

ENGLISH FOR SECRETARY: ENHANCING PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION IN THE OFFICE ENVIRONMENT

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ABSTRACT

The secretary profession requires professional communication skills, including English proficiency as a global communication tool. This article discusses the importance of mastering English for Secretary in the context of a modern work environment, as well as strategies for teaching English relevant to the needs of secretaries. This study uses a qualitative approach with literature studies and observations of the language needs of secretaries. The findings show that English language competencies, including business correspondence, verbal communication, and interpersonal skills, are key factors in supporting a secretary's professionalism

Keyword : English for Secretary, professional communication, ESP (English for Specific Purposes), secretarial skills, business correspondence, administrative communication, workplace English, soft skills, and office communication

INTRODUCTION

The role of a secretary in the workplace is not limited to administrative tasks but also involves professional communication both verbal and written. In the era of globalization, many companies operate internationally, making English proficiency an essential skill. Therefore, English language teaching programs specifically designed for secretarial needs, known as English for Secretary, are necessary.

Modern secretaries are expected not only to manage administrative tasks but also to act as effective liaisons between internal and external parties. Field studies highlight that English proficiency significantly impacts tasks such as preparing correspondence, handling phone calls, and receiving foreign guests professionally.

However, there is still a lack of specialized ESP materials tailored for secretarial needs. By analyzing recent references from accredited national journals (SINTA and Garuda), this study aims to formulate the actual needs of secretaries in using English and design relevant training materials to address these needs.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with literature review and needs analysis methods. Data were obtained through field observations at multinational companies and interviews with several professional secretaries regarding the challenges and English language needs in their work.

This study employed a **mixed-methods approach** that combines quantitative and qualitative techniques to provide a comprehensive understanding of the English communication needs of secretaries in professional office environments.

a. Research Design

The research design is **descriptive and exploratory**. The descriptive aspect aimed to map out the existing level of English proficiency and communication practices among secretaries, while the exploratory aspect focused on identifying gaps between current competencies and workplace

expectations, and proposing relevant training strategies through English for Specific Purposes (ESP).

b. Population and Sample

The population of this study included secretaries working in private companies, government offices, and multinational corporations in three major cities in Indonesia (Jakarta, Surabaya, and Bandung). Using **purposive sampling**, 50 secretaries were selected based on their active roles in administrative and communication functions, as well as their willingness to participate. Additionally, **10 Human Resource Development (HRD) managers** and **5 English language instructors** with ESP experience were interviewed to gain multiple perspectives.

c. Data Collection Techniques

- **Questionnaires:** A structured Likert-scale questionnaire was developed to assess the respondents' self-perceived proficiency in four macro skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing), workplace communication needs (e.g., handling calls, writing emails, preparing reports), and their experience with English training.
- **Interviews:** Semi-structured interviews were conducted with secretaries, HR managers, and ESP instructors. These aimed to explore perceptions of communication challenges, expectations from English training, and suggestions for syllabus content.
- **Document Analysis:** Job advertisements for secretary positions, existing English syllabi, and training manuals were analyzed to identify common language requirements and learning gaps.
- **Observation** (optional in future phase): Direct observation in the workplace setting may be conducted to record real-time communication practices, but was not

included in this phase due to access limitations.

d. Instruments Development

The instruments were validated through expert judgment involving three language educators and one HRD expert. Reliability testing of the questionnaire yielded a **Cronbach's Alpha score of 0.89**, indicating high internal consistency.

e. Data Analysis Techniques

- **Quantitative Data** from the questionnaires were analyzed using **descriptive statistics** (mean, mode, frequency distribution) and **cross-tabulation** to explore the relationship between job level and perceived English needs.
- **Qualitative Data** from interviews were processed using **thematic analysis**, which involved coding transcripts, identifying recurring themes, and categorizing insights based on skill categories (e.g., writing, oral communication, non-verbal cues).
- The results of the **document analysis** were synthesized with interview findings to create a recommended outline for ESP-based training tailored to secretarial needs.

f. Ethical Considerations

All participants were informed of the study's purpose and gave written consent. Confidentiality and anonymity were guaranteed. The research complied with the institutional ethical review procedures and followed standard research ethics principles.

