

THE ROLE OF ENGLISH IN EMPLOYMENT CONTEXT: THE CASE OF INDONESIAN CHINESE COMPANY

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Abstract

The role of English in Indonesian pedagogical field has been studied extensively. However, the role of English in the employment context is scarcely scrutinized. Given the increasing awareness of being employable, examining the functions of international languages demanded in the employment context is imperative. The study focuses on some crucial aspects of English in the employment context, such as the workers' motivation toward English, the goals in learning English, and the potential hardships or challenges in learning or practicing English in their employment context. In order to capture more varied data, the researchers employed a mixed method along with a G-form questionnaire, interviews, and document analysis. The recruited participants comprised of sixty active employees who are currently working as permanent employees in a Chinese company. The participants were recruited randomly. The result indicated that even though English was the employees' preferred foreign language, they preferred to learn it through informal sources (e.g., YouTube, Google Translate, and Grammarly). It was also found that only few departments used English in the company (e.g., marketing, sales department, export- import department). The primary language used to support the company's production was Chinese/Mandarin. The outcome should encourage further research on the factories or businesses owned by non-English nationals (e.g., Japanese, or Korean) so that the critical role of English in the current employment contexts can be verified.

Keywords: Context; Chinese; company; English; employment

Abstrak

Peran bahasa Inggris dalam bidang pedagogi Indonesia telah dipelajari secara luas. Namun, peran bahasa Inggris dalam konteks pekerjaan jarang mendapat perhatian. Mengingat meningkatnya kesadaran untuk dapat bekerja, mengkaji fungsi bahasa internasional yang dituntut dalam konteks pekerjaan sangatlah penting. Studi ini berfokus pada beberapa aspek penting bahasa Inggris dalam konteks pekerjaan, seperti motivasi pekerja terhadap bahasa Inggris, tujuan belajar bahasa Inggris, dan potensi kesulitan atau tantangan dalam mempelajari atau mempraktikkan bahasa Inggris dalam konteks pekerjaan mereka. Untuk mendapatkan data yang lebih bervariasi, peneliti menggunakan metode campuran dengan kuesioner G-form, wawancara, dan analisis dokumen. Peserta yang direkrut terdiri dari enam puluh karyawan aktif yang saat ini bekerja sebagai karyawan tetap di sebuah perusahaan Tiongkok. Para peserta direkrut secara acak. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa meskipun bahasa Inggris adalah bahasa asing pilihan karyawan, mereka lebih suka mempelajarinya melalui sumber informal (misalnya YouTube, Google Translate, dan Grammarly). Ditemukan juga bahwa hanya sedikit departemen yang menggunakan bahasa Inggris di perusahaan (misalnya departemen pemasaran, departemen penjualan, departemen ekspor-impor). Bahasa utama yang digunakan untuk mendukung produksi perusahaan adalah bahasa Cina/Mandarin. Hasilnya harus mendorong penelitian lebih lanjut mengenai pabrik atau bisnis yang dimiliki oleh warga negara non-Inggris (misalnya, Jepang, atau Korea) sehingga peran penting bahasa Inggris dalam konteks pekerjaan saat ini dapat diverifikasi.

Kata Kunci: Konteks; Cina; perusahaan; bahasa Inggris; pekerjaan.

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INTRODUCTION

As one of the international languages, English is learned globally (Aljuaid, 2021; Casale, & Posel, 2011; Crystal, 1997; Wang, et al. 2017). The action to learn English is scientifically perceived as one of the motivational actions (Dörnyei, 1994). Motivation emanates from the Latin word “movere” or to move (Urhahne, & Wijnia, 2023, p. 1). Regarding foreign or second language learning, motivation is among the most critical factors influencing students’ success or failure (Brown, 2000; Daskalovskaa, N., Gudevab, L. K., & Ivanovskaa, 2012). For instance, motivation can trigger the learners to learn autonomously, thus improving the effectiveness of learning process (Muslim, et al. 2020). Specifically, the role of motivation was proven to externally trigger the students who did their assignments (Indrayadi, 2021).

