



ENGLISH DEPARTMENT AND EMPLOYABILITY

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ABSTRACT

The present study examined the popularity of the English department among high and vocational high school students. Specifically, it examined the students' potential choices toward English department compared with the other university departments. The study was conducted in survey research. The instrument employed was a questionnaire distributed to the students through a G-form. The participants were randomly selected from both public and private schools. Before the administration of the survey, the students were informed by the researchers' contacts/informants through their cellphones/WA messengers. One hundred fifty-six students were identified to fill in the questionnaire administered by the researchers. Despite intending to go to university, the students emphasized that they preferred to choose college, which allowed them to have a job soon after graduation. Instead of English, the students preferred to choose business and health as their college majors. Regarding the language program, they preferred to select a foreign language as a supplementary skill rather than as their primary department in college. Despite being considered necessary, most students thought that learning English or other foreign languages could be done informally rather than in foreign language colleges. Concerning the above findings, the English language departments should provide more adjustments to the students' demand to secure employment after graduation, regardless of their specificities. Besides, the administrators of the English language departments should continuously analyze the trends of the job markets, which require English language skills to provide their graduates with more diverse chances to get employment after graduation.

Key words: English department, employability

INTRODUCTION

Numerous scholars consider learning foreign languages, mainly English, important (Bloch, 1995; OECD, 2020). Scholars postulate that the role of English as one of the international languages is one of the major factors driving people to learn it (Crystal, 2003; Graddol, 1997). Specifically, some fields generally require international language capacity when someone wishes to enter employment (Araújo, 2015; Annisa et al., 2023). In the hospitality industry, for instance, scholars perceive that English is essential for workers to serve people with diverse

backgrounds (Malini et al., 2022; Annisa et al., 2023).

However, with the increasingly more important role of technology as indicated in the rising trend of STEM (Hafni et al., 2020) and other international languages, such as Mandarin/Chinese, Japanese, or Korean (Xu, Liu, 2023; Froese, 2020), the need to identify English in employment and its relevance in higher education requires further analysis. The use of more computers or technological aspects, for instance, has driven the need for engineers or specialists

capable of creating numerous programs on the web.

In terms of newly emerging international languages, the new Asian business empires have probably driven the need for non-English speaking workers (Xu, & Liu, 2023; Froese, 2020; Nawawi, 2010). In anticipating the above changes, some colleges have started to equip their students with other non-English language skills (Sutanto, 2022).

Given the above tendency, the need to identify the role of English in employment is deemed critical as it can provide those involved in work, college administration, and job seekers with more objective figures on the employability of English graduates. Unlike the other commonly conducted studies on English, which tend to focus on motivation in learning English either in schools or in colleges (Ulfa & Bania, 2019; Siregar & Siregar, 2020), the present study examines the potential popularity of English majors among the high and vocational high school students along with the perceived job opportunities.

The data were taken from high school and vocational school students, generally considered the would-be or potential college students. The data analyzed in the present study were the high and vocational high school student's views on the higher education program, English major, and the perceived employment opportunities should they take language programs in colleges/universities.

The research questions are formulated as follows:

- a. What are the students' goals after their graduation?
- b. What departments will the students probably take after graduation?
- c. What are the students' perceptions toward departments in colleges/universities and their relevance with employment?
- d. What are the students' perceptions toward the foreign language departments in colleges/universities?

The rising trend of STEM and its impact on employment

The concept of employment constitutes one of the essential concepts in every respect. Scientifically, employment is construed as one of the goals of the people. Maslow, for instance, considered the need for employment as one of the inseparable elements of human security needs (Robbins & Judge, 2013).

Given the increasing trend of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math, commonly abbreviated as STEM (White & Shakibnia, 2019, p. 24), job seekers, regardless of their backgrounds, should be willing to brush up their knowledge to be closely related to the above trends.

More specifically, Lestari and Santoso (2019) postulate three critical aspects affecting the workforce's readiness in the modern era: digital, technology, and human literacy. Gilster (1997, as cited in Lestari & Santoso, 2019, p. 516) defines *digital literacy* as the ability to understand and use information from various digital sources in multiple contexts, academic, career, and everyday life.

