

Need-Based English Competency Development Strategies to Support MSME Product Internationalization Within the RPJMN Framework

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Abstract. This study investigated the English language needs and challenges faced by Indonesian Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in preparing for international market expansion. Utilizing a mixed-method approach with quantitative surveys and qualitative thematic analysis guided by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014). The research design used multi-case or comparative study in 13 MSMEs in Sumatera Utara, Indonesia. This study employed a purposive sampling technique to select respondents who met specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. Data were collected through observation, questionnaires, and interviews. The observation focused on participants' behavioral patterns and contextual interactions, while the questionnaire gathered quantitative data on respondents' perceptions and attitudes. In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted to obtain deeper qualitative insights into participants' experiences. The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods to identify trends and relationships, whereas the qualitative data were analyzed through thematic analysis, involving data reduction, coding, categorization, and interpretation to draw meaningful conclusions. The findings revealed that MSMEs experience significant barriers in communicating with foreign buyers, particularly in conversational English, understanding export-import terminology, and preparing product descriptions, which hinders their export readiness. The study highlighted a strong demand for practical, context-specific English training materials aligned with MSME business types and operational needs. MSMEs express a clear preference for hands-on, simulation-based training methods over theoretical approaches, emphasizing the effectiveness of role-play and practice-based modules in enhancing communication competence. Digital platforms such as WhatsApp, Zoom, and YouTube are recognized as flexible and accessible media for delivering English training. Furthermore, there was a high expectation for government facilitation of affordable, structured, and sustainable English training programs tailored to export-oriented MSMEs.

Keywords: English competence; internationalization of product; need based training

Introduction

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a strategic role in national economic development. According to data from the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs, this sector contributes more than 60% to Indonesia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and absorbs over 97% of the national workforce (Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs, 2024). This indicates that MSMEs are the backbone of Indonesia's economy, not only in job creation but also as a driving force for sustainable regional and national economic growth (Tambunan, 2019). Although MSMEs contribute significantly to GDP, their involvement in export activities remains relatively low. Data shows that only around 14% of total national exports come from the MSME sector (Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs, 2024). The low participation of MSMEs in international markets poses a particular challenge because their limited capability to access global markets can restrict their business

growth potential (Rahman & Setyawati, 2021). One of the causes of this low involvement in exports is the limited English language proficiency among MSME actors, which is essential for cross-border business communication, contract negotiation, access to global market information, and the implementation of digital marketing strategies (Fitriani & Gunawan, 2023). In the era of globalization and economic digitalization, English proficiency has become an important skill that MSME actors need to enhance their competitiveness and expand their market networks globally (Harris, 2017). English is not only used as a tool for cross-cultural communication but also serves as a gateway to broadening international business networks and improving MSMEs' ability to adopt effective digital marketing strategies (Susanti, 2022). Digital marketing utilizing social media, websites, and international e-commerce platforms requires mastery of English to enable MSMEs to promote their products more broadly and professionally to prospective consumers from various countries (Wijaya, 2021). The National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) 2025–2029, as the initial phase toward the Golden Indonesia Vision 2045, emphasizes the importance of improving competitive human resource quality, accelerating digital transformation, and strengthening MSMEs as a key pillar of the national economy (Bappenas, 2024). Enhancing English language skills for MSME actors aligns with the strategic policies in the RPJMN because it supports the acceleration of MSME transformation from local to global scale (Bappenas, 2024). This also supports efforts to increase the added value of MSME products to compete internationally (Sari & Pratama, 2020). This study holds strategic relevance by contributing to the formulation of human resource development policies and economic empowerment based on MSMEs within the RPJMN 2025–2029 framework (Bappenas, 2024). It is also expected to provide practical recommendations for improving English proficiency among MSME actors so that they can adapt to the demands of globalization and economic digitalization (Fitriani & Gunawan, 2023). Thus, this research not only supports the enhancement of MSME actors' competencies but also assists government efforts in increasing MSME contributions to export activities, opening opportunities for international cooperation, and strengthening national economic resilience toward the Golden Indonesia Vision 2045 (Bappenas, 2024; Tambunan, 2019). The urgency of this research is high due to several critical factors. First, the contribution of MSMEs to national exports remains low, posing a serious concern for the government in its efforts to enhance global competitiveness. Second, the limited functional English proficiency among MSME actors hinders their ability to access international markets, engage in cross-border business communication, and effectively utilize global digital platforms. Third, the RPJMN 2025–2029 explicitly emphasizes strengthening human resource capacity and increasing MSME exports as an integral part of the national economic transformation strategy toward realizing the Golden Indonesia Vision 2045. Moreover, there is still a lack of English training models specifically designed for MSMEs that take into account diverse business sectors, local needs, and integration with digital technology advancements. Despite these strengths, this study acknowledges several limitations. The research is contextually bounded to specific MSME sectors and regions, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other business contexts. Data collection relied on self-reported instruments, which could be influenced by participants' subjective perceptions. Additionally, the study's timeframe and resource constraints restricted the inclusion of broader comparative data across provinces or industries. These limitations provide valuable directions for future research to expand the scope, refine the model, and validate its applicability on a wider national scale. Based on the above description, the research problem formulation is: What development strategies are considered effective and relevant in improving the English proficiency of MSME actors in an applicable, contextual, and adaptive manner to digital technology developments?

