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CONSTRUCTING ENGLISH AS EMPLOYABILITY CAPITAL IN VIETNAM'S DIGITAL LABOUR MARKET: A CORPUS-ASSISTED ANALYSIS OF PROFICIENCY, CREDENTIALS, AND WORKPLACE TASKS

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Abstract

This study examines how English is constructed as employability capital in Vietnam's digital labour market. Using the publicly released VietJobs corpus, 48,092 online job advertisements were processed in Python. After 385 exact duplicate records were removed, 47,707 postings formed the labour-market denominator, and 9,061 postings containing direct English competence or credential requirements formed the principal analytical corpus. The analysis combined prevalence and sector comparisons with recurrent-pattern, keyness, credential, concordance, and workplace-task analyses. English demand appeared in 18.99% of unique postings and varied significantly across 16 occupational sectors. Most direct-English advertisements represented competence broadly through general proficiency or communication, while only 10.37% specified identifiable workplace tasks and 9.18% specified applicant-oriented English credentials. Education showed a strongly credential-oriented profile, including comparatively high IELTS and TOEIC thresholds, whereas engineering and information technology more often connected English to reading, technical documentation, and other workplace functions. Formal credentials and explicit workplace tasks rarely co-occurred, and credential-bearing advertisements remained less likely to specify workplace tasks after controlling for sector. The findings show that the labour-market value of English is differentiated by occupational context and by the form through which competence is represented, highlighting a distinction between credentialised and workplace-functional English competence.

Keywords: *Corpus linguistics, employability, English language requirements, job advertisements, linguistic capital*

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KIẾN TẠO GIÁ TRỊ TIẾNG ANH ĐỐI VỚI KHẢ NĂNG VIỆC LÀM TRÊN THỊ TRƯỜNG LAO ĐỘNG SỐ VIỆT NAM: PHÂN TÍCH KHỐI LIỆU VỀ NĂNG LỰC, CHỨNG CHỈ VÀ NHIỆM VỤ CÔNG VIỆC

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Tóm tắt

Nghiên cứu này xem xét cách tiếng Anh được kiến tạo như một nguồn lực phục vụ khả năng việc làm trên thị trường lao động số Việt Nam. Nghiên cứu sử dụng khối liệu VietJobs công khai gồm 48.092 quảng cáo tuyển dụng trực tuyến và xử lý dữ liệu bằng Python. Sau khi loại 385 bản ghi trùng hoàn toàn, 47.707 tin tuyển dụng được dùng làm mẫu nền của thị trường lao động và 9.061 tin có yêu cầu trực tiếp về năng lực hoặc chứng chỉ tiếng Anh tạo thành khối liệu phân tích chính. Phân tích kết hợp tần suất, so sánh theo 16 nhóm nghề, mẫu ngôn ngữ lặp lại, từ khóa đặc trưng, chứng chỉ, dòng ngữ cảnh và nhiệm vụ công việc. Yêu cầu tiếng Anh xuất hiện trong 18,99% số tin tuyển dụng duy nhất và khác biệt đáng kể giữa các ngành. Phần lớn tin tuyển dụng mô tả tiếng Anh bằng năng lực chung hoặc khả năng giao tiếp; chỉ 10,37% nêu nhiệm vụ công việc cụ thể và 9,18% nêu chứng chỉ tiếng Anh. Nhóm Giáo dục thiên mạnh về chứng chỉ, với ngưỡng IELTS và TOEIC cao hơn, trong khi Kỹ thuật và Công nghệ thông tin thường gắn tiếng Anh với đọc hiểu tài liệu kỹ thuật và các chức năng công việc. Chứng chỉ và nhiệm vụ công việc hiếm khi xuất hiện đồng thời. Kết quả cho thấy giá trị việc làm của tiếng Anh thay đổi theo ngành và theo cách năng lực được biểu đạt, qua đó làm rõ sự khác biệt giữa năng lực được chứng nhận và năng lực gắn với chức năng công việc.

