

Needs Analysis of English for Specific Purposes Course in Home Economics Based on Graduate Users' Perceptions

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Abstract

The study aims to identify and analyze the specific English language learning needs of students in higher education in Home Economics based on the perceptions of graduate users. Utilizing a quantitative approach, the research employs a questionnaire as the primary data collection tool. This questionnaire was administered to graduate users of the Home Economics Program at the Faculty of Engineering, Universitas Negeri Semarang, with respondents including twelve individuals from diverse sectors such as schools, government offices, private companies, and home industries or SMEs. The findings reveal that the need for English proficiency varies by sector. In educational settings, English is vital for understanding instructional materials and meeting global educational standards. For government offices, proficiency in English is essential for international collaboration, effective communication in meetings, and maintaining global partnerships. Private companies, particularly multinational corporations, rely on English for recruitment, daily operations, and interactions with international clients, even though incentives for language proficiency are often lacking. Meanwhile, in-home industries, although English is not yet a strict requirement, it is becoming increasingly important for online marketing, responding to international inquiries, and engaging with promotional media. As globalization and technological advancements continue to reshape these sectors, the study underscores the growing necessity of English proficiency. The findings highlight the critical role that English plays in enhancing professional effectiveness and competitiveness, making this research an essential contribution to curriculum development and workforce readiness in an increasingly interconnected world.

Keywords: Need Analysis, English for Specific Purposes, Home Economics, Graduate Users

INTRODUCTION

Entering the era of globalization and the fourth industrial revolution requires individuals to be prepared for competition in the global market. Globalization represents a significant transformation impacting the entire world. In simple terms, globalization can be described as a process where events happening in different parts of the world can be observed directly without being physically present. Additionally, Selo Soemardjan, as cited in Musa (2015), suggests that globalization is the formation of communication and organization among societies worldwide, aiming to follow the same new standards.

To address this, strong communication and interaction skills are essential to facilitate various activities and tasks. One crucial competency in communication is the ability to use a foreign language. Currently, English is the international language mandated for study in Indonesia. The Indonesian government has designated English as the primary foreign language (Chairina, 2019). This initiative aims to enable Indonesians to compete effectively in this increasingly advanced era.

English is a Lingua Franca, a language used to facilitate communication among people from diverse linguistic backgrounds, ensuring mutual understanding (Firmansyah, 2019). Furthermore, over 112 countries and more than 328 million people globally use English for communication (Shobikah, 2017). Therefore, mastering English is undeniably essential for global acceptance. Proficiency in English provides a key that unlocks various aspects of life.

Moreover, in today's technologically advanced world, English is indispensable. Almost all technological devices operate in English. English is now the language of science, technology, and business communication among non-native English speakers, the language of the Olympics and international conferences (Rintaningrum, 2015).

Considering the crucial role of English in the globalization era, university students in Indonesia must

take English courses to prepare them for future employment. Language proficiency as a communication tool in globalization is the key to securing promising and respectable careers (Handayani, 2016).

English courses at the university level aim to prepare students for competitive job markets after graduation. Unlike earlier stages of English courses, university-level English instruction is more adaptable, with no strict regulations, allowing universities to tailor their curricula to meet specific needs (Yulientinah et al., 2020). Consequently, university-level English courses should ideally focus on English for Specific Purposes (ESP). ESP refers to teaching English for particular objectives based on the needs and goals of the students (Fitria, 2020). It emphasizes contextual language use rather than focusing on grammar and structure (Nur, 2018). General English course, or English for General Purposes (EGP), primarily covers grammar and structure and is usually completed at earlier education levels. Therefore, ESP is considered a more advanced stage following EGP. Knezović (2016) states ESP is "student-centered," prioritizing student needs and learning goals. In contrast, EGP is "language-centered," where students learn about the English language and the cultures of English-speaking countries. Thus, ESP focuses on addressing the specific needs of the learners.

