The Use of Application Letter Resources on Improving Writing Competence Students at SMA Istiqamah Bandung

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Abstract : Writing is a means of expressing thoughts and emotions. Writing is a serves as a way for individuals to communicate with their surroundings, especially for students in senior high school. Writing is employed in all learning activities. One of the activities students engage in is writing descriptive texts. Students are required to communicate effectively in English, orally and in writing. Proficiency in writing is essential before students can speak English fluently. It is expected that students can write effectively and accurately, as writing is crucial for their success in learning English. This study aims to enhance students writing skills through the use of application letters. By engaging with application letters, students are guided to assess their writing competencies and improve their skills, particularly among third-grade students in XII IPA 2 senior high school. This research employed a qualitative approach involving observation, questionnaires, and interviews. The study included 28 third-grade students from XII IPA 2 senior high school as participants. The findings indicate that the use of application letters has effectively enhanced students' writing competencies. It is recommended that students gain confidence in expressing their ideas in written form and utilize application letters to overcome writing difficulties and find solutions.

Keywords : Writing competence, Application letter, Improving.

INTRODUCTION

English is a crucial language for students in contemporary times, serving as a means of communication that facilitates global connections. This includes tasks such as sending emails, responding to personal correspondence, writing essays, and preparing reports for school assignments, as well as explaining causes and effects Ilyosovna (2020). In global world the importance of English cannot be denied and ignored since English is the most common language spoken everywhere this opinion is strengthened by Ilyosovna (2020). There are challenges and obstacles encountered in improving English skills. Some students has lack motivation because learning English does not meet their need. According to (Mido & Asmita, 2023). Unexpectedly, their interest in learning English can vary from day to day, which can

affect their goals of mastery by the end of the learning session. According to Harmer (2001) states that writing is a means of communication used to convey thoughts or express emotions through written words form. It means that writing is productive skills that express feeling through written communication.

In line with (Oshima & Hogue, 2007), writing is a process that involves generating, organizing, drafting, and polishing. It begins with generating ideas, followed by organizing them, drafting a rough version, and finally polishing the draft through editing and revision. Writing is a language skill categorized as a productive skill because it constructs words or sentences into larger units, such as paragraphs and texts. It is a process used to convey information or knowledge through text. This means that writing involves generating ideas and articulating them clearly. It is challenging if students are unfamiliar with the principles of writing. To create an application letter, students must know how to write correctly and effectively. Developing writing skills is crucial because they are used to compose texts, sentences, and paragraphs.

The theoretical foundation of the research involves three main theories. First, Markel (2007) application letters are crucial as the initial step in securing a job. Applicants use application letters to present their qualifications and profiles. Therefore, applicants must craft an engaging and clear application letter to make a favorable impression. According to Cahyono et al. (2015), application letters are typically written when applying for employment. Second Harmer (2004) writing is a fundamental skill in learning English and has always been integral to English language curriculum. It involves expressing thoughts, experiences, ideas, and feelings through written communication. When writing, we use written symbols combinations of letters that correspond to spoken sounds. These symbols convey the writer's message to the reader. To excel in writing, students need to pay close attention to their writing skills. Third Patel (2013) argues that writing is a type of linguistic expression, unlike drawing, which uses visual symbols to represent the sounds of language. Its importance can vary significantly among students. Writing plays a crucial role in language learning as it offers a great opportunity to enhance vocabulary, spelling, and sentence structure. Writing skills are best learned when writing practice is integrated with other language skills. This integration fosters strong overall language proficiency.

According to L. Gartside (2000) said that application letter is essentially a sales pitch. It's a letter where an applicant tries to sell their qualifications, training, and experience. The goal is to pique the employers interest in their skills and accomplishments and writing ability

to create well structured. An application letter is one of the most formal types of written communication used by individuals to communicate with others. (Simion & Vasile, 2017) An application letter should be written with sincerity, simplicity, brevity, politeness, and neatness. When writing an application letter, the applicant should state the desired job and conditions clearly. However, the applicant's goal in the application letter should be to convince the company, agency, organization, or government department that they are the right and necessary person for the job.

In real condition, related to improving writing competence students trough application letter, based on the preliminary research, it was found problems faced by students at SMA Istiqamah Bandung. The issue lies with the students of SMA Istiqamah, some of them might understand the material about application letters, while others seem to have difficulty grasping the concept due to limited teaching and learning activities (KBM) and the vast amount of material that must be covered before the end of semester exams. The writer is interested to choose and researching this topic because the application letter material is extremely important for the future of students at SMA Istiqamah and other students as well. Since some of them may continue their education to university and others may choose to work, the application letter is very important to be taught in school material. Through a qualitative inquiry and case study, this study will explore the ways in which students engage with application letter resources, their perceptions of the relevance and effectiveness of these materials. By choosing the application letter resources and writing competence within the context of SMA Istiqamah Bandung in XII IPA 2 with 28 participants, As a result, the writer has the intention to conduct study on the particular occurrences.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research used qualitative research and case study for the research design to explore the factors of application letter use on students and main aspects that help students to become improve in writing competence. Qualitative research is chosen as the most suitable approach for this research, aligning with (Creswell, 2015) stated that qualitative approach is more of a strong methods approach in which emphasize rigorous methods, good protocols for collection and analysis, multiple and extensive data collection, and multiple steps in data analysis.