Từ khóa: *Giá trị ngôn ngữ, khả năng việc làm, ngôn ngữ học khối liệu, quảng cáo tuyển dụng, yêu cầu tiếng Anh*

1. Introduction

English is increasingly treated as an economically valuable resource in recruitment, but its value depends on the market in which it is recognised rather than on language proficiency alone (Bourdieu, 1991). Online job advertisements are useful evidence because they publicly state the qualifications and skills employers value and provide detailed labour-market information that conventional vacancy statistics may not capture (Catanese et al., 2023). Large-scale European evidence shows substantial occupational variation in English demand (Marconi et al., 2023), while Vietnamese research has established both the growing importance of English in recruitment and significant differences across job sectors (Doan & Hamid, 2021).

However, knowing whether English is demanded does not fully explain what employers mean by employable English competence. A requirement such as good English differs from a request for an IELTS score, and both differ from a requirement to read technical documents or communicate with overseas clients. Workplace research likewise shows that occupationally effective English depends on domain knowledge, communicative purposes, and professional genres rather than decontextualised proficiency alone (Kankaanranta & Planken, 2010; Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2013). In Vietnam, credentialisation is particularly visible in private-sector English-teaching recruitment, where high IELTS scores have been strongly prioritised (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2026). What remains unclear is how credentials, general proficiency, language skills, and workplace tasks are distributed across the broader Vietnamese labour market and whether credentials are explicitly linked to the activities for which English is needed.

The recently released VietJobs corpus makes this question empirically tractable at a substantially larger scale. It contains 48,092 Vietnamese online job advertisements across 16 occupational categories and all 34 provinces and municipalities (Pham et al., 2026). The present study conceptualises English employability capital as English-related linguistic resources that employers publicly recognise as desirable or required in recruitment discourse. Its novelty lies not in demonstrating that English matters for employment, which previous research has already shown, but in examining how that value is linguistically constituted and whether credentialised competence converges with explicitly functional workplace English.

Accordingly, the study addresses three research questions: (1) How prevalent is direct demand for English competence and English-language credentials in Vietnamese online job advertisements, and how does this demand vary across occupational sectors? (2) How is valued English competence represented by general proficiency, specific language skills, formal credentials, and workplace-specific tasks, and how do these representations vary across occupational sectors? (3) What relationship exists between the credentialisation of English and the explicit specification of workplace English tasks after accounting for occupational sector?

2. Theoretical and Empirical Background

2.1. English as Linguistic and Employability Capital

Bourdieu's (1991) concepts of linguistic capital and linguistic market provide the principal theoretical foundation because they treat linguistic value as contingent on recognition within a particular market rather than as an inherent property of a language or competence. Recruitment discourse is therefore analytically relevant because employers publicly specify which linguistic resources they recognise as desirable or required for access to work. Research on language commodification similarly shows how linguistic resources may be represented as sources of economic added value (Duchêne & Heller, 2012). The present study uses this

perspective narrowly: job advertisements are treated as evidence of market recognition, not as evidence that English automatically causes employment, income, or career advancement.

English employability capital is used here as a study-specific analytical construct referring to the forms of English competence to which employers assign value in recruitment requirements. It is not proposed as a separate form of capital alongside Bourdieu's linguistic capital; rather, it operationalises market-recognised linguistic value within the recruitment context. Four observable manifestations are distinguished: general proficiency, specific language skills, formal credentials, and workplace-specific tasks. These distinguish an overall evaluation of English, a named language skill, an external credential or benchmark, and an occupational activity performed via English. They are therefore treated as observable representations of valued English, not as four independent types of competence or capital. This distinction is consistent with job-advertisement research that separates proficiency from named skills (Kiškytė, 2023) and with test-use and workplace research showing that credentials or general proficiency indicators do not themselves specify situated occupational language use (Hsieh, 2023; Koester, 2021).