Burhanuddin & Sulaiman (2020) note that ESP is broadly categorized into two types: (1) EAP (English for Academic Purposes) and (2) EOP (English for Occupational Purposes). EAP targets academic needs, while EOP focuses on job-related needs and training. ESP builds upon EGP and prepares learners to use English in specific fields. ESP has two main characteristics: absolute and variable (Amel & Mami, 2020). Absolute characteristics include addressing specific learner needs, using appropriate methodologies and activities for the target discipline, and focusing on relevant grammar, skills, and discourse. Variable characteristics involve being designed for specific purposes, using different methodologies from general English, and catering to adult learners (university or workplace). However, they can also be tailored for secondary students and accommodate learners with intermediate to advanced skills and beginners.

Based on these points, university-level English courses should shift from EGP to ESP. English instruction in non-English majors should address students' specific needs according to their fields of study. This approach will maximize the effectiveness of English learning, enhancing students' skills and competitiveness in the job market after graduation.

Home Economics (HE) is one of the fields of study that plays a vital role in enhancing the quality of family life. HE at Universitas Negeri Semarang has four study programs: craft, engineering, cultivation, and processing. In more detail, they learn about topics related to family, culinary arts, fashion, crafts, agriculture, and entrepreneurship. Graduates of the HE Program are expected to become teachers, family counselors, employees in related government agencies, employees in relevant companies, or entrepreneurs. In this context, communication skills in English are becoming increasingly important to support the implementation of effective and sustainable HE programs. ESP learning in HE requires a different approach than general English language learning. It requires a deep understanding of the specific communication needs in various HE contexts. The needs analysis in ESP learning in HE can provide a better understanding of English language skills requirements in the HE works environment. Therefore, learning programs can be designed to meet the field's actual English language skills needs, enabling learners to be more prepared to contribute to developing effective HE programs.

Various studies have been conducted to analyze the English language learning needs in universities. Syukur and Nugraha (2019) researched to identify and analyze the material needs for ESP among nursing students. The study focused on nursing students from class P17C enrolled in an English course. The findings revealed that the nursing students' needs for the ESP English course varied, indicating that they require English for their current studies and future professional careers.

Similarly, Aflah and Rahmani (2018) conducted a study with students from the Nutrition Department to analyze the needs for the ESP English course. This research aimed to assess the target and learning needs of vocational students. The target analysis showed that the primary goal for Nutrition students in learning English was to communicate actively in the language. The needs analysis highlighted that students required fluent and communicative speaking skills to meet future professional requirements.

Moreover, Novianti (2021) researched to design and develop ideal ESP English materials for students in the physical education, health, and recreation (PJKR) program at STKIP Pasundan. This case study involved 34 PJKR students as participants. The study found that PJKR students needed English for specific purposes in different contexts. These students, such as physical education teachers, professional coaches, referees, athletes, and sports journalists, required English proficiency to support their future careers.

From these studies, it is evident that there is a crucial need to analyze the actual requirements of the job market. After obtaining the research results, it will be possible to design models, syllabi, and English learning materials that meet the job market's needs.

The research aims to identify and analyze the specific English language learning needs of students in the HE fields in higher education based on the graduate users' perceptions. By understanding these needs,

the research aims to develop tailored ESP learning materials, syllabi, and teaching models that align with the requirements of students' future professional careers in HE fields. This approach ensures that English language instruction is relevant, practical, and effective in preparing HE students for their professions and job market demands.

METHOD

This research employs a quantitative approach, which involves using a questionnaire as the primary tool for data collection. The questionnaire was designed to gather information from graduate users of the Home Economics Program at the Faculty of Engineering, Universitas Negeri Semarang. Respondents included twelve individuals from various sectors, including schools, government offices, private companies, and home industries or SMEs.

Before distribution, the questionnaire underwent a validation process to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the data collected. This validation process likely involved reviewing the questionnaire for clarity, relevance, and appropriateness to ensure it effectively captures the necessary information related to the research objectives. This questionnaire aims to gauge how much English language proficiency is emphasized and utilized in the workplace. It assesses various aspects, including recruitment, daily communication, skill requirements, and training programs related to English proficiency. The responses to these statements can provide insights into the importance of English language skills in different professional settings, particularly in HE-related industries.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In this research, the questionnaire was distributed to individuals who have employed graduates from the Home Economics (HE) program. These individuals, referred to as "graduate users," include three school principals, three government department heads, three managers of private companies, and three owners of home industry businesses. Each graduate user has unique needs and requirements regarding their employees' English language proficiency.

