

Communication Challenges and Needs in the Multilingual Workplace: The Case of Security Officers in Jababeka Area Indonesia

Komunitas: International Journal of
Indonesian Society and Culture
14(2) (2022): 239-253
DOI:10.15294/komunitas.v14i2.34840
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p-ISSN 2086 - 5465 | e-ISSN 2460-7320
<https://journal.unnes.ac.id/nju/index.php/komunitas>

UNNES JOURNALS

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Received: November 30, 2021; Accepted: February 5, 2022; Published: September 30, 2022

Abstract

Modern-time workplaces have become increasingly international and multilingual due to the presence of workers from different ethnicities, languages, and cultural backgrounds. Due to the lack of training programs that are mainly focused on developing communication skills, security officers have faced challenges in communicating with clients, especially those who work in multilingual workplaces. This research aims to investigate the challenges of the workers in communicating in a multilingual workplace and exploring the perceived needs of the workers. This research was conducted in Jababeka Area Industries Jakarta. The research found various challenges and needs faced by the security officers including challenges with their occupational standing, limited training, inadequate workplace support system, and limited access and resources for learning. The security officers realize that the ultimate goal of communication in foreign language in the workplace is not merely shown by correctness and perfection, but how messages are transferred and how instructions are understood.

Keywords

communication skill; communication challenges and needs; workplace communication; multilingual workplace; security officer

INTRODUCTION

The development of technology erases professional boundaries and allows people to travel and work globally. This also constantly changes the pattern of human migration which creates a global society with high adaptability to the digital world (Ferreira, 2019). Migration leaves natural selection for socially incompetent individuals and this occurs in almost all social structures, including in the workplace. Workplace structure and organization have become more global

characterized by seamless flow and nature of communication. The local work culture has shifted to a global work culture where everyone brings their own cultural color and is ready to collaborate with anyone to achieve the organizational goals (Kaun, 2021). Interconnection between individuals is deemed important to achieve organizational goals.

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Their achievements may simultaneously become reinforcement to achieve more goals. To realize this synergy, members within the community need to hone their personal abilities at all times (Kaun, 2021).

Workplaces have become the melting pots for professionals from diverse nationalities, languages, and cultural backgrounds (Cachon-Rodriguez, et., al., 2021). At some particular stages of their professional journey, workers may experience the changing demand of the workplace entrenched in the 'new work order' (Heller, 2010). The 'new work order', according to Heller (2010), has created a 'new world order' in the workplaces and that the 'word-force' has replaced the 'workforce' depicted in the professional activities in multilingual workplaces that are characterized by a lot of talking, texting, and negotiating across different platforms. At these stages, the nature of tasks and the communicative environment at the workplace change continually (Hussain, 2018; Keyton, et al., 2013; Mcall, 2003; Mcall, 2003).

Industries compete to win clients, customers, and networks by ensuring that the team members are well-equipped and capable for the jobs. Companies develop practical and effective strategies to provide the employees with the knowledge and skills they need (Elnaga & Imran, 2013). It rings true that being able to provide the best service has long been the tagline for workplaces. People can see that the majority of tasks in an organization are especially carried out by the managerial, customer service, and marketing departments. There is apparently one section that is often forgotten regardless of its significant contribution to the company (Louhiala-Salminen, 2002). This section that hosts the security officers has always been the first encounter for clients, customers, or visitors to interact with the managerial staff and other workers before they enter the buildings.

Security officers often carry out tasks in the front desks. Complaints or compliments from the customers are usually sent to them. These workers hold a vital role in the workplace by ensuring the smooth flow of communication activities carried out by

the e managerial staff, other team members, and customers (Djamin, 2013). Their presence in the company has often been overlooked regardless of their major contribution to the company's development.

Training for security officers has been carried out to develop their professional capacities. These training programs are conducted based on the security-guarding topics due to their primary duty in keeping the workplaces safe (Djamin, 2013; Elnaga & Imran, 2013). There has been a scarcity of training that incorporates customer service knowledge and communication techniques. Training programs that include communication ability and customer service skills are paramount for the security officers to enhance their contributions to the profession and increase their career advancement opportunities (Angouri & Miglbauer, 2014; Heller, 2010; Mcall, 2003; Risse, 2020). Due to the lack of training programs that are focused on developing communication skills, security officers have faced challenges in communicating with clients, especially those who work in multilingual workplaces.

