

# **Crucial Effect of Second Language (English): Feasibility Study of Career Development of Graduate Students Outside of Urban**

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## **1. Introduction**

The ubiquity of the English language in the modern globalized world has been well-documented (Crystal, 2012) (Graddol, 2006). As a lingua franca, English has become the predominant medium of communication in various spheres, including business, academia, and international relations (Jenkins, 2005). This linguistic hegemony has significant implications for career prospects and earning potential, as proficiency in English is often a prerequisite for accessing lucrative opportunities (Grin, 2001). However, the distribution of English language competency is not uniform across geographic regions and socioeconomic strata. Numerous studies have highlighted the disparities in access to English language education, with urban centers and elite institutions enjoying a disproportionate advantage (Phillipson). Graduate students residing in non-urban areas, particularly in developing countries, often face substantial barriers in acquiring the necessary English language skills to compete in the global job market (Canagarajah, 2005). This study aims to investigate the profound effects of the English language on the career development of graduate students in non-urban areas. By exploring the challenges faced by these students in navigating the linguistic demands of the modern workforce, this research seeks to shed light on the complex interplay between language, socioeconomic status, and career trajectories (Pennycook, 1994). The findings of this study may inform policymakers and educational institutions in their efforts to address the disparities in English language education and promote more inclusive career pathways for graduate students from diverse geographic and socioeconomic backgrounds.

## **2. Methodology.**

This study adopts a qualitative research approach to investigate the effects of the English language on the career development of graduate students residing in non-urban areas. The research methodology consists of two primary components: thematic analysis of diverse data sources and in-depth interviews with graduate students and school students from non-urban regions. The thematic analysis component involves the systematic examination of a range of written, electronic, and digital materials, including academic publications, policy documents, and online discussions, to identify and categorize the key themes, challenges, and perspectives related to the topic (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This comprehensive review of the existing literature and discourse will provide a solid foundation for understanding the broader context and the lived experiences of the target population. Additionally, the researchers conduct 20 in-depth, semi-structured interviews with graduate students from rural areas and school students studying in non-urban regions. The students were selected the graduate student of the university of combo. These interviews aim to elicit detailed accounts of the participants' experiences, perceptions, and aspirations regarding the role of the English language in their educational and career trajectories (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The qualitative data gathered from these interviews will be analyzed using thematic coding to uncover the emergent themes and patterns.

### **3. Result and Findings**

The research study conducted with 20 graduate students from the University of Colombo's Faculty of Management, who had graduated in 2018, has provided valuable insights into the role of the English language in their educational and career journeys. According to the sample, 16 of the graduate students did not have a strong educational background, while the remaining 4 had a relatively better foundation. However, a majority of the participants, 12 out of the 20, expressed that they were unable to fully utilize their degree-level proficiency due to a lack of adequate English language skills. The participants attributed this challenge to the insufficient exposure to English language education during their schooling years, with many stating that they did not have access to competent English language teachers. The interviews revealed that the English language played a significant role in the daily activities and future career prospects of 17 out of the 20 participants. They acknowledged that without proficiency in English, they would be unable to thrive in their professional pursuits. Conversely, the remaining 3 participants did not perceive the English language as a crucial factor for their survival and career development. Regarding the challenges faced in acquiring English language proficiency, all the participants expressed that they did not receive a solid foundation in the language during their schooling years. Many of them, 17 out of 20, tried to improve their English skills after completing their Advanced Level examinations, but 7 of them found it challenging to achieve the desired level of proficiency. The participants overwhelmingly recognized the importance of English language skills in the current job market and career opportunities. They shared that the majority of job interviews and workplace interactions are conducted in English, and the lack of English proficiency has hindered their performance in such settings. Most of the participants expressed their inability to communicate fluently in English, even though they could comprehend the language when spoken to them. Furthermore, the graduate students from non-urban areas observed distinct differences in the access to English language education between urban and non-urban regions. They believed that students from urban areas had a significant advantage in terms of exposure to English language instruction and resources, which ultimately enabled them to secure better-paying positions in the job market compared to their non-urban counterparts. In summary, the findings from the interviews with the 20 graduate students from the University of Colombo's Faculty of Management highlight the critical role of the English language in their educational and career trajectories. The participants' experiences underscore the disparities in access to quality English language education between urban and non-urban areas, which have a substantial impact on the career development and employment opportunities of graduate students from non-urban backgrounds.

### **4. Conclusion and Recommendation**

According to the study, the English language is very significant in this contemporary period. Without knowledge of English, individuals cannot reach the top levels of employment, even if they possess a degree. Additionally, non-urban students often struggle to speak English proficiently, which negatively impacts their future and job prospects. Based on the findings from the interviews with the 20 graduate students from the University of Colombo's Faculty of Management, several strategies could be implemented to improve English language education in non-urban areas:

- Enhance Teacher Training and Development:

- Provide comprehensive training programs for English language teachers in non-urban schools to improve their proficiency and pedagogical skills.
  - Offer continuous professional development opportunities to ensure teachers stay updated with effective teaching methodologies and resources.
  - Incentivize and encourage high-performing English language teachers to serve in non-urban schools.
- Expand Access to English Language Resources:
- Establish well-equipped English language labs and libraries in non-urban schools, with access to a wide range of learning materials, audio-visual resources, and digital tools.
  - Collaborate with local communities and organizations to set up English language learning centers in non-urban areas, offering affordable and accessible language courses.
  - Leverage technology and digital platforms to provide online English language learning resources and virtual tutoring services for students in non-urban regions.
- Implement Targeted Curriculum and Pedagogy:
- Develop a tailored English language curriculum that addresses the specific needs and learning styles of students in non-urban areas.
  - Incorporate interactive, communicative, and student-centered teaching approaches to enhance language acquisition.
  - Integrate English language learning into the overall academic curriculum, ensuring its relevance and application across different subjects.
- Strengthen School-Community Partnerships:
- Engage with local businesses, industries, and community leaders to understand the English language proficiency requirements for the job market in non-urban areas.
  - Collaborate with these stakeholders to design and implement English language programs that align with the skill demands of the local economy.

## **5. Keywords**

English language, career development, graduate students, rural schools, education system

## **6. References**

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