The questionnaire is distributed to these graduate users to gain a comprehensive understanding of the actual English language proficiency needs in the workplace. By collecting responses from these users, the researchers aim to identify specific areas where English language skills are crucial for job performance in various settings related to HE.

A. The English language proficiency needs from the schools

Three school principals actively participated by responding to the distributed questionnaire. These educational institutions specifically employ graduates from the Home Economics (HE) program as educators within their faculty. Among them, one school functions as a vocational high school, focusing on specialized vocational training, especially in fashion and culinary programs, while the remaining two schools operate as junior high schools, providing education to students in their early adolescent years. These schools are state schools that adhere to national standards, emphasizing their commitment to quality education and standardized practices.

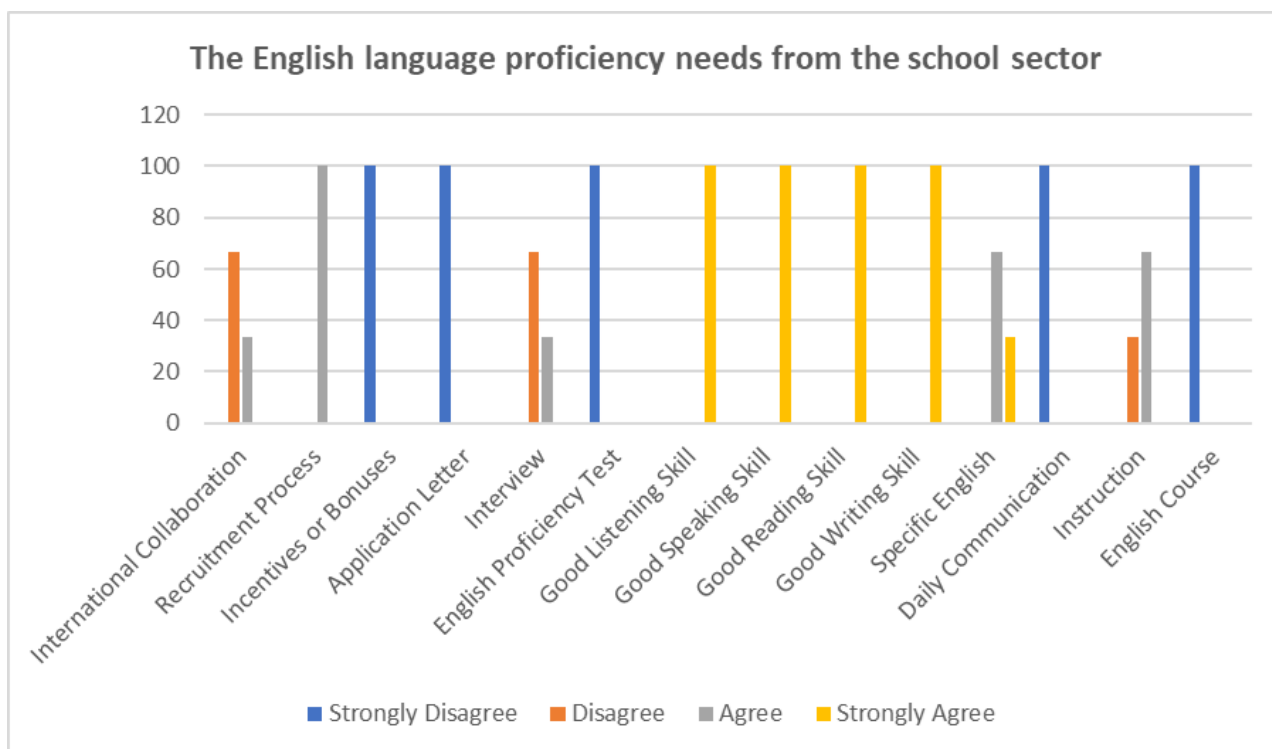


Figure 1. The English language proficiency needs from the schools.