Scholars have documented studies on the communication practice of workers in multilingual workplaces (Angouri & Miglbauer, 2014; Mcall, 2003). The majority of research conducted in multilingual workplaces has involved participants who perform professional, desk, managerial, or administrative work. Those studies have also primarily addressed the power-related issues, work scope, organizational characteristics, and professional performances. The problems related to the communication practice of workers in multilingual settings have remained underexplored (Rodriguez & Walters, 2017; Moslehiyar, & Ibrahim, 2012; Rana, 2013). Furthermore, very little research has been done exploring the professional-related competency of security officers, especially communication skill development.

People transfer information to others when they communicate. In the workplace context, it becomes an important and basic skill that workers have to build to succeed in their jobs (Nilforoush & Chalak, 2019). Having good communication skills will also

help workers secure their jobs and make a good relationship with people they encounter in their professional activities. It is therefore important for workers to continue learning how to communicate effectively in the workplace to enhance their professional achievement and to secure their jobs. Nilforoush and Chalak (2019) conducted a needs analysis on engineers in a steel company. The two scholars argue that to be successful in any field, one must know and understand how to communicate effectively (Nilforoush & Chalak, 2019). According to them, professionals who have a strong foundation in communication skills are considered assets for any organization.

Communication skill is deemed necessary for any organization, as it takes place in a context-bound by formal and informal workplace relationships and larger societal and organizational cultures (Keyton, et al., 2013). In the globalization era, good communication skills are keys to career success. The massive media of communication development, especially in technology, has also emphasized the employees' development of their communication skills (Heller, 2010). Globalization era allows people from different nationalities to work together and create an international, multicultural, and multilingual environment so multicultural organizations become the hubs for different cultures from all over the world (Hussain, 2018). Communication activities in the workplace can be more complex and dynamic with the presence of workers from different culture and language backgrounds. Reviewing literature on multicultural organizations and communication challenges, Hussain pointed out that communication is the most important element in which information is exchanged.

In the multicultural workplace communicative setting, multilingual interaction constantly occurs, especially due to the increasing demands in accommodating and negotiating interactions with diverse networks. Spence and Liu (2013) stated that communication, both oral and written, is frequently delivered in the context of the multilingual workplace. Meanwhile, Keyton

et al. (2013) advanced this idea by stating that oral communication skills are prioritized by most employers, regardless of the disciplines. The researchers further identify ten most common communication behaviors that need to be developed in the multilingual workplace ranging from listening, asking questions, discussion, sharing information, agreeing, suggesting, offering feedback, seeking feedback, answering questions, and giving explanations (Keyton et al., 2013). Even though those range of skills is not necessarily dictated to employees based on levels, hierarchies, or job types, it is apparent that verbal communication skills are emphasized.

Given that workplaces are becoming increasingly globalized, employers often dictate regulations related to communicating in the workplace. The regulations are also often associated with how communication is mediated and what languages are used. Tange and Luring (2009) explained that workplaces with international managers might have specific regulations on people, resources, and activities in the workplace. Within the same vein, domestic workplaces may dictate the same regulations as a result of international recruitment and networking activities (Louhiala-Salminen, 2002) which also at the same time ignite the flame of a multilingual atmosphere in the workplace.

Related to the use of different languages in a multilingual workplace, Mcall (2003) specifically highlighted that this can be an effort to open wider access for certain language groups to a better career advancement. This however, as Mcall (2003) pointed out, may create challenges by excluding the other groups from the workplace. The communication-related consequence of working in a multilingual workplace will be the challenges related to determining communication strategies and language choices. Hussain (2018) further identifies possible challenges that will be faced by workers ranging from language barrier, stereotyping, ethnocentrism, cultural relativism, culture shock, attitude toward conflict resolution, task completion, decision making, privacy,

trust building, and non-verbal language.

In multilingual workplaces, the term multilingualism refers to the presence of more than one language used in communication within an organization. Multilingualism cannot be separated from multiculturalism, especially when distinctive linguistic codes emerge within specific regional, ethnic, professional, or social groupings. Saville-Troike (2003) reminded us that multilingualism will still be present even within communities using common language-related regulations such as a national or corporate language. In a multilingual workplace according to Saville-Troike (2003), how multilingualism is viewed and practiced will be depending upon different factors such as organizational level (e.g., global, regional, national, local, individual), setting (e.g., parent company, subsidiary), and unit (e.g., function, position), and this will create more complex communication experiences for the workers (Saville-Troike, 2003).

In the Indonesian context, security officers have become an integral part of our communities, especially the workplaces. According to the Regulation of the Head of the National Police Department of the Republic of Indonesia (Kapolri), Number 24 of 2007 concerning Security Management Systems for Organizations, Companies and or Government Agencies, a Security Officer Department is a unit or group of officers formed by an agency or business entity to carry out security in the context of implementing independent security in its work environment (Djamin, 2013). In Indonesia, there are around 1,600,000 people who are working as security guards, and only about 500,000 are registered (Djamin, 2013). Statistically, there are currently 470.000 members of police officers in Indonesia. If the numbers of both sides are compared, it is clearly seen that security officers outnumber police officers. According to Djamin (2013), security officers will be able to provide better support for the Police Department in maintaining public security if they are adequately trained.