In addition, *technology literacy* is perceived as part of ICT literacy that falls into the category of inter-literacy perspectives, includes the ability to use ICT as an integral part of basic literacy (Markauskaite, 2006 as cited in Lestari & Santoso, 2019, p. 517). On the other hand, *human literacy* is part of the General Education that students must master. The components of this literacy include leadership and teamwork, cultural agility, and Entrepreneurship/Social entrepreneurship Kemenristekdikti, 2017 as cited in Lestari & Santoso, 2019, p. 517).

The changes of world power and their language hegemony

The changes in the world power of economy have also brought about a significantly different paradigm shift. The hegemony of America and other allies as the superpower in business has gradually shifted to Asian countries (Froese et al., 2020). These changes have undoubtedly brought about the need for language to communicate with these employers and the other higher-ranking managers (Xie, 2021). In the Indonesian context, for instance, the need to hire Chinese translators is more frequently found compared with English translating positions (Jobstreet, 2022).

The changes in curricula and national education policy

In the Indonesian context, English is perceived as a foreign language (Lauder, 2008). Despite being taught in many formal schools, the policy stipulating English as a foreign language limits the use of English in formal education contexts. Hamied and Mustafa (2019) confirm that

the language policy adopted by the government emphasizes the use of Indonesian language as the only language for instruction. With the policy, the application of English is usually conducted only in the classroom. Except for the international schools, the teaching of English is usually restricted inside the school compound (Fitriati, 2015).

Based on the above explanation, it can be interpreted that the status of English has undergone some changes, and these changes require the learners and the other relevant stakeholders to anticipate potential demands from the users in which English will usually be used. Furthermore, the research should be done in some respective fields, such as linguistic aspects, so that the use of language can be fitted into the more suitable application in specific fields. For instance, the use of English in education will be much different from the use of English in medical or health. The studies can provide more information on how to apply English to more realistic applications, either in education or non-education fields in the future.

RESEARCH METHOD

Design of the research

The design of the present study is a quantitative. The concept of quantitative refers to any attempt to identify the data in numbers (Creswell, & Clark, 2018). There are three broad classifications of quantitative research: descriptive, experimental and causal comparative (Leedy, & Ormrod, 2001, as cited in William, 2007, p. 66). The descriptive research approach is a basic research method that examines the situation in its current state. Based on the above concept, it can be interpreted that the present study belongs to the descriptive research as it aims to examine the current situation in its current state. Since the study primarily uses questionnaire as the only means to elicit the data, the research is categorized as a survey research.

Respondents

The respondents recruited in the study are students from high schools and vocational high schools (public and private). These students are deemed prospective as they can go to universities after graduating. The students were given some information through the researchers' contact/information. The information was shared by the researcher's information to the students. The researchers also visited the school headmaster to formally request the permit to distribute the G-form

questionnaire to the students' cell phones. The following are the tables indicating the number of participants in the present study.

Table 1. Participants of the study

SMA/MA (A)	
Public school	Private school
75	5
80	
SMK (B)	
Public school	Private school
6	70
76	

Instruments

All the questions in the instrument were offered in the questionnaire-like options. The questionnaire was expected to allow the participants to answer more conveniently as the choices have been provided for them. However, some of the empty spaces in the other sections were also provided. The empty sections or self-answered sections were provided to allow the participants to answer independently and freely.

All the self-statements or questions in the questionnaire were directly referred to as research questions. The questionnaire administered to the participants was the one written in Bahasa Indonesia. It aimed to allow the participants to grasp the meaning more conveniently. The items in the questionnaire below are the translated version.

a. Goals after school graduation

1. After I graduate I will directly work.
2. After I graduate I will directly go to college.
3. I will go to college with my own expenses.
4. I will go to college with my parents' financial support.
5. I will run my own business.
6. I will continue my parents' business.

b. Department/major that will probably be taken by the participants

1. Departments/majors that I am interested in taking
2. If I go to college, I will probably take.....

c. Perceptions toward departments and their relevance to employment

1. In my opinion, I must take a major/department which allows me to work directly after graduation.
2. In my opinion, I must take a major/department which allows me to take further study (S2/Master, S3/Doctor).
3. In my opinion, I must take affordable major/department or the ones which allow me to get scholarship.
4. In my opinion, all majors are good as long as they belong to state colleges/universities.
5. In my opinion, all majors in Colleges/Universities are good as long as we study hard.

