

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Writing

Writing is an essential language skill in English as it allows individuals to express thoughts, share information, convey opinions, and messages using written words. Unlike spoken communication, writing demands that the writer convey information in a way that readers can comprehend without engaging in real-time interaction. Therefore, writing is not just about using language but also about arranging information in a way that suits a specific purpose and audience.

Writing is also considered a purposeful activity because writers produce texts for particular communicative purposes. In producing written texts, writers need to determine what information should be communicated, how the information should be organised, and how the text should be presented to the intended readers. The organisation of information becomes particularly important in formal writing because formal texts generally follow certain conventions and patterns.

According to Hyland (2003), writing can be understood as a social and contextual activity in which writers construct meaning according to particular purposes, audiences, and contexts. From this perspective, writing is not merely a matter of arranging words and sentences but also involves responding to the expectations of a particular communicative situation. Writers need to consider who will read the text, why the text is written, and how the information should be presented appropriately.

In the study of English, writing helps students practice expressing information through written communication. Students are expected to learn how to arrange their thoughts and information in a way that makes their written messages clear and easy for readers to understand. The ability to organise information is especially important when students need to create texts that serve specific purposes and follow particular structures.

For vocational school students, writing is relevant because English may be used in various academic and professional situations. Students may encounter written communication such as announcements, emails, letters, applications, reports, and invitations. Therefore, learning to produce formal written texts can support students in developing practical English communication skills that may be useful in future academic and professional environments.

An example of functional and formal writing can be found in a formal invitation letter. When composing a formal invitation letter, students must convey details about an event to a specific individual. The information should be arranged in a suitable format to help the recipient clearly grasp the purpose and specifics of the invitation. Therefore, composing a formal invitation letter demands that students use their writing abilities within a particular situation for communication.

Based on the explanation above, writing in this research is viewed as a purposeful and organised activity through which students communicate information in written English. Hyland's perspective is relevant to this research because formal invitation letters are produced for a particular purpose, audience, and context. However, because the present research focuses specifically on structural components, the concept of writing serves as the general theoretical foundation, while the structural framework of formal invitation letters serves as the main basis for analysis.

2.2 Writing Ability

Writing ability is the skill that enables a writer to create written language in a way that effectively conveys information, ideas, or messages. In the context of learning English, a student's ability to write can be assessed by looking at the written work they create. The quality of a student's writing can be evaluated from various perspectives, which depend on the purpose and the specific criteria used for the assessment.

Writing ability is not limited to the ability to produce grammatically correct sentences. It also involves the ability to organise information and present a message according to the purpose and

type of text being produced. Different types of writing may have different organisational patterns and requirements. Therefore, the assessment of writing ability needs to be related to the characteristics of the text being examined.

Brown (2004) explains that writing assessment may involve several aspects of written performance, including organisation, content, language use, vocabulary, and mechanics. These aspects provide possible criteria for evaluating students' writing. However, the aspects included in an assessment should be determined by the purpose and scope of a particular study.

In this study, writing ability does not mean the students' general skill in writing in English. The term specifically refers to students' ability to compose formal invitation letters that follow the required text structure. Therefore, the analysis is confined to the structural elements of the formal invitation letter.

The students' writing skills are assessed based on the writing they actually produce. The researcher checks if students include all the necessary elements and whether these elements are properly included and presented in the formal invitation letter. The structural elements analysed in this study include the heading, salutation, body, closing, complimentary closing, and signature.

This method enables the evaluation of students' writing abilities by examining visible evidence present in their written work. The study bases its description of students' writing performance on the real letters they wrote, rather than making guesses about their abilities.

Therefore, Brown's theory serves as a supporting idea in the structured evaluation of writing performance. However, this study does not cover all the aspects of Brown's writing assessment because the research is focused specifically on the structural elements of formal invitation letters.

2.3 Formal Invitation Letter

A formal invitation letter is a type of written communication used to formally invite an individual or a group of people to attend or participate in a particular event. The letter communicates information about the event and provides the recipient with the necessary details concerning the

invitation. Because it is used in a formal communicative situation, the information should be presented in an organised and appropriate manner.