Within the same area of discussion, as also dictated by Law Number 2 Year 2002 concerning the National Police Department

of the Republic of Indonesia Article 3c (Djamin, 2013), security officers provide support to the police officers. Security officers are often regarded as police officers with limited functions. Security officers hold significant responsibilities in the community as they are shaped by the community and supported by the Police Department. Considering their significant task to maintain security in our society, and in order to be able to perform their duties, security officers have to be acknowledged by the Police Department to legalize their status.

Security officers perform tasks that are considered important in an organization. Regardless of their notable contributions to the workplace, a security guarding job is still somehow regarded as a type of job that is less desired. Even though the position of the security officers is important in an organization, their duties are considered insignificantly related to the professional activities of the workplace; thus their presence in the workplace is often considered complementary.

Security officers need to develop their communication skills to carry out their tasks in the workplace. They need to master negotiation techniques to handle different situations. Customers expect that security officers are able to help them and to answer questions directed to the workplace. In the same manner, the employer expects them to be able to report essential highlights in the workplace. Their workmates expect them to function well in teamwork. Finally, different methods of communication need to be performed when the security officers communicate with their friends and family. Due to the complexities in communication activities in the workplace, communication skills need to be mastered by the security officers (Sofia et al., 2020) to maximize their contribution in creating effective work performance. The researchers also argued that, to help the security officers enhance their communication skills, employers need to develop strategies to provide training programs directed to develop their communication skills (Sofia et al., 2020).

Training programs for security officers

have been conducted by workplaces to develop their competencies and to increase their contributions to the jobs. The majority of training is focused on job and career-related development. There has been a scarcity of training dedicated to enhancing the security officers' communication skills, except for the one reported by Sofia et al. (2020) for a group of security officers in East Borneo, Indonesia. To date, very few studies have been identified with respect to developing communication skills for security officers who work in multilingual workplaces, regardless of the urgency to equip them to master the communication skill for the workplace (Moslehifar & Ibrahim, 2012).

Developing strong communication skills is essential for building a successful career for security officers (Nassazi, 2013; Wenger, 2010; Yusof, & Rahmat, 2020). With strong communication skills, they can quickly improve communication in the workplace, an activity that security officers carry out everyday. Successful communication can help them better understand other people and situations. It can also help them overcome diversities, build trust and respect, and create conditions for sharing creative ideas and solving problems. In the globalized world, many employers believe that proper internal communications within the organization can significantly increase employees' productivity. In contrast, poor communication skills lead to frequent misunderstandings and frustrations. Furthermore if the communication breaks down, the performance of the organization will be affected, because communication becomes the most important element of any organization (Rana, 2013).

The present study aims to fill the gaps in accommodating the security officers by identifying the type of challenges related to communicating in the multilingual workplace and mapping the knowledge and resources they need on the job. Furthermore, it is also expected that this research will be able to shed some light on the affordances that the workplaces have to develop the workers' communication skills. The following questions are used to guide the study: What

types of challenges are faced by the security officers in communicating in multilingual workplaces? How do the security officers view their communication-related needs in order to work successfully in a multilingual environment?

We argue that multilingual settings give challenges to security officers. Security officers realize that the ultimate goal of communication in foreign language in the workplace is not merely shown by correctness and perfection, but how messages are transferred and how instructions are understood.

METHOD

This study was aimed at investigating the challenges and needs of security officers in working in a multilingual workplace. Jababeka Township in West Java was chosen as the main setting of the study considering that Jababeka is an international integrated industry-based township. Located approximately 35 kilometres east of Jakarta city center, Jababeka is part of Greater Jakarta. There are specific areas dedicated for the industrial, residential, and commercial needs which created a multilingual environment in those areas.

The participants for this study were recruited during the community development program webinar conducted to the security officers. The webinar was administered by three university lecturers from a private university in West Java as part of their community service activities. The selection of the participants was random, and therefore, all participants came from different types of organizations across the country (Winters et al., 2010).

A total of 81 (70 male and 11 female) security officers participated in the webinar. Their ages ranged from 27 to 55 (average = 40). The majority of the participants (93%) were high school graduates, and the rest had some college backgrounds. Most of the security officers worked in public facility organizations such as hotels, schools, hospitals, and department stores and they have stayed in the profession for over a year.

