is 3.45. The last, the average score for each aspect of writing is 3.3.

After analyzing the data, the writer made percentage of the students' ability in writing as follows:

The Aspect of Writing	Rater 1			Rater 2			Rater 3			Average Score of the Three Raters	Ability
	∑x	N	X	∑x	N	X	∑x	N	X		
Format/Layout	81	25	3.24	83	25	3.24	87	25	3.48	3.32	Good
Grammar	83	25	3.32	88	25	3.52	84	25	3.36	3.4	Good
Vocabulary	83	25	3.32	92	25		86	25	3.44		Good
Mechanic	76	25	3.04	73	25	2.92	82	25	3.28	3.0	Mediocre
Organization	83	25	3.32	92	25	3.68	92	25	3.68	3.56	Good
										X = 3.3	Good

Table 3
The Percentage of Students' Ability in Writing Test

Score	Classification	Rater 1		Rater 2		Rater 3	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
81 – 100	Excellent	2	8	2	8	4	16
61 – 80	Good	10	40	8	32	14	56
40 – 60	Mediocre	14	56	15	60	7	28
21 – 40	Poor	0	0	0	0	0	0
0 – 21	Very poor	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total		25	100%	25	100%	25	100%

Table 4
The Students' Scores and Their Categories in Writing an Application Letter

Rater	Total Real Score	Average	Level of Ability
1	1652	66	Good
2	1624	64	Good
3	1724	68	Good
Total		198	Good
Average		66	

Table 3 shows the total score of the students from the three raters showing their ability level in writing an application letter. The average score of the students according to the first rater is 66 (considered as *good* level). Next, according to the second rater is 64 (classified into *good* level). And the last, according to the third rater is 68 (considered as *good* level).

After calculating the average score of the three raters, the writer found out that the mean score of the students is 66. It can be concluded that the ability of the second year students of SMAN 08 Siak in writing application letter for an advertisement is in *good* level.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The title of this research is a study on the ability of the second year students of SMAN 08 Siak in writing an application letter for an advertisement. In this case, the writer wants to explore the ability of the students in writing application letters.

From the presentation of the data, the writer found out that the most difficult aspect for the students is in mechanic where the score gained by the students is 3.0 (classified into *mediocre* level). Then, the easiest aspect for the students is in organization. It can be seen from the score gained by the students is 3.56 (classified into *good* level). In addition, based on the mean score gained by the students according to the three raters is 66 (classified into *good* level). Therefore, it can be concluded that the students of SMAN 08 Siak are able to write application letter.

Based on the conclusions above, the writer would like to offer some suggestions. Firstly, the students should have a good motivation to improve their writing. Secondly, the students should master all of aspects of writing so

that they are able to compose good writing that includes correct grammar, correct spelling and punctuation, appropriate structure and vocabulary and good organization. Thirdly, it will be better for the teachers to give more information about how to do the writing test well. Fourthly, it will be better if the students read the ways in writing an application letter from other sources so that they can improve their ability in writing application letters. Finally, English teachers should encourage the students to practice their writing, especially in writing business letter.

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