

English for a Rewarding Career in the Garments Industry

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Abstract

In today's world, English has become a conduit between people's lives and their jobs. In academic life, being a proficient English user leads to a better understanding of study resources such as books, journals, class lectures, the internet, and so on. Again, improved comprehension of study materials leads to better scores on formative and summative tests. Eventually, the improved outcomes lead to an increase in the cumulative grade point average (CGPA). If he wishes to enter the professional world, everyone who has received an honorable grade in his university degree will receive rich work offers. Furthermore, if he wants to advance his academic career, he may be awarded a scholarship to study overseas. Similarly, understanding English improves one's chances of being employed by high-paying companies. This paper aims to discover the role of English language proficiency in the careers of people working in the garment industry in the twenty-first century, and it has discovered that proficiency in English is a must for sustaining one's job in the garment industry in the twenty-first century, based on a survey and review of the literature.

Keywords: English competency, rewarding jobs, garments industry, communication

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1. Introduction

The importance of the English language in our lives cannot be overstated. English is required in every aspect of life, including job advancement, scholarship, education, and creative and critical research writing. According to Locker & Kaczmarek (2009), effective English communication skills in the workplace are necessary in today's highly competitive global economy and corporate sector. Those who complete undergraduate and graduate programs in any field at any university around the world must be fluent in English; otherwise, they will not be successful in their endeavors. The importance and necessity of the English language is increasing all over the world nowadays. The current generation of non-English speaking countries is highly motivated to learn English in order to obtain lucrative employment or to achieve their goals and plans. With the passage of time, the English language has come to be acknowledged as a worldwide language, with many countries using it as an official or semi-official language. The English language is given importance by the organizers of international competitions and sports, international conferences, and other events. Because the apparel industry is known as a "multibillion-dollar worldwide enterprise committed to the labor of creating and selling clothes" (Britannica.com), English is a must for successful business communication in English in order to operate the industry domestically and internationally. As a result, anyone wishing to pursue a career in the garment industry must be fluent in English. In a nutshell, the English language plays an essential part in one's career in the area under consideration.

1.1 Importance of English in the business world

English speaking and writing skills are equally vital in the national and international business worlds. Speaking and writing skills are referred to as "soft skills" by Conrad and Newberry (2011), and they are crucial for every career. In support of this, Crosling & Ward (2002) claim that a lack of these abilities constitutes a "workplace disadvantage." It suggests that those who can communicate in English are more successful in finding jobs and performing well in their current jobs, whereas those who cannot communicate in English are not successful in the corporate sector.

In many nations, English is utilized for commercial communication in the garment sector. Researchers

discovered that merchandisers of textile and garment enterprises in Hong Kong utilize English at work (Somui & Mead, 2000). Furthermore, according to Ehrenreich (2010), English is employed as a lingua franca in a multinational organization. Furthermore, according to Erling & Walton (2007), English is used in the workplace in Berlin. As a result, it is reasonable to suppose that English is used as a common language across enterprises, including the garment industry, both at home and abroad.

1.2 Importance of English in garments industry

The garment industry is a global company that "includes the design, manufacture, distribution, marketing, retailing, advertising, and promotion of all forms of garments (Britannica.com)." Bangladesh's garment industry, also known as the Readymade Garments Industry, is the country's largest national industry and a notable export-oriented enterprise in the global supply chain where English is utilized as the primary language for day-to-day communication (Roshid, 2014). According to Hassan (2010), Bangladesh's RMG sector employs approximately 40 million people. The RMG sector's overall contribution to Bangladesh is extraordinary. It employs a vast number of people in Bangladesh and contributes significantly to women's empowerment. This industry contributes to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGS) in this way (Islam, 2010)

Bangladesh is the third largest exporter of clothes in the world, according to Roshid (2014). He goes on to say that Bangladesh exports apparel to over fifty countries, including the United States, Canada, the European Union, and a number of Asian countries. So, without a doubt, Bangladesh's RMG sector is massive, and this massive sector necessitates a great deal of connection with the people of those countries. As a result, English has emerged as a critical "communication tool" for the RMG sector.