Figure 1 indicates that English proficiency is an essential requirement in the recruitment process for teachers in the three schools surveyed. Although English proficiency test certificates are not mandatory, one of the three schools stated that their job interviews are in English. This is because some schools have international partnerships, necessitating teachers with strong listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. One of the three schools, the vocational school (SMK), stated that teachers must master specific English relevant to their teaching field. This is related to the focused nature of vocational education in SMK, where students specialize in fashion or culinary arts.

Meanwhile, the other two schools, which are at the junior high school level (SMP), do not require specific English skills since the subjects taught are still general. Although English is not used in daily communication in the three schools, teachers often encounter situations requiring English comprehension, such as using tools or media in teaching. Unfortunately, no efforts have been made by the schools to enhance their staff's English proficiency. Additionally, there is no salary difference between teachers proficient in English and those who do not. The survey results show that the schools consider English proficiency essential in the recruitment process and daily tasks.

The necessity of English proficiency is particularly evident in schools with international partnerships, as these collaborations require teachers adept in all four language skills to engage effectively with international counterparts and access global educational resources. For the vocational school, specific English skills in areas like fashion and culinary arts are critical for preparing students for the global job market. This necessity arises from the highly specialized nature of vocational education, where students are trained in particular trades and professions that often involve technical terminology and industry-specific language. In the fashion industry, for example, students must understand terms such as design, textiles, and garment construction, which are frequently used in international contexts. Similarly, knowledge of culinary techniques, ingredients, and equipment, often described using English terminology, is essential in the culinary arts.

This focus on specific English skills aligns with ESP principles, which Hutchinson and Waters in Chi and Vu (2023) highlight as crucial in vocational and technical education. ESP aims to meet the needs of learners in particular professional or academic fields, providing them with the language skills necessary to function effectively in their chosen careers (Stefanova, 2023). By mastering industry-specific English, vocational students are better equipped to access global markets, engage with international clients and suppliers, and keep abreast of the latest field developments. This proficiency enhances their employability and competitiveness in the global job market, allowing them to pursue opportunities beyond local or national contexts. In contrast, the junior high schools' focus on general English skills reflects their broader curriculum, emphasizing foundational knowledge and general communication abilities.

However, a notable gap in the survey is the lack of initiatives to improve teachers' English proficiency.

The absence of programs or resources to enhance language skills represents a missed opportunity to support teachers and improve their effectiveness. Furthermore, the lack of financial incentives for developing English proficiency might deter educators from pursuing further language training. Introducing incentives or professional development programs could motivate teachers to improve their English skills, ultimately benefiting the schools and their students, as suggested by Basikin (2020). Therefore, implementing targeted professional development and offering incentives could significantly enhance the English proficiency of teachers, supporting both their professional growth and the educational outcomes of their students (Derakhshan et al., 2020).

B. The English language proficiency needs of the government offices

The survey was responded to by three heads of leading government offices in several Central Java, Indonesia cities. It was found that there are graduates from the Home Economics Department working as employees in these offices, either as permanent staff or on a contract basis.

