

THE NEXUS BETWEEN PEDAGOGY AND EMPLOYABILITY: THE STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ON PRONUNCIATION TEACHING IN THEIR ENGLISH COLLEGE

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Received: September 2025, Accepted: November, Published: December 2025

Abstract

Studies of English pronunciation in the pedagogical field have been extensively explored but studies on pronunciation in the employability context remain underexplored. The present study examined English pronunciation teaching from the perspectives of both working and non-working students who are currently studying at a privately funded English language college. It sought to elicit the perceived need for pronunciation instruction at their college and the jobs that might require this skill. The research method was qualitative, aiming to portray the nature of pronunciation from the perspectives of the different participants. Ten participants, comprising five working and five non-working students, were recruited purposively to elicit the data. The semi-structured interviews were conducted with each participant to elicit important themes. The findings indicated that two students working as teachers consider English pronunciation teaching important. However, the three working students in non-teaching positions confirm that English pronunciation was not emphasized in their companies, as their employers were non-native English speakers. To support the company's operations, the employers place greater emphasis on intelligibility in communication among workers than on native-like pronunciation. Similarly, most non-working students perceive that pronunciation teaching is partially important because it helps them appreciate English artworks performed by native speakers, especially in English songs or movies, which can motivate them to learn English. The present study highlights the urgency for adopting both linguistic and non-linguistic aspects in English curricula to equip the language graduates with more impactful communicative capacity in the employment context.

Keywords: Teaching, work skills, perception, pronunciation teaching.

Abstrak

Kajian tentang pengucapan bahasa Inggris dalam bidang pengajaran telah diteliti secara meluas tapi kajian tentang pengucapan bahasa Inggris dalam kaitannya dengan kecakapan kerja masih sangat terbatas. Studi ini mengkaji pengajaran pengucapan bahasa Inggris berdasarkan pendapat sejumlah mahasiswa baik yang sedang bekerja maupun tidak sedang bekerja dan sedang belajar pada sebuah sekolah tinggi bahasa asing swasta. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui pendapat para mahasiswa/i tersebut tentang pentingnya pengajaran pengucapan bahasa Inggris di kampus mereka serta kemungkinan adanya sejumlah pekerjaan yang membutuhkan keterampilan ini. Metode penelitian ini bersifat kualitatif karena bertujuan untuk menggambarkan hakikat pengajaran pengucapan bahasa Inggris yang didasarkan pada sudut pandang mahasiswa/i sebagai peserta penelitian. Sepuluh peserta, yang terdiri dari lima mahasiswa yang sedang bekerja dan lima mahasiswa yang tidak bekerja, direkrut dengan metode yang mempertimbangkan tujuan penelitian ini (purposive), guna mendapatkan data. Wawancara semi-terstruktur dilakukan pada masing-masing peserta penelitian untuk

mengetahui tema-tema penting dalam penelitian ini. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa dua mahasiswa yang bekerja sebagai guru menganggap pengajaran pengucapan bahasa Inggris merupakan kegiatan yang penting. Namun, tiga mahasiswa yang bekerja di bidang yang tidak terkait dengan pengajaran menegaskan bahwa pengucapan bahasa Inggris tidak ditekankan di perusahaan mereka, hal ini karena perusahaan tempat mereka bekerja tidak dikelola oleh penutur asli bahasa Inggris. Untuk mendukung operasional perusahaan, perusahaan lebih menekankan pada kejelasan komunikasi antar karyawan daripada pengucapan seperti penutur asli. Selain itu, sebagian besar mahasiswa yang tidak sedang bekerja menganggap pengajaran pengucapan merupakan kegiatan penting hanya karena hal tersebut dapat membantu mereka menghargai karya seni berbahasa Inggris yang dibawakan oleh penutur asli, terutama dalam lagu atau film berbahasa Inggris, yang tentu saja dapat memotivasi mereka untuk belajar bahasa Inggris. Kajian ini menyoroti pentingnya upaya untuk mengadopsi aspek linguistik dan non-linguistik dalam kurikulum bahasa Inggris guna membekali lulusan bahasa dengan kemampuan komunikasi yang lebih berdampak dalam lingkup pekerjaan.

Kata kunci: Hubungan, pengajaran, kecakapan kerja, persepsi, pengajaran pengucapan.

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INTRODUCTION

Pronunciation is one of the crucial aspects affecting oral communication comprehension (Alsuhairani et al., 2024; Andini, & Zaitun, 2023; Dja'far, & Hamidah, 2024). Likewise, in EFL context, learning English pronunciation is essentially inseparable (Al-khreshes, 2024; Derwing & Munro, 2009; Prasatyo, B.A.2022). However, learning pronunciation is complicated and challenging primarily due to the facts that some English sounds do not exist in the non-native English speakers' languages (Febrianto, 2021; Jahara, & Abdelrady, 2022). Studies indicate the main hurdles, which stumble-block the EFL students, is their native language (Octaviani et al., 2024; Taefi, 2024; Thien, & Khanh, 2025).