Methods

Research Approach

This study employed a multi-case study or comparative study design involving 15 MSME actors in North Sumatra. A mixed methods approach was applied, combining qualitative and quantitative methods (Creswell, 2014). The qualitative approach uses descriptive methods or case studies to gain in-depth understanding of English communication practices in buying and selling services conducted by MSME actors in North Sumatra.

Meanwhile, the quantitative approach uses experimental or quasi-experimental methods to measure the effectiveness of the proposed English communication model (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

Research Location and Subjects

The study was conducted on 15 MSME actors in North Sumatra who have potential for sustainable international sales.

Population and Sample

The population in this study consisted of 15 MSME actors who met the criteria related to the utilization of digital technology and demonstrated potential in the international market. The sampling technique employed was purposive sampling, which allowed the selection of respondents based on specific characteristics—namely MSMEs that actively use digital technology and engage in sustainable business practices. Given the limited number of MSME actors who fulfilled these criteria, the entire population of 15 MSMEs was included as the research sample through a total sampling approach. This approach ensured that both quantitative and qualitative analyses reflected comprehensive insights from all eligible participants.

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through three complementary techniques: observation, questionnaires, and in-depth interviews. The observation process involved directly examining communication interactions among MSME actors when using English, aiming to identify recurring patterns and communication challenges. Questionnaires were administered to measure the respondents' level of understanding and the effectiveness of their English communication in business contexts. Furthermore, in-depth interviews were conducted to obtain more detailed insights into the participants' experiences and obstacles in applying English communication while serving and promoting their products to international buyers.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Qualitative data were processed through thematic analysis to identify key themes and patterns related to English communication in product promotion and customer interaction. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods to assess the effectiveness of the optimized English communication model developed in this study. This combined analytical approach provided a comprehensive understanding of both linguistic behaviors and their measurable impact on MSME competitiveness in global markets.

Result and Discussion

Based on the analysis process, the result of the research can be seen on the table 1.

Table 1. Result of Analysis

Statement	Percentage (%)				
	SD 1	Dis. 2	Neu. 3	Agree 4	SA 5
I find it difficult to communicate with buyers from abroad due to my limited English proficiency.	7.7	15.38	15.38	38.46	23.08
I need English learning materials that are relevant to the products and services I sell.	0	15.34	7.7	38.46	38.46
I struggle to understand export-import terminology in English.	7.7	23.08	7.7	38.46	23.08
I have not had the opportunity to participate in English training that is relevant to my business needs.	7.7	7.7	15.38	38.46	30.77
I need English training that I can directly apply to my business activities.	7.7	0	7.7	61.54	23.08
I would like to learn English through digital platforms such as WhatsApp, YouTube, or Zoom.	7.7	0	23.08	53.85	15.38
I believe that practice-based English training is more effective than theory alone.	7.7	0	7.7	38.46	46.15
I need training materials that are tailored to the type of business I run	7.7	0	7.7	61.54	23.08
I require English training modules specifically designed for export-oriented MSMEs	7.7	0	15.38	53.85	23.08
I need conversation simulations with potential foreign buyers as part of the training.	7.7	0	15.38	46.15	30.77