Up to now, the motivational research conducted in learning or teaching English has been conducted extensively (Azar, & Tanggaraju, 2020; Basikin, 2020; Chuane, et al. 2023; Erizar, 2019; Kruk, 2022; Tiwery, & Souisa, 2019). Despite their significant contributions, these studies dichotomize the role of English between pedagogical and professional fields. In fact, English is not only used in pedagogical contexts but also in employment settings. Identifying the workers’ motivations in acquiring English for employment is critical as English has been considered a lingua franca or business lingua franca (Harmer, 2007; Neville, 2018). Numerous scholars claim that English is becoming increasingly important in business as many professions, jobs, or business ventures require their workers to master English (Evans, 2010; Malini, et al. 2022).

Given the growing worldwide concern about employability (Mehdaoui, 2022; Tomlinson, 2012), examining the role of English as one of the inseparable employability skill is imperative. Furthermore, numerous scholars’ claims on the crucial role of English in being employable (Grasmane, & Grasmane, 2011) and the increasingly dominant role of the non-English languages in business world (Xie, 2021) require more objective analysis. It is expected that identifying the potential changes of the important language landscapes of the employment context will not only benefit those managing the language colleges, but also the prospective employers, and workers. Specifically, it can also arouse the workers’ awareness of the need to enhance their human capital for better employment (Hahm, & Gazzola, 2022).

Due to the scarcity of research on English learning/teaching conducted in professional or employment settings, the researchers could only incorporate relevant studies conducted by three scholars (Indriani, 2020; Thaisukho, 2016; Ting, et al. 2017). These three studies were selected as they typically represent the three geographically-related Asian countries (i.e., Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia). Given the steady growth of Asian economic performance

(Shan, 2023), and the perceived role of English as an Asian dominant language (Kirkpatrick, & Lixun, 2020), inquiring the functions of English and the other potentially emerging foreign languages in employment context provides more realistic insight on how the future language landscape and employability will be intertwined in the job markets. Additionally, with the increasingly perceived importance of foreign language mastery in the employment context (Araújo, et al. 2015; Cere, 2012; Gazzola, & Mazzacani, 2019), identifying English or the other potentially emerging foreign languages used in the employment setting can increase more awareness on the need to acquire more relevant and specific foreign language skills for the sake of being employable in the future.

The study examined the workers' perceptions of their motivations in learning and practicing English and other relevant aspects in their employment context (i.e., the company). It illuminated the three core issues on motivation offered by some scholars: a) intensity, b) goal-oriented behavior, and c) potential persistence (Brown, 2000; Dörnyei, 1994; Lahey, 2007; Robbins, & Judge, 2013). Specifically, it scrutinized the use of English in a Chinese-owned company operating in Banten province, Indonesia.

The problem formulations are arranged as the followings:

1. How are the workers' curiosity and interest in English and other relevant English sources?
2. What are the workers' goals in learning and practicing English?
3. What are the potential hardships or challenges that the workers encounter when learning and practicing English?

Indeed, analyzing data from a single company may not adequately capture the significance of English in Indonesian employment. However, the policy established by each business operating in Indonesia will have a significant impact on how one might obtain a permit to do research at a company. The researchers could only get the permit to conduct their research from one company probably since one of the researchers in the present study is currently working as a staff of the human resources (General Affair) department in the company. Further studies should involve more companies to warrant more valid and reliable findings.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Motivation and its important elements

There are numerous definitions of motivations offered by various scholars. Some of the most relevant concepts are presented. Firstly, Lahey (2007) states that motivation is the internal state or condition that activates and gives direction to people's thoughts, feelings, and actions.

Secondly, Schunk et al. (2014) state that motivation is the course of stimulating and protracting goal-directed behavior. Lastly, Robbins and Judge (2013) define motivation as the process that elucidates an individual's strength, path, and grit to attain a specified end.

From their perspectives, three essential aspects solidify the construct of motivation. Firstly, motivation will generally contain intensity. Intensity is the state of being 'intense' indicated with bearer's extreme strength, force, energy, or feeling (Merriam-Webster, 2024). Brown (2001) assumes that intrinsically motivated people will be generally intensified by their needs, wants, or desires so that they do not generally require externally administered rewards. Ryan and Deci (1985 as cited in Dörnyei, 1994) further elaborate that intrinsically motivated people tend to be energized by their natural curiosity and interest.

