Exploring Job Application Letters of EFL Learners

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Abstract

The background to this analysis is that many companies require applicants to write their application letters in English. If a student wishes to get a job, a job application letter is required upon leaving school. The purpose of this study is to examine EFL learners' application letters. This study uses a qualitative methodology and discourse analysis as its research design. The data used in qualitative research comes from a variety of application letters. Participants in this study were high school students at a vocational school. It consists of four students in grade 12—two boys and two girls. The research was conducted through an analytical process in which a student completed her application within one week. They are then collected and analyzed by researchers. The general structure of job application letters is analyzed, and formal and informal words in job application letters are recognized and noted. In general, the results of the above analyses show that two students met the criteria for writing a job application letter, while the other two students did not yet meet the criteria for writing a job application letter. Teachers should pay more attention to teaching writing subjects, especially in making sentences such as when writing a job application letter. If you find an error while writing, explain of the errors to avoid mistakes from happening again and reduce error at the start.

Keywords: Job Application letters, Formal Informal, EFL Learners.

Abstrak

Latar belakang analisis ini adalah banyak perusahaan yang mewajibkan pelamar untuk menulis surat lamaran mereka dalam bahasa Inggris. Jika seorang siswa ingin mendapatkan pekerjaan, surat lamaran kerja diperlukan setelah lulus sekolah. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menguji surat lamaran pembelajar EFL. Penelitian ini menggunakan metodologi kualitatif dan analisis wacana sebagai desain penelitiannya. Data yang digunakan dalam penelitian kualitatif berasal dari berbagai surat lamaran. Partisipan dalam penelitian ini adalah siswa SMA di sebuah sekolah kejuruan. Terdiri dari empat siswa kelas 12—dua laki-laki dan dua perempuan. Penelitian dilakukan melalui proses analitik di mana seorang siswa menyelesaikan aplikasinya dalam waktu satu minggu. Mereka kemudian dikumpulkan dan dianalisis oleh peneliti. Struktur umum surat lamaran kerja dianalisis, dan kata-kata formal dan informal dalam surat lamaran kerja dikenali dan dicatat. Secara umum, hasil analisis di atas menunjukkan bahwa dua siswa memenuhi kriteria penulisan surat lamaran kerja, sedangkan dua siswa lainnya belum memenuhi kriteria penulisan surat lamaran kerja. Guru hendaknya lebih memperhatikan pengajaran mata pelajaran menulis, terutama dalam membuat kalimat seperti saat menulis surat lamaran kerja. Jika Anda menemukan kesalahan saat menulis, berikan penjelasan tentang kesalahan tersebut untuk menghindari kesalahan terjadi lagi dan mengurangi kesalahan di awal

Kata Kunci: Lamaran Pekerjaan, Formal Informal, EFL Learners.

INTRODUCTION

This study aims to explore EFL students' job application letters. The background of this research is that many companies require job applicants to write a job application letter in English. A job application letter is needed when students graduate from school and want to work. The reason researchers are interested in taking this research is because this research is very interesting because many job application letters have been made and studied from the past until now by many people,

both students and employees, this makes this research will be needed by many people at any time especially for people who want to apply for a job, with this research the researcher hopes to be able to provide information and knowledge about correct and complete job application letters to readers, besides that with this research it can be used as capital and a guide about job application letters for reader. The general structure of job application letters is analyzed, as is the use of sentences in job application letters written by vocational high school students, whether they use formal or informal sentences.

In English, there are four abilities that learners ought to master: listening, speaking, analyzing, and writing. Writing is included among the four abilities because it is the most important to master. As (Raines, 2011) stated, writing is critical to express and expand the concept into written form. To become excellent writers, college students should want to go through numerous steps, which include prewriting, planning, draft writing, and revising. Good writing is wanted while college students visit the final. Mahmudah et al. (2017) also say good writing doesn't happen overnight. Incorporating a writer's thinking into good writing through many processes requires practice, editing, and revision. Writing is not only about writing the feelings of the writer, but also about conveying the message to the readers.