Up to this time, the studies on pronunciation tend to emphasize heavily on pedagogical aspects (Al-khreshes, 2024; Derwing, & Munro, 2009; Qin, 2023; Sayogie, & Adbaka, 2022; Shehzad et al., 2022; Suhil, & Romadoni, 2024; Yulianti et al., 2025). Despite being significant these studies tend to dichotomize English language as a language skill and as an employability skill. Given the demand of learning English at the moment, which mostly comes from instrumental drive, such as being employable or pursuing certain educational degrees (Ali et al., 2025; Alshaye, 2025; Hiranburana, 2017; Le, & Le, 2024; Mohd Amin, & Abu Bakar, 2022; Nguyen, & Habók, 2021), the whole college stakeholders should start nurturing their

students with relevant skills allowing them to be more competitive in searching employment, including in English pronunciation when necessary.

The facts indicate that finding employment is still one of the important challenges for the college graduates worldwide (Herbert et al., 2020; Ndayikeza, 2025; Vinichenko et al., 2016). In Indonesian context, there are numerous college graduates who are struggling to secure employment of no avail (Agustina et al., 2024; Al Ayyubi, & Pratomo, 2025; Pradikasari, 2024). Given the aforementioned phenomenon, Scholars perceive that colleges or universities should start providing their students with more relevant skills to acquire proper employment after they graduate (Loc et al., 2025; Tushar, H., & Sooraksa, 2023).

Despite the extensive highlights on the role of English in employment context (Ali et al., 2025; Dülger, & Uğurlu, 2025; Le, & Le, 2024; Tran et al., 2024), the highlight on the nexus of pronunciation skill and employment remains murky. Admittedly, there are very few studies which highlighted the necessity of having pronunciation skill in relation to employment context (Bourdin et al., 2024; Carlson, & McHenry, 2006; Hosoda, & Stone-Romero, 2010). However, most of the pronunciation studies tend to highlight the international context, while ignoring Indonesian context.

The need to identify more on the use of English in the national context is imperative since most of the scholars vehemently argue that the use of English in Indonesian employment context remains crucial (Hidayat, 2024; Prima, 2022; Wahyuningsih, & Untsa, 2023; Widiastuti et al., 2021). The present study attempts to close the gap by highlighting the necessity of teaching English pronunciation skill among the language college students who are both working and non-working students in national contexts. The study aims to elicit the potentially diverse or even contradictory point of views regarding the above case which leads to the new insight on how to deal with English pronunciation aspect in the language college.

The research questions are formulated as the followings:

1. What is the perceived functional value of English pronunciation pedagogy among working and non-working students in their language college experience? How do the working/non-working students describe their perceptions of the employments that require English pronunciation skill?

2. How did students perceive the necessary standard of pronunciation and related non-linguistic skills for effective communication in their foreign language college?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Dismantling the complexities of pronunciation

Between employability and pedagogy admittedly, the role of pronunciation has been extensively scrutinized in the context of pedagogy rather than employability (Al-khreshes, 2024; Alsuhaibani et al., 2024; Bourdin et al., 2024; Carlson & McHenry, 2006; Hosoda & Stone-Romero, 2010; Lee et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2025; Qin, 2023; Sayogie & Adbaka, 2022; Suhil & Romadoni, 2024; Yulianti et al., 2025). Those defending received pronunciation firmly argue that effective communication is impossible when non-native speakers' pronunciation falls below a certain threshold level, even when their vocabulary and grammar are excellent (Derwing & Munro, 2009; Lee et al., 2020). Scholars vehemently postulate that English pronunciation plays a crucial role in supporting speaking skills, thus providing a competitive edge in employment requiring oral communication (Wibowo & Nasrullah, 2024).

Despite the aforementioned necessity, the attempt to illuminate pronunciation in an realistic employment context remains barren (Hosoda & Stone-Romero, 2010; Nguyen & Wellman, 2024). There were only few studies explored the nexus of pronunciation and employment aspect. The first study was conducted by Niamthet (2016) who conducted an awareness survey on the necessity of English pronunciation of Thai international employees working in exhibition service companies. The findings indicated that the workers were more familiar with segmental (e.g., consonant, vowels) rather than supra-segmental features. In terms of supra-segmental, the workers perceived stress as the most complicated aspects.