Based on the arguments offered by the noted scholars (Lahey, 2007; Robbins, & Judge, 2013; Schunk et al., 2014), it can be interpreted that a motivated person is the one who exerts certain attempts driven by his or her interest, curiosity, needs, or wants. In addition, a motivated person is also identified to have a goal-directed behavior/action. Brown (Brown, 2000) exemplifies that that a motivated person will probably determine the experience, goal, and effort that someone will have. Lastly, a motivated person should have relatively high persistence or sustainable vigor, allowing them to maintain their effort to accomplish a goal (Robbins, & Judge, 2013, p. 202). In the present study, the above three main constructs (intensity, goal-oriented behavior, and persistence) are interpreted into more operational concepts: a) Curiosity/interest, b) Goal-oriented behavior, and c) Potential difficulties/persistence.

Motivation in learning second or foreign languages

Regarding foreign or second language learning, scholars believe that motivation is inseparable (Brown, 2000, Brown, 2001; Kruk, 2022; Lahey, 2007; Schunk et al., 2014). Precisely, motivation to learn a language is viewed as the degree to which the individual strives to acquire the language due to the potential impulse and satisfaction underwent by the doer while performing the activity (Gardner, 1985). Scholars confirmed that several factors affect someone's motivation, such as internal and external motivation (Brown, 2000; Brown, 2001; Dörnyei, 1994). Internal motivation is generally perceived as the self-supported factors affecting someone from their internal state. On the other hand, external factors can be categorized as factors affecting someone from outside (Brown, 2000; Brown, 2001; Dörnyei, 1994). In terms of efficacy, most scholars believe that motivation to learn, which comes from within, is more efficacious than those coming from outside (Brown, 2001; Dörnyei, 1994). Despite the above arguments, scholars believe that intrinsic and extrinsic have their specialties.

For instance, the students are frequently motivated by both internal and external factors simultaneously. Particularly, when the students are learning in their classroom, the students' interaction with lots of factors (e.g., classmates, teachers, teaching media) might generate both internal and external stimuli.

Motivations in learning English in professional or employment contexts: Previous studies

Given the scarcity of research on English learning/teaching conducted in professional or employment settings, the researchers could only identify three relevant studies conducted by some scholars: a) Thaisukho (2016), b) Ting et al. (2017), and c) Indriani (2020). These three studies were selected as they typically represent the three geographically-related Asian countries (i.e., Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia). Firstly, Thaisukho (2016) analyzed the use of English at a Thai company. The workers in the company use English for various purposes, such as contacting the company's customers, or writing some documents. As a survey study, a questionnaire was employed as the only instrument to elicit the participant's responses. It attempted to identify the workers' motivation by focusing on two crucial variables: 1) Factors affecting the employees' motivation, and 2) Kinds of skills needed in the company English training course (Thaisukho, 2016).

The findings indicated three critical factors affecting the company's workers' motivation. Specifically, it was confirmed that self-improvement attitude toward English language constitutes was the most influential factor affecting the workers' motivation indicated with the highest means of 4.31. Furthermore, the attitude toward English learning, and career advancement were confirmed to be the other influential factors indicated with means of 4.16, and 3.91 respectively (Thaisukho, 2016). Regarding the skills needed in the company training program, writing was proven the most critical skill needed the workers indicated with the highest mean of 4.43. In spite of the fact that most workers could read English texts, they admitted that they frequently faced difficulties in arranging English sentences for several important matters, such as answering the e-mail in English, or contacting the vendors (Thaisukho, 2016).

In the Malaysian employment context, Ting, Marzuki, Chuah, Misieng, and Jerome (2017) probed the employability of workers in several Malaysian companies. Specifically, Ting et al. (2017) explored the employers' insights on the necessity of English proficiency and communication skills for college graduates to be employed in Malaysian companies. Some variables highlighted were, 1) the significance of communication skills, 2) the significance of English proficiency, and 3) the equivalence between communication skills and English proficiency. The research was conducted qualitatively. Ten respondents who worked and were

in charge of recruiting workers were interviewed semi-structurally. The participants comprised of ten private employers (Ting et al., 2017). Ting et al. (2017) identified that most employers perceived that language proficiency and communication skill were different qualities. Specifically, someone having good English did not necessarily know how to communicate well. Most employers also perceived that communication skill was more important than English proficiency. In sum, the ability to interact was more critical than acquiring language fluency.