d. Perceptions toward foreign language departments in colleges/universities

1. In my opinion, foreign language department is important to find employment.
2. In my opinion, foreign language department is not very important to find employment at the moment.
3. In my opinion, English is not very important at the moment.
4. In my opinion, education/ foreign language department is still important at the moment.
5. In my opinion, foreign language skill can be learned independently or at non-formal institutions.
6. In my opinion, the jobs that can be applied by the foreign language graduates are...
7. If I plan to take a foreign language department, I will probably take..(e.g., English, Mandarin, Japanese, etc.)
8. If I study at college/universities or work, I will probably take a foreign language(e.g., English, Mandarin, etc.) in a non-formal institution

Sources and research data

The data sources in the study were the information taken from the participants, both high school and vocational high school students. The research data analyzed were the students' perceptions toward their purposes after graduation, preferred department, and other relevant considerations.

Data analysis

Since the present study mainly focuses on the students' perceptions toward their potential chosen majors/departments, the data analyzed in the present study will constitute their introspective options or self-stated expressions indicated in the questionnaire/scale. Fraenkel et al., (2012, p. 126) perceive that an attitude scale, which is administered to the participant, can be used as evidence of one or more underlying attitudes or perceptions (Fraenkel et al., 2012, p. 126).

Data collection procedures

- a. The researchers discussed the proposed plan to the chairman of the language colleges and other relevant colleagues.
- b. The researchers created the G-form based on the proposed questionnaire previously discussed by the researchers.
- c. The researchers shared the G-form to the lecturers of their colleges to test the potential shortcoming of the G-form.
- d. The researchers proposed the research to some of the headmasters of both high schools and vocational high schools.
- e. The researchers also shared the G-forms to their colleagues and informants in order to invite more participants.
- f. The researchers analyzed the incoming data from G-forms.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The students' goal after graduation

This section presents the findings of the first research question. There are six statements filled by the participants and are presented in this section.

- a. After graduation, I will immediately work.

HIGH SCHOOL (A)	VOCATIONAL (B)
SD = 12 (15 %)	SD = 3 (4 %)
D = 20 (25%)	D = 10 (13 %)
D= 23 (29 %)	D = 20 (26 %)
A = 19 (24 %)	A = 22 (29 %)
SA = 6 (8 %)	SA = 21 (28 %)

- b. After graduation, I will immediately go to college.

HIGH SCHOOL (A)	VOCATIONAL (B)
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SD = 4 (5 %)	SD = 2 (3 %)
D = 6 (8%)	D = 3 (4 %)
D= 16 (20 %)	D = 16 (21 %)
A = 25 (31 %)	A = 27 (36 %)
SA = 29 (36 %)	SA = 28 (37 %)

c. After graduation, I will study at college with my own money.

HIGH SCHOOL (A)	VOCATIONAL (B)
SD = 3 (4 %)	SD = 4 (5 %)
D = 20 (25%)	D = 7 (9 %)
D= 34 (43 %)	D = 28 (37 %)
A = 14 (18 %)	A = 19 (25 %)
SA = 9 (11 %)	SA = 18 (24 %)

d. After graduation, I will study at college with my parents' financial support.

HIGH SCHOOL (A)	VOCATIONAL (B)
SD = 8 (10 %)	SD = 5 (7 %)
D = 5 (6%)	D = 9 (12 %)
D= 18 (23 %)	D = 22 (29 %)
A = 38 (48 %)	A = 30 (39 %)
SA = 11 (14 %)	SA = 10 (13 %)

e. After graduation, I will run my own business.

HIGH SCHOOL (A)	VOCATIONAL (B)
SD = 1 (1 %)	SD = 0 (0 %)
D = 9 (11%)	D = 2 (3 %)
D= 26 (33 %)	D = 19 (25 %)
A = 30 (38 %)	A = 25 (33 %)
SA = 14 (18 %)	SA = 30 (39 %)

f. I will continue running my parents' business.

HIGH SCHOOL (A)	VOCATIONAL (B)
SD = 12 (15 %)	SD = 7 (9 %)
D = 20 (25%)	D = 17 (22 %)
D= 32 (40 %)	D = 19 (25 %)
A = 12 (15 %)	A = 23 (30 %)
SA = 4 (5 %)	SA = 10 (13 %)

The findings of the first research question indicate the high school students (A) felt less confident compared with vocational (B) in securing employment. Of the whole participants of high school students (eighty students), 29 % of

them indicated their doubt whether they could immediately work after graduation. Unlike high school students, most of the vocational (B) tended to be more confident to work after graduation, as indicated with 29% (Agree) and 28 % (Strongly Agree) of the whole participants (seventy six participants).