Secondly, the study conducted by Phoonkum (2020) who studied the listening problem encountered by Thai employees who work for a Japanese automotive company. She found that the primary causes of the English listening problems encountered by the Thai employees were a lack of background knowledge of the topic being discussed, incorrect pronunciation by the speaker, and the use of technical terms or unfamiliar words. In this case, the standard pronunciation was found not the only factor affecting intelligibility. In fact, the meaning of the unfamiliar words (e.g., technical terms) could probably lead to misunderstanding.

The rest of the studies identified tend to encompass a much wider spectrums in that they associate the non-native accent with the potential cultural mistreatments experienced by immigrants abroad (Bourdin et al., 2024; Maindidze et al., 2025; Schmaus & Kristen, 2021). In sum, these studies not only focus on employment but also highlight the necessity of in-depth cross-cultural analysis of native and non-native pronunciation, which can lead to potential cultural prejudice in foreign context.

Given the emerging trend of both supporting and reproaching native and non-native pronunciation, scholars perceive that adhering to the concept of intelligibility in communication is more crucial (Wang & Wen, 2023). In other words, the objective of pronunciation teaching nowadays is not to require the students to attain a native like accent nor to allow the intelligibility among native speakers, but to ensure mutual intelligibility among non-native speakers (Jenkins, 2000; Moedjito, 2009; Wang & Wen, 2023)

The rise of Asian economy and the role of English

The rise of the economy in one nation will generally require the international language to sustain it. Likewise, the rise of Asian economies has also driven the need for an international language that can nurture their growth (Lin, 2018). As one of the international languages, English has been essential in supporting the global economic development (Strango et al., 2025). Specifically, studies indicated that, despite being mediated by economic policy adopted by the policy makers in the countries, the English proficiency in certain countries exerts a significant impact on the economic development (Li et al., 2022; Lin, 2018).

However, with the increasingly important roles of Asian countries along with other Asian languages, such as Chinese, Japanese, or Koreans, along with the increasing use of these international languages in numerous formal contexts, the potential code-switching instances between the English and other Asian languages leading to incorrect pronunciation might be inevitable. For instance, the Chinese speakers might have misspelled some sounds in English as their language does not have vowels like /æ/ or /ð/ (Zhang & Ying, 2009). Likewise, Japanese speaking English might mistakenly change the sounds mad → much; manuscripts → money scripts; distracted → destructed due to the absence of certain sounds in Japanese (Kashiwagi, 2008).

Despite the perceived benefits of having Standard English pronunciation, particularly in establishing rapport with native English speakers (Al-khreshes, 2024), the occurrence of the above errors are more likely to be caused by culturally embedded factors rather than academic insufficiency. Hitherto, scholars have long confirmed that the aspects of mother tongue or the first language constitute one of the most significant contributors to misspellings committed by the non-native speakers (Al-khreshes, 2024; Kashiwagi, 2008; Octaviani et al., 2024; Zhang & Ying, 2009).

In sum, potential erroneous instances in pronunciation should be understood as culturally acceptable phenomena rather than errors that need to be changed or criticized. Without disregarding the necessity of linguistic aspects in effective communication, scholars perceive that the speaker should not only rely on linguistic aspects to succeed in communication, but also incorporate gestural or facial expressions, which can contribute significantly to his or her communication process (Bobkina et al., 2023).

METHOD

This study utilized an Interpretive Qualitative Design to thoroughly examine the various perspectives and lived experiences of students regarding English pronunciation teaching and its significance for employability (Lim, 2024). This methodology is suitable since it seeks to clarify the 'what' and 'how' of social behaviors and interactions, providing a profound comprehension of the participants' context and perspective, rather than just quantifying events (Lim, 2024). The study aligns with the research topics and is positioned within the Interpretivist paradigm, which posits that reality is socially constructed and comprehended most effectively through the participants' viewpoints (Lim, 2024).

The recruitment of a group of 10 was carried out through a criterion-based purposive sampling method. This method guarantees that participants meet established criteria crucial to the study's emphasis (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). The primary selection requirements were: 1) Active enrollment at the foreign language college and 2) Membership in one of two essential subgroups: Working Students (directly linking education to employment) or Non-Working Students (a guide of future job prospects). This dual approach was essential to elicit possibly different or contradicting perspectives, as outlined in the study's objective. This sampling

method was chosen to ensure that the sample was composed of individuals who could provide the most relevant and in-depth insights into the relationship between pronunciation teaching and employment skills, which is the core focus of this research. To prevent potential bias, the researchers tried to provide sufficient information regarding the research, its benefits, and the rights of the participants in the present study. In sum, the recruitment of the participants was purposefully conducted based on their availability and their status as both working and non-working students.