2. RMG fields that require communication in English

As per the part findings of a large research work on "English Communication Skills in the Ready-Made Garments Industry in Bangladesh done by Roshid (2014), and their analysis it is disclosed that English is considered „the most powerful language“ in global commerce. The researcher notes that in the RMG sector the people working in the Marketing, Merchandising and Commercial sectors utilize English for communication with the people involved in exports, imports and recruiting staff and for several other purposes. On the premise of the survey he carried out on the various persons in various sectors of the RMG industry, the researcher presented his perspective about the demands of English. He posits that it English is the life-blood of this industry. Without English RMG businesses cannot keep its place in the world market; it is even “unthinkable” in the present world (Roshid, 2014).

The researcher studies the functions of the English language in this industry. As per him, the marketing sector seeks markets for goods in different nations and talks orally or by writing with buyers or their agents. Concerning Merchandisers So-mui & Mead (2000) state that merchandisers are the biggest users of English in RMG sector. They communicate with customers and suppliers of accessories. Kothari (2013), who regards communication as the cornerstone of merchandising, speculates that merchandisers have to communicate with existing and new consumers; the involved departments such as production, quality control, accounting, suppliers of fabrics and accessories etc. That is why he argues that merchandisers ought to be skilled for making successful communication. And this message is in English no doubt. Commercial staff deal with the shipping of merchandise and payments. They also maintain communication with associated organizations and agents like BGMEA and BKMEA for the benefit of commerce. Their communication is done almost invariably in English (Roshid, 2014). So, to sustain one's career in RMG industry one has to be skilled in English without any question.

2.1 Significance of the study

It is common knowledge that the country's apparel industry suffers from a severe lack of qualified human resources. According to Mizan (2013), a significant proportion of garment manufacturers must rely on "middle management," which is largely made up of foreigners, to communicate with overseas stakeholders. He claims that in Bangladesh, 25000 foreigners worked in various RMG enterprises in 2013.

Bangladesh suffers from two problems as a result of its reliance on foreign labour. To begin with, a large portion of foreign cash is spent on salaries and allowances provided to foreigners. Furthermore, due to a dearth of skilled labor in the country, foreign workers are being hired, depriving local graduates of employment opportunities (Roshid, 2014). In this aspect, according to the Economist (2014), Bangladesh lacks an adequate number of

academic institutions that give training to produce competent garments workers. Many RMG companies want local institutions to remedy this problem by offering garments business related courses to train qualified workers for the expanding apparel industry, according to the report.

The demand for qualified workers who can communicate in English in the fashion industry is increasing day by day. Similarly, new positions of the same sort are being created and becoming vacant all over the world. Many university graduates in Bangladesh also lack English communication skills, putting them at a disadvantage and putting them at risk of unemployment. There is very little study on the linguistic communication demands of personnel working in the RMG sector. As a result, I have undertaken the current research.

3. Importance of communicating in English

According to recent research, the relationship between globalization and the English language affects job market employability. Despite the fact that the impacts vary by professional group and country, policymakers are becoming more aware of this relationship. This paper aims to investigate the previously unstudied relationship between English language proficiency and employment, as well as the success of Bangladeshis abroad, in order to determine how English language skills influence the global job market for people from non-English speaking South East Asian countries. The study will take an interpretive approach, with the overarching goal of understanding the impact of English language abilities in determining the employment chances and career prospects of the younger generation around the world. It has been discovered that one's English language abilities influence career prospects in a variety of ways, particularly in terms of contributing to the potential of stable and better positions. The findings could help educational policymakers, teacher educators, employers, and career counsellors improve English language learning programs that support greater employability (Crystal et al., 1997)

