

# UNLEASHING LANGUAGE SKILLS FOR BETTER JOB PROSPECTS

**HAZWATI HASHIM**

AKADEMI PENGAJIAN BAHASA, UiTM KAMPUS REMBAU

The English language has become the most-spoken language around the world. Whatever reasons you have for learning English either it is for job promotion, pursuing your study or for any personal reason you have; it is undeniable that you would need the language someday in your life ("The Benefits of Learning English," 2016). However, many students do not even realize the importance of not only learning the language but also to acquire the language thus to become proficient in it.

In realizing the impact of the English language on career opportunities and social activities (A. Jasim, 2021), not many students are aware that they already have the hidden potential of learning and acquiring the language. Some students learn the language just for passing the subject or to meet the faculty's requirements. They, on the other hand, do not see the benefits of one skill over the other language skills. The students apparently have always thought of the language as a subject and part of the program.

In addition to that, there are four language skills that students usually learned since they were in school until graduating from the universities. The language skills range from reading, listening, writing, and speaking. Along the path of knowing and learning the language skills, one student may be good in writing and not on other skills. Some students may not be good in listening, reading, and writing but are fluent in the spoken form. Thus, these create a variety of language learners, and they must see the hidden potential that they have if they are able to acquire even one skill.

In relation to the spoken language, recently many students who obtained the average result in Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) can converse well in English. This could possibly be due to the wide and early exposure to the language. Many of them benefit from the language surrounding such as the circle of friends, family background and the school that they go to. However, not all realize the advantages they already have. There are some who do not know how to apply the skills they have.

Furthermore, in relation to the job prospects awaiting them after graduation either they are searching for the suitable job or otherwise, students should not solely rely on academic performance. They must be aware that there are other capabilities that the interviewers are looking for such as the communication skills, problem solving skills, critical thinking skills, creative thinking and so forth. Hence, this is when the application of language skills exist and as such students must realize the necessity of the skills which they have learned before.

To put the language skills into practice, listening and speaking could be the first examples whereby we listen and speak every day in our lives. The issue is on how to apply these skills at the workplace. For instance, being a telephonist and working at the customer service department could be an easy job to some people. However, little is known that this job requires attentive listening skills which could help a person to give his or her response to the questions raised by the customers. Another occupation is working as a television host. This job requires a person not only to listen attentively but also to respond spontaneously to the invited guests of the event. At the same time, a TV host needs to be energetic and creative so that the audience would enjoy the program. In short, this shows when and how the students can apply the language skills later when they are working in such fields, they could possibly see the connection between learning the English language and the real working environment.



Apart from the listening and speaking skills that the students must acquire for better job prospects, reading and writing skills could put them to another level. For example, being able to read intensively or extensively will lead them to a gateway of knowledge. Being a knowledgeable person could make the students a wiser thinker and at the same time they will have wisdom. This means, when they voice their opinions in a written form, their write-up will get the readers' attention. This will also assist the students to become a journalist, a blogger, a newspaper columnist and a magazine editor - be it an online or a physical one. These occupations require an intensive and wide reading experience thus would lead them to become an excellent writer. Not only that, reading and writing in English could make the students a critical thinker who can critically analyse the reading materials and transform them into writing.



This means that they will not easily believe whatever they have read as they can critically question any issues in the reading materials. Hence, the students will be able to see the integration between reading and writing skills that could help them to be efficient at the workplace.

Moreover, if the students could possibly see the importance of acquiring the language skills and the connection to the working environment then they will no longer think the English language as just a passing subject or be part of course requirements. Even so, it is not easy to convince the students on the impact of English language learning in the future; however, the educators, be it a lecturer or a teacher, must be optimistic in instilling the benefits of the English language. The educators must expose the students to real scenarios in the working environment so that they will foresee the job opportunities awaiting them as such the students will work harder in polishing their language skills.



Despite the motivation from the educators, the students themselves should have the initiative to learn and acquire the language skills. They must embrace the English language as a skill they need to master and not just as a pre-requisite subject. Along the way to graduation, the students must be given the opportunity to explore the job prospects awaiting them as this will give them early exposure to the real working-world. This is also important because they will eventually meet different people from all walks of life.

All in all, great opportunities, motivation, and endless efforts must come from both parties in which the educators and the students should work together to accomplish the students' dreams to get a better job. It is hoped that English language will not be regarded as an unimportant subject in school or at university level but to be at the same par with other technical or critical subjects and should be the ultimate course for the future.

### Reference

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