Cahyono & Widiati (2015) stated that an application letter is one of the crucial letters in the English course, particularly for high school students who are pursuing vocational studies. Wilson & Wauson (2010) There were several differences in format for letters. There are several structures in the application letter. First, applicant address: this letter should indicate the applicant's address. Second, date. In this letter, we should write the date when the application letter was written. Third, the company address should include the full title and address. Fourth, in this letter, address your greetings to the person in charge of hiring. Fifth, in the opening paragraph, it was to specify which job that applicant was applying for, or if they were writing to inquire whether a job position was open, question the availability of an opening. Sixth, middle paragraph or body, this paragraph should show the applicant's work experience that most closely matches the desired job requirements presented in the job opening advertisement and should not simply restate what was contained in the applicant's resume but should provide strong reasons why applications are suited to the position. Seventh, closing paragraph: this closing paragraph ensures action on the part of the reader. One possibility was to ask for an interview appointment time. The final signature could be thanks and sign. According to the study's title, which discussed how students' ability to write job applications, in general, this vocational high school produced many graduates who had the ability and potential in their respective fields, so that for not a few of them it is easy to get a job after graduating from school, and this cannot be separated from a job application letter, so this job application letter is important. The first step that must be considered is how to properly write a job application letter.

When writing a job application letter, students need to pay attention to the use of language and adjust the meaning of the words used so as not to cause misunderstandings. Govindaraj (2012)

defined formal language as compound symbols classified according to construction rules. The use of clear and correct language is very important in writing letters. Rang (2016) said it is appropriate that not everyone can write letters in English. succeeded due to knowledge limitations. Writing a good letter means using special words with proper form and clear content. Convince the recipient and make a good impression. Williyan (2022) Writing clearly without ambiguity is very crucial for every writer. The reason is because the ambiguity can lead the readers into the wrong interpretation so that they cannot get the intended meaning of the text. In this case, of course, writing an English letter requires the right language and conformity with the standards to be addressed. not only for students but also for employees. There are differences in format, style, and language in formal and informal letters. Sometimes people can make unconscious mistakes in their letter writing. This research is very important because formal and informal language problems are very sensitive in the world of correspondence, when apply jobs of course the words or sentences used must be in formal language, many students when writing letters do not pay attention to the correct formal language order in English, this is because many students who cannot distinguish formal and informal language, the standard in a job application letter is to use formal language so it needs sufficient consideration and thoroughness in writing a job application letter, especially in the use of formal language. Sheikha & Inkpen (2011) These characteristics are used for constructing templates to generate sentences based on them. Right here, we give an explanation for the characteristics of every style and provide examples. most important characteristics of informal style text: It employs personal pronouns and the active voice. It uses brief, simple phrases and sentences, It uses contractions (e.g., "received"). It makes use of many abbreviations (e.g., "television"). It makes use of many phrasal verbs, including The phrases that indicate specific rapport and familiarity are regularly utilized in speech, such as "brother," "friend," and "man," It makes use of a subjective style, expressing reviews and feelings. It uses vague expressions and colloquial (slang phrases are time-honored in spoken not in written textual content (e.g., "wanna" = "need to")). important characteristics of formal style text: It uses impersonal pronouns and regularly the passive voice, it makes use of complex phrases and sentences. It no longer uses contractions, it does no longer use many abbreviations, It makes use of appropriate and clean expressions, business, and technical vocabulary. It makes use of polite words and formulas inclusive of "Please", "Sir". It uses an objective style, using statistics and references to help an issue, it no longer uses vague expressions and slang phrases.

Several studies on job application letters have been carried out. by several previous studies. The first is research by Huda (2020) entitled "Implementing of Polytechnic Students' Ability of Writing Application Letters." The results show that: (1) Most of the students' abilities are at Scale 4, and none have the ability at Scale 1. The average number for each component is: content (3,95; organization (3,89; grammar (3,38; and mechanics (3,30. (2) Errors made in writing application letters can be found in all components. Most mistakes were made by students in all components, respectively, mechanics, grammar, organization, and content.

Second, research by Safura entitled "Students' Ability in Writing Application Letters" (Pembelajaran et al., 2020) The result of the data analysis shows that the students' ability to write application letters is very good. The highest aspect of writing that is mastered by the students is mechanics, while the lowest aspect of writing is grammar. Then, the data shows that grammar mastery affects the students' ability in the writing paragraph process, in which the students are not able to express their written ideas if they do not know how to write grammatically correct English.

Third, Research by Wijayanti (2021) entitled "How Indonesian Students Write Job Application Letter". The results showed that students' job application letters have several variants of the AIDA model, and the languages used are still less persuasive.

Fourth, Research by Diana (2019) entitled "Students Ability In Writing Application Letter At Fourth Semester Asm Persada Bunda Pekanbaru". As a result, the researcher found that most of the students were easily identified by their salutation, body, and signature.

