
Move Strategies as Model to Enhance Skills of SHS-TVL-EIM Students in Application Letter Writing

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Abstract – This study aimed at analyzing moves of application letters written by SHS TVL-EIM students for 2nd Semester, SY 2020-2021. This study employed both quantitative and qualitative methods of research. The descriptive type was used through genre analysis by utilizing the Bhatia's (1993) framework for job application letter. The study revealed that out of 20 application letters, only 11 were accepted as to the result of the assessment of the language teachers. The 11 served as the samples and were used as the data source of the analysis. Majority of the samples observed the M2/S2A Introducing candidature/Offering candidature -> M2/S2B Introducing candidature/Essential detailing of candidature -> M2/S2C Introducing candidature/Indicating value of candidature -> M4 Enclosing documents -> M6 Soliciting response -> M7 Ending politely structure. Based on the analysis, the research implied that the utilization of the move strategies in teaching application writing was effective. However, the investigation was only limited to the structure of the application letter of the SHS TVL-EIM students. It is likewise, focused only on the body of the letter and therefore recommended another study to include all the remaining parts of the letter. The language aspect, moreover, was not in the scope of this research and may also be explored through another study. The output of this research is significant to both the SHS teachers and students. This offers a model on how teacher will teach and how students will learn application letter writing. It will also adhere to the demand of the professional fields, not only in the Philippines, but in the world as well.

Keywords – Move, Strategies, Writing Model, Writing Skills, Application Letter.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Background

A job application letter is one of the genres that focuses on the text relating to the professional context (Bhatia, 1993, 2012; Hayland, 2012). The ability to write a genre of application letter is a general competency in the SHS Curriculum and is developed in subjects such as Reading and Writing Skills and Work Immersion. These subjects prepare students for job application exposure after high school since the K-12 Curriculum are made job-ready.

The Technical Vocational and Livelihood (TVL) students in particular are more expected to find job right after SHS. They, therefore, need to present a well-structured application letter as one of the basic job application requirements.

The researchers are writing teachers and in consultation with the Work Immersion teacher. The TVL students encountered difficulty in structuring the body of an application letter. There were no accepted structures used arriving to the idea that the SHS TVL-EIM students do not follow the accepted structure of application letter as observed by the field of professionals.

B. Theoretical Framework

The seven-move pattern of genre analysis that should be followed in writing the structure of a job application letter according to Bhatia's framework (1993) include the following: "Establishing credentials (Move 1), Introducing the candidature (Move 2), Offering incentives (Move 3), Enclosing documents (Move 4), Using pressure tactics (Move 5), Soliciting response (Move 6), Ending politely (Move 7)". Move 2 consists of three steps, (1) "offering the candidature", (2) "essential detailing of the candidature", and (3) "indicating value of the candidature" (Bhatia, 1993, p. 64). This framework was very practical and was utilized in this research to identify the various move patterns of the respondents, as well as to analyze the move structure of job application letters written by native English speakers.

C. Research Questions

1. What move-strategies are observed by the SHS TVL-EIM students in writing an application letter?
2. What writing model can be developed for application letter writing?

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In order to analyze the move structure of application letters, the Bhatia's framework was adopted and used as the model of the study. The structure of a job application letter according to Bhatia (1993) should follow a seven-move pattern of genre analysis as follows: Move 1: Establishing credentials Move 2: Introducing the candidature Step 2A: Offering candidature Step 2B: Essential detailing of candidature Step 2C: Indicating value of candidature Move 3: Offering incentives Move 4: Enclosing documents Move 5: Using pressure tactics Move 6: Soliciting response Move 7: Ending politely.