Table 1. Participants' Background

Initials	Working/Employment status	Sexes
A	English course teacher	Female
B	English course teacher	Female
C	Shoe factory worker	Male
D	Shop assistant	Female
E	Company supervisor	Male
F	No / Full-time Student	Female
G	No / Full-time Student	Female
H	No / Full-time Student	Male
I	No / Full-time Student	Male
J	No / Full-time Student	Male

Moreover, data' refers to the raw details of information covering facts, numbers, or observations, which are subsequently obtained (Hackman et al., 2024). The sources of data taken in the present study were the participants' verbal responses elicited during the interviews. Specifically, the research data to be analyzed was the specific verbal responses indicating their perceptions or insight regarding the teaching of pronunciation, and the potential jobs which require Standard English.

in addition, the main instrument of data collection was a Semi-Structured Interview Protocol. This instrument was built directly from the two principal research questions to ensure coherence between the objectives and the data collected. The semi-structured interview is a qualitative data collection strategy in which the researcher asks informants a series of predetermined but in open-ended manner. Unlike in structured interview, despite having control over the topics, the researchers or the interviewers usually do not determine certain fixed range of responses to each question delivered to the participants (Wishkoski, 2020). Scholars confirm that interview has been commonly used means for collecting data in

qualitative social research methods (Anyan, 2013; Myers & Newman, 2007). The interview conducted by the researcher allowed the researchers to have more access on delicate issues either in the past or present situations (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). The protocol underwent a peer review and expert validation process conducted by a senior lecturer in applied linguistics to verify clarity, coherence, and content validity prior to the onset of fieldwork. This resulting protocol comprised three primary elements to direct the dialogue. After the interview was conducted, the interviews were then transcribed verbatim for analytical purposes. The researchers maintain the information regarding the utilization of both Indonesian and English to enhance understanding.

Concerning data analysis, the data was analyzed using thematic analysis. Ahmed et al. (2025) suggest that thematic analysis (TA) is one of the most widely used methods for analyzing qualitative data. It provides the researchers with a structured yet flexible approach to identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns or themes within a dataset. Furthermore, it is used to interpret patterns or themes in certain data set which can lead to the new perspective and comprehension (Naeem et al., 2023). The present study adopted the Braun and Clarke's six-phase thematic analysis framework (Ahmed et al., 2025), which includes (1) familiarization with data, (2) generating initial codes, (3) searching for themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) writing the report as the followings:

During the familiarization with the data, the researchers immerse themselves in the raw data (e.g., transcripts, notes) by reading and rereading. Furthermore, they also discuss about something important which might be highlighted in the data. At Codes initial generating, the codes are commonly referred to as short phrases or words, known as codes, which can be assigned to identify the data's core message, significance, or theme (Naeem et al., 2023). In this step, the preliminary codes were created both inductively and manually. This required a meticulous line-by-line examination of the transcripts to identify semantic and hidden meanings. For instance, participant responses indicating 'appreciation for songs and movies' were categorized as Motivation through Media Appreciation. All codes were subsequently compiled into a codebook to ensure consistency. To increase reliability (rigor), two researchers (the authors) independently coded and developed initial themes from three tapes. They met to compare, discuss, and address any inconsistencies in coding and theme development,

achieving consensus prior to advancing with the remaining data set. This process ensured that the themes accurately reflected the data and were not just dependent on an individual researcher's interpretation. Afterthat, the researchers search for themes. A theme reflects meaningful data patterns related to the research question. Tools like mind maps or thematic maps assist in organizing themes. In this stage, the researchers tried to interpret the codes. . While during the themes reviewing, the researchers tried to analyze the data to ensure accurate representation leading to certain themes. The next step, the researcher define and name themes. At this step, the researchers refine the essence of each theme and describe how it relates to the research questions. The study established trustworthiness by employing several strategies. Credibility was ensured through: 1) the aforementioned inter-coder consensus among researchers during thematic analysis , and 2) detailed, direct quotes (extracts) from participants being presented in the findings section to allow the reader to judge the interpretations

The principal approach for data collection was the semi-structured interview, chosen to facilitate a flexible yet targeted examination of the students' opinions while guaranteeing thorough coverage of the two fundamental study issues. The interview procedure, comprising 12 open-ended questions addressing pedagogy, self-efficacy, and employment connections, was developed following an extensive literature assessment. To improve content validity, the protocol was subjected to an expert evaluation by two experts in language instruction and applied linguistics. Before starting fieldwork, all the ten purposively chosen participants granted written informed consent after a comprehensive explanation of the study's aims and confidentiality measures was provided. The researchers also asked the confirmation whether there were some questions or things that the participants had to elaborate more. The researcher concluded the interview after the data was deemed saturated or sufficient to answer research questions (Naeem et al., 2024).