In the Indonesian employment context, the research identified was the study conducted by Indriani (2020). She analyzed the teaching of English at a hospital located in Badung, Bali. Her study focused on the process of learning conducted by hospital workers. Her research studied factors that could influence the workers' motivations to learn English, such as teachers' roles, students' attitudes, language, and environmental factors. She conducted her research quantitatively (2020). Fifty workers of specific units (e.g., the medical staff, nursing staff, non-nursing staff, medical staffs and non-medical administration staff) were recruited. The 1 to 5 written survey instrument was used to elicit the workers (Indriani, 2020). The findings indicated factors affecting the workers' motivation, such as learners' personalities, attitudes, teachers' roles, learning styles, and language relationships. Of the whole factors identified, the learning style was the most critical factor, indicated with the highest average value of 3.62. Furthermore, the teacher's role, personality, and attitudes were identified as the following critical factors affecting the learners' motivation indicated with the average values of 3.50, 3.39, and 3.39 (Indriani, 2020).

A glance at the venue of the research

The company is located on Jalan Raya Serang, No. KM 32, 5, Sumur Bandung, Banten Province, Indonesia. It belongs to a Chinese company. The company was established on February 18, 2016. Currently, the company employs 1700 workers of different levels, positions, and departments. It produces luggage for export primarily to American and European markets. To support and meet the needs of Indonesian markets, the company has also established an official distributor named: Bagscity. The company has launched 121 stores across Indonesia while distributing some of its products to some shops or stores. Most of the company's luggage is designed for the middle and higher income brackets. Some well-known products in Indonesia are Lojel, Tumi, Porsche Design, Mendoza, and many more. The description of the company and its operation/activities can be viewed at: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/pt-universal-luggage-indonesia/?originalSubdomain=id> or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B7bxPDK9YIw>.

METHOD

Design of the study

To accomplish the research objective, a mixed method was employed. A mixed method was considered more beneficial as it provides the researchers with more detailed data allowing them to access more meaningful and sound findings. A mixed method is a method in which the researchers employ more than one way to elicit the data (Dawadi et al. 2021). Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) defined mixed method as the type of research that combines both qualitative and quantitative research approaches in order to accomplish the magnitude and deepness of understanding and corroboration.

Table 1. Respondents

Departments	Number of Respondents
Human resources	5
Enterprise resources planning	1
Sales	1
Export import	1
Production	25
Warehouse	6
Quality assurance	6
Information Technology (IT)	1
Nurses	1
Translator	6
Mechanical department	3
Driver	3
Security	1
Number of participants	60

Based on the previously discussed concepts offered by some scholars (Brown, 2000, Brown, 2001; Lahey, 2007; Robbins, & Judge, 2013; Schunk et al., 2014), three crucial points representing someone's motivation: 1) Intensity, 2) The goal-directed behavior, 3) Potential persistence were adapted into the present study. Furthermore, the above concepts were rephrased to simplify the meanings and to help the participants understand the items: 1) the workers' curiosity and interest, 2) the goal of learning English, and 3) the potential difficulties/challenges in learning or practicing English. The items were arranged based on the three core concepts. The questionnaire was distributed in a G-form. A G-form was used to facilitate the workers to answer the questionnaire due to the workers' different times, places, and working schedules in the company.

The options given were only three options to make it more simplified: 1) No, 2) Doubt, and 3) Yes. To help provide more detailed answers /findings, the self-answering spaces were also provided in the last section of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was written in the

Indonesian language. The researchers distributed the G-form questionnaire to the workers and the staffs simultaneously on two days (29 – 30 March 2023). Further interviews were conducted selectively one day after the data tabulation was completed. The interviews were only offered to those giving relevant or important responses/answers in a written questionnaire.

Participants

In order to accomplish valid and reliable finding, the researchers conducted the steps of respondent recruitment. First, sixty respondents were randomly selected for the present study. Second, prior to the recruitment of the respondents, the researchers reported their plan to conduct the study to the factory manager. Third, after obtaining the factory manager's approval, the researchers invited the prospective workers into a selected room. Further, the researchers explained the potential benefits, the procedures, and the rights of the respondents in the proposed research. Fourth, the researchers employed random sampling as not all workers could participate in the study (29 – 30 March 2023).

