Improving Writing Business Correspondence of the Second-grade Students of SMK YPUP Makassar Through E-mail

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Abstract
The research was intended to find out whether using email can improve the business correspondence writing skills of second-grade students at SMK YPUP Makassar. This research utilized a pre-experimental method. The population of this study was the second-grade students of SMK YPUP Makassar. The sample consisted of 40 students and utilized a purposive sampling technique. In collecting the data, the researcher administered writing tests, which consisted of two tests: a pre-test and a post-test. The results of the research showed that email can enhance students' business correspondence skills. It can be proven by the data of the pre-test and post-test mean scores, t-test value, and t-table. The pre-test score was 60.48, the post-test score was 75.53, the t-test value was 10.14, and the t-table value was 2.023. The post-test score is higher than the pre-test score, and the t-test value is higher than the t-table value. The researcher concluded that the use of email in teaching business correspondence writing can enhance students' writing ability.

Keywords
Business correspondence using email, writing ability

1. Introduction
In this twenty-first century, the use of visual or audio technology is no doubt, advanced and implemented in every aspect of life. Like television and radio, the use of computer has touched the whole kind of interaction. The computer which was previously used only in science and technology, now it is now upgraded to numerous fields and domains. One of the computer’s parts is internet, where many kinds of information, thoughts or ideas are available to access.

The existence of the internet has emerged as a prominent new technology. The influence of such as a powerful technological tool has spread through all aspects of the educational, business and economic sector of our world. Regardless of whether someone has used internet or, someone must be clear about the fact that we have entered a new information era and internet is here to stay. The Internet offers numerous benefits to the language learner, a few of such possibilities can be used to exchange information through electronic mail, news groups, professional online discussion groups, and so forth, as well as to retrieve information on a variety of topics through the World Wide Web. The internet can be used to acquire information from language resources for a variety of purposes. For example, the students can access current information from countries around the world. They can obtain geographical, historical, social/cultural, economic, and political information from the countries in which the target language is spoken.
Teaching English as a foreign language in Indonesia is not limited on the linguistic aspects, but more essentially on how to use the language for communication purpose, both spoken and written. In order to reach the objective, the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) are taught. Reading and listening are usually considered to be receptive skills, while speaking and writing as the productive skills (Harmer, 1991).

Among those skills, writing seems to be the most difficult skill to be mastered since writing requires more accurate language and more appropriate expression. Setiowati (2019) argues that writing, the students can express their ideas, respond the other ideas and tell some stories and some information. They are expected to compose well-organized pieces of good writing. That is why writing is used to be practical for students who study English.

Writing business correspondence which is considered by many students as a difficult subject should be taught in various ways, so that the students can be more interested in learning it. The use of the internet could, therefore, be applied in creative ways. One of the innovations is by using of E-mail, a specific feature of the internet. It is a technique that can be an effective way because it can help the teacher to achieve his or her objective. The use of E-mail in learning to write business correspondence would invite attention and automatically enhance students’ motivation.

In this case, one activity that can be expected to help learners in improving their writing particularly business correspondence is by using E-mail. Therefore, the researcher was interested in conducting research under the title “Improving Writing Business Correspondence of the Second Grade of SMK YPUP Makassar Through E-mail”.

2. Problem Statement

The problem statement of this research is to what extent can improve writing business correspondence of the second-grade students of SMK YPUP Makassar?

In relation to the problem statement above, the objective of this research is to find out whether or not the students’ writing ability can be improved in writing business correspondence through E-mail. The result of the research was expected to be a piece of theoretically and practically useful resource or reference in the English teaching and learning process particularly on the teaching and learning of writing business correspondence. It is intended to motivate teachers to find out other ways in stimulating high level of writing achievement.

3. Review of Related Literature

This part deals with the previous related studies, theories, or concepts related to the thesis topic, resume, conceptual framework, and hypothesis of this research.

3.1 Previous Related Findings

Belissle (2022) reported that students become better problem solvers and better communicators by using electronic mail (E-mail) in writing class. She also found that the students had positive attitudes toward the method. Sri Fahmi (2021) found out that the student’s writing skills were improved by using grammar applications. Without a doubt, this condition proves that the student’s writing skills were better than before using the method.

Lee (1998) stated that students’ writing skills improved by facilitating class activities through email. This method enables communication between students and teachers, as well as among students, for both formal and informal consultations, exchange of dialogue journals, and writing conferences. The students felt enjoyable and pleasant during the learning process.