Interviews were held privately on campus to reduce distractions and promote participant comfort. Each session lasted 45–60 minutes. Participants were allowed to use English, although the conversation was mostly in Bahasa Indonesia to avoid language obstacles and stimulate true thought. A high-quality digital recorder was used to record all interviews to capture verbal data, including tone and subtlety. Subsequent to the data gathering phase, all audio recordings were diligently transcribed verbatim. To ensure the reliability and validation of the data, a

transcription audit was performed, in which one researcher compared the final transcripts with the original audio recordings. This verification stage guaranteed the data's integrity prior to the ensuing theme analysis phase. The ten completed transcripts provided the conclusive dataset for analysis.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The perceived functional value of English pronunciation pedagogy among working and non-working student in their language college experience.

Participants	The Extracts elicited from the study	Themes identified
English teacher	<i>As an English teacher, learning pronunciation is important to support my English proficiency.</i>	Learning English pronunciation is important for students.
English teacher	<i>Before I work in my English institution. I was interviewed and I managed to get the job because I showed better English pronunciation before the interviewers.</i>	The interview process for English teacher emphasizes good pronunciation.
English teacher	<i>I think learning pronunciation allows the student to appreciate the nature of English from native speaker' perspective.</i> <i>However, in some instances, there are some of my friends who keep making the same mistakes, despite their frequent attempt to improve their pronunciation. In my opinion, learning pronunciation should not demotivate students with certain local accents.</i>	Learning English pronunciation allows students to appreciate the nature of English. Students' errors in English pronunciation should not demotivate them to learn.
Shoe factory worker	<i>In my opinion, learning pronunciation is good to motivate students to learn English artworks, such as movie, songs, etc.</i> <i>However, the aspect of intelligibility and the ability to understand and respond communication appropriately is more important as it becomes the proof of our ability to communicate.</i>	Learning pronunciation is good to appreciate some artworks in English. Intelligibility and ability to understand and to respond communication appropriately is more important.
Shop assistant	<i>Learning English pronunciation is ok but knowing more words is important.</i>	Knowing more words is more

	<i>At my college, I focus on the words which are more relevant to my work, so I don't really focus on the sounds let alone to the phonetic symbols.</i>	important than learning English pronunciation. Learning in college for improving the vocabulary mastery allowing her to work better.
Company supervisor	<i>Learning English pronunciation is important but the theory makes me confused, especially with the phonetic symbols. In fact, what I need just words or expressions that can help me work better, for instance, the way to write e-mail more accurately, or the way to answer the phone effectively, and so forth.</i>	Practicing English pronunciation is important but don't over emphasize on theory. His learning need is for the words or expressions that are relevant to his work.
	<i>It is dilemmatic to apply standard English pronunciation in college where the whole lecturers are non-native speakers. How can we have a standard English pronunciation? In fact, most of the lecturers frequently slip their dental sounds during the class.</i>	It is difficult to apply the standard English pronunciation since the whole lecturers are non-native.
Student	<i>However, the lecturers sometimes presents the English pronunciation teaching in the form of song, or other short drama, this is more interesting.</i>	The non-native English lecturers frequently make errors. Providing enjoyable pronunciation source is more acceptable to the students.
Student	<i>I am a kind of Western, and Pop addict, I think having a Standard or native-like pronunciation is good as it can help you appreciate more on the songs you enjoy while at the same time improve your motivation to learn.</i>	Learning English pronunciation through English songs can improve students' motivation.
Student	<i>I think English pronunciation is important, but certainly it does not affect the whole academic progress of my English literature. It is enjoyable when pronunciation is given in the form of songs, or short movies allowing us to relax while learning.</i>	Learning English pronunciation will not significantly affect the whole learning progress. Learning pronunciation while

		listening or watching English movie is enjoyable.
Student	<i>I think English pronunciation is important as it allows us to appreciate the English from native paradigm.</i>	Learning English pronunciation allows the students to appreciate the native paradigm.
Student	<i>I think English pronunciation teaching tends to focus more on theories rather than practice. In fact, the communication practice that we should do are often ignored due to the mistakes that some of us do.</i>	Over-emphasizing students' English pronunciation might lead to ignorance of other important aspects.

