

PENGARUH PENGGUNAAN BAHASA INGGRIS PADA PROFESI ALUMNI BE/BEC

THE INFLUENCE OF ENGLISH USE ON THE CURRENT PROFESSION OF BE/BEC ALUMNI

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to provide an in-depth insight into the level of English proficiency required for the current BE/BEC alumni profession. The methodology used in this research is descriptive-qualitative, involving eight BE/BEC alumni of Universitas Negeri Makassar. The data was taken through English language tests and interview. The results showed that English proficiency provides a significant competitive advantage in alumni's careers, allows access to wider employment opportunities, and improves communication skills in a global environment. The implications of the findings provide valuable insights for English language learners and professionals to improve their English language skills to support career development and success in an increasingly connected world of work.

Keywords: *English Language Proficiency, English Use, Alumni, Profession*

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memberikan wawasan mendalam mengenai tingkat kemahiran bahasa Inggris yang dibutuhkan untuk profesi alumni BE/BEC saat ini. Metodologi yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah deskriptif-kualitatif dengan melibatkan 8 orang alumni BE/BEC Universitas Negeri Makassar melalui tes bahasa Inggris dan wawancara. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kemahiran berbahasa Inggris memberikan keunggulan kompetitif yang signifikan dalam karir alumni, memungkinkan akses terhadap peluang kerja yang lebih luas, dan meningkatkan keterampilan komunikasi dalam lingkungan global. Implikasi dari temuan ini memberikan wawasan berharga bagi pelajar dan profesional bahasa Inggris untuk meningkatkan keterampilan bahasa Inggris mereka guna mendukung pengembangan karir dan kesuksesan di dunia kerja yang semakin terhubung.

Kata Kunci: *Kemahiran Bahasa Inggris, Penggunaan Bahasa Inggris, Alumni, Profesi*

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INTRODUCTION

Knowledge of English is significant for graduates who complete their university education and enter their professional lives. Sawir et al (2012), pointed out that the ability to speak English allows graduates to find jobs in multinational companies. These international companies offer many opportunities to candidates that are fluent in English, as English is now considered an essential soft skill for job seekers. As stated by Tedjo (2022), broader context of careers and opportunities found that English skills are critical to opening doors for professionals to pursue careers in multinational companies and interact with international clients.

Over the past decade, the number of people who want to learn English as a second or foreign language has increased rapidly (Liyanage & Bartlett, 2008). According to Sawir et al (2012), English language proficiency is an important factor in employment. It also affects international students' ability to socially integrate with the local population. The importance of English is not measured by the number of people who speak it but by what it is used for. English is the primary language of communication. One of the factors contributing to the lack of English proficiency in Indonesia is the need for more use of English as a medium of instruction.

A profession is a specific occupation that requires unique or specialized requirements to convince and gain the trust of those who need it. The book of Delta and International (2014) defined profession as an occupation that requires a relatively long period of professional preparation in higher education and is governed by a specific code of ethics. Most graduates enter the workforce with the expectation of success in their professional careers.

English Language Proficiency

Kunasaraphan (2015), asserts that English proficiency level is the level of English proficiency measured by English language tests and is divided into three categories: basic level, intermediate level, and advanced level. A high level of English proficiency means alumni are effective communicators in a variety of situations, even comparable to native English speakers who have received higher education. This suggests that a high level of English can affect alumni's ability to communicate well in a professional setting, which in turn can affect their career or profession. In addition, Spilsbury (1993), stated that basic skills such as English language proficiency, plays an important role in determining an individual's success in the world of work. With a strong foundation of basic skills, individuals can meet job challenges more confidently and effectively. In an increasingly complex and diverse context, it is important for individuals to understand the relationship between their level of English proficiency and career success.

CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) is a frame of reference used to describe the achievements of foreign language learners across Europe and in the other parts of the world. University of Cambridge (2011), states that the CEFR is a framework published by the Council of Europe in 2001 that describes language learners' abilities in speaking, reading, listening, and writing at six reference levels. These six levels are named as follows: A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2. The CEFR is not a seal of approval or an international standard. While most test providers, textbook authors, and curriculum designers say that they have a relationship with the CEFR, however, the quality of those statements can vary, as can the quality of the tests, textbooks, and the curriculum itself. There is no single "best" way to conduct alignment studies or consider the claims made. Reasoned explanations supported by evidence are required. Demirel (2021), Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) uses skills to measure the English level of graduates, namely:

Reading Skills

According to Ratminingsih in Asholahudin (2020), reading is a receptive skill used to interpret the meaning presented in a text. Word recognition and comprehension are two processes that are interrelated in the complex reading process. Comprehension is the process of understanding words, sentences, and texts, while word recognition is the process of seeing written symbols associated with spoken language. The purpose of the CEFR is to measure and improve the ability of each skill, including reading skills which include the ability to read and understand texts in the quoted language.

Speaking Skills

Speaking skills are speaking techniques that are learned in the form of the pronunciation of English words. Dash (2013), states one of the most important ideas for developing speaking skills is to use language to learn and communicate. Keep in mind that speaking is very important for learning a foreign language because through speaking, messages can be conveyed. English-speaking skills play a central role in the modern world of work. The ability to communicate ideas clearly and convincingly is invaluable, especially in the context of presentations and work meetings. A well-spoken professional can have a positive influence in negotiations, ensure job interview success, and support the effectiveness of team communication.

Listening Skills

Alzamil (2021), stated that listening is the ability to understand the oral utterances conveyed by language speakers through their own hearing. In other words, listening is the process of understanding messages conveyed by language speakers in a language that can be understood by both speakers and listeners in certain situations.

CEFR scale to rate the ability to understand and comprehend language quoted in audio or video. to practice listening skills and improve the ability to understand language and situations such as talking to others or listening to announcements.

Writing Skills

Writing skills are a key aspect of self-expression and written communication. Kellogg and Raulerson (2007), asserted that writing skills include the ability to organize ideas, thoughts, or information in a clear and structured written form. This includes the use of correct grammar, appropriate word choice, and the logical organization of ideas. Writing skills also involve the ability to adapt to different genres of writing, such as formal letters, essays, reports, or creative works.

The importance of writing skills in a professional context is immense. In a work environment, individuals are often expected to produce reports, proposals, or emails with a high degree of rigor and clarity. The ability to effectively convey ideas through writing can have a positive impact on a professional reputation and career advancement.

The Use of English Language

Dwihartanti and Faizah (2019), mentioned that the use of English is one of the requirements that can improve careers or occupy higher positions in the world of work, in addition to mastery of skills and other competencies in their fields. Mastery of English can help one's career climb, considering the experience and competence possessed. One of the professional requirements is the skill of mastering English actively or passively.

The use of English in the professional environment has undergone a significant transformation along with the globalization and integration of the international job market. In the face of the ever-evolving dynamics of the world of work, the ability to speak English is not just an additional need but has become a critical element in shaping career and professional advancement.

The Influence of English

According to David (2015), English is one of the languages used to communicate globally. An example is politicians worldwide can speak English fluently for the purpose of negotiations. Another example is advertisement from multinational companies will include English in their product and/or advertisement. Moreover, Bryson in Rahayu (2018), states that more than 300 million people worldwide speak English, and the rest are trying to learn it.

Profession

A profession is defined as a specialized, knowledge-based, legally self-regulated occupation that provides services to society through a complex reciprocal relationship based on competence, recognition, and trust (Abadi et al, 2020). At its core, a profession is characterized by several essential and common attributes, including specialization, knowledge-based, legal self-regulation, service to society, and a relationship based on trust and competence.

