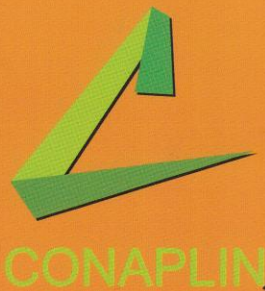




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THE ATTITUDE OF NON-ENGLISH LECTURERS TOWARDS WRITING ACADEMIC PAPERS IN ENGLISH

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Keywords: English writing, academic papers, attitude, foreign language learning

Abstract: In response to the encouragement by the government in this case the Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education through Regulation No. 20/2017, many lecturers are now learning English academic writing to prepare manuscripts for international publications. This study focused on the attitude of non-English lecturers at Sultan Agung Islamic University (UNISSULA) Semarang towards writing academic papers in English. Sixty six respondents were randomly drawn as sample from the population of around 380 non-English lecturers. Data on the attitude were collected using a Likert-typed questionnaire of 5 scales. The data were statistically analysed using SPSS 16.0. The result shows that non-English lecturers of UNISSULA have positive attitude and there is no significant difference on the level of attitude between male lecturers and female ones.

1 INTRODUCTION

In response to the encouragement by the government, in this case the Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education through Regulation No. 20/2017 which clearly stipulates that active professors and associate professors are required to publish their papers in accredited and international journals on periodical basis, many lecturers are now learning English academic writing to prepare manuscripts for international publications. Writing workshops, trainings, coaching and even clinics for international journal publications are offered to lecturers willing to have their work published in international journals.

Though such kinds of workshops and trainings do help them improve their knowledge about writing for international publications, there are still many other things that need to be addressed since when second/ foreign language writing and second/ foreign language acquisition in general are the case, there are many factors affecting success and failure of the endeavour. Aside from curriculum, teaching methods and other environmental factors, there are learner differences which contribute to either the success or failure of learning (Saville-Troike, 2012). As Gardner (1985) also suggests that achievement in a second language learning is influenced by attitudinal and motivational characteristics. Learners' attitude towards the target culture will have an impact on the level of success. Fakey (2010) even stated that learner's attitude is acknowledged as one of the most important factors that impacts on learning a language. In language learning situation,

if the learner's attitude is favourable, learning will continue. Favourable attitudes tend to cause the experience to be perceived positively, while negative attitudes tend to cause the learning experiences to be perceived unfavourably (Gardner, 1985).

To help predict the possibility of success of lecturers' efforts especially the non-English lecturers at university to learn English writing for international scientific publication, this research was conducted. It was aimed at investigating the attitude of non-English lecturers towards writing English academic papers for international publication. Non-English lecturers here refer to the university lecturers who teach subject courses other than English and who don't have any degree in English Education or English Literature. Two research questions which were addressed in this research were: 1) what was the attitude of non-English lecturers towards writing English academic papers like? 2) Is there any difference on the attitude towards writing English academic papers between male lecturers and female ones?

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Attitude is defined as a mental state that includes beliefs and feelings (Lathanna & Dagnew, 2009). Al-Mamun, et al. (2012) suggest attitude as a psychological construct which defines a particular behaviour. It is an evaluative reaction to some referents or attitude objects inferred on the basis of the individual's beliefs or opinions about the

referents (Gardner, 1985). It is a predisposition to respond in a favourable or unfavourable manner with respect to a given attitude object (Oskamp & Schultz, 2005). Attitude is thus linked to a person's values and beliefs and promotes or discourages the choice made in all realms of activity, whether academic or informal (McGroarty, 1996). It is a relatively enduring organization of beliefs around an object or a situation, predisposing one to respond in some preferential manner (Smith, 1971). Attitude is relatively enduring because it may be learned or unlearned and is characterized by a large proportion of emotional involvements such as feelings, self and relationship in the society (Brown, 2001).

Attitude develops early in childhood and is the result of parents' and peers' attitudes, contacting with people who are different in any number of ways, and interacting affective factors in the human experience (Brown, 1994). It is therefore, attitude can be positive or negative.