A formal invitation letter varies from an informal one based on its intended use, the situation in which it is used, the way it is written, and how it is structured. Informal invitations are typically used when reaching out to individuals with whom you have a close personal connection, while formal invitations are commonly used in settings such as institutions, academic environments, organisations, or professional situations. Formal invitation letters typically adhere to a standard structure and employ suitable language that reflects the relationship between the sender and the recipient.

The content of a formal invitation letter is determined by the event that is being announced. The letter should include enough details so that the recipient can clearly understand the reason for the invitation and the specific date and location of the event. Important event details might consist of the reason for the invitation, the name of the event, the specific date, the time it will take place, the location where it is held, and any other pertinent information that is significant for the person receiving the invitation.

The organisation of information is an important characteristic of a formal invitation letter. Information should not be presented randomly because each part of the letter has a particular function. The sender's information, greeting, event details, concluding message, polite closing expression, and sender's identity need to be presented in their appropriate positions.

In an educational context, formal invitation letters can be related to various activities, including school events, competitions, educational seminars, parents' meetings, workshops, organisational meetings, community programs, and other institutional activities. Such activities provide students with opportunities to practise functional English writing in contexts that resemble real communication.

In this research, formal invitation letters are the specific type of text produced by the eleventh-grade students of Vocational School 1 of Bengkulu City. The students are required to produce formal invitation letters based on formal event situations provided in the writing task. The students' letters are then analysed based on their structural components.

Based on the explanation provided, a formal invitation letter in this research refers to a properly written document that is used to invite someone to a specific event, and it follows a standard structure with recognised sections. The idea of formal invitation letters is closely connected to the focus of this research since the students' written work includes formal invitation letters.

2.4 Structure of Formal Invitation Letters

The structure of a formal invitation letter refers to how the various parts of the letter are arranged and organized. A formal letter typically consists of multiple sections, and each section plays a specific role in conveying information from the sender to the receiver. Proper organization ensures that the information in the letter is presented in a clear and structured manner.

In this research, the structure of a formal invitation letter consists of six components: **heading, salutation, body, closing, complimentary closing, and signature**. These six components are used as the main analytical framework because they correspond directly to the writing task and the purpose of the research.

2.4.1 Heading

The heading is the essential part of a formal letter that delivers information about the sender or institution and the letter itself. In an institutional context, the heading may contain the name of the school or institution, address, contact information, and date. The heading allows the recipient to identify the source of the letter and provides contextual information about when and where the letter

originates. In a formal invitation letter, the heading is placed before the salutation and the body of the letter.

In this research, the heading is studied with regard to whether it includes the name of the school or institution, its address, contact details, and the date. The researcher checks whether students include the necessary heading details in their formal invitation letters.

2.4.2 Salutation

The salutation is the formal greeting used to address the person who receives the letter. It usually comes after the heading and before the main part of the letter. The greeting is used to set up the connection between the sender and the person who will receive the letter in a formal way. In a formal invitation letter, the salutation should be appropriate to the intended recipient. Examples may include formal greetings addressed to a particular person, group, or position.

In this research, the salutation refers to the greeting written by students to address the recipient of the invitation. The main research focuses on whether students include an appropriate salutation or not as part of their formal invitation letters.

2.4.3 Body

The body is the main part of the formal invitation letter. It contains the central information that the sender wants to communicate to the recipient. In an invitation letter, the body should provide sufficient information for the recipient to understand the purpose and details of the event.

In this analysis, the body of the formal invitation letter includes the purpose of the invitation, the name of the event, the date, time, venue, and other suitable information. These components are important because they provide the recipient with the information needed to understand and respond to the invitation.

The body is thought to be the main part of the letter because it carries the main communicative message. In analysing students' writing, the researcher analyses whether the needed event information is included in the body of the formal invitation letter.

2.4.4 Closing

The closing is the final part of a formal invitation letter, which serves as the concluding statement. It comes following the main event details and prior to the complimentary closing. The closing of the message can be used to wrap up the invitation, convey hopes for the recipient's presence, or include a suitable ending that relates to the invitation. It should act as a bridge between the main content and the last section of the letter.

In this research, the closing is analysed separately from the complimentary closing. The closing refers to the concluding content of the invitation message, whereas the complimentary closing refers to the polite expression used to formally end the letter.

