



Good Impression in Writing Business Correspondence by English as Foreign Language Students

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Abstract—This study concerned to investigate good impression in bussiness correspondence wrriitten by by EFL (English as Foreign Language) students of second semester in Budi Darma University, Medan, North Sumatera-Indonesia, especially in writing application or cover letter. These EFL students were investigated to find out their capability to write appropriate application letter or usually called as cover letter. The problem found is the EFL students are failed to write good impression to the reader or employer. A writer should be able to make good impression about herself to the employer, because the essential point of writing application letter is how to impress the employer about a writer or a job seeker’s selling points. The writer found that most students need to be trained to write an application letter with good impression. This study focused on sixteen random students of the second semester in Budi Darma University Medan majored in Computer Engineering. The data was collected in August 2021. The data collection was conducted by assesing the samples of sixteen students’ writing test. The data was analyzed by using quantitative analysis to get the percentage of the students who were failed to write application letter with good impression to the reader. The results indicated that the students were less experience in writing application letter with good impression to the reader especially in personal touch it is how to write proper salutation and closing then followed by less experience in writing addressee and contact details. The suggestions are proposed to improve writing training to the students, the improvement of training to write application letter with good impression especially in personal touch and contact details.

Keywords: Good Impression; Writing Application Letter; EFL Students

1. INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of four English language skills which is taught in school and university. The ability of writing subject is differently performed by the students, especially writing in English language for EFL Students because writing in Bahasa Indonesia and English are highly different. Writing in Bahasa Indonesia Students who have read many articles, use the vocabulary in daily activities will easily comprehend the text, in addition the factor of text the presentation of detail information of describing how something look, the writer uses spatial descriptive text (Putri Ramadhani in JLEE Vol 1, No 1, March 2020, pp. 9 *Writing Descriptive Information as the Medium to Promote Halal Cuisine*) explained that the more descriptions presented in a text will help the reader with zero experience of something to be easier to describe new word, terms in the text based on the color, size, shape, and may details. EFL (English as Foreign Language) Students who have no experience in reading technical terms will face some difficulties to translate the terms from source language; English to target language; Bahasa Indonesia.

Writing ability cannot be separated from another skills related with language, they are reading skill, speaking skill, and listening skill. Writing application letter is one of lesson subject taught for university students who are expected to ease them facing competition in job after they graduate from university. English lecturer in University level who teach EFL students found some problems faced when the students do not match the job provided in job application with the position they are write in application letter. The problems in writing related to poor translation and vocabulary experience in job application terms. Newmark, 1998 “Good translation ease people to get information with no misinterpretation. In order to create a good translation, the translators have to use appropriate procedures.” The mistakes in writing job application will be minimized by enhancing translation and vocabulary enrichment treated to the students. Previous research taken by Dzur Rif’ah Mahmudah 2014 in his Journal titled *The Correlation between Students’ Writing Ability and Their Vocabulary Mastery* stated that “There is a significant correlation between students’ writing ability and their vocabulary master with score valued as substantial”

Sviatuk (2015) explains business correspondence is writing activity aimed to transfer information from a writer to a reader related to business or social relation, the success of transforming information between two parties depend on how good a business correspondence written and make good impression to the reader. Business Correspondence is commonly taught in University, the goal is to prepare the students be ready to compete and promoting their ability and skill to the job provider after they have finished studying in university. Business correspondence includes information letters for instance; letter of introduction, letter of inquiry, letter of confirmation, letter of notification, (apology letter), letter of business offer (letter of proposal), letter of demand, letter of complains, advertising, marketing materials, personal letters (Curriculum Vitae or resume, application letter, letter of recommendation), social letters (invitations, congratulations, announcements, condolence letters). The most topic taught of Business correspondence in Budi Darma University Medan is about writing application letter, usually attached with curriculum vitae or resume. A good application letter usually indicated with good impression which can ensure the employer about the writer’s skills and competency as the article taken from University of Montana “A cover letter is one of the most important components in your job search. It is the initial liaison between you and the employer. Its purpose is to market you and your skills.” Good impression in application letter is very essential in an application letter or cover letter so the writer must avoid doing the mistakes as tips from Freelance writing article; typo, poor punctuation and grammatical errors, management speak and buzz words, forgetting



the reader, long words and elaborate phrases, complex sentences, poor planning, failing to make an impression, too much text, abbreviations and being vague.

