

Business English Writing (BEW) Training for Students of SMK PGRI Sukoharjo Majoring in OTKP (Automation and Office Governance)

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ABSTRAK

This training aims to equip class X students majoring in OTKP at SMK PGRI Sukoharjo with the ability to write business letters in English. The training participants were class X OTKP students at SMK PGRI Sukoharjo. Training was carried out using three meetings. Training is carried out online using Google Meet (first meeting) and face to face in class (second and third meetings). The first meeting includes a pre-test and material related to Parts of Business Letters in English. The second meeting is the Sales Letter. The third meeting was Order Letter and post-test material. The average of the pre-test is 20 while the average of the post-test is 85. Based on the pre and post test scores, there is a significant increase in the average score. This shows that this training can improve students' abilities in writing business letters.

INTRODUCTION

The importance of English as an international language now cannot be overstated, particularly in the period of the 4.0 Industrial Revolution. The industrial revolution is characterized by the rapidly advancing of digital technology so that mastery of technology and foreign languages is necessary. Everyone is required to have good communication skills and knowledge, especially when it comes to using English as an international language (Puspitaloka, 2020). Given this occurrence, it is extremely important that students be provided with digital abilities (computers) and communication skills. One of the goals of teaching English courses in the current curriculum is to enhance the ability to communicate in English, both orally and in writing. As a result, teachers must stress language skills that help students attain English learning objectives. .

The ability to communicate well in English is very important to communicate in the business world. The increasingly fierce business competition that occurs in today's global and digital era requires good English language skills in the hope that it can help someone establish good business relationships (Zulkarnain et al., 2023). English proficiency is increasingly becoming an aspect of interest to many companies, especially with the rapid globalization, foreign investment, and foreign relations in Indonesia

Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan (SMK) or Vocational School is an upper secondary formal education degree that qualifies learners for employment in the workforce and becoming skilled employees. SMK grads must be better quality in their field of specific expertise, and they must have other more universally applicable abilities such as international communication and digital skills. This is because English and digital abilities are frequently required in every job offering (Suparlan et al., 2022). Dalti Yulita noted that as a digital and sophisticated industrial era develops, vocational education grads must have the proper skills and be able to compete in the world of work, one of which is fluency in English (Yulita et al., 2022).

Given this situation, it is crucial to enhance SMK graduates' English communication skills in with the expectation that they will be offered more opportunities and be more likely to be recruited when they apply for jobs. English is being used by state-owned, multinational, foreign, and private businesses (Setiawan et al., 2020). Mandasari underlined that it is crucial for students to acquire English both actively and passively in order to facilitate progression both now and in the future (Mandasari et al., 2021)

English, as and adaptive lesson in SMK, are designed to give students the resources they need to communicate both orally and in writing in the context of the communication materials required for their programs of study. Furthermore, English courses give students the instruments they need to interact effectively in daily situations and advance their communication skills to a higher level, to fulfill the needs of the global society (Diselita, 2011).

Speaking skills are actually not the only skills that play a role in the world of work because English writing skills are also indispensable in all professions in today's globalized world (Dewi & Puspitaloka, 2020). The primary issue that

this community service project will focus on is intimately intertwined to writing, which is one of the language capabilities. One of the language abilities that is significant is writing, as it allows for both formal and informal indirect communication with people. Writing is also a means of communicating thoughts, feelings, and experiences to others. One of the many interconnected abilities that make up communication skills is writing. in the English language. Writing always comes last in English language proficiency tests, after speaking, listening, and reading. However, this does not imply that writing is any less significant. Writing develops abilities in its users, which makes it a more productive skill than speaking (Setiawan et al., 2020).

Interviews with one of English teachers at SMK have shown that the school offers five majors. One of them is Office Management Automation (OTKP). One major offered by SMK that prepares students for firm or office work is the Department of Office Automation and Governance (OTKP in Indonesian), formerly known as Office Administration (AP in Indonesian). Proficiency in people management, financial management, and archiving management will be given to OTKP major students. Graduates of the OTKP program can find employment in the industrial sector as secretaries, receptionists, personnel, or administrative staff (production, documents, operations, export, and import).