The profession also has a code of ethics and professional conduct that governs its members, as well as a professional culture and identity with common values, norms, and attitudes. There are also formal organizations that support the profession with functional structures, policies, professional standards, and regulatory processes that provide the foundation for the organization's functions. Thus, a profession can be viewed as a form of work that not only has specialized knowledge but also carries high social and ethical responsibilities and is governed by strict standards and regulations.

METHOD

This research uses qualitative data from alumni BE/BEC. This data is in the form of primary data. Primary data comes directly from the source and is used for data collection, classification, analysis, and conclusion. The subjects of the research are eight alumni from the Business English study program (now Business English Communication), English Department, Faculty of Languages and Literature, Universitas Negeri Makassar. Data analysis systematically searches and compiles data from English language test and interviews. This process includes organizing data into categories, breaking it into subunits, synthesizing it, arranging it into patterns, choosing what is essential and what to study, and making conclusions so that others and oneself easily understand it. Data analysis is a series of procedures used to produce scientific conclusions by combining data obtained and validated with a theoretical basis relevant to the research data.

RESULTS

English proficiency is very influential for the participant's profession. To work in their workplace, they must be at a minimum of level B1 or B2. If they are at the A1 level, according to CEFR characteristics, they can only introduce themselves and answer questions about basic personal information. At B1 or B2 (intermediate or upper-intermediate) level, they can understand and engage in more fluent interactions with native speakers.

The frequency of English use varies depending on the work context of each participant. However, in general, English proficiency plays an important role in improving communication effectiveness, expanding employment opportunities, and strengthening business relationships in international work environments. Interviews with alumni revealed that regular use of English in a variety of work contexts, from teaching in schools to customer service in the banking industry to operations in the aviation sector, has provided significant benefits in carrying out their tasks.

DISCUSSION

English Language Proficiency

Based on the results of the English test, it shows that participants recognized themselves as being at the upper-intermediate level (B2). By being at the upper intermediate level (B2), participants demonstrate their ability to understand and use English independently in various contexts, including academic and professional situations. This result is supported by Paulina (2021), participants who have a high level of English proficiency, including the upper-intermediate level (B2), can already understand conversations and presentations in academic and professional contexts. This is because they have mastered various strategies for processing information and understanding meaning in English.

The Influence of English Proficiency on the Current Profession

Based on the results of the interview, it shows that the profession of the participants must have a high level of English. Participants who work as teachers must be able to interact with students effectively. Other participants who work for multinational companies, such as banks, also really need high English skills to carry out their duties, such as communicating with customers and managing documents in English. Participants who work abroad revealed the importance of English as a steppingstone to improve their future careers.

Frequency and context of alumni's use of English

Based on the results of interviews and alumni professions that have been described, researchers concluded that frequency and context of the use of English have a lot of influence on the participant's profession. In the teaching profession, the use of English is the most frequently used skill because the job requires them to use English when teaching. In the banking sector, English is used for interacting with international customers and providing better service to foreign national customers. In industrial accounting, Findex internal auditors use English as the main language in conducting audits and presenting reports to international clients. Meanwhile, in the Australian aviation sector, cabin services and gourmet gathering assistants, English is the main language to carry out their work. The result is supported by Minkara (2013), that the frequency and context of English use have a significant impact on an individual's career and profession. A good command of English can help individuals find their jobs.

CONCLUSION

English language use has a significant influence on the professions of BE/BEC alumni. The findings show that the level of English proficiency directly affects alumni's ability to perform their professional duties in various industries. Interview results also show that English proficiency gives BE/BEC alumni a competitive advantage in an increasingly globalized job market.

As far as the frequency and context of English use impact on alumni's professions, the results show that the frequency of English use in professional contexts is very significant. The participants stated that they often use English in their daily work, both to communicate with foreign colleagues and to manage English documents. This use of English not only facilitates them in carrying out their professional tasks but also helps in improving the quality of English education in Indonesia. Thus, it can be concluded that the frequency and context of English use have a significant impact on the career development of BE/BEC alumni, both locally and globally.

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