The participants were invited to participate in the study through *WhatsApp* text message communication, with permission from the relevant authorities from their workplaces. At the end of the webinar, the study was explained to the participants, confidentiality was assured and participation was described as voluntary. The participants were then invited to sign a consent form indicating their agreement to participate and acknowledging that their responses might be used for research purposes and possible publication. All participants agreed and signed the forms, indicating their willingness to participate in the study, which involved submitting responses to a questionnaire and participating in an interview.

Out of the 81 participants who submitted responses to the questionnaire, only three of them did not give consent to participate in the interview. The interview participants were randomly selected based on the location of work. Respondents from Jababeka Township in West Java were deliberately selected for the interview as the researchers aimed to investigate the representatives from multilingual workplaces. For this purpose, nine security officers were interviewed. Pseudonyms were assigned to participants whose names were mentioned in the research report to protect their identities.

This study applied a mixed-method research design through a survey and interview. Quantitative method was implemented through questionnaires, descriptive data mapping, and questionnaire analysis. For the qualitative method, interview guidelines preparation, in-depth interview process, and qualitative data analysis were performed using interactive techniques suggested by Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2020). The entire set of questionnaires consisted of twelve items and were divided into three sections: 'demographic background', 'communication practice' and 'interview invitation' sections. In the demographic section, the participants were asked to state their emails, gender, education backgrounds, and their professional affiliations and history. The communication practice

section asked the participants to mention the types and sources of training they attended, the nature of challenges they found in the workplace, and their needs related to communication skill development. In the last section, the participants were asked if they were willing to be interviewed to gain more detailed information related to the challenges and needs of security officers in communicating in the workplace. The survey was administered using *Google Forms* and the link was distributed to the participants during the webinar. The participants were given access to the survey for a month to give them enough time to respond to the questionnaires.

It took around five to ten minutes to complete the questionnaire. Quantitative data for this study was generated from the quantitative questionnaire. Qualitative data was obtained from the open-ended questionnaire and interview. Qualitative and quantitative data were analyzed using a triangulation process to ensure the credibility of the information gathered (Creswell, 2012).

The interview was a semi-structured interview where the interviewer did not strictly follow a formalized list of questions. Even though the interviewer asked open-ended questions, a set of interview questions were used as a guideline to make sure that the questions asked were pertinent to the topic. The interview question guideline consisted of 7 questions focused on the following topics:

- a. The relation between gender and security officer as a profession
- b. Academic background for security officers
- c. Work history and affiliation
- d. Trainings provided for security officers
- e. The contribution of educational institutions in professional trainings
- f. Trainings that are focused on communication skill development
- g. Challenges and needs related to communication skill development

Those 7 questions were developed further into 12 sub-questions to allow a more

detailed elaboration on the topics.

Both instruments were administered in *Bahasa Indonesia*, as the participants use the language as a medium of communication in the workplace and at home. In order to confirm the validity of the content, both instruments were consulted to experts for revision before being used for the data collection activities.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Responses were collected from 81 participants from the survey. The responses gathered were then organized into different categories, comprising gender, academic backgrounds, number of years working as a security officer, professional affiliation, identified needs related to professional development, contribution of educational institution in trainings, trainings related to communication skill/foreign languages, identified needs related to foreign language competency, the nature of work and workplace. By sorting those responses into categories, data was then analyzed for trends and commonalities found in each group and those between them. Data was then graphed and formulated in tables.

The interview was conducted through *WhatsApp* text-messaging platform to provide ease for both the interviewers and interviewees since it was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic where social distancing was fully mandated in the workplace. This strategy was also able to accommodate time constraints of the security officers who work based on different shifts.

For the initial step, the responses from the survey and interview were listed to facilitate explorations of salient common themes. There were 137 statements related to challenges and 92 about needs. In the second step of the analysis, more salient themes were consolidated around central concepts. At this stage four themes were identified to describe the challenges faced by the security officers in working in multilingual workplace as follows:

- a. Low individual long term occupational standing

- b. Limited training related to communication skill development
- c. Inadequate support from the workplace/other institutions related to professional development
- d. Limited access and resources for learning

With regards to how the security officers view their needs related their communication practice, the following four themes were identified:

- a. Workplace accommodation for security officer's duties
- b. Adequate professional development program
- c. Workplace support system for communication skill development
- d. Trainings related to foreign language competency

According to the analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data, four main concepts were explored related to the challenges of the workers in working in a multilingual workplace, while another four themes emerged for their needs for communication-related skill development. Since the interview was conducted in *Bahasa Indonesia*, the responses were initially translated into English for data analysis purposes. Member check was administered to ensure accuracy by consulting the translated comments with the interview participants. To assure the original voice, where possible, respondents' comments are provided verbatim, including occasional "infelicities".