The four manifestations are not assumed to be equally frequent or hierarchically ordered. Of particular analytical interest is the relationship between credentials and workplace tasks: credentials externalise competence through a recognised score, level, or certificate, whereas workplace tasks specify what an employee is expected to accomplish via English. Whether these two representations converge within the same recruitment text is therefore treated as an empirical question rather than assumed in advance. This distinction also avoids interpreting a credential as direct evidence of workplace use or a task statement as evidence of formal certification.

Table 1 operationalises this framework for corpus analysis.

Table 1. Operational Framework for English Employability Capital

Manifestation	Analytical meaning	Typical recruitment form
General proficiency	Broad evaluation without a named skill or task	good/basic/fluent English
Specific language skills	Named skill or communicative ability	reading, writing, speaking, listening, communication
Credentialised competence	Recognised test, score, level, or certificate	IELTS, TOEIC, TOEFL, VSTEP, CEFR
Workplace-functional competence	English linked to an identifiable occupational activity	technical documents, foreign clients, English-language documents

2.2. Empirical Literature on English and Employability

2.2.1. English Demand in Labour Markets

Previous job-advertisement studies have commonly measured language demand with presence, priority, proficiency level, and named skills. In Vietnam, Doan and Hamid (2021) documented growing English demand and substantial variation across job sectors, while Marconi et al. (2023) found marked occupational variation in English requirements across European online vacancies. Kiškytė (2023), for example, analysed 1,442 advertisements across five industries in three Baltic countries and demonstrated substantial variation in foreign-language requirements. Together, these studies establish where, and to some extent at what level, language is demanded, but provide less evidence about the occupational activities for which English is required.

2.2.2. English in Workplace and Occupational Communication

Within occupational settings, however, linguistic value is not exhausted by a general proficiency label. Research on English as a business lingua franca shows that effective professional communication depends on clarity, domain knowledge, and familiarity with communicative genres and practices (Kankaanranta & Planken, 2010; Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2013). This distinction matters for recruitment discourse because formulations such as good English, IELTS 6.5 score, English reading, and read technical documents do not represent the same kind of employable competence. The first offers a broad evaluation, the second externalises proficiency through a recognised credential, the third names a language skill, and the fourth links English directly to occupational action. Treating these formulations as equivalent would obscure how particular labour markets make English valuable.

Research in hospitality likewise shows that general proficiency measures may not capture the specific communicative practices affecting workplace interaction (Youngblood et al., 2021). Koester (2021) similarly treats surveys and needs analyses as useful starting points but emphasises the need to examine how language is used in particular workplace settings. This strand therefore provides a more situated account of occupational language use than labour-market demand studies, although evidence from specific workplaces or sectors does not by itself show how such functions are represented across the broader recruitment market.

2.2.3. Credentials and Workplace-Functional Competence

The distinction between credentials and workplace tasks is especially important. Standardised scores are portable indicators that may be used in employment-related decisions, but their meaning depends on interpretation by score users (Hsieh, 2023). Research has therefore questioned whether test-based requirements should automatically be equated with workplace readiness (Pan & In'nami, 2017). Workplace and English-for-occupational-purposes research instead emphasises language in relation to the communicative practices of particular settings (Koester, 2021). Together, this research shows that a credential can provide evidence used to judge proficiency without being equivalent to the full range of language practices required in workplace activity.

Taken together, the three strands leave a specific research gap. Labour-market research establishes the prevalence and sectoral distribution of English demand, workplace research shows that occupational language use is activity-specific, and test-use research shows that credentials require contextual interpretation. What remains unresolved in the studies reviewed here is how general proficiency, specific language skills, credentials, and workplace-functional uses are jointly represented across the broader Vietnamese recruitment market, and whether credential requirements co-occur with explicit workplace English tasks after accounting for occupational sector. The present study addresses this gap across 16 occupational sectors.