The last, Research by Hasan & Marzuki (2017) entitled "An Analysis of Student's Ability in Writing at Riau University Pekanbaru – Indonesia" The findings of the study showed that grammatical problems seemed to be the most frequent mistakes made by the students, ranging from errors in using plural forms, articles, verb, forms, clauses, passive voice, and prepositions. The findings also indicated that problems in coherence and cohesion stemmed from the absence of cohesive markers in the students' sentences, which affected how they put ideas in their letters coherently. However, despite the problems the students faced in writing, on the whole, the results of their writing were good enough, as they were able to include most of the important information required by their friends.

The difference between this research and previous research is that in this study, the researcher analyzed the use of formal and informal words in job application letters for vocational students. Whereas previous research only examined the structure of job application letters, The position of this research is a continuation of previous research to solve the limitations of the research studied above as further research in the context of vocational high school job application letters.

METHOD

This research uses qualitative methods and discourse analysis as a research design. The data that is used in qualitative research comes from a range of collection methods. Richard (2013) These include interviews with individuals, observations of people, places, and actions/interactions, immersion in settings so as to understand the what, how, when, and where of social structure and action or interaction, and the analysis of media written, spoken, drawn, etc. Nassaji (2015) the reason for using a qualitative method is that qualitative research is more all encompassing since it includes information from numerous sources to pick up a more profound understanding from a person counting viewpoints and states of mind. This study aims to explore EFL students' job application letters. The general structure of job application letters is analyzed, and besides focusing on the structure of job

application letters, the researcher also analyzes the use of sentences in job application letters written by vocational high school students, whether they use formal or informal sentences, discourse analysis is a kind of method. Gee (2011) Discourse analysis is the study of language in use. Better put, it is the study of language in use in the world, not just to say things, but to do things. Discourse analysis research is used to understand the world by investigating the underlying meaning of what people say and how they say it, whether in face-to-face conversations, documents, non-verbal interaction, or images. It is applied to determine the extent to which students have mastered the ability to write a job application letter. In this study, data can be collected with document samples. The sample used came from students who collected samples of job applications, and then the researchers analyzed the results of the sample.

The participants of this study were vocational high school students. which consisted of four students, two boys and two girls, in grade 12. This research was conducted through an analysis process in which students made a job application letter within one week. Then, after that, it will be collected and analyzed by researchers. The general structure of letters will be analyzed, as well as the formal and informal writing errors in the job application letter will be seen and noted.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

The purpose of this study is to explore student job application letters. Later, the structure of the application letter for work was analyzed to find out what mistakes occurred in the writing of job application letters. Research also examined formal and informal writing in job application letters, because, when writing a job application letter, it should also be considered formal and informal writing. This segment explains the results of the analysis of the facts determined by presenting them in tabular form. table used as a recapitulation of the distribution of the four written consequences obtained from the research sample. The writing components analyzed are structured, formal, and informal writing on job application letters. then find out if students reach the standard or not in writing a job application letter.

Generic Structures of the Job Application

This study involved 4 participants, all of whom were in grade 12 at a vocational high school, including two girls and two boys. The reason researchers examined vocational school students was because in vocational schools they already had skills and had been prepared to work after graduation. While the researcher was conducting the research, the researcher found some mistakes in writing a job application letter.

Table 1. Structure Analyzing Student 1

Structures of Job Application Letters							
Applicant Address	Date	Company Address	Greetings	Opening Paragraph	Body	Closing	Signature
✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓

Based on the table above, it explains that the first student made two mistakes in writing a job application letter. including, company address and greetings. In writing a job application letter, there is a structure for the company address and greetings that must be followed. Diana (2019) Company address is the company name or business letter registered. This includes the walking address, city, state, zip code, and nation. The letter must contain all relevant information. The greeting part of a business letter is more formal than that of a personal letter. The salutation is followed by a colon. These are suitable salutations: Dear Madam: Dear Sir: Dear Sir/Madam: Dear Mrs. Itgen: Dear Mr. Modian: Dear Ms. Wartsky: If the sender is writing to a firm and does not know the name of any particular person to whom to address the letter,Dear Sir / Madam is commonly used. However, there is a growing tendency in such cases to omit the salutation altogether and to begin the letter immediately after the inside address.

Table 2. Structure Analyzing Student 2.