Department the students will probably take after graduation

This section presents two statements filled by the participants in the survey. The results are presented below:

a. Department that I am interested to take

HIGH SCHOOL (A)
Foreign Language/Literature/Linguistics = 17 (21%)
Management = 11 (14%)
Business = 23 (29%)
Engineering = 9 (11%)
Information Technology = 9 (11%)
Education = 10 (13%)
Taxation = 2 (3%)
Communication = 6 (8%)
Tourism/Hospitality Industry = 4 (5%)
Accounting = 5 (6%)
Economy = 8 (10%)
Law = 14 (18%)
Health/Medical = 20 (25%)
International Relations = 5 (6%)
Psychology = 10 (13%)
Statistic = 2 (3%)
Theology = 15 (19%)
Sociology = 4 (5%)
Political Science = 4 (5%)
Archaeology = 0 (0%)
Journalism = 2 (3%)
Film = 1 (1%)
Philosophy = 0 (0%)
Nautica = 2 (3%)
Security/Defense = 16 (20%)
Agriculture = 2 (3%)
Flight = 10 (13%)
Design = 1 (1%)
Beauty = 12 (15%)
Art = 8 (10%)
Administration Science = 6 (8%)
Astronomy = 3 (4%)

VOCATIONAL (B)

Foreign Language/Literature/Linguistics = 10 (13%)
Management = 6 (8%)
Business = 14 (18%)
Engineering = 7 (9%)
Information Technology = 5 (7%)
Education = 5 (7%)
Taxation = 1 (1%)
Communication = 7 (9%)
Tourism/Hospitality Industry = 8 (11%)
Accounting = 4 (5%)
Economy = 2 (3%)
Law = 7 (9%)
Health/Medical = 56 (74%)
International Relations = 4 (5%)
Psychology = 15 (20%)
Statistic = 0 (0%)
Theology = 5 (7%)
Sociology = 2 (3%)
Political Science = 0 (0%)
Archaeology = 0 (0%)
Journalism = 0 (0%)
Film = 0 (0%)
Philosophy = 1 (1%)
Nautica = 0 (0%)
Security/Defense = 7 (9%)
Agriculture = 0 (0%)
Flight = 1 (1%)
Design = 6 (8%)
Beauty = 12 (16%)
Art = 11 (14)
Administration Science = 0 (0%)
Astronomy = 0 (0%)

b. If I go to college, I will probably take

HIGH SCHOOL (A)

Foreign Language/Literature/Linguistics = 3 (4%)
Management = 7 (9%)
Business = 9 (11%)
Engineering = 3 (4%)
Information Technology = 4 (5%)
Education = 3 (4%)
Taxation = 0 (0%)
Communication = 1 (1%)
Tourism/Hospitality Industry = 2 (3%)
Accounting = 1 (1%)
Economy = 1 (1%)
Law = 4 (5%)
Health/Medical = 13 (16%)

International Relations = 2 (3%)
Psychology = 2 (3%)
Statistic = 0 (0%)
Theology = 6 (8%)
Sociology = 0 (0%)
Political Science = 0 (0%)
Archaeology = 0 (0%)
Journalism = 0 (0%)
Film = 0 (0%)
Philosophy = 0 (0%)
Nautica = 2 (3%)
Security/Defense = 7 (9%)
Agriculture = 0 (0%)
Flight = 4 (5%)
Design = 0 (0%)
Beauty = 4 (5%)
Art = 1 (1%)
Administration Science = 1 (1%)
Astronomy = 0 (0%)

VOCATIONAL (B)

Foreign Language/Literature/Linguistics = 0 (0%)
Management = 2 (3%)
Business = 5 (7%)
Engineering = 2 (3%)
Information Technology = 2 (3%)
Education = 2 (3%)
Taxation = 0 (0%)
Communication = 0 (0%)
Tourism/Hospitality Industry = 2 (3%)
Accounting = 0 (0%)
Economy = 1 (1%)
Law = 2 (3%)
Health/Medical = 49 (64%)
International Relations = 1 (1%)
Psychology = 1 (1%)
Statistic = 0 (0%)
Theology = 0 (0%)
Sociology = 0 (0%)
Political Science = 0 (0%)
Archaeology = 0 (0%)
Journalism = 0 (0%)
Film = 0 (0%)
Philosophy = 0 (0%)
Nautica = 0 (0%)
Security/Defense = 4 (5%)
Agriculture = 0 (0%)
Flight = 0 (0%)
Design = 0 (0%)
Beauty = 0 (0%)