Challenges

Low individual long term occupational

At a glance, the above graph showed a relatively balanced composition with respect to the length of work of the security officers, which was in the range of one to five years. However, actually only a small number of workers or 30.9% of the population survived up to 5 years and above. It showed that this profession had a high turnover rate. Even though not directly related to the workers' communication practice at the workplace, this finding supported the workers' professional development experience in the long

run as explained by one of the interview participants below:

“...You could say that many of these security officers actually only work temporarily... Just transiting or waiting to find another decent job, instead of being unemployed... (Burhan, Participant 2)”

Based on the excerpt from the above interview, many security officers chose this profession as a temporary job before they land to more promising occupations which can guarantee their future prospects.

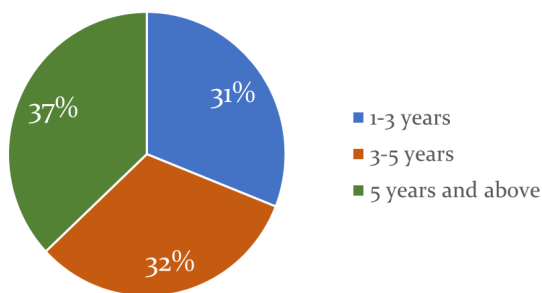


Figure 1. Security officers' professional history

Limited training related to communication skill development

Table 1. The types of training attended by the security officers

| Types of training | Percentage |
|--|------------|
| Trainings related to security officers' tasks | 68% |
| Trainings related to career advancement | 9% |
| Trainings related to communication skill development | 9% |
| Other trainings attended | 13% |

Based on Table 1, it showed that the majority of training (68%) attended by the security officers were mostly related to safety guarding tasks. These type of trainings were mandatory for security officers considering those tasks have always been considered their major tasks for the job, as also narrated by one of the interview participants below:

“...If physical exercise is mandatory, it can't

be avoided by security officers, it's obvious that all officers must attend this training. There is even a training conducted by the Police Department, on the security system, discipline enforcement, leadership, agility, and other physical exercises....(Arif, Participant 9)”

Training related to security guarding was focused on how to maintain public security and order, self-defense, physical strength, and general leadership. Furthermore, there were also a few other training activities conducted to develop their skills in other areas such as career development, communication techniques, and some other training. The communication techniques trainings were voluntarily attended by security officers simply because of the demands of the job, as mentioned by one of the participants below:

“...there are those who take part in training outside the mandatory training. Usually, it's the young ones who take part in the training... Usually it's like English language training, for work too.... if there are foreigners or Chinese people who can't talk to us, they usually speak English... (Yusuf, Participant 8)”

Even though these trainings were considered important, it was usually not specifically conducted for the security officers, and only limited workers attended the training (the young ones). Communication skill development training was particularly the least frequent training attended by the workers.

Inadequate support from the workplace/other institutions related to

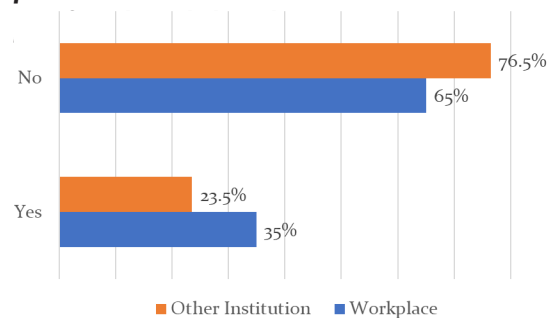


Figure 2. Supports received by the security officers for professional development

The above graph showed that there was limited training administered by both the workplace and other institutions. Furthermore, training by other institutions was particularly low. The security officers were outsourced from several companies where the security officers were academically and professionally trained. Trainings initiated by these organizations, or the other educational institutions were still scarce. One of the interview participants expressed his expectation below:

"...I really want it... we will be very happy if the campus conducts free training like this... if you pay, it will be very expensive, so if you can get it for free, it will be very useful for us in the field(Steven, Participant 1)"

The statement made by the participant indicated an expectation especially for the educational institutions to initiate programs dedicated for security officers considering that those trainings were very useful and most importantly, they were free.

Limited access and resources for learning

The participants admitted that the biggest challenges related to training was the possible cost for those programs. Others mentioned that they had limited access to the information on the trainings as stated by the following participant:

"...Yes, the main problem is the cost. Usually, we have to pay the training fee, and it is quite expensive. Or if it is free, sometimes we don't get the information, we don't know where it is....(Feri, Participant 4)"

Training cost became one of the major challenges for the workers especially those that were outside the mandated training topics.