Steps of the Study

Having started from collecting the data, primary instrument used in the present study was a questionnaire. It was firstly used by the researchers as it could help the researchers to get the primary data in a relatively large number (Creswell, & Plano Clark, 2018). Besides, it also allowed the respondents to choose the options conveniently (Yu, 2010). The questionnaire was shared through the participants' phone numbers at once. Selected interviews were further conducted. It was performed and offered only to those who provided the researchers with relevant answers and were deemed essential to be investigated. Document analysis was also done to support the findings (Bowen, 2009; Morgan, 2022). The documents analyzed by the researchers were mostly internet sources, recognized international/national journals, or some webs containing employment information.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

This section discusses the results regarding the first research questions. It presents the data on the aspects of participants' motivation (i.e. workers), particularly which are related to the participants' curiosity and interest toward English and other relevant sources.

The workers' curiosity and interests in English and the other relevant sources

The following table indicates the findings of the workers' motivations, particularly on their interests or curiosity toward English and other relevant sources.

Table 1. The workers' curiosity and interests in English and the other relevant sources

No.	Items	Options (N=60)		
		No (N)	Doubt (D)	Yes (Y)
1	Do you often listen to English songs or watch English movies?	16 (26.66%)	3 (5.08%)	41(68.33 %)
2	Do you often speak English or use English terms in the company?	13 (22.03%)	28 (47.45%)	19 (32.20%)
3	Do you like listening to the people who speak English?	6 (10 %)	6 (10 %)	48 (80 %)
4	Do you like or want to learn English?	6 (10 %)	13 (21. 66 %)	41 (68.33 %)

The findings above indicate that most respondents partially show strong motivations toward English as indicated by the most respondents or 41 persons or approximately 68 33 %, like or want to learn English. However, although most of the participants indicated their curiosity/interest in English and English sources, the data showed that only nineteen participants (32, 20%) speak English in their company. The following data indicates the company's departments that require/allow the workers to speak English in their departments.

The use of English in company departments

Further analysis on the data taken from G-form indicated that there were few departments, which supported the use of English in the company. The data is presented below:

Table 2. The use of English in company departments

Departments	N	No	Doubt	Yes
Human resources department	5	2 (40 %)	1 (20 %)	2 (40 %)
Enterprise resources planning	1	-	-	1 (100 %)
Sales departments	1	-	-	1 (100 %)
Export- import department	1	-	-	1 (100 %)
Production	25	18 (72 %)	1 (4 %)	6 (24 %)
Warehouse	6	2 (33. 33 %)	1 (16. 66 %)	3 (50 %)
Quality assurance	6	1 (16. 66 %)	1 (16. 66 %)	4 (66. 66 %)
Information and Technology	1	-	-	1 (100 %)
Nurses	1	1 (100 %)	-	-
Translators	6	4 (66. 66 %)	2 (33. 33%)	-
Mechanical department	3	2 (6. 66 %)	1 (33. 33 %)	-
Drivers	3	1 (33. 33 %)	-	2 (6. 66 %)
Security	1	1 (100 %)	-	-
Total =	60			

It could also be interpreted that despite being a preferred workers' foreign language, English was strictly limited to specific departments, such as information technology, Sales Department, and Export-Import department. Chinese/Mandarin was the only official language used by the company to support their operations (e.g., accompanying the visitors/ visiting mechanics to replace or maintain the machinery). The dominant role of Chinese/Mandarin was

also revealed in the translating department, which employed Chinese/Mandarin speaking employees.

The workers' goals in learning and practicing English

The goal of learning English is a directed effort that most motivated people will generally attempt to accomplish. This table presents the second research question regarding the goal of the participants (i.e. workers) if they learn English.