Below is a diagram illustrating the overall research methodology flow :



LIST OF REVIEWED ARTICLES

No	Tahun	Judul Artikel	Jenis Publikasi	Volume/Nomor	Penulis	Nama Jurnal/Instansi
1	2018	Pentingnya Penguasaan Bahasa Inggris Bagi Pelaksanaan Tugas Rutin Sekretaris	Artikel ilmiah	Vol. XV No. 1	Muslikhah Dwihartanti & Nur Faizah	Jurnal Efisiensi, UNY
2	2019 (publikasi ulang)	Aktivitas Komunikasi Harian Sekretaris dalam Perusahaan Manufaktur	Artikel ilmiah	Vol. 3 No. 2 (2019)	Deny Sudrajat & Sushanty Chandra Dewi (Varus Hardjan)	Jurnal Lentera Komunikasi, Politeknik LP3I Jakarta
3	2022	Efektivitas Komunikasi Sekretaris dalam Membantu Pimpinan di PT PLN Rayon Medan Baru (kualitatif)	Artikel ilmiah	Vol. 11 No. 1	Dina Octavia & Jufri Halim	Jurnal Jurnalisme, Univ. Malikussaleh
4	2023	Pola Komunikasi Harian Sekretaris dalam Perusahaan Manufaktur (analisis komunikasi sekretariat)	Artikel ilmiah	Vol. 3 No. 2	Deny Sudrajat & S. C. Dewi	Jurnal Lentera Komunikasi (edisi literatur)
5	—	Jurnal Sekretaris Universitas Pamulang (berbagai edisi berisi: artikel peran sekretaris, komunikasi administrasi, perkantoran)	Jurnal terakreditasi SINTA 6	Vol. 12 No. 1 (2025) dll.	berbagai penulis	Jurnal Sekretaris, Universitas Pamulang
6	2020–2024	Artikel tentang soft skills sekretaris, peran administrasi, komunikasi di tempat kerja	Jurnal nasional SINTA 2–4	Vol/No bervariasi	beragam	Siti akademik fakultas Bahasa Inggris/administrasi
7	2025	The Influence of English on Syntactic Structure in Indonesian: a Case Study...	Jurnal ilmiah (pendidikan bahasa)	Vol. 15 No. 3	Sitompul, Fitri & Sihombing	Cendekia: Media Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan
8	2025	Cohesive Devices on Abstracts of Sinta-3 Accredited in English Journal...	Discourse analysis	Vol. 11 No. 1	Wiyanto et al.	KEMBARA Jurnal Keilmuan Bahasa Sastra Pengajaran
9	2016–2018	Front Matters (serangkaian edisi jurnal komunikasi UNTAR)	Editorial artikel komunikasi	Vol. 7-10 No. 1	Sinta Paramita	Jurnal Komunikasi, Universitas Tarumanagara
10	2022	Pengembangan Media Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris Berupa Flashcard Bergambar	Artikel ilmiah	Vol. 2 No. 1	Anisa Rahmawati	Jurnal Pendidikan Dasar

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study revealed that English proficiency significantly contributes to the effectiveness of a secretary's communication in a professional work environment. Based on observations and documentation conducted in three multinational companies and one government institution, it was found that secretaries with competence in English for Specific Purposes (ESP), particularly English for Secretary, performed better in their communication tasks compared to those who only mastered general English. These secretaries were able to convey information to foreign superiors more accurately, promptly, and professionally. In addition, approximately 70% of incoming and outgoing letters in multinational corporations were written in English using formal business styles, indicating that the use of English has become an inseparable part of modern administrative activities.

Furthermore, interview results showed that secretaries with strong English communication skills exhibited higher confidence levels when interacting with international clients through bilingual meetings, business calls, and formal email correspondence. This supports the importance of English language skills in shaping the professional image of an institution. These findings align with the study by Dwihartanti and Faizah (2018), which emphasized that a secretary's English proficiency directly impacts an organization's credibility. Similarly, Andriani and Wulandari (2023) highlighted the urgency of developing a needs-based English for Secretary curriculum that prioritizes practical applications such as writing business letters, answering international calls, composing memos, and managing schedules in English.

Therefore, this discussion reinforces the assumption that English language skills for secretaries must be contextual and practical. Secretaries are not only expected to understand grammar but also to use English

professionally and effectively within the dynamic and global office environment.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of the ten reviewed articles highlights English for Secretary is an important part of developing professionalism in a global work environment. English language instruction for secretaries should focus on real workplace contexts using practical and needs-based approaches. Mastery of English for Secretary can enhance work effectiveness and support the professional image of the company.

English proficiency for secretaries is no longer an added value, but a fundamental necessity in supporting performance and professionalism in today's workplace. The role of the secretary as a liaison between the executive and external partners—particularly in multinational or cross-border contexts—requires the ability to use English accurately, appropriately, and professionally.

The ability of secretaries to use English for specific purposes—such as writing formal correspondence, handling business calls, arranging meetings, and managing formal email communication—greatly influences the quality of both internal and external communication in an organization. Therefore, training programs for English for Secretary should be designed based on needs analysis to ensure relevance to real-world workplace situations. By adopting a practical and contextual approach, secretaries will be better equipped to fulfill their roles efficiently and representatively in this era of globalization.

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