Deregozu, A. and Ustun, B. (2021) found out the students were happy following the writing class and active in learning using the E-mail method. Their writing skills were better than before using the strategy and the students were active and had positive thinking toward the strategy. Davis, Chang, and Singhal (1997) explored the potential of long-distance communication involving second language learners by using E-mail. They concluded that the using of E-mail could make the students focused on writing activities.

Writing plays an important role in our personal and professional life. It is an interactive process by nature since it involves the symbolic interaction between writer and reader (Fox, 1998). From this point, Bougheyin Massi (1999) states that writing implies the successful communication of ideas from an addressee to an addressee via a text and this exchange of information becomes a powerful means to motivate and encourage the development of language skills.

Writing is often the only practical means of communication possible in the business world. In business situations where it is necessary to remember what has been said, writing provides ‘visible’ memory. Most contacts for sales, purchases, and many important agreements are put into writing to provide proof and a clear for that permits a person to organize and summarize his thoughts and, thus, solve problems (Sterward et al., 1968). Wello et al. (199) says that there are some
typical tasks to perform by a businessperson in writing skills: writing internal and external business correspondence, publicity and marketing documents, reports and manuals, business articles and press releases, electronic mail, abbreviated documents such as cables, telexes, and facsimiles, standard proforma and record, etc.

The letter is often evidenced arrangement or a contract, and therefore must be written with care. In business, the aim of the letter is to secure the interest of the reader and his/her cooperation. The letter should begin with sentences that will introduce the matters without undue delay and polite forms to help the introduction and the letter must be not too long.

A business letter has some parts where each art has its functions. The types are based on the styles used (Cyssco, 1977). They describe chronologically the parts of a good letter such as the letterhead, the reference, the date of the letter, the attention line, the salutation, the subject line, the body of the letter, the complementary close, the signature, the enclosure, carbon-copy and blind carbon-copy notations and postscripts. As a tool for written communication, a business letter has its own style and expression. The styles and expressions used in business letters should give a positive impression to the intended reader. The following are styles of business letters and examples commonly used in business correspondence (Sterward, 1968) such as full block style, block style, semi-block style, indented style, simplified style, and hanging indentation style. In business, the letter is used more extensively than any other type of written communication. Letters are written to buy and sell goods or services, welcome new customers, ask for information, answer inquiries, place orders, request or make adjustments, collect overdue accounts, and build a friendly attitude toward a company and its products, and even to apply for a job.

The most essential of a good business letter is if the message is clear in its meaning. A letter that is carefully thought out and written with well-chosen words will undoubtedly have its intended meaning. A letter should be checked for accuracy in all its details before it is sent out. A business manager should not sign a letter that shows carelessness. Error in spelling, grammar, and punctuation is not acceptable nor is a letter that is not a model in appearance. A person may judge an entire company by a single letter received. A good business letter can create goodwill.

The Internet is a worldwide network of computers that interact on a standardized set of protocols that act independently of particular computer operating systems, allowing for a variety of access methods to the Internet. Therefore, as to each individual system brings something different to the whole and the result is vast accumulation of information (Singhal, 1997). E-mail is a form of computer-mediated communication, and has been called ‘the mother of all internet applications’ (Warschauser et al., 2001). Finally, Belisle (1996) defines that E-mail is a relatively new medium of communication that is experiencing exploding growth in USA and around the world. E-mail messages can be sent across different kinds of networks, both locally and globally.

4. Method of the Research

This method employed a pre-experimental design which involved one group that will be given pre-test and post-test. The pre-test will be given in order to know the students’ prior knowledge or skill, while post-test is to find out the students’ writing skill after teaching by E-mail in writing business correspondence.

The design of the research is presented below:

\[ 01 \rightarrow X \rightarrow 02 \]

Where:
- 01 = Pre-test
- X = Treatment
- 02 = Post-test (Gay, 1981)

1) Pre-test
   Before presenting materials, a pre-test was admininistered to the students to find their basic in writing performance or skill.

2) Treatment
   The researcher gave the treatment to the students as a medium to show the mistakes found in the pre-test and those made during the treatment in writing. It consisted of at least 6 meetings by using E-mail in writing skill.

3) Post-test
   After doing the treatment, the post-test was given to the students who were supplied the same test as in the pre-test to measure whether or not the students made progress in writing skill. The content of the pre-test and post-test is the same.