Needs

Interestingly in a similar vein, the analysis of the needs revealed that the security officers' challenges in communicating in a multilingual workplace were very similar to their perceived needs to keep up with their tasks on the job. Put simply, what the secu-

urity officers reported about their perceived challenges were consistent with their needs. Their needs were likewise consolidated around four main categories.

Workplace accommodation for security officer's duties

The participants in this study realized that the characteristics of their tasks were mostly related to giving information or in other words, they carry out the public relations duties. The services needed by the community in general were also related to information-giving services in addition to maintaining safety or public order. This also showed a significant shift in tasks based on the needs in the field, where security officers were more frequently required to interact with clients and customers. One of the participants expressed his view related to how they perceive their tasks, and their expectations for the workplace regarding this shift of tasks:

"... I hope the workplace sees this, that we carry out the public relations tasks now which are related to giving information to people, answering questions, and answering incoming calls... when you enter the building now you see the security officers at the front office (Feri, Participant 4)"

Due to this shift in functions and needs, security officers expected the workplace to accommodate their needs to equip themselves with the necessary skill, which is communication skill.

Adequate professional development program

One of the challenges faced by the security officers was limited training for their professional development. Even though training was provided, they were mostly focused on security guarding. To fulfill the need for learning, security officers attended training conducted outside the mandated areas. These training sessions, however, were very limited. One of the interview participants expressed the need for professional development programs which could accommodate the security officers' tasks in

working with people from different backgrounds in the following excerpt:

“So far, there is no training or very limited training that directly supports our current tasks to work at the front desk. We know how to help customers, but sometimes we are confused on how to communicate if we have visitors who come from different places...foreigners for example. Even with people from our country, sometimes they speak differently and we need to learn about that, the techniques and how to communicate better. We need a training that will support us professionally (Budi, Participant 7)”

The security officers' major concern was also related to the need to equip them with skills that supported their tasks in working at the front desk. As previously stated, some of them had attended training provided by the educational institutions. Although the percentage was small, it showed that there was a need to participate in training activities. In this regard, the following statement put forward by one of the participants supports this analysis:

“There are trainings conducted by the university, maybe one or two. We need to have more of those. University, I think, is full of people who are very smart and they are intellectuals. We will be very happy if we can attend a training provided by the university (Steven, Participant 1)”

In addition to the needs for professional development training, the statement made by the above participant also implied his perception of the characteristics of educational institutions. Based on this statement, the security officers have a fairly firm barrier separating the workplace and the education institution.

Workplace support system for communication skill development

With regards to the availability of a workplace support system, the security officers expressed a need for support in the workplace especially from their coworkers to help each other particularly in developing their communication skill. A statement from one of the participants below sup-

ported the above concern:

“... We need coworkers that can help each other. Usually, the young ones are better than the old ones. If there are clients who speak in English, it's usually easy for young workers to come forward...they have more motivation to learn, learning from everywhere, the internet, or learning from YouTube....(Alex, Participant 6)”

The participant reported that coworkers have contributions in the workers' communication skill development. In addition to stating that age was a significant factor in determining the motivation to learn, the worker also revealed that they acknowledged different platforms for learning.

Trainings related to foreign language competency

The participants in this study realized that they were positioned in the front rows, in the center of workplace traffic, or in the spaces where people meet. They admitted that their tasks had mostly been related to providing information for others in the workplace. With the presence of people from different language and cultural backgrounds in the workplace, their tasks became more complex ranging from providing information to accommodating people using different communication strategies to ensure that messages were transferred successfully. One of the participants narrated a situation at the workplace as follows:

“....a lot of foreigners now...especially Chinese or Japanese...there are also Indians.... Europeans too...They cannot speak our language (Bahasa Indonesia), so we have to use English... even though our English is not good, the important thing is that we keep on talking with them in English and to know that they understand what we say....(Steven, Participant 1)”

There has been quite a frequent occurrence of foreign workers or guests talking to security officers, and this further proved that there has been a high need to be able to master English language skills. The security guards need to improve their capabilities in

speaking English because of the demands of work that require them to interact in foreign languages actively every day.

“... Sometimes we also don't know what to say with Chinese, we are confused, he is also confused, but usually we help each other, the young ones who are better at English, usually help me talk...the important thing is that you understand what it means...that's all...(Deni, Participant 5)”

The presence of workers from different ethnicities, languages, and cultural backgrounds have created an international and multilingual environment in the workplace (Angouri & Miglbauer, 2014), including in Indonesia where this study took place. This study therefore investigated the challenges and needs of security officers in working in multilingual workplaces. At the open coding stage, a total of 137 explicit statements describing challenges and 92 statements about needs were identified. The two groups of statements were both categorized around four axial themes.