Based on Bhatia (1993), each move functions differently. Move 1 presents the candidates' strengths by stating their predominant academic credentials and the admiration for the reputation of the companies of prospective employers (Bhatia, 1993). Lesikar (1984, as cited in Bhatia, 1993) suggests that the successful method to establish credentials is to match the employers' needs with the explanation of applicants' qualifications as effectively as possible. Move 2 consists of three steps, (1) "offering the candidature", (2) "essential detailing of the candidature", and (3) "indicating value of the candidature" (p. 64). The first step presents how the candidates' meet the requirements of the prospective positions, while the second one shows the most necessary information of the candidates. The third step is responsive to the requirements of the jobs that they are applying for. Bhatia (1993) describes that indicating the value of the candidature is similar to self-representation with the aim of presenting relevant information, being persuasive, and presenting positive aspects of the candidates. Move 3 is always stated on sales promotion letters but rarely found in job application letters. The information shown in this move overlaps with the details found on the step of indicating the value of the candidature since both offer the attractive qualifications of the candidates.

It is, therefore, difficult to differentiate which one the candidates refer to. Move 4 functions as a reminder to see further information about qualifications, experience, interests, strengths, etc. through the C.V., certificates, and testimonials which are referred to in the enclosed documents. Move 5 represents the tactics the candidates use to force the readers (or prospective employers) to make a quick decision. However, this move is not often found in job application letters. Move 6 is to persuade the prospective employers to call to make interviews. Move 7 is referred to the closing in job application letters and consists of thanking the readers for spending the time to read their letters.

III. METHODS

A. Research Design

This study employed both quantitative and qualitative methods of research. The descriptive type was used through genre analysis. Twenty application letters written by SHS TVL-EIM students were gathered from their portfolio in Work Immersion subject and were carefully assessed. The assessment form (application letter assessment rubric) adapted from the Washington Center’s cover letter for internship and academic seminars was used to clarify the standards for the quality of the job application letters. They were evaluated by three English teachers. In the assessment form, only contents (introductory, body, closing sections) of the application letters were examined. The whole assessment form was presented on three rating scale ranges from 0 to 2 (0 = unacceptable, 1 = acceptable, 2 = excellent). The total scores of each letter were calculated in the percentage. The letters with the scores higher than or equal to 70% were considered acceptable; those with the score less than 70% were considered unacceptable and rejected. In total, the number of job application letters considered as acceptable was only two, with 11 considered unacceptable.

The teacher provided the writing model to the 11 students and let them write another application letter. Finally, another analysis was used to generate a proposed model for application letters of SHS students.

B. Analysis

The data analysis was undertaken using Bhatia’s framework (1993) to name moves found in this study.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Move-step strategy found in the corpus.

Move-Step Strategy	No. of Occurrence	%
Move2/Step2A → Move2/Step2B → Move2/Step2C → Move4 → Move6 → Move7	6	54.55%
Move2/Step2A → Move1 → Move2/Step2B → Move1 → Move2/Step2C → Move1 → Move6 → Move7	2	18.18%
Move2/Step2A → Move1 → Move2/Step2B → Move2/Step2C → Move1 → Move6 → Move7	2	18.18%
Move1 → Move2/Step2B → Move1 → Move2/Step2C → Move7	1	9.09%
Move2/Step2A → Move1 → Move2/Step2B → Move2/Step2C → Move7	1	9.09%

Table 1 shows the moves occurrence in the application letter written by the TVL-EIM students. There are six samples that arrived to the same structure. This makes the 54.55% percent of the 11 analyzed papers. The move begins with the move2/step2, whereas the writers present how the candidates meet the requirements of the prospective position. The following example shows the common expression used by the students in presenting candidature:

- (1) “I am Juan dela Cruz and I am interested to apply for a lineman in your business.”

Patanasorn (2020) explained that (offering candidature) can be achieved by direct and indirect strategies. The most common lexical feature of the direct strategy was the use of the verb “apply,” which appeared in every occurrence of this approach. This verb was used regularly in the clause I am writing to apply for + noun phrase (position). A few other structures included the following: I would apply for + noun phrase (position) and I am

(adjective) to apply for + noun phrase (position). His study revealed that the linguistic features used by most of the six ASEAN applicants who employed the indirect strategy was the verb phrase “express my interest.”

The next observed move is Essential Detailing of Candidature. The writers express the most necessary information of the candidatures; for example, qualifications, past experiences, abilities and achievements attained from the previous work.