I hope that the results of this research will help the government develop policies that support MSMEs in strengthening their English proficiency.	7.7	0	7.7	53.85	30.77
I would like English training for MSMEs to be facilitated by local government or relevant institutions.	0	7.7	7.7	53.85	30.77
I support the implementation of export enhancement policies that include functional English training for MSMEs.	7.7	0	7.7	46.15	38.46

Based on the first statement, the majority of respondents expressed agreement (38.46%) and strong agreement (23.08%) with the statement. This indicates that 61.54% of respondents acknowledge experiencing difficulties in communicating with foreign buyers due to limited English proficiency. Meanwhile, 23.08% of respondents (combining strongly disagree and disagree) did not perceive significant obstacles, and 15.38% remained neutral. These results suggest that more than half of the MSME actors still face communication barriers in English when interacting with international buyers, which hampers efforts to expand export markets. This finding aligns with studies by Susanti (2022) and Fitriani & Gunawan (2023), which state that limited English competence is one of the main barriers for MSMEs in the product internationalization process. The 23.08% of respondents who disagree or strongly disagree may indicate variation in English proficiency levels among MSMEs or the possibility that they rely on intermediaries/agents in international transactions, so language limitations are not directly perceived as barriers. The neutral response (15.38%) reflects uncertainty or hesitation among some MSMEs regarding their English skills or due to limited experience selling products internationally. These data underscore the urgency of providing practical, business-contextualized, and easily accessible English training to enhance the global competitiveness of MSMEs, in line with the direction of the RPJMN 2025–2029. Such training would also help minimize communication barriers and boost MSMEs' confidence in negotiating with international buyers.

Based on the second statement, the findings indicate a clear and urgent need among MSMEs for English materials that are contextual and relevant to the types of products or services they offer, to support business, marketing, and communication activities with foreign buyers. The high percentage of agreement and strong agreement (76.92%) reinforces the findings of Fitriani & Gunawan (2023) and Susanti (2022), which show that existing English training materials are often too generic and do not accommodate the specific needs of MSMEs, whether in promotion, negotiation, or international customer service. The 15.34% disagreement may suggest that some MSMEs feel they do not require specialized materials because their products are local, they already possess sufficient materials, or they outsource international communication. Meanwhile, 7.7% neutral responses reflect uncertainty regarding the need for specific materials, possibly due to limited knowledge about the benefits of contextually appropriate content or limited experience in international sales. These findings affirm the importance of developing need-based English training curricula and modules tailored to MSME industries and product types to improve the effectiveness of their international business communication. Moreover, contextualized materials facilitate easier internalization for MSMEs, boost their confidence in interacting with foreign buyers, and support product internationalization efforts within the RPJMN 2025–2029 framework.

Based on the third statement, 38.46% of respondents agreed and 23.08% strongly agreed, showing that 61.54% of MSMEs acknowledge difficulties in understanding export-import terminology in English. Conversely, 28.08% disagreed and 7.7% strongly disagreed (totaling 35.78%), indicating some MSMEs do not experience such difficulties. Neutral responses accounted for 7.7%, reflecting uncertainty or limited practical experience in export-import activities. These findings reveal that more than half of MSMEs still face challenges understanding export-import terminology in English, which impedes document processing, price negotiation, comprehension of international shipping requirements, and communication with foreign buyers and freight forwarders. This is consistent with Fitriani & Gunawan (2023) and Rahman & Setyawati (2021), which emphasize that limited technical English literacy is a significant barrier to MSME readiness for international market expansion. The 35.78% disagreement may indicate variations in experience and access to information among MSMEs; those with export experience or support teams are likely more familiar with the terminology and do not perceive significant barriers. The neutral response may suggest that some MSMEs are still

considering exporting or have limited exposure to international transactions, hence unable to fully assess the difficulty. These results highlight the need to develop practical, contextual English training modules focused on understanding technical terms frequently used in export documentation, negotiation, and cross-border communication. Such training would reduce MSME dependence on intermediaries, enhance their autonomy in managing international transactions, and accelerate product internationalization aligned with RPJMN 2025–2029.