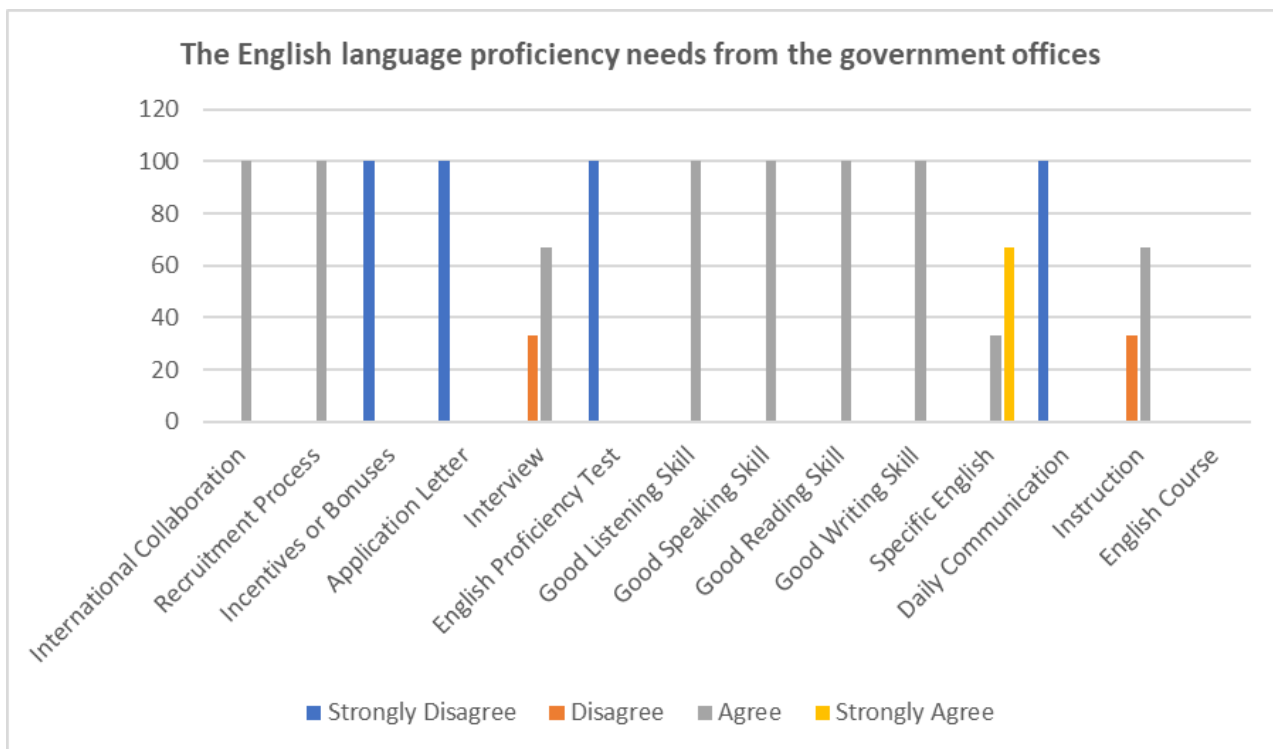


Figure 2. The English language proficiency needs from the government offices.

Based on Figure 2, the survey results from three heads of government offices in Central Java, Indonesia, reveal a strong emphasis on English language proficiency. All respondents agree that their offices collaborate internationally and consider English proficiency crucial in recruitment. However, none of the offices provide incentives for employees with high English proficiency nor require job applications to be written in English. On the other hand, job interviews are often conducted in English, with a majority (66.7%) agreeing and 33.3% strongly agreeing to this practice. Although English proficiency certificates are not mandatory, there is a unanimous agreement on the necessity of solid listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in English for their employees.

Additionally, 66.7% of respondents believe specific English skills related to their field are essential. English is one of many languages used in daily communication. However, it is vital to understand instructions and media at work, with all respondents agreeing to provide English language classes outside working hours.

All respondents strongly agree that their offices engage in international collaboration. This finding underscores the necessity of English proficiency for effective communication with international partners. Alhasnawi (2021) states that English is the global lingua franca, essential for international projects and negotiations. The ability to communicate in English enables government offices to participate in international dialogues, fostering global cooperation and exchange. Furthermore, all these government offices have established collaborations with international entities, making English communication crucial. Such communication is necessary during meetings, foreign visits, and presentations to international stakeholders.

In addition, many respondents believe that employees must master specific English skills related to

their field. This might include policy, administration, and international law terminology for government offices, ensuring employees can effectively handle their specialized tasks. Despite English not being the primary language for daily communication, it is essential for understanding work-related instructions and media. Hafner & Pun (2020) highlight the functional role of English in professional settings, where it serves as a tool for accessing and disseminating information. This finding indicates that, while not used daily, English proficiency remains crucial for specific professional functions. Finally, all respondents agree on providing English language classes outside working hours, emphasizing continuous language learning. This practice reflects a commitment to enhancing employees' language abilities, ensuring they remain competent.