5. Findings and Discussions

This part deals with the findings of the research and the discussion of the findings. The findings are ordered in the line with the problem statements stated in the introduction part. In the discussion section, arguments and further interpretation
of the findings are given. The findings of the research deals with the students’ scores of the research activities such as pre-test and post-test, the frequency and the rate percentage of the students’ score, the main score, standard deviation of pre-test and post-test, t-test value, and hypothesis testing.

Based on the result of the data analysis of the pre-test showed that there were none of the students classified into excellent to very good scores 17 (42.5%) out of the students were classified into good to average scores, 11 (27.5%) out of them classified into fair to poor score, and the rest 12 (30%) were classified into very poor score. Thus, the mean score of the students’ pre-test was 60.48. this score fell into fair to poor. It indicates the students’ achievement in writing business correspondence before giving treatment by using E-mail was fair to poor.

On the contrary, in the post-test, 10 (25%) out of them were categorized as excellent to very good, 21 (52%) out of them were categorized as good to average, only 9 (22.5%) out of them were categorized as fair to poor, and none of them was classified as very poor. Thus, the mean score for the post-test was 75.53. this score indicates that the student’s achievement in writing business correspondence before giving treatment by using E-mail was good to average.

The frequency of the students’ score in pre-test and post-test in writing business correspondence is based on the range score observed. In the pre-test, most of the students scored good to average and somewhere between fair to poor and very poor. None of them scored from excellent to very good. In the post-test, the same as the pre-test, most of the students scored good to average but the amount of the students in the post-test was much more than in the pre-test. Some students scored from excellent to very good and fair to poor. There is an increase since in pre-test none of them got excellent to very good. In contrast to the pre-test, none of them scored very poorly. It can be concluded that the students’ ability to write business correspondence significantly differed from the pre-test and post-test. It means that the students’ ability to write business correspondence through E-mail significantly improved.

The t-test of the students’ achievement after they had the treatment showed that t-table was smaller than t-test value of the students’ writing business correspondence achievement, where the value of t-test was 10.14 and the t-table was 2.023. It can be concluded that there is a significant difference between the results of the students’ pre-test and post-test.

Compared with the t-test value, it can be concluded that the t-test value (10.14) was higher than the value of t-table (2.023). In other words, it can be said that 10.14>2.023. This means that the null hypothesis (H0) of this research is rejected and the alternative hypothesis H1) is acceptable because there is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test through E-mail teaching writing business correspondence.

From the analysis above, the researcher concluded that there was significant difference between the score got by the students in pre-test and post-test in writing business correspondence through E-mail technique. Teaching writing business correspondence through the E-mail technique could improve the students’ abilities.

The description of the data collected through E-mail as explained in the previous section showed that the students’ writing business correspondence was improved. It is supported by the frequency and the rate percentage of the result of the students’ pre-test and post-test. Students’ scores after presenting materials through E-mail are better than before the treatment given by the students.

The mean score of each component of the students’ pre-test that is content (18.60), layout or organization (15.75), vocabulary (14.35), grammar and mechanics (11.78) which indicated that the students had fair to poor scores.

Meanwhile, the mean score of each component of the students’ post-test namely content (23.13), layout or organization (19.53), vocabulary (18.53), grammar and mechanics (15.35) showed that the students had good to average scores.

Based on the result of the t-test as well as probability, the researcher found that the students’ achievement in writing business correspondence between the pre-test and post-test differed significantly. The difference was seen after comparing it with the value of t-table. This means that there was a significant difference result of the test before and after presenting materials through E-mail. In other words, teaching business correspondence by using E-mail is more effective and challenging in improving the students’ writing of business correspondence.

Finally, the researcher concludes that by using E-mail can improve the writing business correspondence of the second-grade students of SMK YPUP Makassar.

6. Conclusions and Suggestions

After doing the researcher concluded that teaching writing business correspondence to the second-grade students of SMK YPUP Makassar has been improved after applying E-mail in teaching-learning process. It can be found that there is a significant difference in the students’ writing ability in the pre-test and post-test. It is shown by the mean score of pre-test and post-test. The result of the post-test was higher than the pre-test.

Based on the result of the data analysis and conclusions, the researcher suggested:
1) The lecturers or teachers should explore alternative devices or techniques for teaching business correspondence writing, in addition to the traditional methods. One of the techniques is by using email since it promotes a more attractive, sophisticated, and realistic authentic teaching and learning situation.

2) It is suggested that lecturers or teachers should be knowledgeable in computer applications related to teaching in order to utilize existing techniques. They should also be creative in encouraging and motivating students to take responsibility for their roles as creative learning partners in collaborative email exchanges.

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