Structures of Job Application Letters							
Applicant Address	Date	Company Address	Greetings	Opening Paragraph	Body	Closing	Signature
✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓

Based on the table above, it is explained that the second student made an error in writing a job application letter. including the opening paragraph. In writing a job application letter, there is an opening paragraph structure that must be completed. The opening paragraph is a section that contains information about the applicant, the source from which the applicant gets information on the job vacancy, and the position the applicant wants. I am writing to apply for the position you advertised on Monster.com for a quality control manager. As you will see in my résumé, I have the experience to fill this position. Researchers take an example from the book The AMA Handbook of Business Writing, written by Wilson & Wauson (2010) : I am writing to apply for the position you advertised on Monster.com for a quality control manager.As you will see in my résumé, I have the experience to fill this position.

Table 3. Structure Analyzing Student 3.

Structures of Job Application Letters							
Applicant Address	Date	Company Address	Greetings	Opening Paragraph	Body	Closing	Signature
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Based on the table, third students have written a job application letter which contains a generic structure such as applicant address, date, company address, greetings, opening paragraph, body, closing, and signature. This means that the third student has met the correct job application letter criteria because the generic structure in the job application letter is sequential and complete.

Table 4. Structure Analyzing Student 4.

Structures of Job Application Letters							
Applicant Address	Date	Company Address	Greetings	Opening Paragraph	Body	Closing	Signature
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Based on table four, the last student is also the same as the third student. The last student has met the correct job application letter criteria. Based on research the generic structure in the job application letter is correct and complete.

Error analysis of Formal and Informal writing

Then the researcher examines formal and informal writing in writing job application letters. The reason the researcher examines formal and informal situations is that one of the difficulties of writing in English is knowing how to adapt to formal and informal situations. Knowing formal and informal writing also has many uses, especially when writing a job application letter. Situations that require formal English include business letters or emails, letters or emails to government officials, office memos or emails, reports, homework, messages to teachers, important conversations, speeches, presentations and oral reports (Woods, 2017). Jaafar and Awal (2020) also believed that the more formally the situation is consistent, the more experienced speakers are in choosing the right words, structuring and pronouncing a good sentence.

In writing the job application letter structure, the researcher found several formal and informal words. In this study, the researcher analyzed the writing of four high school students, both formally and informally, by presenting them in the following table:

Table 5. Formal and Informal

	Student 1	Student 2	Student 3	Student 4
Formal	-	Obtain	Grateful, Utilize	-
Informal	-	Get	Thank you, Use	-

Based on the table above, the researcher found two students who were still wrong in formal and informal writing. The second and third students are less precise in placing formal and informal words in job application letters. can be seen in the table above with the second student writing informal words like "got" which should be in the formal word is "Obtain". and the third student was found writing informal words in job application letters such as "Thank you" which should be in the formal "Grateful" and "Use" in the formal form, namely "Utilize". This statement is reinforced by a statement from the journal Sheikha & Inkpen (2012). Which states that the formal word of "Get" is "Obtain"similarly to "thank you & use" in formal form it states "Grateful & Utilize"

In general, the results of the research above show that two students have reached the standard for writing job application letters, and the other two students are still not up to standard in writing job application letters. In connection with the findings and discussion, there are several suggestions that can be obtained from the field of student errors in the structure of writing a job application letter.

Students should be more careful when writing a job application letter because it is important for them when applying for a job. Students should also pay more attention to writing. Informal formal writing should be more scrutinized so as not to be misunderstood. The same thing was also expressed by Muslimawati (2022) that they also paid enough attention to choosing language and adapting it to the conditions of society, situations and communication goals. Teachers should pay more attention to teaching writing subjects, especially in making sentences such as when writing a job application letter using the correct vocabulary, and if you find an error while writing, provide an explanation of the error so that mistakes do not occur again and reduce mistakes at the beginning. Likewise, Williyan & Darma (2022) said that EFL teachers are required to have adequate knowledge about how to use appropriate methods in class.

CONCLUSION

From the previous presentation, it can be concluded that the four students studied, two of whom still did not reach the standard in writing job application letters. Like the results of the data above, in writing the company address, greetings, and opening paragraphs, these two students were still not quite right. while the other two students have reached the standard. Besides that, there are two students who are still wrong in choosing formal and informal words in writing a job application letter. When writing a job application letter, the two students still didn't quite put the formal word in correctly, for example, the second student chose the informal word "got," which should be in the formal form "Obtain". while the third student found two informal words in writing a job application letter, namely "Thank you" should be "Grateful" and "Use" should be "Utilized". Apart from that, this study has room for further research. Researchers can conduct similar research by analyzing deficiencies or other errors in writing a job application letter, such as designing the letter so that it looks more attractive.

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