The writer gathers the information through observations, questionare, and interviews to address research questions and to collect the data (Permana, 2022). This research will conduct with three main instrument to gain information namely interview, questionare, and observation.

First, observation from XII IPA 2 class who have used and learn application letter resources, provide a semi-structured guide with close-ended questions to facilitate discussion and last encourage participants to share their perspectives, build on each other's ideas, and explore the phenomenon collectively. Second questionare to XII IPA 2 of students who will be using application letter resources for a specific period, ask students to write reflective entries on a regular basis about their experiences and encourage them to explore their thoughts, feelings, and challenges related to using the resources and how it affects their writing skills. Third, interview to encourage participants to share their experiences.

Conduct individual interviews with 28 students who have used and already learn application letter resources. By utilizing a combination of these instruments, the writer capture a well-rounded understanding of how students at SMA Istiqamah Bandung experience the use of application letter resources on their writing competence. The writer will use triangulation to check about the factors of using application letter and the key aspect of improving writing competence students. Triangulation of data sources is important to check the accuracy of the interpretations made by the researcher (Creswell, 2015). Triangulation procedure will be conducted to test the validity and reliability of the data obtained from in-depth interview, questionare and during observation.

RESULT AND DISSCUSSION

In the result and discussion section, the writer showed all description and explanantion of data and table based on the instrument of the research, as follows. Observation. This table summarizes the key activities, teacher actions, student actions, and teaching aids used during the observation period (Creswell, 2015). The observed lesson at SMA Istiqamah Bandung was well-structured and effectively managed, balancing direct instruction, interactive discussion, and independent practice.

Table 1. Observation results

Time	Activity	Teacher Actions	Student Actions	Teaching Aids
10:30 - 10:35	Teacher greets students and asks how they are.	Greets students, inquires about their well-being	Responds to teacher's greeting	None
10:35 - 10:40	Teacher explains the day's learning objectives (how to write an effective application letter).	Explains learning objectives	Listens	None

10:40 - 10:50	Teacher explains the structure and format of application letters using varied methods.	Uses pictures, and examples to explain	Listens, observes, takes notes	Diagrams, pictures
10:50 - 11:00	Teacher provides an example of a good application letter and explains its merits.	Shows and explains a sample application letter	Listens, observes, takes notes	Sample application letter
11:00 - 11:10	Teacher gives practice questions to identify the structure and format of application letters.	Distributes practice questions, provides guidance and support	Works on practice questions, asks questions if needed	Practice questions handout
11:10 - 11:30	Teacher discusses practice question results, provides tips for writing effective application letters.	Discusses answers, asks students to explain their choices, gives tips for writing	Presents answers, participates in discussion, asks for clarification	Whiteboard, projector
11:30 - 12:15	Teacher assigns independent task to write an application letter.	Assigns task, provides 45 minutes for completion	Writes application letter independently	None

Questionare and Interview. Based on the questionare and interviews that had been done, the writer found out that every students had their various. While the questionare and interview that appears in every respondent are same. Also the main factor of writing competence in application letter. For more detail look at the following result of questionare and interview in the tables bellow.

Table 2. Familiarity of students with an application letter

Questioner	Not familiar	Slightly familiar	Somewhat familiar	Very familiar	Extremely Familiar
How familiar are you with an application letter?	3,6%	3,6%	25%	53,6%	14,3%

This table illustrates the familiarity of students with an application letter based on responses to a questionnaire. It provides insights into how well students understand the components and format of an application letter. Based on the results from table 1 above, in the familiarity of an application letter, 53,6% of students are very familiar (VF) with the an application letter. This is based on student interview stated that when studying application letter material they were asked to write application letters in grade XII. One of the students at Istiqamah High School also mentioned that they wrote application letters using references available on the internet and reading various article references and types of job application

letters. It can be concluded that one of the students at Istiqamah High School was greatly helped by the internet because it can make more references and also know the types of application letters not only in learning materials but on the internet where access and references are definitely very numerous and also complete so that they can easily understand. This is as stated below: *Saya pertama kali menulis surat lamaran kerja di kelas 12, kami diminta untuk menulis surat lamaran kerja dengan isi yang sesuai berdasarkan pekerjaan yang tersedia di internet. Saat itu, saya menggunakan internet sebagai acuan saya dalam menulis surat lamaran kerja. Saya membaca berbagai artikel tentang beberapa tipe surat lamaran kerja dan akhirnya dapat membuat surat lamaran kerja yang sesuai."*

Table 3. Student confident ability to write an application letter

Questions	Not confident	Slightly confident	Somewhat confident	Very confident	Extremely confident
How confident are you in your ability to write an application letter?	3,6%	3,6%	25%	15,6%	14,3%