How students perceive the necessary standard of pronunciation and related non-linguistic skills for effective communication in their foreign language college

Participants	The extracts elicited from interview	Themes identified
English teacher	<i>To the best of my knowledge, being an English teacher requires you to have standard English pronunciation. Having a standard English pronunciation helps motivate students to learn. We also sometimes listen to the song and this helps them to have better motivation to produce English sounds.</i>	Anyone becoming an English teacher must have a standard English pronunciation. Learning English pronunciation through song can improve the students' motivation to learn.
English teacher	<i>In my opinion, being a good English teacher means that you must have a good pronunciation capacity as it can also help the students learn English naturally. My students sometimes comment on the other teachers who mistakenly pronounce the words, and I think it is not good.</i>	Being an English teacher require someone to acquire good pronunciation.
Shoe factory worker	<i>I think, my job needs English, but not in pronunciation. Here, we emphasize on accuracy, for example we must give accurate information to vendors or other business partners so that we can maintain orders. Besides, we also have procedures of manufacturing that should we should obey. These procedures are written in English.</i>	An administrator in shoe factory is required to have accuracy aspect in English communication with vendors.

		There is procedure of manufacturing written in English.
Shop assistant	<i>I depend on gesture, facial expression, and positive attitudes to help serve my costumer. I know I do not speak very well but so far they are satisfied.</i>	The shop assistant depends not only to language skill but also non-language skill.
	<i>My boss emphasizes that politeness is important when serving the customer and not only the language we speak.</i>	The management emphasizes more on being polite rather than a mere linguistic fluency.
	<i>We use English for communication. As a Japanese company, we focus on how to maintain understanding and respect among each other.</i>	The Japanese company emphasizes the use of language as a means to maintain understanding and respect.
Company supervisor	<i>In fact, what I need just words or expressions that can help me work better, for instance, the way to write e-mail more accurately, or the way to answer the phone effectively, and so forth.</i>	The need of having sufficient words or expressions to work better.
	<i>We do not focus on having native-like pronunciation but how to maintain good client relationship and it should be built with politeness, willingness, and trust.</i>	It doesn't emphasize on native-like pronunciation.
Student	<i>I don't know as I don't work yet. But, may be the job in the service industry like in the bank, hotel industry, and the like.</i>	Service industries might need English more.
Student	<i>Actually I don't know yet, but since I hope I can possibly work in the factory as a design operator. I hope I can have some language skill to support my work after graduation.</i>	Working as design operator might need some language skills.
Student	<i>Honestly, I don't know about this, but my parents say working in hotel will require you to have good English pronunciation as you must serve the foreign visitors.</i>	Working in hotel will possibly require a good English mastery.

Student	<i>I hope I can work in non-teaching profession. However, I believe that teaching job is the one that highly appreciates your native –like pronunciation. As a teacher you are the model in the classroom.</i>	Teaching position will probably need good pronunciation.
Student	<i>I think the future job needs English, but I cannot figure out what kinds of job, but may be the job in hotel or other service industry will require you to speak well, including with the good pronunciation.</i>	English is still needed in the future employment. Service industries might need English speaking skill, including pronunciation.

Discussion

The functional value of English pronunciation pedagogy among working and non-working student.

The necessity of English pronunciation as a partially motivating factor

The finding that the majority of students acknowledge the necessity of English pronunciation in their college curriculum partially aligns with the arguments from scholars such as Adinda & Ahmad (2024), Karunia Amanda et al. (2025), and Leis (2025), who postulate that pronunciation is an inseparable aspect of English language learning. At a foundational level, the students recognize its inherent importance to the English skill set. The study significantly confirms the effectiveness of learning media, demonstrating that the use of English artworks (songs, movies) effectively fulfills a dual function: enhancing students' motivation to learn English while simultaneously improving their pronunciation skills (Hidayat, 2024; Iswadi, 2021; Yudar et al., 2020). This synergistic effect highlights the practical advantages of integrating engaging, real material into the classroom, reinforcing the notion that cyclical improvements can be achieved when educators implement diverse language teaching approaches.

Unlike to the direct role in communication proficiency frequently highlighted in (Al-khreshes, 2024; Derwing & Munro, 2009; Qin, 2023), the current findings reveal that many non-working students consider pronunciation as a subordinate element of their learning

experience. Their favorable opinion is mostly influenced by the motivational advantage of valuing English artworks (e.g., comprehending songs/movies), rather than a perceived direct professional requirement. This interpretation is strengthened by the non-working students' insistence on the necessity of teaching pronunciation through engaging media, indicating that its immediate significance is more closely linked to engagement and cultural consumption than to communicative competence.

