

AN EMPLOYEE'S PERCEPTION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF USING ENGLISH IN THE WORKPLACE: A CASE STUDY AT PT.LTE

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Abstrak

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengidentifikasi faktor faktor pentingnya penggunaan Bahasa Inggris di dalam dunia kerja, mendeskripsikan dengan cara bagaimana pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris melalui dunia kerja. Penelitian ini dilaksanakan di Salatiga pada bulan Februari hingga bulan Mei 2024. Jenis penelitian yang digunakan pada penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif dengan metode deskriptif dan wawancara. Subjek penelitian ini adalah karyawan yang bekerja di PT. Lintas Teknologi Evolusi. Data yang digunakan pada penelitian ini berupa kegiatan berbicara karyawan PT. LTE di Salatiga yang didapatkan melalui observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa 1) Faktor Faktor yang dapat mempengaruhi karyawan untuk fasih dalam Bahasa Inggris antara lain menonton youtube, menonton film, sering berkomunikasi menggunakan bahasa Inggris. 2) Motivasi karyawan untuk lebih fasih dalam Bahasa Inggris adalah semakin berkembangnya jaman, terutama di dunia kerja, penggunaan Bahasa Inggris akan semakin penting dikarenakan banyaknya persaingan antara negara dan banyaknya kerja sama dengan negara luar. 3) Berdasarkan hasil penelitian diketahui bahwa cara karyawan menyelesaikan masalahnya adalah dengan sering berlatih berbicara dan menulis dengan teman sebaya untuk memastikan bahwa mereka dapat mengontrol dan mereview kesalahan satu sama lain

Kata kunci: Pelatihan, Berbicara, Bahasa Inggris.

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to identify the important factors behind the use of English in the workplace and to describe how English learning can be developed through work experience. This research was conducted in Salatiga from February to May 2024. The study used a qualitative approach with descriptive and interview methods. The participants were employees of PT. LTE. The data consisted of the employees' English speaking activities, which were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The findings show that : 1) Several factors help employees become fluent in English, including watching YouTube videos, watching movies, and communicating regularly in English. 2) Employees are motivated to improve their English because, as the world continues to develop, English has become increasingly important in the workplace due to global competition and growing number of international partnership. 3) The study also found that employees overcome their language difficulties by practicing speaking and writing with their coworkers, allowing them to monitor each other's progress and review each other's mistakes.

Keywords: Talk, Speaking, English.

1. PENDAHULUAN

Language plays an important role in human life because language is a human communication tool in everyday life (Setiyono et al., 2022). Every country has its own language, but one of the languages that is often used in business communication is English because English is the first international language used to communicate in various aspects of life; education, economy, politics, culture in the international scope. As a universal language, English is the language used in the world of technology, education, politics, business, and so on (Wengrum and Adhi, 2022).

There are so many languages used to communicate, there are approximately 7000 languages in the world. Although English is third by number of first speakers or mother tongue, it is the first second language to be learned in the world. It is also the official language of nearly 60 sovereign nations. The importance of English is not seen in how many people speak it but what it is used for. English is a patented international language where anyone in any part of the world can communicate with someone who speaks a different language using English. In addition, English in some cases is designated as an international language in various fields such as science, information technology, business and international communication (Kusuma, 2018). Especially in the era of the industrial revolution 4.0 which emphasizes digital technology, English is one of the languages needed in the operation of this technology.

The role of foreign languages is necessary in mastering communication technology and in interacting directly. With good foreign language skills, there will be many opportunities to get a good job in Multinational Companies that do require good foreign language skills, to expand relationships in the International World because foreign languages are languages that are generally useful to be able to compete in the Era of Globalization. Handling international business transactions requires effective skills in English. English is the preferred language of business because it is commonly used. However, using the wrong tenses, prepositions, and the like will make one's statements less accurate. Therefore, in the world of work, it would be good for someone to have a fairly good understanding of English. In connection with this, students need to have the ability to speak and be able to interact using English from now on, making it easier for them to adapt to communication in the workplace in the future. As according to

Pandey and Pandey (2014), communication skills in English can not only result in a better social life, but also better job opportunities in the future.

Apart from that, English has become a keyword that can grasp all aspects, be it business, politics, social or culture. In the past, maybe English was still a little taboo to learn and understand more deeply. However, today, on the contrary, English, which is a means of communication in the era of globalization, is the main key to one's success in achieving a bright future career. Considering that communication, especially in language (international language), serves as a bridge for various activities (Sri Handayani, 2016). In other words, the ability in English can also be used as an investment.