At SMK PGRI Sukoharjo, the OTKP major includes X OTKP, XI OTKP, and XII OTKP. English classes for X and XI OTKP last for three hours each week, whereas that of the XII OTKP last for four hours. An hour of study lasts roughly 45 minutes. The materials of X OTKP are announcements, compliments and congratulations, descriptive texts, introductions, and simple past. Meanwhile Asking and Giving Directions, Suggestions and Offerings, Personal Letters, Procedure Texts, and Short Telephone Messages are discussed in XI OTKP. Materials for Class XII OTKP consist of Cause and Effect, Biography Text, and Analytical Exposition.

Looking at the English materials, topic about letters (personal letter) appears in class XI. There is not information concerning business letters in English material. It appears that English business correspondence has not received much attention, despite the fact there may already be a special topic on Indonesian correspondence in productive lesson in the OTKP major. The service team believes that having proficiency in business correspondence in English could draw the community interest and value to SMK PGRI Sukoharjo. The objective of this community service activity is to provide SMK PGRI Sukoharjo students with OTKP specialization with the knowledge and skills necessary for office business in English while also motivating them to participate in training activities.

IMPLEMENTATION AND METHODS

The participants of this training were class XI students majoring in OTKP at SMK PGRI Sukoharjo. This training activity was carried out using the workshop method for 3 meetings involving students of SMK PGRI Sukoharjo specializing in OTKP. This training was carried out during the COVID-19 pandemic so that the first meeting was held online via gmeet. Meanwhile, the second and third meetings were held face-to-face in class but while maintaining health protocols. The meeting was conducted using the workshop method with the main resource person being the community service team from Universitas Veteran Bangun Nusantara Sukoharjo. The material of this training is about Business English Writing whose main focus is writing business letters in English which includes parts of English business letters, sales letters, and order letter. This training also applies pre-test (in the first meeting) and post-test (in the third meeting) to determine the understanding of the trainees.

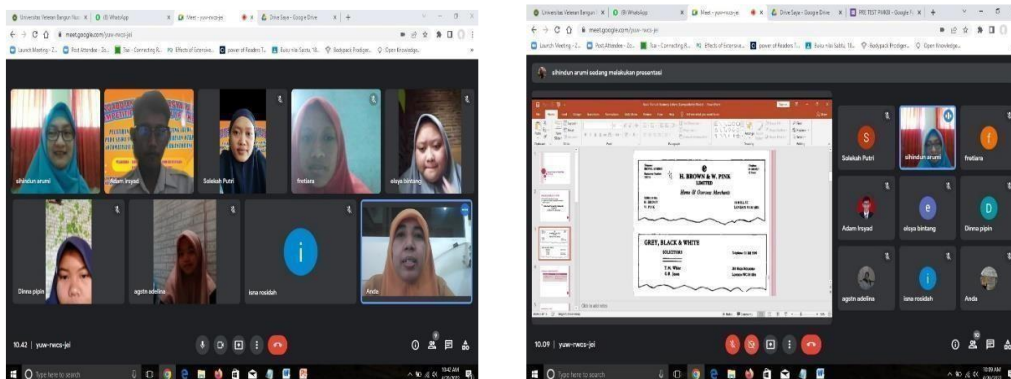
Meanwhile, the description of the activity method includes the methods and materials presented.