3. Data and Methods

3.1. Corpus and Analytical Sample

The study used VietJobs, a publicly released corpus containing 48,092 job advertisements and more than 15 million words, organised into 16 occupational categories and covering Vietnam's 34 provinces and municipalities (Pham et al., 2026). The source data were collected in July 2025 over approximately one week. The dataset creators harmonised 24 source-platform category labels into 16 occupational domains, drawing on ISCO-08, O*NET, and ESCO; the present study retained these categories rather than reclassifying advertisements

(Pham et al., 2026). This provides broad occupational and geographical coverage but is not treated here as statistical representation of every segment of the Vietnamese labour market. The dataset is particularly suitable because it combines contemporary scale, occupational breadth, geographical coverage, and preserved recruitment text. Although this corpus contains structured fields generated with large-language-model assistance, the present linguistic analysis relied primarily on the original requirements_text so that findings were based on employer-facing wording rather than automatically extracted language metadata. Vietnamese, English, and mixed Vietnamese–English requirement texts were retained in their original form. Retrieval was case- and accent-insensitive, and observed credential spelling variants were canonicalised only in derived counting fields (e.g., IELT/IELST → IELTS; TOIEC/TOEICS → TOEIC), while the original wording was preserved.

After 385 exact duplicate records were removed, 47,707 unique advertisements formed the denominator for prevalence analysis. Postings were included in the principal analytical corpus when requirements_text contained explicit applicant-oriented evidence of English competence or use, or an English-language credential. Hits occurring only in the job title, description, or LLM-extracted structured fields were excluded from primary linguistic retrieval, as were contextual English mentions within requirements_text that did not impose a competence or credential expectation on the applicant. This produced a principal analytical corpus of 9,061 advertisements. For recurrent-pattern analysis, identical requirement texts were additionally collapsed, yielding 6,808 linguistically unique texts. Figure 1 summarises corpus construction.