This table illustrates the level of confidence that students have in their ability to write an application letter. The data is based on responses to a questionnaire. Based on the results from table 3 above, in student confident ability to write an application letter, 25% of students somewhat confident (SWC) to write an application letter. This is based on student interviews stated student somewhat confident write and application letter. This is as stated below:*"Secara keseluruhan tidak tetapi ada sedikitnya peningkatan. Saya harus belajar lagi seperti template untuk surat di luar jam sekolah. Guru hanya memberikan penjelasan sederhana sehingga kita harus mencari tahu lebih dalam lagi. Peningkatan yg ditingkatkan adaa dalam hal tata Bahasa tetapi masih belajar."*

Table 4. Students ability improved using application letter resources

Questions	Not improved	Slightly improved	Somewhat improved	Very improved	Extremely improved
How has your ability to write an application letter improved since using the provided resources?	3,6%	3,6%	21,4%	53,6%	17,9%

This table illustrates how students perceive the improvement in their ability to write an application letter since using the provided resources. The data is based on responses to a questionnaire. Based on the results from table 4 above, in students ability improved using application letter, 53,6% students very improved (VI) using application letter resources. This is

based on student interviews mentioned application letters very improved their ability to write. The student is eager to further explore and understand how to craft a well-written application letter. This is as stated below:*"Sangat percaya diri dan saya ingin belajar dan mencari tahu lagi bagaimana menulis surat lamaran pekerjaan dengan baik."*

Table 5. Students writing improved aspects using application letter

Questions	Grammar	Vocab	Structure & organize	Clarity and cohe	Formal tone & style
Which aspects of your writing have improved the most as a result of using the application letter resources?	53,6%	78,6%	46,4%	28,6%	10,7%

This table presents the aspects of students' writing that have improved the most as a result of using application letter resources. The data is based on responses to a questionnaire. Based on the results from table 5 above, regarding difficulties in students writing improved aspects using application letter, 78,6% of students vocabulary (V) writing improved aspects using application letter. This is based on student interviews stated the application letter improve their writing skills trough vocabullary aspects. This is as stated below:*"Lumayan meningkat karena sebelum diajarkan saya tidak pernah dan tidak cara menulis surat lamaran kerja sekarang jadi tau gimana dikit dikit, yg ditingkatin mungkin dalam merangkai kata yak arna ada bagian harus menceritkan diri sendiri gimana."*

Table 6. Effective of application letter on improving students writing competence

Questions	Not effective	Slightly effective	Somewhat effective	Very effective	Extremely effective
Overall, how effective do you find the application letter resources in improving your writing competence?	0%	3,6%	7,1%	32,1%	57,1%

This table illustrates how students perceive the effectiveness of application letter resources in improving their writing competence. The data is based on student responses to a questionnaire. Based on the results from table 5 above, in effective of application letter on improving students writing competence, 57.1% of students felt application letter extremely effective (EF) on improving students writing competence. This is based on student interviews stated that application letter extremely effective in improving writing competence. This is as stated below:*"Untuk saya secara keselurahan materi surat lamaran pekerjaan sangat*

membantu dalam hal bagaimana cara kita mengembangkan kata kata dan berimprovisasi dalam menulis sehingga sangat membantu"

Based on the research findings presented, it can be seen that ideal conditions and real condition and are associated. In the real conditions observed during the preliminary research, it became evident that the use of application letter resources on improving writing competence students at SMA Istiqamah Bandung shows positive potential in increasing students application letter writing competence at Istiqamah Bandung High School. In ideal condition according to (Oshima & Hogue, 2007) presented discuss writing as a series of steps, including planning, organizing, drafting, revising, and editing. The current curriculum seems to focus primarily on understanding the content, potentially neglecting the crucial steps of revision and editing. The research reinforces the idea that writing is a process that requires ongoing guidance and practice. By improving the application letter writing curriculum to better reflect this process, Istiqamah High School can equip students with stronger writing skills Harmer (2004).

Despite these limitations, the research highlights the positive potential of application letter resources. These resources could bridge the gap by providing a structured framework of application letter for the writing process (Simion & Vasile, 2017). Overall, the research suggests that by aligning current practices with the established writing process and implementing appropriate application letter resources, Istiqamah High School can significantly enhance student application letter writing competence. This approach would equip students with a deeper understanding of the writing process and the ability to create well-structured and impactful application letters L. Gartside (2000).

CONCLUTION

Based on what has been found, analyzed and discussed in the previous chapters, the writer made some conclusion that aligning ideal and real conditions can improve writing competence among students at SMA Istiqamah Bandung, particularly in application letter writing. Observations from preliminary research show that using application letter resources positively impacts students' writing skills. Teachers employ various methods, including explanations, examples, practice questions, and discussions, to aid student understanding, though some students still struggle with the material. The research emphasizes the importance of the writing process steps planning, students understanding of the writing process and the ability to produce well-structured, impactful application letters. By addressing these research, future researchers can contribute to do a research of a more comprehensive understanding of

writing education and develop more effective strategies to enhance student writing competence across diverse contexts.

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