Art = 2 (3%)
Administration Science = 0 (0%)
Astronomy = 0 (0%)

The findings of the second research question indicate that most high school (A) and vocational (B) perceived business and health departments as the most interesting departments for them. Specifically, 29 % of high school students (A) were found to be interested in Business department, while 25 % of them were interested in health/medical departments.

Likewise, most of vocational students (B) were found to be interested in health/medical as indicated with 74 % participants in the survey. In sum, the first and the second items of the second research questions indicated relatively consistent result in that most of high school (A) and vocational school students (B) tended to perceive that health/medical and business belong to the most interesting major and would probably become their future majors.

Perceptions toward departments in colleges/universities and their relevance to the employment

In the third research questions, there are five statements, which were filled/chosen by the participants. The results are presented below:

a. In my opinion, I must take a department, which allows me to work directly after graduation.

HIGH SCHOOL (A)	VOCATIONAL (B)
SD = 0 (0 %)	SD = 0 (0 %)
D = 4 (5%)	D = 2 (3 %)
D= 8 (10 %)	D = 6 (8 %)
A = 31 (39 %)	A = 27 (36 %)
SA = 37 (46 %)	SA = 41 (54 %)

b. In my opinion, I must take a department, which allows me to take further study.

HIGH SCHOOL (A)	VOCATIONAL (B)
SD = 0 (0 %)	SD = 0 (0 %)
D = 0 (0%)	D = 1 (1 %)
D= 9 (11 %)	D = 9 (12 %)
A = 38 (48 %)	A = 31 (41 %)
SA = 33 (41 %)	SA = 35 (46 %)

c. In my opinion, I must take affordable department or the one that allows me to get scholarship.

HIGH SCHOOL (A)	VOCATIONAL (B)
SD = 0 (0 %)	SD = 1 (1 %)
D = 7 (9%)	D = 2 (3 %)
D= 24 (30 %)	D = 19 (25 %)
A = 31 (39 %)	A = 22 (29 %)
SA = 18 (23 %)	SA = 32 (42 %)

d. In my opinion, all departments are good as long as they belong to state colleges/universities.

HIGH SCHOOL (A)	VOCATIONAL (B)
SD = 10 (13 %)	SD =13 (17 %)
D = 19 (24%)	D = 18 (24 %)
D= 20 (25 %)	D = 16 (21 %)
A = 20 (25 %)	A = 16 (21 %)
SA = 11 (14 %)	SA = 13 (17 %)

e. In my opinion, all departments in colleges/universities are good as long as we study hard.

HIGH SCHOOL (A)	VOCATIONAL (B)
SD = 0 (0 %)	SD = 1 (1 %)
D = 2 (3%)	D = 0 (0 %)
D= 6 (8 %)	D = 1 (1 %)
A = 23 (29 %)	A = 19 (25 %)
SA = 49 (61 %)	SA = 55 (72 %)

The findings of the third research question indicate that the students preferred to take a job after graduation. Of the two groups (A, and B), vocational students (B) were found to be the ones who prioritized the urgency of working after graduation indicated with A=27 (36%) and SA= 41(54%), thus reaching 90 % of the total participants. On the other hand, high school students indicated less intensity. Of the whole participants 85 % of them indicated their agreement (A= 39 %, and SA= 46 %). Interestingly, the high school (A) were found to agree that the continuation after graduation was also important as indicated with 89% of the whole participants compared with vocational school students (87 %).

4. 4 Perceptions toward language departments in colleges/universities

The fourth research question has eight statements. The findings are presented below:

a. In my opinion, foreign language department is important to find employment.

HIGH SCHOOL (A)	VOCATIONAL (B)
SD = 5 (6%)	SD = 0 (0%)
D = 6 (8%)	D = 4 (5%)
D= 14 (18%)	D = 8 (11%)
A = 35 (44%)	A = 32 (42%)
SA = 20 (25%)	SA = 32 (42%)

b. In my opinion, foreign language department is not very important to find employment at the moment.