- (2) I finished Electrical Installation and Maintenance under TVL Track of the SHS Program of West Palale National High school in 2021.
- (3) I was given academic distinctions and best in Work Immersion Award. Moreover, the next move is the indicating value of candidature,
- (4) The academic and potential qualifications I got from school and field exposure I know are relevant for the job I am applying for, hence I know I can do better once you entrust me the position. Likewise, I am positive that I can contribute to the success of your business.

Right after the persuasive expression, the candidates immediately remind the reader to take a look at the enclosed documents to see further information.

- (5) I have attached herewith my resume’ for your further perusal.
- (6) I am pleased to attached hereto my documents for your examination.

The next move is soliciting response. The applicants initiate to solicit response from the prospective employer. According to Rizan, T.N., Darus, S., Stapa, S.H., & Mustaffa, R. (2007), job application letter also has its primary indicator of success, and that it is to obtain an invitation to attend an interview session by the potential employer. Thus, in writing good and convincing job application letter, the applicant should clearly indicate a request for an interview or an invitation for further correspondence.

- (7) I am looking forward to interview soon.
- (8) I hope to meet with you soon for an interview.

The final move observed from the body of the application letter is the ending politely. Rohayati (2018) used the term thanking for this move. It is an obligatory move according to him. Moreover, Rizan, T.N., Darus, S., Stapa, S.H., & Mustaffa, R. (2007) found that a very high percentage of applicants adopted the ending politely.

- (9) Thank you very much.

Table 2. Proposed writing model for application letter writing.

Move	Strategy	Example
Move 1 <i>Offering candidature</i>	Presents how the candidates' meet the requirements of the prospective positions. <i>I am(name) and I am (adjective) to apply for + noun phrase (position)</i>	I am Juan dela Cruz and I am interested to apply for a lineman in your business.”
Move 2 <i>Introducing candidature / Essential detailing of candidature</i>	Shows the most necessary information of the candidates.	I finished Electrical Installation and Maintenance under TVL Track of the SHS Program of West Palale National High school

	<i>I + finished/ graduated + (strand and specialization) at (institution) + awards+ experience if any.</i>	in 2021 with academic distinction and commendable performance for work immersion award.
Move 3 <i>Introducing candidature / Indicating value of candidature</i>	responses to the requirements of the jobs that they are applying for <i>qualities and/ or credentials of the applicant + I believe/ I know + are relevant to (the job).</i>	The academic and potential qualifications I got from school and field exposure I know are relevant for the job I am applying for, hence I know I can do better once you entrust me the position. Likewise, I am positive that I can contribute to the success of your business.
Move 4 <i>Enclosing documents</i>	Simply encloses <i>I + enclosed/attached +NP (documents) for your perusal/reference/review</i>	I have attached herewith my resume' for your further perusal.
Move 5 <i>Soliciting response</i>	States desire for an interview <i>I hope/ wish + to talk/ to meet with you + for an interview</i>	I hope to meet with you soon for an interview.
Move 6 <i>Ending politely</i>	Formulates phrases of appreciation. Thank you very much.	Thank you very much.

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn that lead to the recommendations next after.

1. The SHS TVL-EIM students did not observe identified moves in writing an application letter.
2. The moves-step strategy derived from the application letters of the students were: Move2/Step2A -> Move2/Step2B -> Move2/Step2C -> Move4 -> Move6 -> Move7,
3. The suggested writing model for writing an application letter was M2/S2A *Introducing candidature / Offering candidature* -> M2/S2B *Introducing candidature / Essential detailing of candidature* -> M2/S2C *Introducing candidature / Indicating value of candidature* -> M4 *Enclosing documents* -> M6 *Soliciting response* -> M7 *Ending politely*.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the presented conclusions, the researchers recommend the following:

1. The SHS teachers handling Reading and Writing Skills and Work Immersion subjects should adopt the proposed model in teaching application letter writing.
2. A follow-up detailed study should be conducted with the inclusion of the other parts of an application letter and exploration of language use.

Another study may be conducted among corpus from other SHS strands.

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