USING WRITING PROCESS IN TEACHING AN APPLICATION LETTER THROUGH GROUP WORK FOR VOCATIONAL STUDENTS

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Abstract : Using writing process in teaching an application letter through group work for vocational students. The purpose of this research is to investigate whether teaching application letter using writing process approach is effective or not. The research method used in this research is pre-experiment. Based on the result of the pretest, the students’ achievement is 49.8. The result of the students’ achievement in posttest was 77.4. The result of the students’ interval score of pretest and posttest was 27.6. The result shows that the writing processes help the students in writing application letter. Based on the result of the data computation, it was obtained that the t-test score was 16.53. It indicated that the t-test result was higher than t-table (2.042). It indicated the alternative hypothesis is accepted; the writing process approach is effective in teaching an application letter.

Keywords : application letter, writing process

Writing is very essential for the students to become proficient at, for example to apply a job. Writing is an important part of authentic communication which can transfer ideas or message. There are numerous kind of writing such as writing letters, reports and summaries which should be mastered by the learners. Most of the learners will answer to write letter or composition if the teacher asks them about immediate use of writing in class. Writing letters or compositions are seldom practiced by the student and they are not used to do it. Therefore, teacher should give much practice to them.

The letter writing can be an enjoyable activity if the learners’ motivation and expectation are kept high (Dhaim : 1992). This activity seems a relevant way to achieve the ability of writing letter. This activity is also flexible. It doesn’t necessarily have to be a talk that the students are asked to write about.
Shaheen (1998:43) said that most of the students’ writing focuses on grammar, spelling, and structure and not on meaning, significance, and pleasure. Writing “correct” sentences makes students’ forget what they are writing about. Sometimes we will find the students use simple sentences with some mistake and they not only understand but also they use language with flair and imagination. What they write will be significant for them, and also for teacher. Based on Shaheen’s experience, she said that teacher should give the students more choices to write about. So those who find writing letter difficult can have some hints. The process genre approach makes this feasible, as background material is read during prewriting activities, and speaking and listening occur during lectures and when giving or receiving feedback. Typically, the teaching procedure for the process genre approach is divided into the following six steps: (1) preparation, (2) modeling and reinforcing, (3) planning, (4) joint constructing, (5) independent constructing, and (6) revising based on Badger and White (2000).

The application letter is sales letter. Dhany (1994:150) states that application letter is not different from sales letter because in application letter, the writer tries to convince the reader for the offer. The sender tries to offer what he has such as: knowledge, special ability/skill, job experience and performance of sender himself. It means, application letter is very important for the student to find out a job because to get a job the students have to explain about themselves for example: their ability, knowledge, performance and their experience of job.

The application letter is the concerning the job seeking. It may be the most important letter that the person ever writes, because it may change the whole course of person career. So, it obviously demand is careful attention must be written neatly and clearly because the employer will judge some of the applicant personality through this letter.

To write this letter, the student must consider with the criteria of good application letter such as using formal sentences and the message of this letter must be clear and understood by the reader. In writing application letter the student should have clear ideas of what they are going to say. Besides the student have to consider with some important aspects of writing, especially in making an application letter such as content and organization, language use and mechanics, so, it is very important for the teacher to guide their student to write a good application letter.

1. Form of Application Letter

The style of business letter is different from style of personal letter. Dhanny (1995) states business letter have six style of letter, they are:

a. Full block style
In full block style, writing and typing all of the parts of letter starts from left of the letter.

b. Block style
In this style of business letters some of the parts of letters start from left of the letter such as: reference line, inside address, attention line, salutation, subject line and body of letter. For date line, complimentary close and signature start from right of letterhead.

c. Semi block style
In this style of business letters some of the parts of letters start from left of the letter such as: reference line, inside address, attention line, salutation, subject line and body of letter. For date line, complimentary close and signature start from right of letterhead.

d. Indented style
The style of writing this letter almost same with the semi block style. The difference in writing inside address which every line of inside address starts from fifth tick.

e. Simplified style
   The style of writing this letter almost same with the block style. In simplified style salutation and complementary close are not written. The signature line is written four spaces under last line of letter.

f. Hanging indented style
   In hanging indented style, every paragraph start from left of the letter, then the lines are written after fifth tick from left side of letter.