There are three dimensions of attitude. Each of the dimensions has different features to bring out language attitude results, namely behavioural, cognitive and affective. These three dimensions of attitude are based on the three theoretical approaches of behaviourism, cognitivism, and humanism. The behavioural aspect of attitude is about the way one may behave and react in a particular situation. Positive attitude leads to the exhibition of positive behaviour towards studying, absorbing the students themselves in learning, and striving to learn more (Kara, 2009). Cognitive aspect of attitude concerns about someone's belief on something he receives and understands. The cognitive attitude could be classified into four steps of connecting the previous knowledge and the new one, creating new knowledge, checking new knowledge, and applying the new knowledge in many situations. While the last, namely emotional aspect of attitude is someone's likeness or dislikeness towards an object. Feng and Chen (2009) stated that learning process is an emotional process, therefore, it is affected by different emotional factors.

Studies show that there is a relationship between attitude and success of learning. In a study of the relationship between motivation/ attitude and L2 writing, Hashemian and Heidari (2012) for example found that participants who had positive attitude showed better operation in L2 writing than their peers with negative attitude. Students who have negative attitude towards English may not be well aware of the importance of English (Abidin M. J., 2012). There was a strong correlation between the students' attitudes towards learning English and their performance in reading comprehension (Momani, 2009).

The ability of students to master a second language is not only influenced by the mental competence or language skills but also on the

students' attitudes and perceptions towards the target language (Abidin et al., 2012). High motivation and positive attitude facilitate second language learning. If a learner does not have the interest and tendency in acquiring the target language to communicate with others, this learner will possess a negative attitude and will not be motivated and enthusiastic in language learning.

3 METHOD OF THE STUDY

3.1 Research Design

The design of this study was descriptive. It was aimed at portraying the attitude of non-English lecturers in learning to write English papers for international publication. An adapted questionnaire written in Bahasa Indonesia was employed as a data collecting instrument. The participants were required to give their own perceptions about their attitudes towards learning English writing for academic purpose in terms of the emotional, cognitive, and behavioural aspects.

3.2 Participants

The population of the study was all the non-English lecturers at Sultan Agung Islamic University (UNISSULA) which reached the number of 380 persons. However, to make the work manageable, 66 lecturers were randomly drawn as sample ($N = 66$). Thirty one lecturers were as old as 40 and under 40 years old, 35 were above 40 years old. Twenty six respondents were male and 40 were female, majority of them (90%) held S2 (graduate) degree, only 10% held S3 (post graduate). They taught different subjects and disciplines as engineering, medicine, humanities and education.

3.3 Instruments

One attitude questionnaire was used to collect data. The questionnaire was modified from attitude questionnaire in the form of Likert scale with 5 points from Strongly Disagree (score 1), Disagree (score 2), Neutral (score 3), Agree (score 4), and Strongly Agree (score 5). For negative statements, the scales were reversely scored. The statements in the questionnaire cover behavioural aspect of attitude indicators (item No. 2, 3, 4, 6), cognitive aspects (item No. 7, 8, 9, 10), as well as emotional aspects of attitude indicators (item No. 1, 5, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15).

Validity of the questionnaire was measured using person product moment correlation. An item is valid

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if the score for r_{count} is higher than the one specified in the Table. The output of SPSS person product moment correlation of the items of questionnaire was 0.418 as the lowest and 0.778 as the highest, while the score of r specified in the table for 66 respondent is 0.244. Therefore, it was concluded that all items in the questionnaire were valid. Reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha also showed that the items had Alpha of higher than 0.8, so the questionnaire was reliable.