The cover letter is the key to success the opportunity of getting good job because the only way from an applicant to impress the employer is by writing good cover letter with criteria from Samantha Burton in “Cover Letter Tips: Making a Good First Impression” accessed on June 2021. The criteria of good impression are 1) Use a simple, a professional layout; Use Times New Roman or Arial fonts in standard 10 or 12 point size, it will help the reader to be easier to find essential information with speed, 2) Addressee and contact detail; add address details at the top of the page, as well as the employer address details, 3) Adopt a personal touch; try to find out detail information about the workplace applying for, add individual’s name in the address details at the top of the page and use a typical personalized letter opening for example: “Dear Mr. Smith”, or “For the attention of Mr. Smith” into the company address details at the top of the page and start application letter with “Dear Sirs” opening. Close the salutation with “Yours sincerely” if an applicant write “Dear Sirs” it must be closed with “Yours Faithfully”, 4) Keep it brief; write not more than one page and attach with qualification with CV or resume, 5) Use unique content; summarize applicant’s selling points in brief highlight including the GPA, campus, study major, qualification and personality in team work.

2. METHODOLOGY

The participants of this research were sixteen random EFL students in second semester majoring Computer Engineering in Budi Darma University, in Medan, North Sumatera - Indonesia. The research was taken in August 2021 in English Subject. The students were given a task writing of Job Application, previously the students were treated with a theory and material of writing application letter with good impression based on 5 criteria written by Samantha Burton “Cover Letter Tips: Making a Good First Impression” accessed on June 2021. The criteria of good impression are:

1. Use a simple, a professional layout
2. Addressee and contact detail
3. Adopt a personal touch
4. Keep it brief
5. Use unique content

The data collection and instruments were distributed among the students, the students were asked to write application letter based on the task provided by the lecturer, the writer found some students had problems in writing proper application letter with strong impression to ensure the reader. After analysing, the writer cluster the number of students who do not write the application letter with good impression and the writer conclude in which criteria the students most failed to write the letter.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The table below is the data of 16 students and their fulfillment of 5 criteria of writing application letter according to Samantha Burton in “Cover Letter Tips: Making a Good First Impression” accessed on June 2021.

Table 1. Writing Application Letter Data of 16 EFL Students

No.	Nama	Kelas	5 Good Impression In Cover Letter by Samantha Burton				
			Simple, Professional Layout	Addressee & Contact Detail	Adopt a Personal Touch	Keep it Brief	Use Unique Content
1.	Maya Sofina Gulo	PS-P2001	√	√	X	√	√
2.	Muliana Halawa	PS-P2001	√	X	X	√	√
3.	Endang Fitriyani	PS-M2001	√	X	X	√	√
4.	Sandra Dwi H	PS-M2001	√	√	X	√	√
5.	Anhar Rizal S	TI-S2001	√	√	X	√	√
6.	Elfrianti Fransiska	TI-S2001	√	√	X	√	√
7.	Alviansyah H	TI-M2001	√	√	X	√	√
8.	Bayu Pratama	TI-M2001	√	√	X	√	√
9.	Emy Alfiani S	TI-M2002	√	X	X	√	√
10.	Hana Kristin	TI-M2002	√	X	X	√	√
11.	Dicky Ermawan	MR-M2001	√	X	X	√	√
12.	Riki Rikardo S	MR-M2001	√	√	X	√	√



5 Good Impression In Cover Letter by Samantha Burton

No.	Nama	Kelas	Simple, Professional Layout	Addressee & Contact Detail	Adopt a Personal Touch	Keep it Brief	Use Unique Content
13.	Dameliana T	MI-M2001	√	X	X	√	√
14.	M. Ryan H	MI-M2001	√	X	X	√	√
15.	Windi Siahaan	MI-P2001	√	√	X	√	√
16.	Agustiawati S	MI-P2001	√	√	X	√	√

Based on the table above it was found that the most failed writing criteria is in the personal touch for about 16 students or 100% participants mismatch the salutation with the closing for example: The salutation is “Dear Sir, Madam” and the closing is “Sincerely”. In the personal touch issue there are 75 % participants write the salutation “Dear Sir, Madam” and the closing “sincerely”, while 12.5 % write nor salutation and closing, 6.25 % write “With Respect” and “Sincerely”, 6.25 % write “Dear sir, Madam” and closing “With Best Regards”.

43.75 % participants make mistake in writing the addressee and contact details, while 31.25% participants write no addressee and contact details in their application letter, 12.5 % participants write their addressee and contact details in not proper position, it is on the right top of the page.

4. CONCLUSION

After having the data analysis, conclusions are drawn as the following: 1) most EFL students are not familiar with the personal touch issue it is proper salutation and closing writing in application letter, as Samantha Burton tips’ if an applicant write “Dear Sirs” it must be closed with “Yours Faithfully”, 2) The writing of proper addressee and contact details also need to be seen as serious attention because it is a key for the applicant to be easily contact with the employer during the job recruitment process held, 3) The suggestion for both English trainer and EFL students is to improve the training and more practice in writing proper application letter mostly in personal touch; salutation and closing then more attention to be taken to write proper addressee and contact details.

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