2.4.5 Complimentary Closing

The complimentary closing is a respectful component used in a formal invitation letter. It is usually positioned following the closing statement and prior to the sender's name or identification. Examples of common closing phrases used in formal letters include "Sincerely," "Yours sincerely," and "Best regards." These structure components serve as standard and respectful ways to conclude formal written messages.

In this research, the complimentary closing is considered a separate structural component from the closing. The analysis focuses on whether students include an appropriate complimentary closing in their formal invitation letters.

2.4.6 Signature

The signature is the last part of the letter that shows who sent it. In a formal institutional letter, the sender's identity may include the sender's name along with their job title or position. In this research, the term 'signature' does not mean the physical or handwritten form of a signature. The emphasis is on whether students include the sender's identity by providing the sender's name along with their suitable job title or position. Therefore, the signature component in this study is concerned

with the identification of the sender rather than the physical appearance of handwriting or an actual handwritten signature.

Based on the explanation above, the six structural components **heading, salutation, body, closing, complimentary closing, and signature** constitute the main analytical framework of this research. Each component is analysed to describe students' performance in creating complete and appropriately organised formal invitation letters.

2.5 Students' Writing of Formal Invitation Letters

Students' ability to write formal invitation letters involves their written performance in creating formal letters for specific communication purposes. Writing a formal invitation letter involves students conveying details about an event in a manner that adheres to the standards and structure of formal written communication.

When students write a formal invitation letter, they should take into account the purpose of the letter, the person it is addressed to, the event that is being mentioned, and the details that must be provided. They also need to arrange the information in the correct structure of the letter. Therefore, the way students approach and build each part of the letter can be used to assess their performance.

The performance of students in organising information is especially important in formal invitation letter writing. For example, information about the institution or sender is presented in the heading, the recipient is addressed through the salutation, and the main event information is presented in the body. The message is then concluded through the closing and complimentary closing, followed by the sender's identity in the signature.

In this analysis, students' writing of formal invitation letters is analysed through the essential writing products produced by the eleventh-grade students of MPLB 2 of Vocational School 1 of Bengkulu City. The students' letters are analysed based on six structural elements: heading, salutation, body, closing, complimentary closing, and signature.

The purpose of analysing the students' writing products is to describe how well the students are able to construct formal invitation letters based on these structural requirements. The research does not assume that students have difficulties in writing. Instead, it examines the actual products to obtain an objective description of their writing performance.

The results of the analysis provide information about students' performance in each structural component. This information can show whether students are able to include the required components and organise their formal invitation letters appropriately.

Thus, students' writing of formal invitation letters in this research is understood as students' ability to produce formal invitation letters and organise the required information according to the six structural components used in the research.

2.6 Assessment of Students' Writing

Assessment is an important process in writing research because it provides a systematic way of examining and describing students' written performance. Through assessment, researchers can determine the extent to which students' writing products meet predetermined criteria. The criteria used in an assessment should be appropriate to the purpose and scope of the research.

Brown (2004) explains that writing can be assessed through various aspects of written performance, depending on the purpose of the assessment. These aspects may include organisation, content, language use, vocabulary, and mechanics. However, not every writing study needs to examine all of these aspects. The assessment criteria should be selected according to what the researcher intends to investigate.

In the current research, the assessment focuses specifically on the structural components of formal invitation letters. Thus, the researcher does not assess students' writing based on grammar, vocabulary, spelling, punctuation, or other linguistic features. Instead, the assessment examines whether the required structural components are present and appropriately produced in the students' writing products.

The assessment consists of six components: heading, salutation, body, closing, complimentary closing, and signature. Each component is examined separately based on criteria established by the researcher. The students' writing products are then classified according to their performance in each component.

The use of separate structural components allows the researcher to obtain a more specific description of students' writing performance. For example, students may demonstrate complete performance in the body while showing different performance in the salutation or closing. Analysing the components separately therefore provides information that may not be visible if the letter is assessed only as one general writing product.

The results of the assessment are subsequently used to describe students' writing performance. The frequency of students who meet or do not meet the criteria for each component can be presented using percentages. In this way, the assessment provides a systematic description of how well the students construct the structural components of formal invitation letters.

Therefore, Brown's writing assessment theory functions as a supporting theoretical basis for the assessment process. However, the six-component structural framework remains the main analytical framework because it directly corresponds to the research focus, research instrument, and data analysis.