Based on the fourth statement, 38.46% agreed and 30.77% strongly agreed, totaling 69.23% of MSMEs who reported not having opportunities to participate in English training relevant to their business needs. Conversely, 7.7% strongly disagreed and 7.7% disagreed (total 15.4%) claimed to have such opportunities. Neutral responses accounted for 15.38%. This indicates that the majority of MSMEs have limited access to English training contextualized for their business environment, despite the crucial need for English skills to support business activities and international market penetration. This finding aligns with Fitriani & Gunawan (2023) and Susanti (2022), who note that most English training for MSMEs in Indonesia remains general, non-contextual, and rarely available at the local level. The 69.23% gap between MSME needs and available training programs impacts their capacity in negotiation, marketing, and communication with international buyers. Neutral responses may stem from lack of information about training availability, deprioritization of English training, or limited international transaction experience. The 15.4% who disagreed or strongly disagreed may have access to relevant training via government institutions, local export communities, or self-initiated online courses. These findings underscore the need for initiatives providing English training tailored to MSME business types through cooperation with local governments, universities, and private training providers, employing practical, case-based methods. Need-based training will enhance MSME competencies in international business communication, expand export market access, and support RPJMN 2025–2029 goals in strengthening MSMEs as a pillar of the national economy.

Based on the fifth statement, 61.54% agreed and 23.08% strongly agreed, totaling 84.62% of MSMEs who expressed the need for English training that can be directly applied in their businesses. Only 7.7% strongly disagreed, and 7.7% were neutral, with no respondents disagreeing. This reflects a strong demand (84.62%) for practical, applicable English training that MSMEs can use in interactions with foreign buyers, price negotiations, digital marketing communication, and export document management. This high demand aligns with Fitriani & Gunawan (2023), who emphasize the necessity of need-based training with relevant content to prepare MSMEs for international markets. It also supports RPJMN 2025–2029's focus on enhancing MSME competitiveness through human resource capacity building. Neutral responses may indicate some MSMEs' limited recognition of practical English training urgency, possibly due to lack of export experience or prioritization. Strong disagreement may be from those confident in their current English abilities, relying on intermediaries, or without plans for product internationalization. The findings highlight the importance of developing contextual, practical, and simulation-based English modules tailored to MSME sectors—such as negotiation simulations, digital catalog creation, buyer conversations, and handling international customer inquiries. Practice-based training improves confidence, expands international business networks, and accelerates product exports, supporting MSME export capacity building within the RPJMN framework.

Based on the sixth statement, 53.85% of respondents agreed and 15.38% strongly agreed, totaling 69.23% of MSMEs who expressed the desire to learn English via digital platforms such as WhatsApp, YouTube, or Zoom. Meanwhile, 23.08% were neutral, indicating uncertainty or hesitation. Only 7.7% strongly disagreed, and no respondents disagreed. This suggests that most MSMEs are interested in and ready to utilize digital platforms for English learning, recognizing them as flexible, cost-effective, and adaptable to their business schedules. This aligns with the digital transformation agenda in MSME human resource development outlined in RPJMN 2025–2029. The 69.23% acceptance of platforms like WhatsApp, YouTube, and Zoom reflects MSME openness to technology use for competency enhancement and opens opportunities for blended learning approaches that are affordable and accessible. The relatively high neutral percentage may reflect

concerns about infrastructure readiness (internet data quotas, devices), digital skills, or doubts about online learning effectiveness compared to face-to-face instruction. Some MSMEs may still be weighing if digital learning can meet their practical needs optimally. The 7.7% strong disagreement likely represents MSMEs unfamiliar with technology, facing internet access limitations, or preferring conventional in-person training. These findings suggest opportunities for local governments, training institutions, and universities to design practical, need-based digital English training modules, leveraging WhatsApp for daily material delivery, YouTube for business communication video tutorials, and Zoom for simulated conversations with foreign buyers. To improve effectiveness, training should be complemented with mentoring, interactive forums, and structured assignments to help MSMEs integrate English learning into their daily business activities. Overall, this supports digital transformation in strengthening MSME competencies, aligned with efforts to enhance global competitiveness efficiently within the RPJMN framework.