Improved English communication abilities can lead to a better social life as well as greater work chances in the future. Communication skills are important in many aspects of life, from job interviews to the workplace, and being fluent in English means being able to speak simply and effectively. The majority of interviewers conduct job interviews in English. Interviewers make snap decisions and place a premium on first impressions. Poor language abilities can lead to a lower likelihood of finding a job. Being fluent in English, on the other hand, can help you make a strong first impression, which means you'll have a better chance of receiving the job you're seeking for. The majority of corporate agreements are drafted in English. Managing international business transactions necessitates strong English abilities. Using erroneous tenses, prepositions, and other such errors, on the other hand, will make one's assertion less accurate. As a result, in order to develop one's professional competence, one must have a strong command of the English language (Roshid, 2014).

In order to compete in the job market, employees must be able to communicate effectively. Employees who want to grow in both local and international firms and improve their technological knowledge and abilities need to be able to communicate in English. It provides a foundation for "process skills," such as problem-solving and critical thinking, which are required to cope with the fast changing global workplace environment, in which English plays an increasingly significant role (Bhatia, 2012).

The globe, and especially our country, is currently undergoing a third industrial revolution, namely the communication revolution. This has a significant impact on our business and workplace. English has become the lingua franca of the international corporate world, regardless of geographical, social, political, or religious distinctions. It has been designated as one of the United Nations' six official languages. People used to gain jobs because they were experts in their subjects, but in today's world, specific skills need be supplemented with communication skills.

According to three academics from the Universities of Alberta and Manitoba, Graves et al. (2012), who cited Rhoulac & Crenshaw (2006) and Donnel, J. et al. (2011), certain industry stakeholders claim that their graduates' communication abilities are still lacking. Consequently, the Canadian Engineering Accreditation Board (2008) requires that graduates show "an ability to convey comprehensive engineering principles within the profession and with society at large." Reading, writing, speaking, and listening are some examples of these skills, as are the capacity to interpret and produce effective reports and design papers, as well as the capacity to offer and successfully implement clear instructions.

In order to make job seekers gainfully employed, it is critical to place a strong emphasis on English communication growth. This research attempts to emphasize the value of English in a variety of fields, ultimately addressing the demand for employability (Imam, 2005).

The relevance of English has risen dramatically in recent years, especially to the globalization of jobs. It has grown in importance as a means of communication at both the international and intra-national levels over time. The value of spoken English is much greater, because there are numerous instances in which someone knows their subject well but fails to communicate it effectively. As a result, it is critical to practice spoken English. Learning English in a place where it is not the local language opens up a world of possibilities. The importance of excellent communication has been recognized and accepted in today's corporate environment more than the necessity for technical expertise (Briguglio, 2005).

English is widely recognized as a gateway to greater education and job prospects. The English language is critical in tying the world together in a single thread. In almost every country where English is not the first language, it is considered a second language. The basic goal of learning any language is to acquire a simple language for day-to-day communication (Casale, 2011).

When a communicator is knowledgeable enough to speak competently, simply, clearly, truthfully, and dynamically, communication becomes effective. Communication is necessary for maintaining intimate, sympathetic relations in a society as well as the movement of individuals, materials, and ideas from one location to another. Initiation reception and reaction provide as feedback in this phase. As a result, communication is inherently participatory. Learning English is now required not only for political reasons, but also for scientific and technological reasons. And English is no longer just a British language; it is a language that the rest of the world needs to communicate; it is one of the most widely spoken languages on the planet. English has evolved into a global language that serves as a connecting link, a language of modern science and technology, a language of cutting-edge sciences such as computer technology and space science, and a language of all competitive examinations-state, national, and international. We are currently living in the realm of information and communication technology, whether we recognize it or not (Dudley-Evans, 1998).