Being proficient in English does not warrant effective communication

Concerning the second research question, the findings indicated that the jobs demanding good English pronunciation are only teaching positions. In fact, the three employed students in non-educational positions (shoe factory worker, retail assistant, and company supervisor) consistently reported that standard or native-like English pronunciation was not prioritized in their workplaces. Their employers, who were non-native English speakers, stressed intelligibility, clarity of communication, and the capacity to comprehend and respond correctly. This discovery is in great accordance with the tenets of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), which asserts that the objective of contemporary communication is not a native accent but mutual intelligibility among non-native speakers. This result corroborates previous research by Phoonkum (2020), which demonstrated that in professional environments, conventional pronunciation is not the only determinant of comprehension. This study significantly addresses a gap in the literature by concentrating on the Indonesian employment context, affirming that local, non-teaching sectors prioritize practical, job-specific vocabulary and expressions (e.g., email composition, telephone etiquette) alongside non-linguistic competencies such as politeness, demeanor, and body language as conducted by previous study by (Bobkina et al., 2023; Izwandi et al., 2025).

The main finding of our study that employers in non-teaching positions value intelligibility and non-linguistic competencies such as politeness, attitude, and social interaction over native-like pronunciation provides direct support for the argument made by Ting et al. (2017) that linguistic proficiency is not equivalent to effective communication. The working students in our sample, employed in local companies, emphasized that success was dependent upon their capacity to "persuade and interact" with a wide range of mostly non-

native English-speaking colleagues and supervisors. Ting et al. underscore the necessity of this specific adaptability and soft competence for effective communication.

Moreover, the data aligns closely with the claims made by Hindiarto et al. (2020) and Tushar and Sooraksa (2023), who recognized communication, adaptability, and teamwork as essential abilities for 21st-century jobs. The emphasis placed by working students on politeness, demeanor, and body language as essential workplace needs indicates that these soft skills are not mere preferences but are fundamentally crucial to the communication process within their Indonesian employment context. This empirical evidence from students supports the experts' theoretical claim that soft skills are crucial for workplace success. The findings, while consistent with the emphasis on soft skills, provide an essential contextual dimension concerning the significance of pronunciation, so enhancing the research such as Cong-Lem (2025). Cong-Lem emphasizes the importance of cultural comprehension and appreciation of accents to operate effectively within varied linguistic contexts. Our research supports this by demonstrating that accent tolerance is significant in the local workplace; the employers, primarily non-native English speakers, prioritize the intelligibility of English as a *Lingua Franca* (ELF) over traditional native models. Nevertheless, the study introduces a pragmatic aspect by illustrating that this tolerance is accompanied by an expectation for basic linguistic precision (accurate vocabulary, email formats) and solid interpersonal soft skills. Consequently, the difference is not merely in acknowledging cultural differences as found by (Albert, I., & Trommsdorff, 2014), but in the actual results.

How students perceive the necessary standard of pronunciation and related non-linguistic skills for effective communication

Identifying the most relevant skill for employments

The results of this study, which focused on the role of pronunciation (a sub-component of speaking skills) in relation to employability in the Indonesian context, reveal a nuanced relationship with existing literature: they predominantly affirm the importance of productive skills (speaking and writing) while presenting a crucial limitation regarding the assessment of these skills in the workplace. For instance, speaking and listening skills are found important in service industries (Hee & Azlin, 2018). The importance of speaking skills, compared to other

skills, is also highlighted by Annisa et al. (2023). Similarly, Wahyuni (2021) expands that both listening and speaking skills are the most important skills that the medics should possess.

The present study strongly supports the general focus on productive skills identified in prior research. The fact that working students said they needed clear communication for their jobs, which included talking to supervisors, managing shop floor activities, or teaching, is in line with studies by Hee & Azlin (2018) and Annisa et al. (2023), which found that speaking and listening skills are important in service and other fields. The results align with the findings of Kassim and Ali (2010) and Wahyuni (2021): communication skills, especially oral ones, are crucial for workplace efficiency, whether for "teleconferencing, networking for contacts" (Kassim & Ali, 2010) or for vital medical communication (Wahyuni, 2021). Our working students who do not teach work as shop assistants and supervisors, which means they have to talk to people all the time. This supports the idea that good speaking abilities are important for both formal and informal situations in the workplace. In sum, the emphasis of speaking skills is primarily due to the need of the employment requiring the workers to conduct formal encounters with their clients or other important counterparts (Kawashima, 2019; Ting et al., 2017; Xhemaili, 2022).

Unlike the aforementioned findings, other scholars suggest that being able to write in English is essential for higher-level employment (Bahji et al., 2023; Stevens, 2005). Besides, English writing skills are also necessary for international research and publication (Mur Dueñas, 2012). Studies indicate that jobs in administrative positions require the workers to record those requiring them to write in English. Taye and Mengesha (2024) reiterate that being able to write is essential as it constitutes a stepping stone to enter both academic and professional career. Based on the above findings, it can be interpreted that basically, productive skills are deemed as essential skill for the-would be employee as it can help produce essential information when conducting the duties in professional context. Further studies needed to be done to identify more specifically on what industries or business in need of the productive skills.