Table 3. The workers' goals in learning and practicing English

No.	Items	No	Doubt	Yes
1.	Do you learn English at the moment?	38 (63. 33%)	5 (8. 33%)	17 (28. 33%)
2.	Is learning English rewarding/useful for you?	3 (5%)	5 (8. 33%)	52 (86. 66%)
3.	Is there an English training conducted by your company?	55 (91. 66%)	5 (8. 33%)	-
4.	Do you think mastering English will allow you to get a better position in your company?	6 (10%)	15 (25%)	38 (63. 33%)
5.	Why do you want to learn English? (The purpose of learning English)	Interested to learn = 15 (25%) To facilitate communication = 13 (21. 66%) International language= 10 (16. 66%) Traveling around the world = 3 (5%) To access technology= 7 (11. 66%) To get a better career = 3 (5%) To add more skills = 5 (8. 33%) To get better employment= 4 (6.66%)		
6.	What foreign language is frequently used or spoken in your company?	English = 9 (15 %) Mandarin = 51 (85 %)		
7.	Where (in what department) is English frequently used or spoken?	Human resources department = 2 (3. 33%) Enterprise resources planning = 8 (1. 33%) Sales departments = 18 (30%) Export and import department = 10 (16. 66%) Production = 5 (8. 33%) Warehouse = 3 (5%) Quality assurance = 8 (13. 33%) Information and Technology = 5 (5%) Nurses = 1 (1. 6%) Translators = 0 Mechanical department = 0 Drivers = 0 Security = 0		

The data above indicate some important findings: a) Despite the workers' strong perceptions on the importance of mastering English, b) the workers' goal of learning English

(if they learn) is not for professional purposes as the company management emphasizes the use of Mandarin. c) The workers also admit that they do not learn English formally as the company does not provide formal training for them. The selected interviews with some workers also validated the confirmation that the workers tended to learn informally from the internet English sources and other social media platforms.

The potential difficulties or challenges when learning and practicing English

Persistence belongs to the last aspect of motivation. This table presents the data regarding the potential difficulties that the participants face when learning or practicing their English in their company.

Table 4. The potential difficulties or challenges when learning and practicing English

No	Items	Self-answered spaces
1.	In your opinion, what skill/English language is challenging to learn?	Listening = 5 (8.33%) Speaking = 5 (8.33%) Grammar = 4 (6.66%) Writing = 20 (33.33%) Pronunciation = 10 (16.66%) Practice = 16 (26.66%)
2.	With whom do you communicate in English in your company?	Superiors = 25 (41.66%) Co-workers = 10 (16.66%) Buyers = 5 (8.33%) Visitors = 10 (16.66%) Foreign workers = 10 (16.66%)
3.	What language is needed most in communication practice (in a company context)?	English = 19 (31.66%) Mandarin = 31 (51.66%) Don't have idea = 10 (16.66%)
4.	What skills or language skills do you find challenging when practicing English?	Speaking = 14 (23.33%) Listening = 5 (8.33%) Writing = 16 (26.66%) Pronunciation = 12 (20%) Grammar = 10 (16.66%) Don't have Idea = 3 (5%)
5.	When you have problems speaking or communicating in English, what do you usually do?	Consulting Google Translate or the other online dictionary = 33 (55%) Consulting paid language software (e.g., Grammarly) = 23 (38.33%) Consulting/asking friends/colleagues in departments = 4 (6.66%)

The workers' claim on the informal learning process was supported by point 5. In which the workers learn English informally from Internet sources, and they did it mostly because they were assigned by their superiors or managers. They did not complain about the absence of the English training provided by the company, as they thought they could still manage the company matter with the facilities provided by the company (i.e., Grammarly).

Discussion

General skill, specific skill, and the economic value of English in the future

Although most workers consider that English is still essential in the company, the fact shows that the company provides no training. The absence of English training in the company might indicate that the change of the status of English to be a general skill rather than specific. Christenko et al. (2020) postulated that general skill is generally significant to a large fraction of employees or companies. On the other hand, specific skill is generally significant only to a few or specified firms. As a generally acquired and learned skill by the world people, the role of English, despite its popularity, will probably undermine its economic values compared with the other international languages (e.g., Mandarin/Chinese, Japanese, or Koreans) which are still scarcely learned by Indonesians.