The work environment is evolving rapidly due to digital technology. Speaking in a foreign language or English presents its own challenge (Hidayat, 2022). This rapid development has led to a significant surge in employee education. Competition is fierce among job applicants. As such, English can be a plus in a job search. In general, many companies are looking for workers or employees who can follow communication with overseas clients. English proficiency tests are not conducted to assess whether someone can do a job or not, but by having sufficient ability about the language and skills needed for a job position, it will definitely help someone succeed in supporting their success. English can be one of the mainstay weapons of an employee to be able to improve his career and income at work, especially in companies that are already at the medium and large level where English is generally standardized as a language of communication with clients or other companies.

2. METHOD

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach to examine the paraphrasing techniques used by eighth-semester students. According to Sugiyono (2016), the qualitative descriptive method, within a post-positivist framework, is a research approach where the researcher serves as the main instrument to analyze the conditions of natural objects.

By gathering as much information as possible about an individual, a group, or an event, qualitative descriptive research seeks to describe, explain, and provide deeper insights into the issues that need to be examined. In qualitative research, individuals are the subjects of the study, and the findings are expressed in words or phrases that accurately reflect the situation as it is.

The qualitative descriptive approach is strengthened by the following ideas: Qualitative research is concerned with describing and explaining phenomena that occur within the natural environment, which are often commonplace and routine. Researchers can approach data from different frameworks and perspectives, allowing for a nuanced understanding of the subject matter.

The descriptive and richly subjective nature of the data produced through the use of qualitative techniques is emphasized. This study explores the perceptions and challenges regarding the importance of using English in the workplace as conveyed by employees of PT.LTE, based on interviews conducted with the employees as subjects.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Results

3.2.1 The use of English in the Workplace

The first finding concern the use of English in workplaces activities at PT.LTE. The participant explained that the company has partners or clients from foreign countries.

One of the activities is a montly sharing session. According to the participant, the sharing session discusses the work that has been completed, including evaluations, advantages and disadvantages, working methods, and other work-related matters. The company also conducts verification activities every two to three months. The verification functions as a test to examine employees' understanding of their work.

The participant explained:

“There is also something called verification. It is like a test to check our understanding of the work we do. The test is usually held every two or three months. Like any other test, there is a minimum score that we need to achieve. The difficult part is that all the materials and reading in the test are in English..”

The participant also stated that some of the reference books used at work are written in English:

“I think the main problem is the questions. Even our reference books are in English, so whether we like it or not, we have to learn and use English.”

These statements indicate that English is used not only for communication but also for understanding work-related materials and completing workplace assessments.

The company also provides an English Day program. The participant explained that English Day is conducted on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. During these days, employees are required to use English when communicating through Discord and WhatsApp.

The participant stated:

“So, English Day is held for three days, on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. For employees who work from home, we communicate through Discord. On Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, we have to communicate in English. The same applies to our group chat. On those days, we also have to send our messages in English.”

This finding shows that English is integrated into the employees' daily workplace communication. English Day provides employees with direct opportunities to practice English through written and spoken communication.

3.2.2 The Importance of English for Workplace Communication

From second finding concern the importance of English for communication. The participant stated that English is important because PT. LTE has partners or clients from foreign countries. The participant's perception of English changed after entering the workplace. Before entering the working environment, the participant did not consider English to be very important.

The participant stated:

“Yes, before I started working, I also felt that English was not very important.”

However, after entering the workplace, the participant realized that English was necessary for communication: “But after I started working, especially at a company where English is very important and needed for communication, I realized how important it really is.”

The participant also connected the importance of English with the development of the current era and increasing cooperation with foreign companies:

“Especially nowadays, as the world continues to develop, there is more cooperation with foreign companies. So, in my opinion, learning English is quite important.”

The participant perceived English as an international language that can help people communicate despite having different backgrounds:

“English is an international language that is used by many countries. By using English, we can communicate well with people even though we come from different backgrounds.”

Based on these statements, the participant perceived English as an important communication skill because of the increasing possibility of interaction with people and companies from different countries.

3.2.3 The English as an Additional Value for Employees and Companies

The participant also explained that English is important not only for communication but also for the company and its employees. When asked why English is prioritized even though the company operates in Indonesia, the participant gave several reasons.

First, English is considered important for companies that operate internationally or have clients and branches in different countries:

“First, companies that operate internationally or have clients or branches in different countries really value English skills because they make communication easier.”

Second, the participant stated that English ability can contribute to the image of a company and provide additional value:

“Second, employees’ English skills can also reflect the company’s image. Good English skills can be an added attraction for clients, investors, or job applicants who are interested in working for the company.”

The findings indicate that the participant views English proficiency as having benefits at both the individual and organizational levels. For employees, English can be an additional skill, while for companies, it can support communication and contribute to the company's image.

3.2 Discussion

The findings presented above are discussed in relation to the theoretical review and previous studies presented in Chapter II. The discussion focuses on the use of English in the workplace, English ability, the function of language as communication, employee perception, and the relationship between English competence and workplace needs

3.2.1 The English as a Means of Workplace Communication

Based on the The findings show that English has an important function as a means of communication at PT. LTE. The participant explained that the company has partners or clients from foreign countries, which creates a need for English communication.

