THE USE OF BUSINESS LETTER IN TEACHING READING

Sandhy Jisnu Tri Manunggal
Slamet Riyadi University

Abstract

The aims of the study are: (1) Knowing whether implementing business letter improves reading skill of XI AK students of SMK KANISIUS SURAKARTA in 2013/2014, and (2) Describing the situation in the classrooms when business letter is implemented in reading class. This research was conducted at SMK KANISIUS Surakarta from January-March 2016. The subject of the research was the XI-AK class consisted of 18 students. It was a Classroom Action Research. The research was conducted in two cycles which consisted of four steps: planning, implementing, observation and reflection. In collecting the data, the researcher used observation, interview, documentation, and test. In analyzing the data, the researcher used qualitative and quantitative data analysis. The result of the research shows that Business Letter can improve the students’ reading skill. The students’ mean score at pre-test was 52.67. It improved to 61.11 in the first cycle, and improved up to 70.78 in the second cycle. Besides, the students’ participation in the class also improves. The students became more active during the lesson. Therefore, Business Letter is an effective learning medium to improve students’ reading skill.

Keywords: Reading Skill, Business Letter, Classroom Action Research
INTRODUCTION

English is very important in the world of communication. Today, English has become an instrument of communication which is used by almost every people all over the world for various purposes. By mastery English, people are able to live in any places across nations, receive more information that they need to know, understand things that another might not able to, and have a conversation with foreigner. We realize that there are obstacles in learning English, because learning a foreign language may not as easy as learning our own language. It needs more time, more knowledge and other aspects to understand.

The Indonesian students start learning English at Junior High School (SMP). The process continues at Senior High School (SMA). In fact, now, English is also taught in some elementary schools as the local content and even in some kindergartens. The pupils are introduced to some English vocabularies. In addition to learning the language in formal education as mentioned above, people also learn it in non-formal education like in English courses and private lessons.

However, SMU graduates are still very poor in reading comprehension, since they are not used to reading or understanding articles which are written in English. From the experience of the researcher, reading is the most emphasized in English teaching and learning process. Quite simply, without solid reading, second language readers cannot perform at levels they must succeed in reading.

Reading skill is a must to master English as it is an important part of the four necessary language skills for gathering informations besides listening, speaking, and writing. Ronald Mackay in Simanjuntak (1988: 15) states that :“Reading is an active process. The reader forms a preliminary expectation about the material, then selects the fewest, most productive cues necessary to confirm or reject that expectation. This is a sampling process in which the reader takes advantage of his knowledge of vocabulary, syntax, discourse, an the
‘real world’. Therefore reading involves an interaction between thought and language. It means that the reader brings to the task a formidable amount of information and ideas, attitudes and beliefs”.

Based on the observation of the XI grade students of SMK KANISIUS SURAKARTA, there are some problems that can be found in the English learning process. One of the problems is the weakness of students’ skill in reading comprehension. The problems are inability to master the changing form of the verb, details information, and the meaning of words. Besides that, their English score is lower than the standard of English Language lesson – KKM (Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal), that is 6.5. Furthermore, there are some factors that become a problem in teaching reading activity in the class. Those include low motivation in participating English lesson, boredom, unnecessary disturbance during the learning process, and low attention.

One of the language teaching media which can be implemented to solve the vocational high school students’ problems in reading skill is by using Business Letter. It gives more benefits if this method can be implemented to the students. The students not only can improve their ability in reading skill, but also can learn about business letter, which is very important for them when they are about to enter the workforce.

The aims of the research are: (1) to describe the situation of the classroom when Business Letter is implemented in the reading class. (2) to identify whether implementing business letter improves students’ reading skill.

**METHODOLOGY**

The method of the research used in this study was a Classroom Action Research. As quoted Ferrance (2000: 1) “Action research is a process in which participants examine their own educational practice systematically and carefully, using the techniques of research”. “Action research is a systematic approach to investigation that enables people to
find effective solutions to problem they confront in their everyday lives.”. (2007: 1). The other expert, Kemmis et al (2014: 2) say that, “action research is a social practice, a practice-changing practice, which cannot ignore the theoirtical terrain that might help participants to work from a critically informed perspective on social life”.