The low long-term individual occupational standing becomes the initial challenge among the security officers related to their career advancement. This challenge does not directly influence the workers' communication practice, however, from their perspective, the workers' confidence on the job will have a contribution towards their future goal, which includes maximizing their values (Risse, 2020) on the job. This particular drive to increase values can also reflect in their ongoing performance and productivity. The security officers in this current study continually assess their ability to perform on the job to estimate their chances of success in the future. With regards to the security guarding profession, the workers do not seem to see this job as professionally promising or unimportant. When the majority of the workers leave their job for better career prospects, the workplaces will suffer from a high turnover rate which is disadvantageous for the organization (Kappel, 2017), as recruiting new employees will require a significant maneuver related to financial resources and time management.

Staying on the job is often not a cho-

ice for some security officers, due to their low professional standing. In her research on workers' career advancement, Risse also mentioned that workers who are confident in their occupational standing will have the willingness to take risks, to face challenges, to have ambition, and self-determination (2020), which can also be trained through professional development programs for the workers to enhance their competencies, skills, and knowledge (Nassazi, 2013).

Workers take the responsibility to take care of the products and services in an organization. Considering their importance in a workplace, workers need suitable training to enhance their accomplishment. (Rodriguez & Walters, 2017) highlighted that workers who perform well in an organization will tend to stay on the job because they have a high job satisfaction. Therefore, as suggested by Elnaga and Imran (2013), training becomes an important strategy for an organization to help the workers develop professionally, and to increase their motivation and loyalty to the workplace. Lack of training can have a direct impact not only on the workers performance on the job but also on the organization related to its employee retention.

In order to minimize the employee turnover rate and increase their retention, proper and adequate training programs need to be implemented in the workplace. In this study, the participants shared their experiences related to training programs provided by their organizations. The majority of the security officers reported that their professional development activities have mainly been focused on security guarding topics, a mandatory training that they have to attend because security guarding is considered the skill that they use the most on the job. Training related to communication skill development, on the other hand, is still limited, regardless of its importance on the job. In their recent research on communication barriers in the workplace, Yusuf and Rahmat (2020) clearly stated that communication in the workplace is a paramount key in determining the success of an organization. Communication barriers can oc-

cur especially in diverse workplaces, where different strategies and platforms are used.

In the same vein, communicating in a multilingual workplace can be challenging for the security officers due to different communication strategies and platforms that they have to apply, especially when training on communication skill development is limited. Some training on communication skill development is usually administered by educational institutions. However, in addition to the scarcity of training, the workers see the world of work and education as two totally different villages. In the workers' perspectives, the world of education is for intellectuals and therefore it can be challenging for them to explore this area. Support from the workplace can be done to bridge the gap between professionals and academicians, for instance by providing a strong support system in the workplace.

In addition to communication skills, workers also face challenges in communicating in foreign languages, especially in English. A strong support system can minimize the challenges in communicating in a foreign language. The presence of co-workers who are more proficient in English can help others when interacting with foreign workers. This strategy can also increase cohesiveness among the workers where the members interact and learn from each other in a group which is called a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Etienne Wenger, 2010). Community of Practices or CoPs refer to groups of people who work together on real life problems and interact regularly to learn together and from each other (Wenger et al., 2002), even when they have different levels of expertise.

Learning from each other also apparently emerged during communication in English in the workplace. Responding to the need to equip themselves with the ability to speak English, the security officers respond to this demand by constantly practicing the "text and talk" activities with others and helping each other when communicating with non-Indonesian in the workplace. Even though the security officers suspected that age differences became an important factor

in determining their English competency, with the young ones performing the expert's role, they apparently realized that standard English was not the priority in communication (Canagarajah, 2007). Instead, the workers believed that communication was about exchanging messages and making sure that messages were successfully transferred. They realized that the ultimate goal of communication in foreign language in the workplace was not merely shown by correctness and perfection, but how messages are transferred and how instructions are understood.

In the case of communicating in English, the key is to be able to understand each other's messages with the support of others. This is in accordance with the statement of DeVito (2015) who states that the essence of communication is the transfer of messages from the sender of the message and the message can be received and understood as much as possible by the recipient of the message. Situations and conditions may vary when communication occurs, but many things can be done so that the transfer and recipient of this message can be maximized. Workplace cohesive support systems are an important factor and can have a direct impact on the transfer and reception of messages. Gupta et al. (2021) state that the cohesiveness of the team in communication allows the messages to be absorbed more optimally and obstacles can be solved immediately.