2.7 Previous Studies

Previous studies are important in this research because they provide actual information concerning students' writing of formal invitation letters and help position the present research in relation to earlier research. Several previous studies have examined students' performance in producing invitation letters from other perspectives.

Raihan (2022) investigated students' mastery of the components of formal invitation letters. The study reported that students demonstrated different levels of mastery across the components of the letter. The findings indicate that students' performance was not necessarily the same in every

structural component. This study is relevant to the present research because both studies examine students' performance in producing formal invitation letters and consider the components of the letter as an important basis for analysis.

Melja et al. (2022) investigated students' ability in writing invitation letters and reported variations in students' performance across different aspects of invitation-letter writing. The study shows that students' writing performance can be examined through specific aspects rather than being considered only as a general writing ability. This previous study is relevant to the present research because the current study also analyses students' writing performance through specific components of a formal invitation letter.

Panjaitan (2024) investigated students' writing of formal invitation letters and focused on the difficulties experienced by students in producing formal invitation texts. The findings provide information about students' performance in writing formal invitation letters from a different perspective. Although the focus of Panjaitan's research is related to difficulties, the study is relevant to the present research because it examines the same general type of written text.

The previous studies provide an essential base for the current research. They demonstrate that formal invitation letters can be investigated through students' actual writing products and that students may show different levels of performance across different elements or aspects of the text. However, the present research differs in its specific focus. The present study does not investigate students' difficulties or the factors causing difficulties. Instead, it focuses on describing **how good the eleventh-grade students of Vocational School 1 of Bengkulu City write formal invitation letters based specifically on six structural components: heading, salutation, body, closing, complimentary closing, and signature.**

Thus, the present research extends the discussion of students' formal invitation writing by providing a specific description of students' performance in each structural component within the context of a vocational school in Bengkulu City. The use of the students' essential writing products

as the main data source also allows the research to describe their observable writing performance directly.

2.8 Theoretical Framework Used in This Research

Based on the literature discussed above, this research requires a theoretical framework that is directly connected to the research question: **“How good the eleventh-grade students of Vocational School 1 of Bengkulu City write formal invitation letters in the Academic Year 2026?”**

The first theoretical foundation is the concept of **writing as purposeful communication**. Hyland (2003) views writing as a social and contextual activity in which writers construct meaning for particular purposes and audiences. This perspective is relevant to the current research because students write formal invitation letters for certain communicative purposes. The students are expected to communicate information about an event to a particular recipient through a properly organised written text.

The second theoretical foundation is the concept of **writing assessment**. *Brown (2004)* explains that writing performance can be assessed through different aspects depending on the purpose of the assessment. This perspective supports the present research because students' writing products need to be assessed systematically using clearly defined criteria. However, because the present study is specifically concerned with the structure of formal invitation letters, only the structural aspects relevant to the research are assessed.

The main analytical framework of this research is the **six structural components of formal invitation letters**, consisting of **heading, salutation, body, closing, complimentary closing, and signature**. These components provide the specific criteria used to analyse the students' writing products. Each component is examined separately to determine whether students include and appropriately construct the required parts of a formal invitation letter.

The relationship between these concepts can be explained like this. Writing refers to the process of creating written communication. Writing ability refers to a student's ability to create written text in an appropriate manner. Formal invitation letters are a particular kind of written communication that is specifically created for formal purposes. The six structural components are the specific criteria used to evaluate the students' writing products. Writing assessment is the process used to evaluate students' performance in a systematic way.

Therefore, the theoretical framework of this research consists of three related foundations. First, **Hyland's concept of writing as purposeful communication** provides the general understanding of writing. Second, **Brown's writing assessment theory** provides a supporting basis for systematically assessing written performance. Third, and most importantly, the **six-component structural framework of formal invitation letters** provides the main analytical basis for examining the students' writing products.

The framework is closely linked to the research process. The students are assigned a writing task in which they must create formal invitation letters. The resulting written materials are gathered as research data. Each letter is then examined according to the six main parts: heading, greeting, main content, closing, polite sign-off, and signature. The findings from the analysis are utilized to explain the extent to which students can create formal invitation letters within the scope of the research.

Thus, the theoretical framework supports the alignment among the research question, research objective, research instrument, data analysis, and research findings. The framework also ensures that the analysis remains within the stated limitation of the research, namely the structural components of formal invitation letters.