The research was carried out at SMK KANISIUS Surakarta which is located in Jl. Telasih IV No.2 Surakarta 0271 – 730577. The subject of this research was the accounting class of XI grade students of SMK KANISIUS SURAKARTA consisting of 13 girls and 5 boys. The research took two cycles. Each cycle consisted of four steps: planning, implementing, observation and reflection. In collecting the data, the researcher used class observation, interviewing the English teacher and the students, documentation, and multiple choice test, consisting of pre-test, post test I, and post test II.

In collecting the data, this research used two techniques, test and non test. The test that was used was multiple choice text. Meanwhile, the researcher also conducted a classroom observation and interview the English teacher and students. After the data were collected, the researcher analyzed the data. There were two techniques that were used to analyze the data, qualitative and quantitative data analysis.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Prior to implementing Business Letter in reading class, the reseacher conducted a pre-test. The purpose of the pre-test was to know and to measure the students’ reading skill. The result of the test showed that most of the students did not achieve the KKM yet (below 65). It means there were many aspect of students’ reading skill that need to be fixed and improved, especially identifying the main idea, finding detail information of the text, determine the meaning of difficult words, and determine the reference.

On Tuesday, February 17th, 2016 the researcher conducted post test I. The aim of post test I is to find out whether there was an improvement of students’ reading skill after business
letter was implemented in reading class on cycle one. In post test II, the students get a multiple choice test contains the indicator of reading skill that need to achieved. There was an improvement that shown by the mean score of post test I. The students’ mean score of post test I was 61.11, it was higher than the mean score of pre-test that was 52.67. Although there was an improvement after cycle 2 was done, the students’ mean score of post test I still did not reach the minimum score of KKM (Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal) 65. In other hand, the researcher also find out some strength of implementing business letter as a media of teaching reading in cycle one, such as: it can attract students’ interest in reading, students pays more attention to the material, the students’ participation during the lesson was improved, the students become more active during the lesson, and the mean score showed an improvement. From the mean score of post test I, it can be conclude that implementing business letter as a medium in teaching reading improves the students’ reading skill, but they still have some problem that need to be solved in cycle 2.

Cycle 2 was conducted in February 19th – 24th 2016. The action plan for the second cycle was made based on the result of the first cycle and the problems that identified on the first cycle. After cycle 2 had been finished, the researcher conducted post test II. The post test II was conducted at Friday, February 26th, 2016 at 07.00 – 08.30 a.m. The result of post test II showed that there was an improvement on students’ reading skill. The mean score of students’ post test II was 70.78. It was higher than their mean score of post test I that was 61.11. The students’ mean score of post test II was successfully passed the KKM that was 65, it means that the implementation of business letter as a media in teaching reading was successfully improved the students’ reading skill. The strengths that the researcher found in cycle 2 were: the students became more motivated in learning English, the students’ interest about the material was developed, the students became more active and co-operative during the teaching and learning process.
The implementation of business letter as a medium was successfully improves the students’ achievement if it is compared with the result of the pre-test in which the mean score was 52.67 and the result of post-test I was 61.11 as the mean score. And the mean score of post-test II was 70.78. It means the students’ reading skill improves. The used of business letter as a medium in teaching reading makes the learning situation alive. The students look enthusiast in learning reading and create a good communication with the researcher during the teaching and learning process.

The result of the improvement of the students could be seen on the result table as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Mean of Pre-Test</th>
<th>The Mean of Post-Test1</th>
<th>The Mean of Post-Test 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>52.67</td>
<td>61.11</td>
<td>70.78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is concluded that business letter is an effective medium to teach students of SMK Kanisius Surakarta. It made the students improve their reading skill. They understand the meaning of the text and answer the questions correctly.

CONCLUSION

The use of Business Letter can improve the students’ reading skill at the XI AK students of SMK KANISIUS Surakarta in 2014/2015 Academic Year. I can be seen from their achievement in the score of the test. The mean score of pre-test was 52.67. After the research did some treatment using business letter as a media, their reading skill getting improved step by step. Their mean score in Post-test I was 61.11, it was better than the pre-test. The mean score of post-test II was highly increase at 70.78. By using business letter as a
media, the condition of the class becomes conducive and the students are motivated to improve their skill and motivated to become active during the teaching and learning process.
REFERENCES