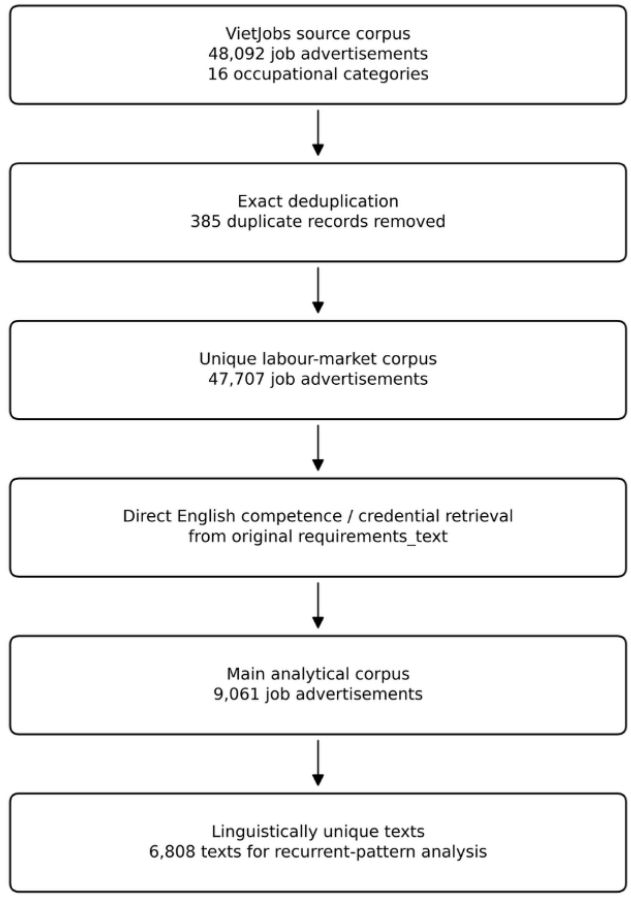


Figure 1. Construction of the Analytical Corpus

3.2. Python-Based Analysis and Validation

All processing, corpus analysis, and statistical analysis were conducted in Python. Prevalence was calculated for the complete deduplicated corpus and each occupational category, with 95% confidence intervals. Sector differences were tested using Pearson's chi-square test and Cramer's V, with odds ratios for selected sector-versus-rest contrasts. Linguistic representation was examined through recurrent English-node patterns, concordances, and sector keyness. Log-likelihood identified distinctive features, log-ratio measured effect magnitude and direction, and Benjamini-Hochberg adjustment controlled multiple comparisons. Credential analysis identified named tests and recoverable score thresholds. Workplace-functional competence was operationalised conservatively as an explicit connection between English and an identifiable work activity. The credential-task relationship was examined using contingency analysis and logistic regression with occupational sector as a control variable. Requirement strength was determined from local lexical and modal cues in the evidence clause rather than from the proficiency expression alone. Preference cues such as "is an advantage" or "preferred" were distinguished from compulsory cues such as "required" or "mandatory", while cases without a safely recoverable strength marker were treated as unspecified in strength; explicitly optional or not-required cases were distinguished separately. Consequently, expressions such as "know English", "proficient in English", and "good English communication" were not assigned a fixed obligation level independently of their surrounding wording.

Exact duplicates and repeated linguistic texts were controlled separately according to analytical purpose. Test-name spelling variants were normalised for counting while raw text was preserved. Automated high-precision classifications were checked against concordance evidence. In addition, a stratified sample of cases representing the rule-based analytical categories was reviewed by the researcher against the original requirement texts as a single-researcher validation check. Since no independent second coder was involved, this procedure does not constitute inter-rater validation, and no inter-rater reliability coefficient is reported. A broader sensitivity analysis was also conducted to assess whether the main prevalence estimate depended strongly on the conservative retrieval criteria. This sample-based check should not be interpreted as evidence of perfect classification accuracy across the entire corpus.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Prevalence and Occupational Variation

Of 47,707 unique advertisements, 9,061 contained direct evidence of English competence or an English-language credential, corresponding to 18.99% of postings (95% CI [18.64%, 19.35%]). A broader sensitivity analysis produced an upper estimate of 21.18%, indicating that the overall result was stable under less conservative retrieval criteria. English demand varied significantly across the 16 occupational categories, $\chi^2(15) = 852.80$, $p < .001$, Cramer's $V = .134$. As Table 2 shows, Logistics, Education, and Information Technology had the highest rates, whereas Design/Media, Construction, and Finance had the lowest.

Table 2. Direct English Demand Across Occupational Sectors

Occupational sector	All ads	Direct-English	Rate (%)
Logistics/Supply Chain	1811	614	33.90
Education	1165	366	31.42
IT/Digital	1903	517	27.17
HR/Admin/Legal	3210	760	23.68

Occupational sector	All ads	Direct-English	Rate (%)
Languages/Translation	384	87	22.66
Electrical Engineering	1236	275	22.25
Agriculture/Energy	322	67	20.81
Business/Sales	8213	1692	20.60
Other	345	71	20.58
Manufacturing	6341	1200	18.92
Tourism/Hospitality	4198	769	18.32
Marketing/Communications	5947	1006	16.92
Healthcare	963	133	13.81
Finance/Banking	5454	720	13.20
Construction/Real Estate	2809	369	13.14
Design/Media	3406	415	12.18

Sector-versus-rest comparisons showed that Logistics advertisements were more than twice as likely to contain direct English demand as advertisements outside the sector (OR = 2.27, 95% CI [2.06, 2.51]); Education (OR = 1.99) and IT/Digital (OR = 1.63) were also clearly elevated.

4.2. How English Competence is Represented

General English ability or proficiency appeared in 7,161 of the 9,061 direct-English advertisements (79.03%). Communication was explicitly mentioned in 35.10%, followed by reading (16.60%), writing (12.39%), speaking (5.97%), and listening (3.47%). Only 10.37% linked English to a clearly identifiable workplace task and 9.18% specified an applicant-oriented English credential (Table 3).