C. The English language proficiency needs of private companies

Three HR managers from private companies responded to the survey. These companies span different industries, including manufacturing, service, and trading. The two companies are multinational, with international partnerships and a diverse workforce. The remaining company is local, focusing on the domestic market. This variety in company types provides a comprehensive overview of the English language proficiency needs across different business contexts and scales of operation. The responses from these HR managers help to highlight the varying demands and expectations for English language skills in their respective sectors, illustrating the commonalities and differences in language proficiency requirements.

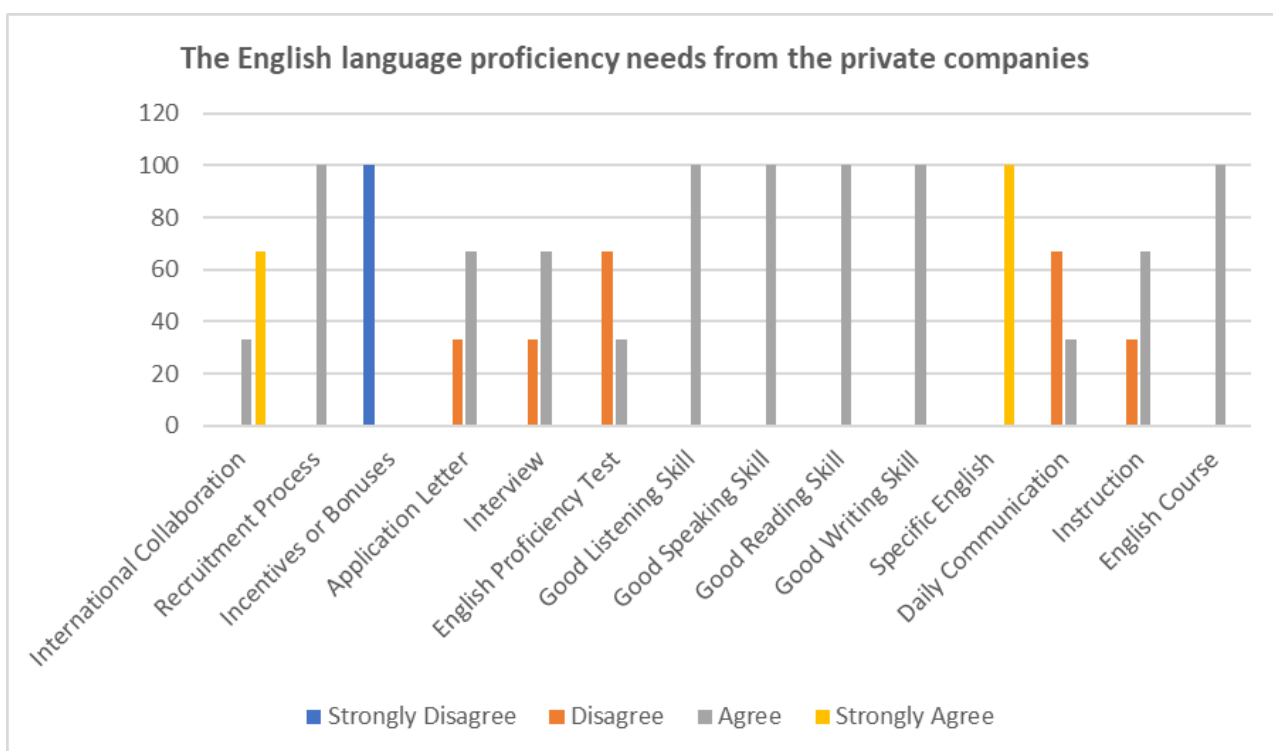


Figure 3. The English language proficiency needs of private companies

The survey results from three HR managers in the private sector, representing manufacturing, service, and trading companies, highlight significant insights into English language proficiency needs. All respondents agree that their companies engage in international collaboration, indicating the necessity of English for effective communication with global partners. Although English proficiency certificates are not mandatory, good listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in English are essential. Furthermore, specific English skills related to the respective fields are necessary, even though English is not predominantly used for daily communication. The companies emphasize understanding instructions in English and provide courses outside working hours, reflecting a commitment to ongoing language skill development.