Furthermore, workers' loyalty and motivation are also important variables in facing challenges in communicating in English with foreign workers. Security officers understand that English proficiency is very important for their profession, but because of their limited skills, communication barriers occur. Loyalty and motivation can keep the officers in their profession and creates a desire to keep on learning despite limitations they have. Cachon-Rodriguez et al. (2021) highlight that employee loyalty is a variable that binds employees to remain devoted to a particular job or task description with full responsibility. While motivation encourages individuals to move towards a stable condition or a solution that is a so-

lution that provides a way out of a problem at hand with that loyalty and motivation, security officers will remain in their profession in the midst of high turnover rate in the profession (Cachon-Rodriguez et al., 2021).

Another obvious challenge faced by the security officers is related to limited access and resources for learning. Due to the dense workload and working period, it is challenging for the workers to find access to improve their communication skills, and especially their English competency. A collaboration can be built between workplaces and educational institutions such as universities to provide training to develop the workers' competency in communicating in English. For universities, this program can be made possible through a community service program. This strategy generates benefits for both parties where workers can get support for their professional development, while universities have the opportunities to give back to the communities outside campus. At the same time, every university in Indonesia is obliged to perform community service as one of the important pillars of the three contributions or *Tri-dharma* of Higher Education. One of the functions of community service programs is that universities as educational institutions can contribute to the community on the basis of scientific development for the purpose of education and public welfare.

In fact, the community service program has now been an absolute obligation for universities in Indonesia. It is also stated that the implementation of community service is currently directed to sustainable programs, which means that the program needs to be created through a collaboration with partners, and not a program with a short-term implementation. This regulation will allow a long-term program, such as communication skill development or foreign language competency development training to be conducted.

CONCLUSION

This study has presented the findings related to the communication practice of se-

curity officers who work in multilingual workplaces. Several conclusions are drawn from this study. As Heller (2010) previously highlighted, there has been a major shift related to how tasks are regulated and mandated in the workplace reflected in the "work-order" to "word-order" transformation. This has continuously informed the security officers to have a more self-regulated attitude in perceiving their tasks and needs, especially related to tasks they carry out in the workplace, skills they need to have in order to successfully accomplish the tasks, and how to attain those skills in and outside the workplace.

The global mobility of people nowadays has transformed workplaces into multilingual ones. People from different cultural and language backgrounds often meet and work together in a workplace. It is quite common that the tasks of security officers often address significant aspects in people's life related to sensitive issues, safety concerns, and emergencies. These particular tasks require the workers to have good communication skills. Modern workplaces also often require them to have the ability to speak in foreign languages, particularly English considering that their tasks are related to providing public speaking services to clients/people from different language backgrounds.

The security officers in this study are aware of the need for continuous knowledge-seeking. They can see that there is always room for learning (and teaching) activities in the workplace, regardless of their educational backgrounds. These teaching and learning activities have been common activities in the workplace where workers are members of the community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991; E. Wenger, 2010). Novice members are going to learn from the experts in the group through constant interaction and participation in group work activities.

Responding to the need to equip themselves with the ability to speak in foreign languages, the security officers respond to this demand by constantly practicing the "text and talk" activities and viewing English as a *lingua franca* language, where standard

English is not the priority (Canagarajah, 2007). They realize that the ultimate goal of communication in foreign language in the workplace is not merely shown by correctness and perfection, but how messages are transferred and how instructions are understood. The security officers also realize that developing their English language competency will create wider avenues for career advancement (Mcall, 2003).

Based on the conclusions previously stated, the followings are the recommendations drawn from the study:

- The workplaces need to provide more trainings that are focused on communication skill development to accommodate the needs of the workers in providing the best service to the customers
- The education institutions need to actively participate in community development programs, for example through the community service activities
- The workplace curriculum training developers need to incorporate materials which address the workers' needs in their daily task accomplishment activities, especially related to their need to increase their communication skills in foreign languages
- Future researchers can further investigate the workers' communication practice in the workplace by implementing different data gathering methods such as observations and focus group discussions. Those methods may capture more detailed working-learning-teaching activities of the workers and how they apply their communication strategies in the workplace. Furthermore, this strategy may also allow the researchers to identify how the workplaces accommodate the workers in facilitating the workers professionally and personally.
- Related to the need to participate in training activities, it is necessary to have cooperation between the organizations that manage the security guarding profession and the educa-

tional institutions. The need to increase foreign language capacity is clear evidence that security officers need certain skills that can be accommodated by educational institutions. Universities should see this as an opportunity for collaboration or giving back to the community. This collaboration can benefit both parties, the security service providers and educational institutions.

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