English began to emerge as a major language around the end of the twenty-first century. It enjoys widespread support on social, economic, and political levels. The attitude toward the use of English has shifted dramatically. In our country, the middle class is not isolating itself by ignoring the relevance of English. In a day or two, no one can perfect communication skills. It's a mess at school for those who don't know how to communicate effectively. As the globe continues to move toward economic globalization, it is critical to prioritize English so that ordinary people can keep up with global issues. Race, color, and creed barriers are no impediment to English's further growth. It's a future-oriented language (Crystal,1997).

For people to integrate into society, they must have a good attitude about English as a national language. There appears to be no debate on the importance of the English language. By learning English, one can almost instantly become a global citizen. In the media, English is widely used. It has been utilized for interstate and broadcasting communications. English's influence is not just persisting, but also growing (Babcock, 2001).

4. Bangladesh's Current Situation

English has become a new necessity in Bangladesh in order to meet global and local expectations. English is a valuable asset that is required for national growth. The government appears to be more concerned than ever before with promoting the English language in order to establish a nation and trained workforce capable of meeting the challenges of globalization. Because current proficiency levels are insufficient to satisfy the needs of the labor market, particularly corporate sectors that are becoming active in the global garment industry, it is vital to investigate the need for English communication skills from both a global and local perspective. to solve the current deficiency in English communication abilities of workers in Bangladesh by examining workplace communication needs and receiving extensive feedback from major stakeholders in the workplace. This is a compelling reason to do study in Bangladesh's garment business, or in any other industry where English is spoken (Hamid et al., 2010).

Bangladesh's garment sector has grown to be a major player in the worldwide market as a result of globalization and trade liberalization. The garment sector is becoming increasingly intertwined with other parts of the world through the flow of capital, goods, and people, and it has become a location of employment for the younger generation. Bangladesh's garment industry is gradually becoming a national industry and a highly export-oriented commercial sector in the global market, with English as the primary language of communication. Bangladesh's garment industry has had a dramatic upward trend (2016, Ford).

5. Review of Literature

According to Thavabalan (2018), businesspeople need to have strong business English communication skills in order to export their goods in a cutthroat market. For the sake of their company's success, the businessmen should emphasize the importance of English-language business communication.

For instance, Ferguson (1983) connects the growth of English with communication technology. The adoption of English for international communication has been hastened by computer technology, which has overcome the language barrier.

Running a successful clothing sector requires a high level of business English communication (Thavabalan et al 2018). Here, the significance of English business communication has been underlined. English proficiency should be prioritized if you want to succeed in the clothing sector.

The knowledge of the English language code and the following proper and effective use of this code in the international and intercultural business contexts are referred to in this study as English communication abilities. Understanding and using contextualized language in spoken and written texts, as well as knowing how to use various ways to express ideas when language resources are limited, are all aspects of communication skills. (Hedge, 2000)

Wilson (2003) defined garment as "clothing in which the essential element is quick and ongoing changing of trends" at the beginning of *Adorned in Dreams*. Wilson (2003), page 3,

According to Hariharasudan et al. (2017), in order for any enterprise to be successful, English must be used to attract the interest of all groups of people. Additionally, they note how the demands of international markets have dominated language development in the age of globalization.

The term "garment business" refers to any businesses and people engaged in the planning, creation, and marketing of textile and garment products. Components of the industry including accessories, jewelry, and perfume are frequently included when the garment industry is discussed (Dickerson, 2003).

English is a global language because it allows for greater worldwide connections than any other language, claims Crystal (2003). Additionally, communication is necessary, especially for the global academic and corporate sectors. A lingua franca, or common language, serves as global language. English is employed in marketing and bargaining in the corporate world, he continues.

According to Seidlhofer (2004), when people think of English as a preferred language for communication among speakers of various first languages, they may hear it referred to by different names or terms, such as English as an international language (EIL), a lingua franca (ELF), a global language (EGL), a world language, or a tool for cross-cultural communication.