Based on the seventh statement, 38.46% agreed and 46.15% strongly agreed, totaling 84.61% of MSMEs who consider practice-based English training more effective than theory alone. Only 7.7% strongly disagreed and 7.7% were neutral; no respondents disagreed. This reveals a strong preference among MSMEs for English training emphasizing direct practical application over passive theoretical learning, with 84.61% endorsing a hands-on approach. Such preference aligns with MSME needs to apply English directly in business activities, including foreign buyer communication, price negotiations, creating English product catalogs, and managing export-import transactions. Practice-based training offers real experience, boosts confidence, and accelerates internalization compared to solely learning grammar theory. These results support Fitriani & Gunawan (2023) and Susanti (2022), which highlight the effectiveness of need-based, contextually practical English training for MSMEs. This approach also resonates with adult learning theory (andragogy), which emphasizes experiential learning. The neutral group (7.7%) may include MSMEs lacking experience with practice-based training or unable to compare its effectiveness to theoretical instruction. The 7.7% strong disagreement possibly reflects MSMEs comfortable with theoretical methods or not perceiving immediate need for practical training.

Based on the eighth statement, 61.54% agreed and 23.08% strongly agreed, totaling 84.62% of MSMEs expressing the need for English training materials tailored to their specific business types. Conversely, 7.7% strongly disagreed and 7.7% were neutral, with no disagreement recorded. This suggests most MSMEs desire training content relevant to their sectors—culinary, handicrafts, fashion, spices, or creative services. The high demand reflects dissatisfaction with generic materials that inadequately address MSMEs' needs for export activities, digital promotion, and international buyer communication. This concurs with Fitriani & Gunawan (2023) and Rahman & Setyawati (2022), which emphasize need-based training to develop targeted, contextual English skills applicable to MSME operations. The 84.62% support signals that English training design should begin with needs analysis to ensure content such as product catalog creation, business conversation simulations, price negotiation, and complaint handling aligns with the goods and services offered. The neutral respondents may lack export experience or focus on local markets, while the strong disagreement may arise from MSMEs confident in their skills, relying on intermediaries, or questioning English's business relevance.

Based on the ninth statement, 53.85% agreed and 23.08% strongly agreed, totaling 76.93% of MSMEs who require English training modules specific to export-oriented MSMEs. Only 7.7% strongly disagreed and 15.38% were neutral; no disagreement was noted. This indicates that most MSMEs recognize the urgency of having specialized modules covering technical vocabulary, export-import terminology, and practical international business communication pertinent to export processes. The 76.93% agreement highlights a gap between generic English training and MSME needs to master export-related skills—negotiating with foreign buyers, understanding export documents, trade correspondence, and professional product promotion in English. Neutral responses suggest some MSMEs are still evaluating export readiness or the value of specialized modules. The 7.7% strong disagreement may reflect MSMEs not export-oriented, satisfied with current skills, outsourcing export communication, or still focused on domestic markets. These results are consistent with Fitriani & Gunawan (2023) and Susanti (2022), who advocate for need-based, contextual English training

tailored by business sector and export objectives to improve global market readiness.

Based on the tenth statement, 46.15% agreed and 30.77% strongly agreed, totaling 76.92% of MSMEs who emphasized the importance of simulated conversations with prospective foreign buyers as part of English training. Only 7.7% strongly disagreed and 15.38% were neutral; no disagreement was reported. This suggests that the majority value practical, role-play simulations as an effective method to enhance communication skills, build confidence, and prepare for real-world negotiation and product promotion internationally. The 76.92% agreement aligns with experiential learning principles, which facilitate language internalization and practical business communication skills in relevant contexts. Neutral responses may represent MSMEs unfamiliar with simulation methods or lacking exposure to such training. The 7.7% strong disagreement likely reflects MSMEs already comfortable communicating with foreign buyers or using intermediaries. These findings support recommendations from Fitriani & Gunawan (2023) and Susanti (2022) to include simulation and interactive practice in English training programs to boost effectiveness and relevance for MSMEs facing global market challenges.⁷