3.4 Procedure for Data Collection and Data Analysis

SPSS 16.0 was used to analyze the data descriptively and to compare means (t-test) between male and female respondents, in order to find out whether there is a significant difference on attitude between the male and female respondents.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The first research question to be addressed in this study was what the attitude of non-English lecturers towards writing English academic papers was like. To achieve that purpose, a descriptive analysis was employed. The result shows that almost all mean scores of English language writing attitude among the participants was relatively high. They ranged from 2.89 for the lowest to 4.50 for the highest with standard deviation (SD) ranged from 0.53 to 1.07. Referring to Likert-scale used, in which score 3 was used to refer to neutral choice, and 1 to 2 were used for strongly Disagree and Agree respectively, while 4 and 5 were used to refer to Agree and Strongly Agree, mean scores of under 3 were considered as having negative attitude, while mean score from 3.01 to 5, for example were considered as having positive attitude.

The result shows that the participants mostly had a positive attitude towards English writing for academic purposes. Statements as the respondent enjoy learning writing, English academic writing will improve performance, help build network, make more confident and others were scored higher than 4. Item No. 7 saying that academic papers in English are accepted in international journals more easily has the highest mean score, while item No, 9 saying writing articles in English is too difficult for me has the lowest and it was the only item scored under 3. Statement "Writing articles in English is too difficult for me" was negatively responded; that they didn't agree that writing English was too difficult. The data were presented in the Table.

Table: Descriptive Statistics of Respondents' Attitude towards English Writing for Academic Purposes

| No | Statement | N | Mean | S.D |
|----|--|----|------|------|
| 1 | I enjoy learning writing academic English | 66 | 4.00 | .82 |
| 2 | English academic writing ability will help me improve my performance as lecturer. | 66 | 4.42 | .60 |
| 3 | English academic writing ability will help me build my networks with other researchers. | 66 | 4.45 | .61 |
| 4 | I will participate if there is a training for English writing. | 66 | 4.28 | .57 |
| 5 | English academic writing ability will make me feel more confident. | 66 | 4.46 | .58 |
| 6 | English academic writing ability can help me develop my academic performance. | 66 | 4.46 | .53 |
| 7 | Academic papers written in English are accepted in scientific journals more easily. | 66 | 4.50 | .68 |
| 8 | Writing articles in English will encourage me to read and learn topics relevant to my interest broader and deeper. | 66 | 4.42 | .58 |
| 9 | Writing articles in English is too difficult for me. | 66 | 2.98 | 1.07 |
| 10 | I can't develop my ideas if I must write it in English. | 66 | 3.03 | 1.05 |
| 11 | Writing articles in English is enjoying. | 66 | 3.69 | .74 |
| 12 | I will be proud of myself if I can finish writing article in English. | 66 | 4.21 | .66 |
| 13 | I will be proud of myself if my English paper is published in an international journal. | 66 | 4.45 | .66 |
| 14 | Honestly, I don't have any interest to write article in English. | 66 | 3.92 | .99 |
| 15 | Writing article in English will only make me depressed. | 66 | 3.75 | 1.06 |
| | Valid N (listwise) | 66 | | |

If the data were analysed based on each attitudinal aspect (behaviour, cognitive and emotional), they will look as follows:

1. The mean score for behavioral aspect is 4.40.
2. The mean score for cognitive aspect is 3.37,
3. The mean score for emotional aspect is 4.07.

Concerning the second research question on whether there is any significant difference on the level of attitude between male lecturers and their female counterparts, the data were analyzed using t-test formula. The null hypothesis states that there is no significant difference on the attitude of non-English lecturers towards English academic writing. The result shows that the F of Levene's test for equality of variances is 1.435 with sig. 0.235, while the t for equality variance assumed is 0.541 with sig (2 tailed) of 95% confidence interval is 0.590 for equal variance assumed and 0.610 for equal

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variance not assumed. This means that the null hypothesis cannot be rejected; between male and female lecturers there is no significant difference on the level of attitude towards writing academic English.

5 CONCLUSION

This study was conducted to find out non-English lecturers' attitude towards English academic writing. The data show that they had positive attitude, they valued things related to English academic writing behavioural, cognitive and emotional aspects positively. The research also concluded that there was no difference concerning the attitude towards English writing for academic purpose between male and female lecturers.

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