

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Background of the Study

Communication is one of the most important things in the world of modern business. Along with the development of modern business, the methods of modern communication also vary. Communicating through email, fax, cellular phone, telephone are some of the examples of modern communication methods that are used these days.

Despite the modern communication methods available today, many companies still use business letters to communicate with their business relations. Letters are one of the means of communication to send out written statement or information from one party to another (Bratawidjaja 5). Taylor also says that business letters are an ambassador for a company (51), that is why there are many considerations in composing business letters. According to Mintorogo (158), there are some considerations that a company should be aware of when they compose a business letter. These considerations will be given later in chapter II, Problem Analysis.

Barelatama, a company that specializes in technical service, maintenance, and repairment, is also one of the companies that use

business letters to communicate with their business relations. In late 2006, Barelutama began to establish contact with foreign clients from Singapore, and Switzerland. There are two reasons why I do my apprenticeship program at Barelutama. The first is because Barelutama still uses business letters to communicate with their foreign clients. The second reason is because one of Barelutama specialities, that is technical service, is also the field that I have been dealing with for the last 5 years.

During my apprenticeship programme at Barelutama, I was assigned as one of the staffs at the administration department. The administration department is in charge of composing and documenting Barelutama business letters. I was responsible for handling some of Barelutama business letters such as business proposal of services. After doing an interview with one of the administration staff, I found out that since the first time the administration department has started composing letters for foreign clients, the staff still faces many problems that still have not been solved until now. I found out that the format of their business letters were taken from various business letters that the company received in past times. The staff then uses it as Barelutama business letter format without considering how a business letter should be.

Barelutama problem with business letters is also closely related with Barelutama administration department. Barelutama problem happens as the result of the administration staff not having proper knowledge in composing business letters. Shurter says that there are three qualifications one must have in writing business letters (159). The qualifications are:

1. Being aware with the situation of the company
2. Mastering written language
3. Having proper knowledge about composing letters

The administration staff at Barelutama has been working there ever since the company establishment. However, in composing business letters in English the staff does not have proper knowledge of English and also of composing business letters. As a result, Barelutama business letters do not use any reference number, the staff purely adopts other formats into its own format, and it does not apply the formal and proper language too.

Business letters with a fixed format is very important to establish and maintain relationship, especially with Barelutama foreign clients. Incorrect use of business letters can result in the company adopting an inappropriate tone, causing offense or misunderstandings, lack of clarity or purpose and hostility or soured relations (Trawick 5).

#### B. Identification of the Problem

There are some points that I am going to analyze in this term paper.

These points are:

1. What kind of business letter format that is currently used in Barelutama?
2. Why does Barelutama have problems with its business letter format?
3. What suggestions that can be used to improve Barelutama business letter format?

### C. Objectives and Benefits of the Study

This term paper is written to provide a helpful suggestion for Barelatama in improving communication with their foreign clients through business letter. The suggestion that will be made at the end of this term paper is meant for Barelatama so that it can have a standardized business letter format that can be used to establish and maintain relationship with both new and existing foreign clients.

This term paper also provides me with an opportunity to practice my English skill one step further and to help me analyze a problem and find the best possible solution. Furthermore, it is expected that this term paper will give me suitable knowledge, and as a stepping stone to continue my education to the next degree, the English for Business Professionals Programme.

Last but not least, it is also expected that this term paper will be useful for other students who will do their apprenticeship programme, and will give the readers some information about the real working environment.

### D. Description of the Institution

Barelatama Tekindo was established on November 1999 by Mr. Barlian Oemar who was also supported by his own brother, Emiel Oemar. The two of them agreed to set up Barelatama office and workshop at Jl. Cidamar 3, Bandung. Barelatama offers three kinds of services: technical service, maintenance, and repairment. At that time, it was also decided that Mr.

Barlian Oemar will act as the owner and Mr. Emiel Oemar as the operational manager. Barelata is also supported by four other people who have been Mr. Barlian's partners for many years.

In late 2006, Barelata widened the company target market by establishing contacts with foreign clients. At first, Barelata tried to establish contacts with the foreign clients through their known associates. A number of foreign clients then decided to make use of Barelata services. However, Barelata wanted to obtain more of foreign clients, therefore in mid 2007, Barelata decided to make more efforts in contacting foreign clients by composing letters, proposals, and so on. Since then, Barelata has performed many services for foreign clients from England, Switzerland, and many other countries. Until now, Barelata clients are dominated by foreigners. High quality services with competitive price are two important factors that made Barelata one of the best companies in Bandung.

#### E. Limitations and Method of the Study

The problem stated in this term paper is taken from a real working situation at Barelata. The observation had been made since my first day of apprenticeship until the end of my programme there. Out of so many valuable experiences, I decided to choose two points for my analysis. The first one is the current business letter format that is being used at Barelata and the impacts that are received by Barelata as a result of the incorrect business letter format. The second point is the

improvements in Barelatama business letter format and in the administration department. These improvements will be made so that Barelatama can have proper business letter format.

The first point will be analyzed using theories about communication, especially communication through letters. The second point will be analyzed using theories about the roles and qualifications of an administration department staff in a company from the library research. The theories are taken from various sources; textbooks, and internet sources.

#### F. Organization of the Term Paper

Chapter I, the Introduction provides information about the problem. Chapter II, Problem Analysis, discusses things that cause the problem and the effects as results from the problem. Chapter III, the Potential Solutions, provides comparison and contrast of the three potential solutions that might solve the problem. Chapter IV, the Conclusion, provides us with one chosen potential solution to overcome the problem. This solution is proposed based on the analysis of the previous chapters. The final part of this term paper is the bibliography that contains all of the printed sources that I use as a reference in writing my term paper.