In similar view, Asai et al. (2020) reiterate that specific skills are associated to a job and might not be applicable to another one. It should be admitted that Chinese is commonly perceived more complicated than English in terms of orthography, or the phonetic aspects, thus resulting in the scarcity of the learners or the people who can master the language. With this analogy, English can be categorized as general skill, while Chinese might be categorized as specific skill as it is specifically related to Chinese company operation. It can also be hypothesized that the absence of English training might indicate the management's perceptions toward the language, which can be learned by many workers in relatively easier manner. In sum, the tendency of over-popularity will probably generate to oversupply of the English graduates. If this continues, it can possibly impact on the lower economic value of English compared with the other scarcely learned language skills.

The lowering economic value of English has also been identified in Indonesian higher education context. Currently, English major/department does not belong to a popular major taken by Indonesian university students (Ministry of Research, Technology, 2019). Likewise, in American higher education context, the declining trend of English major/departments has also been identified (Klinkenborg, 2013). The most recent analysis conducted by Heller (2023) corroborates in that English major has declined due to various reasons, such as the rising trends of health science, medical sciences, natural sciences, engineering or computer science. More extensive studies are needed to validate this hypothesis so that the more objective roles of English in pedagogy and employment context can be verified and further be reconstructed based on the most current employment trends.

The rising trends of multilingualism

Given the growth of non-English business empires around the globe (e.g., Alibaba, Samsung, Toyota.) leading to the demand for non-English language translators/teachers, it is imperative to diversify the foreign/international language skills mastered by the language

students/workers so that they can be more adept in dealing with such diverse businesses/professional contexts, while at the same time enhancing the versatility of their English itself (Araújo, et al. 2015; Cere, 2012). It should be admitted that most of the investments from Chinese will probably prioritize its language as the means to support the company operation rather than use international languages. Chen and Yeung (2015) suggest that China's economic power has increased the need to communicate with Chinese people/business people.

Specifically, the increasing role of the Chinese government as one of the new superpowers and an economically prosperous nation has impacted the need to learn its language (Xie, 2021). Given the scarcity of data on employment opportunities in Indonesia, the researchers conducted the documentary analysis on one of the most extensive employment webs (JobStreet.com, 2023 May 23). The finding indicated there were 1328 job vacancies in Indonesia, mainly which were related to Chinese/Mandarin translators or teaching/training jobs (<https://www.jobstreet.co.id/id/job-search/mandarin-jobs/>). On the other hand, the need for English language positions was mostly identified as English teachers. The documentary analysis conducted at the same employment web (JobStreet.com, 2023 May 23) indicated that there were 681 positions offered for English teaching positions with only one for English translating position (See: <https://www.jobstreet.co.id/id/job-search/english-teacher-jobs/>).

Further studies should be done to justify this finding of whether or not Chinese investments will probably require workers or professionals to learn and master the Chinese language to support their business ventures instead of other international languages. It is also imperative to compare the companies of non-English nationalities (e.g., Chinese, Japanese, or Korean) so that it can be verified whether or not the role of English in these companies remains dominant. The need to identify some areas of employments or fields requiring English or certain English skills is also imperative (Malini et al., 2022). Given the tendency of learning foreign language for instrumental purposes rather than integrative, the need to analyze English skills, which are deemed more relevant and probably more useful in certain contexts or employments is more critical as the language learners can possibly have more realistic views on what to do in the future if they should enter the new job market.

Informality vs. Formality of English

The workers' interests toward English are primarily for fun. Of the whole workers (60 participants), forty-one employees, or approximately 68.33 %, claimed to listen to or watch English movies. The above finding corresponds to what Crystal (2006, p. 400) hypothesizes on the tendency of learning English informally due to the wider access of various on-line media,

such as advertising, songs, or web blog. Crystal (2006) coins the term ‘passive knowledge,’ indicating the process in which many young generations (i.e., Japanese) tend to learn English informally.

Further finding indicates that the workers tend to use digital tools enabling them to work on English or other languages easier than before (e.g., Google Translate, Quilbolt, or Grammarly). This phenomenon is also relevant to what Jonsson and Blåsjö (2020) have identified in that the use of on-line translation tool has significantly improved workers’ capacity to communicate in multilingual ways. With the tendency of being informal, it is possible that the future English will play a pivotal role in arts, entertainment, or cultural domains (Barratta, 2014; Kirkpatrick, A., & Lixun, 2020; Stein, 2023). In line with this hypothesis, Crystal (1997) confirmed that English has inherited a solid cultural legacy in global entertainment. In the Asian context, the newly emerging group band, BTS, has also started producing English songs to reach a larger audience to survive (Neale, 2021).