Based on the eleventh statement, 53.85% agreed and 30.77% strongly agreed, totaling 84.62% of MSMEs who hope this research will inform government policies supporting MSME English competency development. Only 7.7% strongly disagreed and 7.7% were neutral; no disagreement was noted. This reflects high expectations among MSMEs for research to guide more responsive policy-making addressing their English language development needs. Most recognize government support as crucial to strengthen international communication capabilities, expanding markets and product competitiveness. The 84.62% agreement underscores the need for systematic, targeted interventions and policies accommodating MSME sector diversity, based on need-based training approaches. Neutral responses may reflect uncertainty about policy effectiveness or awareness of policymaking processes, while strong disagreement might indicate skepticism regarding research impact or sufficient existing support. This aligns with literature emphasizing research's role in evidence-based policy decisions (e.g., Creswell, 2014; Patton, 2015), encouraging collaboration among researchers, government, and MSMEs to design impactful English competency development programs.

Based on the twelfth statement, 53.85% agreed and 30.77% strongly agreed, totaling 84.62% of MSMEs desiring English training facilitated by local governments or relevant institutions. Conversely, 7.7% disagreed and 7.7% were neutral; no strong disagreement was noted. This indicates strong support and expectation for active governmental or institutional facilitation of tailored English training. It reflects a demand for robust institutional support to enhance MSME English competencies, especially for international market engagement. The 84.62% agreement suggests MSMEs view formal, systematic training provision by public or accredited institutions as essential to ensure quality and sustainability. Neutral responses may indicate some MSMEs considering private or self-directed alternatives, or lacking experience with government-facilitated training. Disagreement may arise from preferences for non-institutional training, distrust of government quality, or accessibility challenges. This finding aligns with recommendations in the literature emphasizing the role of local governments and institutions in vocational training and MSME human resource capacity building (e.g., Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs, 2023; Fitriani & Gunawan, 2023). Institutional facilitation guarantees standardized content, monitoring, and systematic evaluation.

Based on the thirteenth statement, 46.15% agreed and 38.46% strongly agreed, totaling 84.61% of MSMEs supporting export strengthening policies incorporating functional English training. Only 7.7% strongly disagreed and 7.7% were neutral; no disagreement was recorded. This indicates broad positive reception and strong backing among MSMEs for government policies integrating functional English training as part of export capacity enhancement. The 84.61% support reflects awareness of English proficiency as key to expanding international market access and enhancing export product competitiveness. Functional English training typically focuses on practical business language use—negotiation, buyer communication, document comprehension, and effective product promotion—considered more relevant and applicable than general

English courses. Neutral responses may reflect some MSMEs' lack of full understanding of functional training benefits or prioritization of other needs. Strong disagreement may come from experienced exporters or those using intermediaries who do not feel additional training is necessary. These findings corroborate Fitriani & Gunawan (2023) and Rahman (2022), emphasizing the importance of need-based functional English training to efficiently build MSME export capacity.

The following is qualitative analysis based on Miles, Huberman and Saldana 2014 analysis. The findings of analysis are follows:

Data Condensation

Data condensation refers to the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, and abstracting raw data into main themes or categories.

Table 3. Key Findings Of Interview

Aspect	Key Findings
Challenges	Lack of conversational skills, difficulties in understanding export/import terms, composing product descriptions, and responding to foreign buyers' inquiries.
Material Needs	Conversational materials, business simulations, export-related terms, product description drafting, negotiation, and writing business emails/chats.
Training Experience	The majority have never participated in training or found previous training irrelevant to their business needs.
Effective Training Strategies	Preference for hands-on training, conversation simulations, role-play, and case studies over purely theoretical approaches.
Interest in Digital Technology	Interest in using platforms such as WhatsApp, Zoom, and YouTube due to their flexibility and accessibility.
Benefits of Practical Application	Considered easier to understand, builds confidence, and accelerates learning.
Export-Relevant Materials Simulations with Foreign Buyers	Product descriptions, responding to buyer inquiries, negotiation, and professional communication. Most participants believe simulations are necessary as they reflect real-life conditions.
Training Frequency	Regular training is essential to prevent skill deterioration due to infrequent use.
Expectations from the Government	Expecting continuous, practical, accessible, and affordable training provided for MSMEs.
Training Benefits	Enhances competitiveness and expands international market reach.
Recommendations	Research findings should serve as a basis for MSME training policies, supported with facilities and follow-up.