This finding is related to the theory of language presented in Chapter II. Language is a system used by people to communicate and express thoughts and ideas. Language also

functions as a means of communication, integration, and adaptation. Based on this theory, English can function as a communication tool when people from different linguistic backgrounds need to interact.

The participant's statement that English is “sangat penting dan sangat dibutuhkan untuk menjalin komunikasi” demonstrates that the importance of English is closely related to its practical function in communication.

This finding is consistent with the first previous study conducted by Ahmad Saifudin (2021), entitled “Analysis of Non-English Major Students' Perceptions of English Language Needs in the Workplace”. The study found that English is considered important because it is used for communication in jobs involving foreign or international interactions.

The similarity between the previous study and the present research can be seen from the reason for considering English important. In both studies, English becomes important when individuals are involved in communication that crosses national or linguistic boundaries. Therefore, the findings support the idea that English is particularly valuable when employees need to communicate with foreign clients, partners, or other international parties..

3.2.2 The Difficulties in Vocabulary and Grammar

Based The findings indicate that employees still experience difficulties when using English. The participant mentioned unfamiliar vocabulary, difficulties in remembering words, difficulties understanding spoken English, and difficulties constructing English sentences.

The participant specifically stated:

“Kan kadang bahasa Inggris ada verb 1, 2, 3. Nah, cara milihnya itu juga bingung.”

This statement shows that grammatical knowledge is one of the difficulties experienced by the participant. The participant also mentioned difficulty using pronouns correctly. The difficulties can be understood in relation to the theory of ability. According to the theoretical review, ability can be developed through learning and experience. Therefore, employees' English abilities may continue to develop through repeated exposure and practice.

The findings also show that English ability involves more than vocabulary. Employees need to understand vocabulary, sentence structure, grammar, pronunciation, and meaning in context. This finding is related to the second previous study conducted by Rizky Eka Prasetya (2021), entitled “Analysis of English Language Learning Needs in the Field of Secretarial and Office Administration”. The study emphasized the importance of developing language

competencies to support communication in professional environments. Although the research contexts are different, both studies demonstrate that employees need language competence that can support their actual workplace communication.

4. PENUTUP

4.2 Conclusion

- 1) Based on the findings and discussion presented in the previous chapter, the researcher concludes that English has an important role in the workplace, especially for employees who work with foreign clients and companies from other countries. Based on the participant's experience at PT. LTE, English is not only used as a communication tool but is also needed to understand work-related materials and complete work assessments.
- 2) The second finding shows that the English Day program provides an opportunity for the participant to practice English. The program is conducted through Discord and WhatsApp, where employees are required to communicate in English on certain days. At first, the participant felt nervous and had difficulty using English because English was not commonly used in daily communication. However, regular practice through the program helped the participant become more familiar with English and increased their confidence.
- 3) Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the participant perceives English as an important skill in the workplace. The participant's direct experience of using English for work activities and communication with foreign parties influenced this perception. Although the participant still experiences several difficulties, regular practice and the English learning activities provided by the company help the participant become more familiar and confident in using English.

4.2 Suggestion

- 1) For Employees

Employees are expected to continue practicing English regularly, especially the skills that are directly needed in their work activities, such as speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Employees can use various learning media such as YouTube,

TikTok, Google, and other English learning platforms to increase their vocabulary and improve their understanding of English.

Employees are also encouraged not to be afraid of making mistakes when using English. Regular communication and practice can help employees become more familiar and confident in using English. In addition, employees can learn from their mistakes and use them as part of the learning process.

2) For the Company

The company is expected to continue providing English learning activities such as the English Day program. The program can be maintained because it gives employees an opportunity to practice English directly in a work environment.

The company can also provide more structured English training based on the difficulties experienced by employees. For example, training can focus on vocabulary, speaking, listening, pronunciation, grammar, and sentence construction. In this way, employees can improve their English skills according to their actual needs at work.

3) For Students

Students, especially English Department students, are expected to understand that English is not only important for academic purposes but can also be needed in the workplace. Students can start practicing English through daily communication, watching English videos, reading English materials, and using English in academic or non-academic activities.

Students are also encouraged to improve their confidence in using English. This is important because the ability to use English in real situations may be different from simply understanding English as a subject.

4) For Future Researchers

Future researchers who are interested in a similar topic are suggested to involve more participants from different positions or companies. Using more participants may provide different perspectives regarding the use and importance of English in the workplace.

Future researchers can also conduct research in different types of workplaces, especially companies that have different levels of international interaction. In addition,

future researchers can examine specific English skills, such as speaking, listening, reading, or writing, in more detail

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