The importance of stylistic innovation in the high garment sector is so glaringly clear that studying it could help generate principles that could be used in other industries where the significance of style is likely to be less overt (Cappetta, Cillo, & Ponti, 2006, p. 1274).

Garment brand creation is known to start with the production of unique, expensive clothing and the presentation of it in prominent garment shows (Grumbach et al., 2007).

The concept of proficiency is seen as a very pragmatic component that is closely related with competence in business and communication as well as business know-how in general, even though proficiency in English is seen as significant in BELF discourse (Kankaanranta and Louhiala-Salminen, 2010). For sociopolitical reasons, English is regarded as a foreign language in Bangladesh and is taught as such.

The RMG business professionals of Bangladesh engage in business interactions with individuals from all three circles, despite the fact that they are technically a part of an outer circle nation. Regardless of whether English is someone's mother tongue, second language, or a foreign language, their learned/acquired English knowledge and communication abilities are employed as a communication tool with people from all three circles (Chowdhury & Farooqui, 2011)

For international communication, English is the most widely used and effective language in the world. Currently, 1.75 billion people can communicate effectively in English (Neeley, 2012).

The demand for English is rising quickly due to the increase in global trade that results from economic globalization. International business communication now involves more people than ever before. Millions of business professionals from around the world communicate in English throughout the hundreds of transactions and agreements that take place every day (Nickerson, 2012).

Therefore, it is clear from the analysis of the literature on the garment industry's use of the English language that English ability is a crucial component of a person's career in the business world.

5.1 Goals for the Study

For those who work in or aspire to work in the garment industry, knowing English is crucial for long-term professional advancement in any nation on the planet. The study's goals are to identify the barriers that prevent those who want to work in the garment business from becoming proficient in the English language and to look for potential solutions to such barriers.

6. Data and Method

To gather pertinent information from those working in the apparel industry, a convenient sampling survey of size 95 using a questionnaire was undertaken. They were professors who taught courses linked to clothing and textiles, MBA students studying merchandising, and textile engineers. There were 95 responders in all. 22 of them were instructors of clothing and textile-related courses at BGMEA University of Garment and Technology in Dhaka, 32 were MBA students studying apparel merchandising there, 27 were B. Sc. students studying textile engineering at Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology in Dhaka, and 14 were staff members employed by various RMG-related businesses.

The subjects were given a one-question survey with the following statement: "English Proficiency is Essential for Sustainable Career Development in the Garment Industry". Despite limitations, one-question surveys can be valid for specific purposes, such as measuring Net Promoter Score (NPS), where a single question evaluates customers' likelihood to recommend a product or service (Reichheld, 2003). Following that, there were five choices to make, as listed below the Likert scale (1932):

Strongly disagree Disagree Neither agree nor disagree Agree Strongly agree

7. Findings

From table 1 of the respondents, 72 selected "strongly agree," 23 selected "agree," and none selected any other response. According to statistics, while 24 percent chose "agree," almost 76 percent of respondents strongly agreed that "English Proficiency is vital for sustained career advancement in the garment sector".

From figure 1 we can see that "agree" and "strongly agree," comprise 100% of respondents in both categories have voted in favor of the English language requirement for long-term career development in the garment sector.

The importance of English proficiency for long-term career development in the garment business was examined in this article. A diagram of the research concept is shown below in figure 2 to help clarify the conceptual framework of the study.

People who learn English and use it more effectively are given higher work chances, as seen in figure 2. Next, they will perform better at work since they are fluent in English. Better employer gains from earnings and goodwill will result from their improved performance. Employees receive promotions and higher pay if the companies gain something. And this is how having a strong command of the English language helps one develop a long-lasting career in the RMG industry.

8. Discussion

As shown by the literature and the survey results used for this research, it is clear that English communication skills are necessary for the industry's workforce to function effectively in an international standard business sector like RMG. The RMG experts should be fully aware of their international business competitors. A breakdown in the business connections could result from misunderstandings between the business partners if both parties either partially or incorrectly understand one another. It is crucial that the professionals can communicate with their colleagues in English because the RMG sector in Bangladesh is a bright and prospective industry. So it stands to reason that effective English communication, along with other professional achievements, will make RMG employees successful in their careers, ultimately boosting the country's economy.

