

Professional Orientation, Social Influences, and Perceived Readiness as Determinants of Intention to Pursue Language-Related Careers among English Major Students: A Basis for Career Readiness Program

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Abstract

This mixed-methods study investigated the intention to pursue language-related careers among English major students. Grounded in the Theory of Planned Behavior and Linguistic Capital Theory, the study examined professional orientation toward language-related professions, social influences on language-related career decisions, and perceived readiness to utilize language competencies as determinants of students' intention to pursue language-related careers. The quantitative phase involved seventy-four graduating Bachelor of Arts in English Language Studies students from Camarines Sur Polytechnic Colleges, selected through total enumeration, while the qualitative phase involved fifteen purposively selected participants. Data were gathered using a validated survey questionnaire and a semi-structured interview guide. Findings showed that professional orientation toward language-related professions obtained the highest mean, followed by social influences on language-related career decisions, while perceived readiness to utilize language competencies obtained the lowest mean. The respondents' intention to pursue language-related careers was moderate. Regression analysis revealed that professional orientation toward language-related professions, social influences on language-related career decisions, and perceived readiness to utilize language competencies significantly predicted career intention, with perceived readiness to utilize language competencies emerging as the strongest predictor. The qualitative findings identified oral communication insecurity, limited experiential exposure, imbalanced language-skill development, career decision uncertainty, social and economic expectations, perceived readiness and self-efficacy, and adaptive career reorientation as major explanations for students' moderate career intention. Based on the integrated findings, the study developed the Building Readiness through Industry Development and Guided Engagement (BRIDGE) Program, a contextualized career readiness program intended to strengthen career awareness, pathway matching, professional exposure, workplace English communication, portfolio development, and employment preparation among English Language Studies students.

Keywords: Professional Orientation, Social Influences, Perceived Readiness, Language-Related Careers, Career Intention

1 Introduction

English language competence plays a significant role in language education, curriculum planning, and professional preparation. In English Language Studies programs, English is developed not only as an academic discipline but also as a professional resource for teaching, writing, editing, translation, media communication, corporate communication, content production, public relations, research, and other language-service occupations. Recent studies show that language-related careers have expanded into communication-intensive fields in which English-language expertise serves as a central occupational resource [1, 2].

The study was grounded in the Theory of Planned Behavior and Linguistic Capital Theory. The Theory of Planned Behavior explains that intention is shaped by attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control [3], which were contextualized in this study as professional orientation, social influences, and perceived readiness. Linguistic Capital Theory positions language competence as a socially valued resource that can be converted into symbolic, educational, economic, and occupational advantages [4]. Recent studies similarly show that career intention is shaped by perceived career value, professional identity, social influence, mentoring, and confidence in meeting professional demands [5, 6, 7, 8]. Recent literature further shows that English proficiency may serve as linguistic and career capital that supports employability, mobility, professional recognition, and socioeconomic advancement [9, 10, 11, 12].

Despite the recognized value of English, English major students may still experience uncertainty when pursuing language-related careers due to limited mentoring, industry exposure, specialized training, confidence in oral communication, and opportunities to apply English competencies in authentic workplace contexts. This gap is particularly relevant in a provincial state college context where students may value English as linguistic capital but remain uncertain about converting it into employability, professional confidence, and specific language-related career pathways. Thus, this study examined professional orientation toward language-related professions, social influences on language-related career decisions, and perceived readiness to utilize language competencies as determinants of intention to pursue language-related careers, used qualitative explanations to clarify the quantitative findings, and developed a program-based response for English Language Studies graduating students.