CONCLUSION

The study showed that students' belief in the importance of English pronunciation in their college curriculum is based on extrinsic motivation rather than an acknowledged professional necessity. In contrast to academic assertions that pronunciation is an integral component of language acquisition, the students, especially the non-working group, regarded it as a secondary element. Their favorable opinion was chiefly influenced by the *motivational advantage* gained from interacting with English artworks (e.g., music, films), which the curriculum employed as instructional materials. This finding corroborates prior research affirming *the media's role in enhancing student motivation and pronunciation skills*, yet it refines the pedagogical aim by indicating that the immediate significance of pronunciation for students is frequently linked to cultural consumption and engagement rather than its direct relevance for general communication.

The research identified an important disparity between language instruction and the requirements of the profession, especially in non-educational fields. The key discovery among working students was *that employers do not emphasize standard or native-like pronunciation; rather, they favor intelligibility, clarity in communication, and the capacity for mutual comprehension*. This discovery strongly supports the tenets of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) and opposes conventional teaching objectives that prioritize native-speaker paradigms.

The study finally showed how important *non-linguistic abilities* are for obtaining a job after college, which is in line with what employers are looking for these days. Students who worked claimed that soft skills like being polite, *having a clear attitude, using body language well, and being able to get along with people from different backgrounds were important for professional success*. Some individuals thought that these qualities as being equally, if not more, essential than English language proficiency itself.

The emphasis on sufficient and effective vocabulary mastery, along with grammatical aspects identified in the present study, signifies that working in certain companies nowadays, requires applicants to develop specific English skills, and not merely a general English mastery. In other words, certain sub-skills, which are of paramount importance, should be provided by the language colleges, so that students can have a more competitive edge when searching for jobs in these contexts. Since discrete language mastery does not warrant effective communication, integrating both hard and soft skills into linguistic curricula might be of

paramount importance. For instance, while discussing the use of certain English functions in communication practice, the syllabus might also highlight some important aspects, such as psychological, sociological, or intercultural aspects, simultaneously.

The findings have substantial implications for the English language curriculum and pedagogy in higher education. The university must promptly address the difference between educational emphasis and professional requirements. This requires a transition from an excessive reliance on pronunciation theory, such as phonetic symbols, to a practical, intelligibility-centered approach to communication. Secondly, institutions should implement a comprehensive strategy by incorporating both linguistic proficiency (particularly job-specific vocabulary and grammar) and vital non-linguistic soft skills (such as politeness, clarity of attitude, and effective gestures) into the curriculum, as these are considered crucial for success in non-teaching careers. By matching educational objectives with the practical demands of the contemporary workforce—which frequently emphasizes precision and interpersonal skills over accent—language graduates will be more adequately prepared for meaningful employment.

The present study, although offering significant investigative insights, is limited by two main constraints. The research employed a qualitative design with a small, criterion-based purposive sample of ten individuals (n=10). The restricted sample size, partially due to participants' demanding schedules, limits the generalizability of the findings to the wider student population. Secondly, the work experiences were confined to merely two principal sectors (educational and non-educational roles in light industry/service), which may not adequately reflect the varied English language requirements across all Indonesian industries.

Considering these constraints, future studies should attempt to model this study with an expanded sample size and include a wider array of working students from various sectors, including tourism, finance, and international enterprises. A broader and more diverse sample would yield a more objective and accurate representation of the actual English pronunciation requirements across various sectors. Additionally, quantitative research or mixed-methods designs could be utilized to statistically evaluate the perceived significance of intelligibility compared to a native-like accent in employer hiring decisions within the Indonesian context.

The present study aims to identify the role of English pronunciation as perceived by some of the most important language college stakeholders, namely students and their working

classmates. Despite highlighting important findings, the study is constrained regarding the number of participants. In fact, there were only few participants who are willing to join the study due to their hectic schedules. Further study replicating this finding should involve more college students who work from diverse industries to portray their need for English more objectively and precisely, particularly in pronunciation aspect.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The researchers wish to express their sincere appreciation to all individuals who contributed to the success of this study. First and foremost, the authors thank the participants currently studying at STBA Technocrat Tangerang for their invaluable time and willingness to share their perceptions, which formed the empirical foundation of this research. Furthermore, the authors extend their gratitude to Bayu Andika Prasaty, an expert in applied linguistics, for his critical role in inspecting and validating the research instrument (the semi-structured interview protocol), a contribution that ensured the methodological rigor and quality of the data collection process

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