8.1 Suggestions

The government and those in charge of the RMG sector in Bangladesh should take the initiative to improve English language teaching and learning there. Universities across the nation, both public and private, can be helpful in this area. In addition, for those looking to advance their careers in the garment sector, several specialist English language schools may be formed.

9. Conclusion

English, which is spoken and understood by people all over the world, is essential for international corporate collaboration and coordination. Good connections, which depend on communication, are the foundation of commerce and trading. Therefore, those who want to improve their chances of establishing a stable career in a variety of commercial disciplines, including the garment industry, should consider studying and becoming proficient in using the English language in written and verbal communication.

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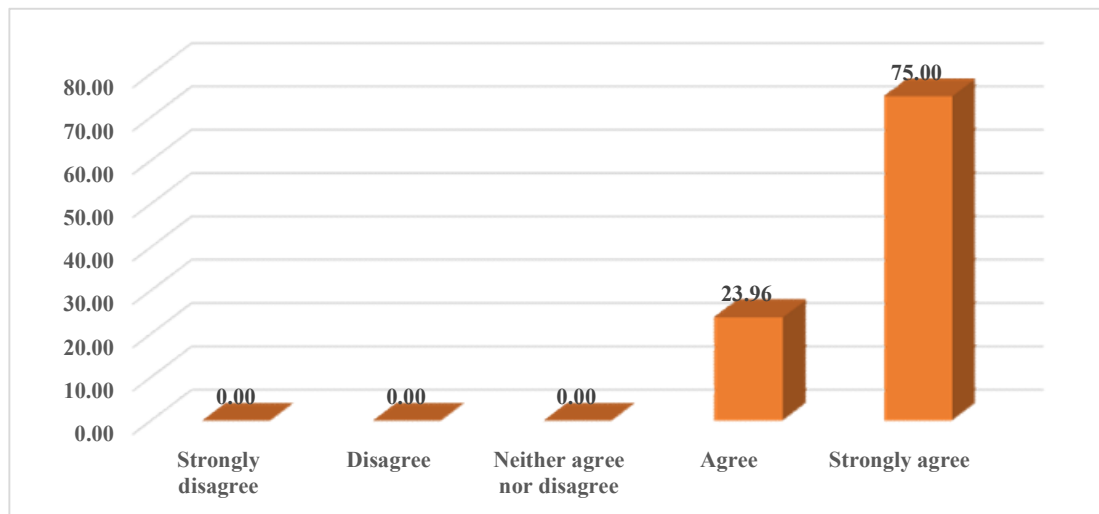


Figure 1. Represents the percentage of opinion on five choices

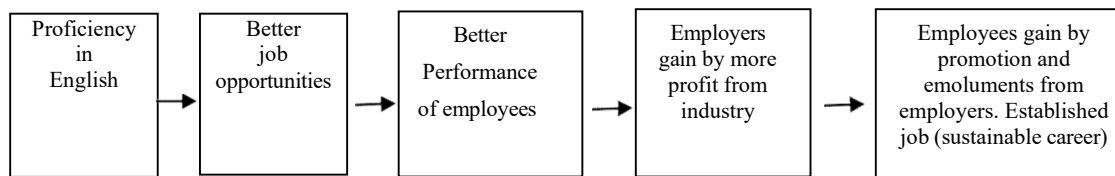


Figure 2. shows the study's proposed conceptual model

Table 1. The percentage of the opinions

Opinion	Number of respondents	Percentage
Strongly disagree	0	0.00
Disagree	0	0.00
Neither agree nor disagree	0	0.00
Agree	23	24.21
Strongly agree	72	75.79
Total	95	100.00