The necessity of English proficiency in the recruitment process is straightforward, emphasizing practical communication abilities. The mixed responses regarding English application letters and job interviews indicate varying requirements based on industry-specific needs. Some companies require English for these processes, while others do not prioritize it. Despite this variation, communicating effectively in English remains a critical factor for all respondents, aligning with the importance of communicative competence in professional settings. The preference for performance-based assessments over standardized tests highlights the focus on real-world language use.

Overall, the survey underscores the importance of comprehensive language proficiency, including

specific industry-related English skills. The unanimous agreement on providing English courses outside working hours shows a commitment to continuous language learning and skill development. This approach ensures that employees are well-equipped to handle international collaboration and understand work-related instructions, enhancing their effectiveness in professional roles.

D. The English language proficiency needs from the home industries.

Three individuals involved in home industries or SMEs responded to the survey, and all three are the owners of these businesses. Graduates from the Home Economics program often pursue entrepreneurship, leading many to create and expand their ventures. These particular home industries specialize in fashion and culinary fields. Despite being domestically founded, their promotion and marketing efforts have successfully extended to an international audience.

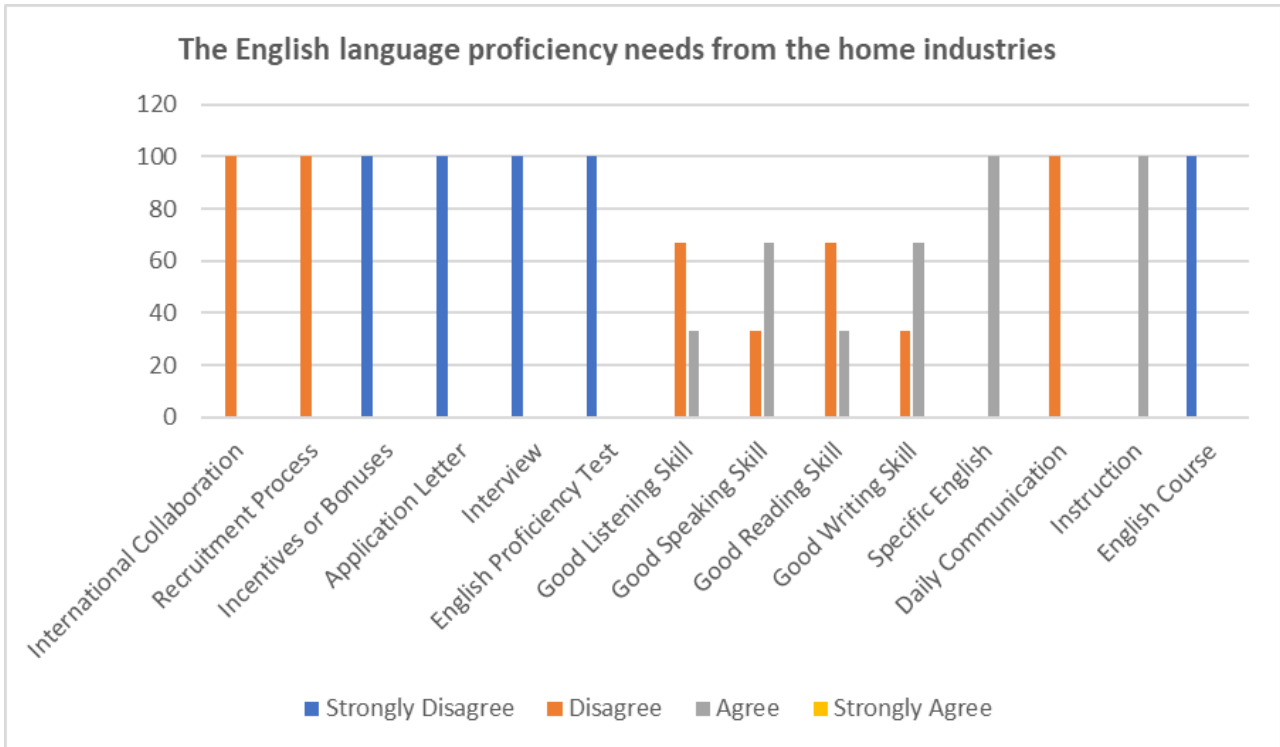


Figure 4. The English language proficiency needs from the home industries.