Potential pedagogical application

With regard to the formal and informal distinctions, further application of English pedagogy should probably focus on the skills which tend to be applied in certain domains. For instance, the use of English writing skill is identified to be important in formal domains. Scholars identified that being able to write in English is mandatory for higher level employments (Bahji et al., 2023; Stevens, 2005). Besides, English writing skill is also necessary for international research and publication (Mur Dueñas, 2012). Furthermore, the use of speaking skill is also important due to the potentially more formal encounters conducted recently (Kawashima, 2019; Ting et al., 2017; Xhemaili, 2022).

Unlike productive skills (i.e., writing, and speaking skill), people can easily access numerous English texts freely or listen to some English sources in the internet nowadays. It should be admitted that these sources might have contributed to the enhancement of the learners’ receptive skills (i.e., listening or reading skills). It is important to pinpoint the skills, which should be brushed up formally or informally. For instance, productive skills cannot be easily learned by solely accessing written texts or listen to a variety of on-line sources. Despite being able to access free or paid on-line grammar checkers, most scholars believe that productive skills, particularly writing generally requires the learners to nurture their skills more comprehensively (Klimova, 2014; Tangpermpoon, 2008).

Ideally, learning language should aim to improve the learners to communicate, which is more applicative and adaptive with the most current situation rather than theoretical; dichotomizing formal or informal learning is not necessary as both of these exposures are

critical to allow the learners to acquire a more realistic view on the use of language in the contemporary societies. In its application, for instance, the local or non-native English teachers can possibly provide more natural English exposures from abundant sources of the internet to their students so that they can adapt the way English communication occurs more naturally. In addition, the teachers can also contrast the English texts written naturally and those which are corrected with digital/AI supported devices. With the growth and availability of technology in English learning, the use of these facilities will allow the learners to have more effective goal compared with the teaching process, which is solely supported with the teacher's expertise. Studies have shown that technology has contributed significantly to the EFL process (Darwin et al., 2024; Hidayat et al., 2022), providing numerous relevant on-line sources, which are based on formal and informal media exposures, will not only reduce the burdens of the teachers but also accelerate the learners' way to accomplish their learning objectives.

CONCLUSION

The findings reveal some of important aspects to be considered: Firstly, given the emergent existence of Eastern language skills in employment contexts, diversifying language skills is imperative. Secondly, the role of English in the future, which shifts to an informally learned language medium, requires more natural, flexible, yet more modern teaching method. For instance the lecturers can possibly teach their students by incorporating more social media presenting English advertisements, news or other currently written texts or spoken by either native or non-native English speakers. They can also incorporate the variety of translating tools or even AI-supported tool commonly accessed by the students to allow them to get used to practicing their language more independently and more effectively.

Thirdly, it is also important for the administrators or college managers to identify the current trends in employment contexts such as social media specialists, dubbing jobs, or other potentially emerging professions. The analysis on the potential link and match of the English language skill or other English aspects (e.g., soft skill) will significantly help the language graduates to have more predicable assessment on how their skill will be used in employment context in the future.

To sum up, the present study was conducted in a company owned by the Chinese. Thus, using Chinese/Mandarin in the company could probably affect the workers' motivation to learn and practice their English skills in the company. Further study on workers' motivations in learning or practicing their English may involve more companies with more varied nationalities so that the data elicited could be more varied and dependable. It is also essential that the analysis of the use of English be conducted in more specific departments within the company

as it can provide more specific information regarding the use of English for future employment purposes. Despite using the mixed method and employing more instruments (i.e., written questionnaire, limited interview, and documentary analysis), the options of the instruments in the present study were limited to only three choices: disagree, doubt, and agree. Although it was proven easier for the workers to fill in the options, this simplification may hinder the potentially more specific analysis in the statistical description, commonly conducted in the five Likert-scale options. Further study may entail a more commonly employed Likert scale consisting of 5 options: strongly disagree, disagree, doubt, agree, and strongly disagree.

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