Meeting 1 (online) April 20, 2022	Meeting 2 (offline) April 21, 2022	Meeting 3 (offline) April 22, 2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pretest• Parts of Business Letter	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sales Letter	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Order Letter• Post-test

Picture 1. The Activity Schedule

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of Business English Writing training activities at SMK PGRI Sukoharjo for students majoring in OTKP was held in three meetings. The first meeting was held online by using Google meet, while the second and three meeting were done face-to-face at SMK PGRI Sukoharjo. The training was conducted by a team of lecturers from English Department of Univet Bangun Nusantara that consist of two lecturers and two students. The first meeting was held on Tuesday, April 20, 2022 at 7.30 -10.00 WIB with the material Basic Part of Business English. Before delivering the material the service team held an oral pre-test. At the beginning of the material presentation, the participants were still seen not actively participating in the training. The following is the pictures taken from the first meeting:



Picture 2. First Meeting

Meanwhile, the second meeting was held on April 21, 2022 at 7.30-10.00 WIB. The training material at the second meeting was Sales Letter. Before entering the presentation of the material, the speaker first asked about the previous meeting material by asking a few questions. Some students tried to remember and managed to answer all the questions, this showed that the students understood and remembered the material that had been presented. After finishing the material presentation, the participants then practice to write the sales letter based on the situation given. Here are some photos during the implementation of Business English Writing activities at SMK PGRI Sukoharjo;



Picture 3. Second Meeting

The third meeting was held at SMK PGRI on April 22, 2022. In the third meeting, the material was about order letters delivered by the two presenters. In this third meeting, the students also practiced making order letters. The training ended by giving a post test to find out whether the trainees had understood or not. It turned out that the post test results showed that on average the trainees had understood the business letters taught in 3 meetings.



Picture 3. Third Meeting

In this community service activity, the writers also held two tests, namely the pre-test at the first meeting and the post-test at the third meeting. The writers held this test to determine the trainees' understanding of the material that has been given. In addition, the test can also be used to see the improvement of students' English letter writing skills before and after attending the Business English Writing training.

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Table 1. The result of the test

No	Test	Mean
1	Pre-test	22
2	Post – test	85

Table 1 shows the average scores of the pre-test and post-test. Both tests were scored using a scale of 1-100. The highest score in the pre-test was 30 (33.3%) while the highest score for the post-test was 90 (50%). The mean value of the pre-test was 22 while the mean value of the post-test was 85. There was a significant increase in the pre-test and post-test. From the observations during the implementation of the service at SMK PGRI Sukoharjo, the writers found several problems faced by students.

In this service activity, the writers found several problems that arose in the classroom. First, students still have difficulty in forming English sentences. The students are still confused in making verbal and non-verbal sentences. In addition, there are errors in the use of present and past tense verbs. It can be seen when students make sentences in the body of the letter. Second, the students still have limited vocabulary in business letter, such as the parts of the letter (reference, salutation, complimentary closing, etc.), expressions commonly used in writing business letters (opening, body of letter, closing). Most of the students used their gadget to translate the Indonesian sentence into

English. Other problem was related to self-confidence which was seen when they were asked to answer some questions from the speaker. They were actually able to answer the questions, but they tended to be shy.

From the results of these observations, perhaps as a follow-up, further training can be carried out related to English pronunciation techniques and training related to the introduction of vocabulary related to office terms. Furthermore, the community service team of Universitas Veteran Bangun Nusantara and the English teachers of SMK PGRI to create a supplement book containing phrases and expressions relevant to office terms that teachers and students can use to improve their English.

There was synergized cooperation between SMK PGRI Sukoharjo and the community service team from Universitas Veteran Bangun Nusantara during the implementation of the community service. The school was very helpful in the training activities by providing facilities for the training. It shows the enthusiasm of the school regarding the implementation of the training conducted by the service team of Universitas Veteran Bangun Nusantara.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

English language skills can be an added value for SMK graduates in the world of work, especially for OTKP. This Community Service activity shows a good understanding by the participating students regarding the training material. Increased cooperation between the school and outside agencies related to English Language Training can be scheduled to facilitate the provision of English Language training for SMK students. Speaking and writing in English will be beneficial for SMK students, particularly OTKP majors. Hopefully, when the SMK graduates particularly OTKP major join the workforce, this capacity will be available. An improvement in post-test scores implies that students who participated in this Community Service activity acquired the training material well. More collaboration between the school and other organizations offering English language training can be planned to provide English language instruction for SMK students.

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