In Figure 4, the survey results from three individuals working in home industries reveal several key insights into English language proficiency needs. The three home businesses do not collaborate internationally, meaning English proficiency is optional in most employees' recruitment processes. As a result, application letters and job interviews are conducted in Indonesian rather than English. Additionally, English proficiency test results are optional during the hiring process. However, one of the home industries requires its employees to possess adequate listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in English. This specific need arises because their operations are closely tied to specialized fields such as fashion and culinary arts, where English language skills are essential for understanding technical terms and instructions. While daily communication within these businesses is conducted in Indonesian, comprehending English is crucial for operating specific tools or media used in their work. This necessity highlights the importance of specific English language skills in ensuring the adequate performance of tasks within these specialized sectors.

Based on the survey results, English language proficiency is yet to be a stringent requirement for workers in these SMEs, but it is becoming increasingly necessary. These SMEs often market their products online, making it essential for marketing employees to understand promotional media, which frequently includes instructions or guidelines in English. This necessity becomes even more pronounced when the intention is to expand promotion to an international level. The use of social media and online marketplaces is a common practice in their marketing strategies. They often use English in product captions or descriptions to attract a broader audience.

Additionally, there have been instances where foreign consumers inquire about products in writing, necessitating responses in clear and comprehensible English. This practice underscores the need for employees who can effectively understand and respond in English, highlighting the growing importance of English proficiency in these SMEs.

The findings indicate that while English is not used in daily business communication, comprehending and utilizing English becomes critical when operating equipment or media related to their work (Wamalwa & Wamalwa, 2014).

While English proficiency is optional for most positions within these SMEs, the growing need for English skills in marketing, international communication, and specific professional contexts indicates an emerging trend. As global markets and technology significantly influence the advancement of their businesses, English proficiency is increasingly needed, making it an essential skill for future growth and success (Rao, 2019).

CONCLUSION

In summary, the need for English proficiency varies across different sectors. English is essential for understanding instructional materials, enhancing global communication skills, and meeting school educational standards. Government offices require English for international collaboration, effective communication during meetings, and maintaining global partnerships. Private companies, particularly multinationals, demand English proficiency for recruitment, daily operations, and interactions with international clients, although incentives for proficiency are generally lacking. In-home industries, while English is yet to be a stringent requirement, it is increasingly necessary for online marketing, responding to international inquiries, and understanding promotional media. Overall, as globalization and technology continue to influence these sectors, the importance of English proficiency is becoming more pronounced, highlighting its role in enhancing professional effectiveness and competitiveness.

Based on the research findings, it is recommended that educators and material developers in ESP classes at universities adopt a holistic approach to teaching English, integrating general and specific language skills required across schools, government offices, private companies, and home industries. The curriculum should emphasize listening, speaking, reading, and writing abilities through practical exercises such as role-playing and simulations, ensuring students can apply their skills in relevant contexts. Modules on international communication and cross-cultural understanding are essential, as global collaboration and marketing are critical in these sectors. This training can include case studies and intercultural workshops. Additionally, integrating technology and digital literacy into the curriculum is crucial, with training in social media management, e-commerce, and digital marketing tools to prepare students for the digital demands of modern workplaces. Fostering critical thinking and problem-solving skills through debates, group projects, and problem-based learning will enable students to handle complex tasks and challenges effectively. By addressing these areas, educators can equip students with comprehensive language proficiency, enhancing their employability and preparing them to meet the demands of their future careers.

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