2 Methodology

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, comprising a descriptive-correlational quantitative phase and a qualitative phase using semi-structured interviews. The quantitative phase determined the level of professional orientation toward language-related professions, social influences on language-related career decisions, perceived readiness to utilize language competencies, level of intention to pursue language-related careers, and tested the predictive value of the three language-related determinants through regression analysis. The respondents were seventy-four graduating Bachelor of Arts in English Language Studies (ABELS) students from Camarines Sur Polytechnic Colleges (CSPC), selected through total enumeration, while fifteen participants were purposively selected for the qualitative phase. Data were gathered using a validated survey questionnaire and a semi-structured interview guide. The research instruments were subjected to expert validation, and the survey instrument was pilot-tested with fifteen comparable English Language Studies students, yielding a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.849, which indicated good internal consistency reliability. Quantitative data were treated

using weighted mean, standard deviation, and regression analysis, while qualitative data were analyzed thematically and integrated with the quantitative findings following mixed-methods procedures [13, 14].

3. Results

Findings revealed that the respondents generally agreed with the level of determinants of language-related career intention, with an overall mean of 3.97. Professional orientation toward language-related professions was the highest-rated determinant, with a mean of 4.28, followed by social influences on language-related career decisions, with a mean of 3.93, while perceived readiness to utilize language competencies obtained the lowest mean of 3.69. The respondents' level of intention to pursue language-related careers was moderate, with a mean of 3.43. Regression analysis showed that professional orientation toward language-related professions, social influences on language-related career decisions, and perceived readiness to utilize language competencies significantly predicted intention to pursue language-related careers, explaining 44.4 percent of the variance. Perceived readiness to utilize language competencies emerged as the strongest predictor, $\beta = 0.413$, $p < 0.001$, followed by professional orientation toward language-related professions, $\beta = 0.261$, $p = 0.008$, and social influences, on language-related career decisions $\beta = 0.211$, $p = 0.032$.

The qualitative findings explained these patterns through eight major themes: constrained entry into the English Language Studies program, oral communication insecurity, limited experiential exposure, imbalanced language-skill development, career decision uncertainty, social and economic expectations, perceived readiness and self-efficacy, and adaptive career intentions and reorientation. Students valued English-related careers, but their orientation often developed after program entry and continued through career reassessment. Social influences on language-related career decisions shaped their views on English-related careers in relation to stability, income, practicality, and family expectations. Although English language competence was recognized as linguistic capital, students' readiness remained uneven due to insecurity in oral communication, limited experiential exposure, imbalanced language-skill development, and concerns about self-efficacy. Their statements, such as "in the future, but not yet now," "more experience and practice," being "guided by professionals," and exposure to "real situations," suggest that English competence was viewed as useful but still needing validation through mentoring, experiential learning, and authentic professional tasks. These narratives explain why perceived readiness to utilize language competencies obtained the lowest mean yet became the strongest predictor of intention to pursue language-related careers.

Overall, moderate career intention reflected students' negotiation of aspirations, readiness, opportunity, stability, and familiarity with career pathways. Intention was stronger for teaching-related careers but remained uncertain for technical writing, media or content production, and editing due to limited exposure to non-teaching roles in language-related professions. Based on the integrated findings, the study developed the Building Readiness through Industry Development and Guided Engagement (BRIDGE) Program. The program consists of five components: English Language Career Orientation, English Language Career Planning and Pathway Matching, English Language Professional Exposure and Engagement, Workplace English Language Communication Training, and English Language Career Portfolio and Employment Preparation. These components address the identified gaps in career awareness, pathway clarity, professional exposure, workplace English communication, portfolio development, and employment preparation.

4. Conclusion

The study concludes that English major students generally value language-related professions and recognize English competence as a professional resource; however, their career intentions remain moderate and exploratory because of readiness concerns, limited exposure, oral communication insecurity, career uncertainty, and uneven familiarity with specific pathways. Perceived readiness emerged as the strongest predictor, showing that career intention depends largely on students' confidence in applying English competencies in professional contexts. This contributes to language education policy, program development, and applied linguistics by showing that English majors' career intention is shaped by linguistic capital, professional identity, readiness, and access to structured career preparation. Its limitation lies in its focus on one state college, reliance on self-reported intentions, and emphasis on perceived readiness rather than direct assessment of actual workplace performance. The BRIDGE program is recommended to strengthen curriculum enhancement, professional exposure, mentoring, workplace English communication, portfolio development, and career pathway preparation for English Language Studies students.

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