Data Display

The data is presented in a thematic table format to facilitate clearer conclusions. The thematic map is as follows:

Table 4. Thematic Map of Data

Theme	Example Utterances
English Language Challenges	"The main difficulty usually occurs when responding to inquiries from foreign buyers..."
Material Needs	"Materials such as how to respond to questions, draft product descriptions, and write emails..."
Training Strategy Preferences	"The most helpful strategy is hands-on practice-based training, such as simulations..."
Preferred Digital Platforms	"Preferred platforms: WhatsApp for communication, Zoom and YouTube for materials."
View on Practical Application	"Easier to understand and comprehend compared to theoretical explanations..."
Foreign Buyer Simulations	"Conversation simulations help build confidence..."
Expectations from the Government	"The government should provide easily accessible training tailored to MSME needs."
Policy Implementation Suggestions	"This research should serve as the basis for designing training programs..."

Drawing and Verifying Conclusions

MSMEs have a genuine need for practical English training, particularly in business conversation contexts.

Hands-on, practice-based training (e.g., simulations and role plays) is significantly more effective than purely theoretical methods.

Most MSME actors have not received relevant training; however, they express a strong interest in participating, particularly if supported by the government.

Digital platforms such as WhatsApp, Zoom, and YouTube are considered the easiest and most flexible to use by MSMEs.

Export-oriented training and communication with foreign buyers are essential, including simulation-based interaction training.

Regular and continuous training is highly anticipated to maintain and improve skills.

Government support is highly expected, both in providing affordable or free training and in training infrastructure.

The findings of this research are considered important to be used as a foundation for public policy that supports MSMEs, especially in facing international markets.

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that developing practical English training curricula focused on export contexts, directly targeting business communication, product description writing, and buyer simulations; Utilizing digital platforms familiar to MSMEs (WhatsApp, Zoom, YouTube) for efficiency and wider reach, Ensuring training is interactive, simulation-based, and not limited to passive materials such as videos or PDFs; the government should facilitate free or highly affordable training programs; implementing training on a regular basis with monitoring systems to ensure sustainability and quality improvement.

Conclusion

Based on the quantitative and qualitative findings, this research concludes that: MSMEs face significant English communication barriers when dealing with foreign buyers, particularly in conversation, understanding export-import terminology, and preparing product descriptions, which hinders their export market expansion. There is a strong, clear demand for contextually relevant English training materials tailored to the products and services offered by MSMEs, supporting negotiation, promotion, and international buyer interactions. Most MSMEs have not accessed relevant English training suited to their business needs, highlighting the gap between training provision and actual market requirements. Practical, hands-on English training is considered more effective than theory-only approaches, aligning with adult learning principles (andragogy) and the real needs of MSMEs in export readiness. Digital platforms such as WhatsApp, YouTube, and Zoom are widely accepted as flexible, accessible, and cost-effective means for delivering English training to MSMEs. MSMEs strongly support simulation-based learning, including mock conversations with foreign buyers, to build confidence and practical communication skills for international trade. There is a high expectation for government facilitation and policy support in providing structured, practical, and affordable English training aligned with the specific needs of MSMEs. The integration of functional, export-oriented English training within export development policies is viewed as essential by MSMEs to enhance their competitiveness in global markets. Regular, sustainable, and monitored English training programs are necessary to ensure continuous competency improvement and long-term impact. Therefore, the study recommends: developing practical, export-context English training curricula focusing on business communication, product description, negotiation, and simulations with buyers; utilizing digital platforms familiar to MSMEs for training delivery to maximize reach and efficiency; ensuring interactive, simulation-based training beyond passive video or PDF learning; the government should facilitate free or low-cost training, making it accessible to all MSMEs; implementing regular training with monitoring and evaluation to sustain quality and impact. These conclusions align with RPJMN 2025–2029 objectives of strengthening MSMEs' global competitiveness and advancing Indonesia's economic development through human resource transformation.

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