In this research the writer choosing full block style and semi block style, because these styles are common used to write application letter. Based on Benton (2009:3) there are some parts of an application letter. The part of application letter are follows:

a. Personal stationary is the writer address

b. Date line is when the letter written by writer

c. Inside address is including the name and the address of person who will receive the letter. In the letter, inside letter must be written correctly and it has role:
   1. The first line includes the full name and function who will receive the letter.
   2. The second line includes the location/name of the way and number of house of the company.
   3. The third line includes the names of city.
   4. The fourth line includes the name of the country.

d. Salutation is greeting from the writer to reader

e. Body letter
   1. Opening paragraph
      In the opening paragraph, the applicant should state the reason of writing the application. If it is advertised in promotion, mention the position title and where it was advertised.
   2. Core (message of letter)
      In this part, state what the applicant offers and the reasons why the curriculum vitae should be read. In this part, one should memorize the experience and skill, at the same time to respond the position requirements as per the advertisement.
   3. Closing paragraph
      The closing paragraph should ask for some action from the recipient. This is one ask for an interview. It should also state where and how they employee reach the applicant, and it should think the recipient for giving the opportunity to apply.

f. Complementary close
   In this section the applicant should show the hospitality by saying.

g. Writer’s identification
   The applicant should state clear name and signature.

The concept of group work could be explored by considering some definitions on group work provided by language experts as follows: Robert(2003:14) indicates that “group work is one whose members share a common goal, it must be small enough (three to thirteen members) so members can interact if the group is to be successful, members must get along with one another”.

Robert (2003:21) say that “by group work we mean just that pupils working together as a group or team for a joint purpose or outcome.” The children may work on a practical task, on a problem that requires one solution, brainstorming or discussing views on a
local issue about which views are strong. We argue that group work can be used across all curriculum areas, and for many different type of task.

Practical and Principle Factors in Group Work

1. The Basis Group –Form

   The way of choosing members for group work is very necessary because it effects the interaction among members Robert (2003:23) explains “some basis of group – form in:

   a. Heterogeneity

      Most classes, fortunately, are composed of pupils who are not so widely dissimilar in ability that they cannot work together. Heterogeneous groups may be formed after appropriate testing or may be based upon the teacher’s assessment of abilities. If it is the teacher’s intention to stress group competition, it is convenient to have groups of roughly equivalent ability. Similarly, if it is intended that the groups work through the same sequence of inquiry or activity, it may be thought desirable to have groups which will work at somewhat the same place.

   b. Ability

      Where differences in ability are such that it is unprofitable for unsorted children to work together, ability grouping is the logical choice, especially if the purpose is skill building

   c. Interest

      Teacher who are concerned with the simulation of their students and who are consciously aware that children differ widely in the topics that interest them, many choose the group students according to interest.”

2. Friendship

   Friendship group often prove the most stable; and they are the most likely to promote social development and the acquisition of group skills. While setting up friendship groups, the teacher gains valuable insight into the attitudes and relationships of his pupils. He can identify the isolates, those with whom nobody wishes to associate, and the stats, the popular individuals whose interest-or lack of interest-in a project may away many other students.

   a. The Group Size

      Robert(2003:27) say that “the size of groups should be appropriate to the age and experience of pupils and the purpose of the group task. Groups should normally consist of no more than four or five pupils. And the group size may be smaller when pupils are learning how to interact together.”

      Byrn (2000:75) says that “there is no magic number for groups, but four to eight students in each is a good general guide. Some activities such as games, work better with the smaller numbers because students get turn more often.”

**METHOD**

In this research, the writer conducts a pre-experimental study. The method used is the pre-experimental method. Suryabrata (1983 : 45) says that pre-experimental design is conducted by “ menggunakan satu kelompok subyek. Pertama-tama dilakukan pengukuran, lalu dikenakan perlakuan untuk jangka waktu tertentu, kemudian dilakukan pengukuran untuk kedua kalinya (using a subject. First, the subject will be measured, then will be treated after that the second test should be conducted)”. An experimental design has purpose of collecting data which relevant to problems and also to test the hypothesis. The uses pre-experimental designs are not really considered
model experiments because they do not account for extraneous variables which may have influenced the results.

There are three most commonly used pre-experimental designs are the one-shot case study, one group pre test, and the intact group comparison design. One group pre-test is intended to get information about the students’ ability before treatment. It doesn’t use control group. In this research, writer uses the one group pre-test and post-test. The pre-test is given before treatment begins. So there are two tests: T1= the pre-test and T2= post-test.

Furthermore, Suryabrata describe pre-experimental method as follow:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre test</th>
<th>Treatment</th>
<th>Post test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T1</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>T2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Brown (1998:11) states “population is the entire group that is of interest in study. Population is the whole object of research which may consist of human being, things, plants, phenomenon, test score or events which have certain characteristics as data resources in a research. Meanwhile, Best (1997: 267) judged that population is any group of individual that has one or more characteristics in common that are interested to the researchers. The population may be all the individuals of a particular type or more restricted part of that group. Arikunto (1989 : 102) refers population to “keseluruhan subjek penelitian,” (the whole research subject).