HIGH SCHOOL (A)	VOCATIONAL (B)
SD = 26 (33%)	SD = 31 (41%)
D = 32 (40%)	D = 32 (42%)
D= 17 (21%)	D = 11 (14%)
A = 2 (3%)	A = 2 (3%)
SA = 3 (4%)	SA = 0 (0%)

c. In my opinion, English is not very important at the moment.

HIGH SCHOOL (A)	VOCATIONAL (B)
SD = 37 (46%)	SD = 43 (57%)
D = 31 (39%)	D = 31 (41%)
D= 5 (6%)	D = 1 (1%)
A = 5 (6%)	A = 1 (1%)
SA = 2 (3%)	SA = 0 (0%)

d. In my opinion, education/foreign language department is still important at the moment.

HIGH SCHOOL (A)	VOCATIONAL (B)
SD = 3 (4%)	SD = 0 (0%)
D = 3 (4%)	D = 2 (3%)
D= 6 (8%)	D = 7 (9%)
A = 44 (55%)	A = 34 (45%)
SA = 24 (30%)	SA = 33 (43%)

e. In my opinion, foreign language skill can be learned independently or at a non-formal institution.

HIGH SCHOOL (A)	VOCATIONAL (B)
SD = 2 (3%)	SD = 0 (0%)
D = 9 (11%)	D = 1 (1%)
D= 13 (16%)	D = 16 (21%)
A = 45 (56%)	A = 38 (50%)
SA = 11 (14%)	SA = 21 (28%)

f. In my opinion, the jobs that can be applied for by the foreign language graduates are.....

HIGH SCHOOL (A)
Do Not Know = 52 (65%)
Translator/Interpreter = 12 (14%)
Tour Guide/Tourism = 11 (13%)
Teacher/Lecturer = 3 (4%)
International Organization = 3 (4%)
Others (Health, Technology) = 3 (4%)

VOCATIONAL (B)
Do Not Know = 49 (64%)
Translator/Interpreter = 10 (12%)
Diplomat/International Organization = 3 (4%)
Tour Guide/Tourism/Hospitality = 10 (13%)
Teacher/Lecturer = 5 (7%)
Journalist/Dubber/Film Industry = 6 (8%)
Health Industry = 1 (1%)
Business Industry = 3 (4%)

g. If I plan to take a foreign language department, I will probably take

HIGH SCHOOL (A)
English = 69 (86%)
Korean = 20 (25%)
German = 13 (16%)
Arabic = 12 (15%)
Japanese = 22 (28%)
Turkish = 3 (4%)
Dutch = 5 (6%)
French = 6 (8%)
Chinese = 9 (11%)

VOCATIONAL (B)
English = 60 (79%)
Korean = 24 (32%)
German = 7 (9%)
Arabic = 17 (22%)
Japanese = 29 (38%)

Turkish = 5 (6%)
 Dutch = 4 (5%)
 French = 11 (14%)

h. If I study at college/universities or work, I will probably take a foreign language in a non-formal institution

HIGH SCHOOL (A)

English = 70 (88%)
 Korean = 27 (34%)
 German = 15 (19%)
 Arabic = 20 (25%)
 Japanese = 29 (36%)
 Turkish = 6 (8%)
 Dutch = 15 (19%)
 French = 14 (18%)
 Chinese = 14 (18%)

VOCATIONAL (B)

English = 64 (84%)
 Korean = 32 (42%)
 German = 12 (15%)
 Arabic = 32 (42%)
 Japanese = 40 (53%)
 Turkish = 16 (21%)
 Dutch = 16 (21%)
 French = 13 (16%)
 Chinese = 11 (14%)

The findings of the fourth research question indicate that despite being popular, as indicated with 69 % of the whole high school participants (A) and 84 % of the whole vocational high school participants (B), most of the participants perceived that English could be learned informally.

The data indicated that 88 % of the whole high school participants (A) tended to consider that they probably take English in non-formal institution rather than formal ones. Similarly, 84 % of the whole vocational high school students (B) perceived that they preferred to learn English non-formally rather than taking English in college. In sum, although English was perceived important either as major or as a skill, most of the participants preferred to take English as supplementary skill rather than a degree to pursue.