The population of this research is the twelfth grade year students of SMK Muhammadiyah. The writer chooses SMK Muhammadiyah Pontianak because the writer has done teaching practice there. The total number of population is 3 classes, they are:

a. Class Administrasi perkantoran 1 with 34 students
b. Class Administrasi perkantoran 2 with 35 students
c. Class Akuntansi with 43 students
d. Sample is part of population which is used as the source of real data of the research. Cohen (2005:92) states that sample is the smaller group or subset of the total population as representative of the total population. If the population is more than 100 persons, we may take 10-15 percent or 20-25 percent or more from the population. In selecting the sample, the writer will use cluster random sampling. This technique requires groups or clusters in taking the sample based on the groups that have already existed in the population. The class that will be sample is class Administrasi Perkantoran 2, which consists of 35 students.

In this research, the writer uses measurement technique to collect the data. According to Ross (2005 : 33), “Measurement is a process that assigns a numerical description to some attribute of an object, person, or even.” Therefore, for the purpose of this research, the measurement technique is intended to measure the significant difference of the students’ score in experimental and control group on pretest and posttest. Then, the result of the posttest is measured by using parametric statistics in form of t-test. The t-test is used to find out the significant difference of mean score between experimental and control group after treatment.

Tool of data collecting in this research is written test. The researcher asks the students to write an application letter based on the job vacancy given.

The data are collected from the students’ score in writing application letter. In scoring students’ writing, there are nine aspects to be evaluated: personal stationery, date line, inside address, salutation, opening paragraph, core, closing paragraph, complementary close and writer’s identification. To find out the students’ individual score of pre test and
post test, the writer used the scoring profile based on the nine aspects above to be evaluated in writing application letter. The total score was one hundred by added the score in each aspect.

To find out the students’ mean score of pre-test and post-test, the writer used the following formula:

\[
x = \frac{\sum x}{n}
\]

Where:
- \(x\) = mean
- \(\sum x\) = the total score
- \(n\) = the total number of students who took the test

After calculating the students’ mean score of pre-test and post-test, the writer calculated the students’ interval score of posttest and pre-test by subtraction formula:

\[
\overline{D} = \overline{X}_2 - \overline{X}_1
\]

Where:
- \(\overline{D}\) = the different score of the students’ mean score of pre-test and post-test
- \(\overline{X}_2\) = the students’ mean score of post-test
- \(\overline{X}_1\) = the students’ mean score of pre-test

Analysis on the students’ significant difference of pre-test and post-test.

\[
t = \frac{\overline{D}}{\sqrt{\frac{\sum D^2 - \left(\frac{\sum D}{N}\right)^2}{N (N - 1)}}}
\]

\(t\) = the t-value for correlated means
\(\overline{D}\) = deviation of each subject.
\(\sum D\) = the number of the students
\(\sum D^2\) = the sum of the squared difference score
\(N\) = the number of students

Then, to classify the data, the writer provides the criteria of the students’ mean score as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Score</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Qualification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>80-100</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Good to excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-79</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Average to good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-64</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Poor to average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-49</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The purpose of this research is to investigate whether or not teaching application letter through writing process significantly increases the students’ score in writing. The population of this research is the students of SMK Muhammadiyah Pontianak in academic year 2011/2012. The total sample of this research is 35 students. Based on the result on students’ achievement in pretest, the result is 49.8. It indicated that the students’ achievement is as poor to average.

Based on the result on students’ achievement in posttest, the result is 77.4. It indicated that the students’ achievement is as average to good.

Discussion

Based on the result of the data analysis, the students’ achievement on writing application letter by using teaching process can be improved. Based on the result of the pretest, the students’ achievement was 49.8 which categorized at poor to average. The pretest was given before the treatment. After having the treatment, the students had the posttest. The result of the students’ achievement in posttest was 77.4 which categorized as average to good. The result of the students’ interval score of pretest and posttest was 27.6. The result showed that the writing process can help the students in writing application letter.

Then the writer analyzed the significance of the students’ interval score of pretest and posttest by using the t-test formula. Based on the result of the data computation, it was obtained that the t-test score was 16.53. It indicated that the t-test result was higher than t-table (2.042) at 0.05 the degree of freedom (df) = N-I (35-1=34). It indicated the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

Based on the data analysis of the students’ posttest score, it can be concluded that (1) the use of writing process in writing application letter is effective for the XII grade students of SMK Muhammadiyah Pontianak in academic year 2011/2012. This can be seen through the result of the pretest and posttest. The posttest result (77.4) is higher than the pretest result (49.8). It indicated that there was an improvement on students’ writing achievement. (2) The significance of the students’ interval score of pretest and posttest by using the t-test formula. Based on the result of the data computation, it was obtained that the t-test score was 16.53. It indicated that the t-test result was higher than t-table (2.042) at 0.05 the degree of freedom (df) = N-I (35-1=34). It indicated the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Suggestion

Based on the result of the research, the writer gives some suggestion that (1) The teacher could use writing process in teaching writing, not only for writing application letter. It is because the writing process can help the students to write step by step, not directly write the text or letter. (2) In teaching activities, the group work could be more effective rather than the students should learn the subject individually. (3) Teacher should be more active in using some teaching techniques to help the students learn the materials easier.
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