Discussion

The tendency to learn English informally

The data showed that despite the students' perceptions toward the importance of English, indicated by the students' disagreement toward the negative statement of English (marked by 46 % of high school students and 43% by vocational high school students), most of the students perceived that learning English or other foreign languages could be done in a non-formal institution (i.e., course/training center). The tendency of non-formal learning preference was indicated by 88% of the whole high school students and 84 % of the vocational high school students who perceived that learning English could be done informally.

This finding was supported by a statement indicating that the student's favourite college majors were not English. Specifically, Business and Health are the most interesting majors for high school students (29 %, 25 %) and vocational high school students (74%, 18 %). This shift indicates that the practical aspect of English as a means of worldwide communication will be more appreciated by the people compared with the intricate theoretical aspects of English literature or linguistics.

The tendency to learn more informally has also been hypothesized by Crystal (2006, p. 400), who once considered that English would be more understood in non-formal contexts as people will be more exposed to the English language naturally from various media, such as advertising, songs, internet rather than in the previous decades.

Students' preference to get employment soon after graduation

The finding indicated that students preferred to get employment once they graduated. Specifically, 37 % and 41 % of the high school and vocational students indicated their emphasis on being employed after graduation. This finding is similar to the other research indicating the participants' preference for having a job soon rather than being proud of taking certain majors in colleges/universities.

Previously, Aldosary and Assaf (1996) identified that the most important factors in choosing a college major were job availability, prospective salary, social status, and the prestige of the major. Similarly, one of the most current studies indicated that one of the factors affecting the students' foreign language choice in college/universities is the possibility of being

employed as English teachers and other potential career prospects for English graduates (Fitria et al. 2022). García-Aracil et al. (2021), likewise, identify that finding better employment opportunities is currently among the main reasons to enroll in higher education.

The rising trend of ESP

Theoretically, ESP constitutes one of the alternatives for the administrators or English lecturers to identify the needs of the markets in the future. ESP, which stands for English for specific purposes, is considered a field of English that focuses on 'purposes' and 'specificity' (Salmani-Nodoushan, 2020, p. 248). Similarly, ESP is also perceived as a well-established English field to identify the needs of a specific group to fit their purposes best (Neville, 2018, p. 1).

In other word, the application of ESP can cater to the needs of numerous English trainings and contexts (Neville, 2018). For instance, besides preparing their students' English-specific skills based on their possible future jobs, the administrators/lecturers can also consider more aspects, which are related to the students' internal condition, such as talents, skills, and other competencies, thus allowing the students to endeavor relatively varied positions yet still relevant to their language backgrounds.

In this case, the students who might have good capacities in design, regardless of their current language department (e.g., linguistics, literature, or education) can be given specially tailored training in graphic design along with their relevant English, allowing them to be more competitive in job market.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

English has indeed remained a crucial foreign language until now. However, with the upcoming changes in employment in the digital era and the tendency to use high technology in modern life, foreign language learners need to adjust their language skills to adopt these changes skillfully. Regardless of their specificities (e.g., English literature, Education, or Linguistics), the administrators of the English program should meticulously identify the potential relevance and irrelevance of the language characteristics and further change the curricula so that the language

learners can also enter or participate in the modern employment scheme.

For instance, with the growing interest in learning business, health, or tourism in colleges, English language administrators should be able to cater to the relatively connected language for the above fields so that English graduates can apply their skills in the above areas. It is also essential that those managing language departments provide the foreign language students with entrepreneurship skills so that the students can run their own English language course/tuition after graduation.

Until now, English or other foreign language courses in Indonesia constitute one of the feasible business ventures. Providing the entrepreneurship program to the students will allow them to have more possibilities to create more job opportunities besides being a worker in certain companies. In sum, to elevate the values of the students' language skills, they also need to have more aspects, such as knowledge and other practical skills, to enable them to compete in a much diverse employment arena.

The research method was conducted in survey research; thus, the data taken were purely numerical facts indicating the students' responses toward certain phenomena. Although some employment information was also taken from the employment web for comparison, the data was strictly limited to the options indicated in the questionnaire without possible enrichment from verbal responses. It is also important to note that the calculation of the G-form of the present study was conducted manually. Without SPSS or other statistics devices, the researchers could not precisely determine the more specified findings. Further study regarding the above topic may involve a more holistic method, more varied participants, and more advanced statistic calculation to warrant more valid and reliable results.

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