Table 3. Representations of English Competence in the Direct-English Corpus

Representation	Number	%
General English ability/proficiency	7,161	79.03
Communication	3,180	35.10
Reading	1,504	16.60
Writing	1,123	12.39
Speaking	541	5.97
Listening	314	3.47
All four skills	424	4.68
Workplace-specific task	940	10.37
Applicant English credential	832	9.18

Note. Categories are not mutually exclusive; one advertisement may contain more than one representation.

A mutually exclusive classification made the broadness of these requirements clearer. Of the 9,061 direct-English advertisements, 5,299 (58.48%) expressed English only through broad proficiency and/or communication, without a specific skill, workplace task, or credential. A further 1,764 (19.47%) named a specific language skill but no task or credential,

906 (10.00%) specified a workplace task without a credential, and 798 (8.81%) specified a credential without a workplace task. Another 260 advertisements (2.87%) contained other direct English requirements that did not fit these four principal representations, while only 34 (0.38%) combined a credential with an explicit workplace task. These mutually exclusive categories account for all 9,061 advertisements in the direct-English corpus. For recurrent-pattern analysis, frequencies were calculated separately on the linguistically deduplicated subcorpus of 6,808 unique requirement texts so that repeated recruitment wording would not disproportionately influence the results. Within this subcorpus, the most frequent English-node frames included [ENGLISH] communication (n = 608), communication in [ENGLISH] (n = 466), basic [ENGLISH] (n = 356), proficient in [ENGLISH] (n = 275), know [ENGLISH] (n = 236), and [ENGLISH] is an advantage (n = 204). These constructions also encoded different degrees of recruitment obligation: "[ENGLISH] is an advantage" explicitly framed English as desirable rather than mandatory, whereas broad formulations such as "know [ENGLISH]", "proficient in [ENGLISH]", and "[ENGLISH] communication" did not by themselves determine whether English was required or preferred.

4.3. Credentialisation, Workplace Tasks, and Sector Profiles

The separation between credentialised and workplace-functional competence was striking. Among the 9,061 direct-English advertisements, 832 specified a credential and 940 specified an identifiable workplace task, but only 34 contained both (Table 4). Only 4.09% of credential-bearing advertisements also specified a workplace task. The unadjusted association was negative (OR = 0.34, Fisher's exact $p < .001$). After occupational sector was controlled in logistic regression, credential-bearing advertisements still had lower odds of task specification (adjusted OR = 0.36, 95% CI [0.25, 0.52], $p < .001$). This association is descriptive rather than causal.

Table 4. Relationship Between English Credentials and Workplace-Task Specification

	Task present	Task absent	Total
Credential present	34	798	832
Credential absent	906	7,323	8,229
Total	**940**	**8,121**	**9,061**

Sector profiles further differentiated these forms. Education was strongly credential-oriented: 42.35% of its direct-English postings specified a credential but only 3.28% specified a concrete workplace task. Electrical Engineering showed the reverse pattern, with 32.00% task specification and 7.64% credentialisation, while IT/Digital combined relatively high task specification (23.60%) with moderate credentialisation (12.57%). Tourism/Hospitality displayed low rates on both dimensions despite frequent communication requirements. Sector was significantly associated with both credentialisation, $\chi^2(15) = 657.31$, $p < .001$, $V = .269$, and task specification, $\chi^2(15) = 443.59$, $p < .001$, $V = .221$. Table 5 and Figure 2 summarise the clearest contrasts.

Table 5. Selected Sector Profiles of Credentialisation and Workplace-Task Specification

Sector	Direct-English Number	Credential %	Task %
Education	366	42.35	3.28
Languages/Translation	87	28.74	10.34
IT/Digital	517	12.57	23.60

Sector	Direct-English Number	Credential %	Task %
Electrical Engineering	275	7.64	32.00
Construction/Real Estate	369	2.17	17.07
Manufacturing	1,200	4.17	14.83
Tourism/Hospitality	769	2.86	1.82

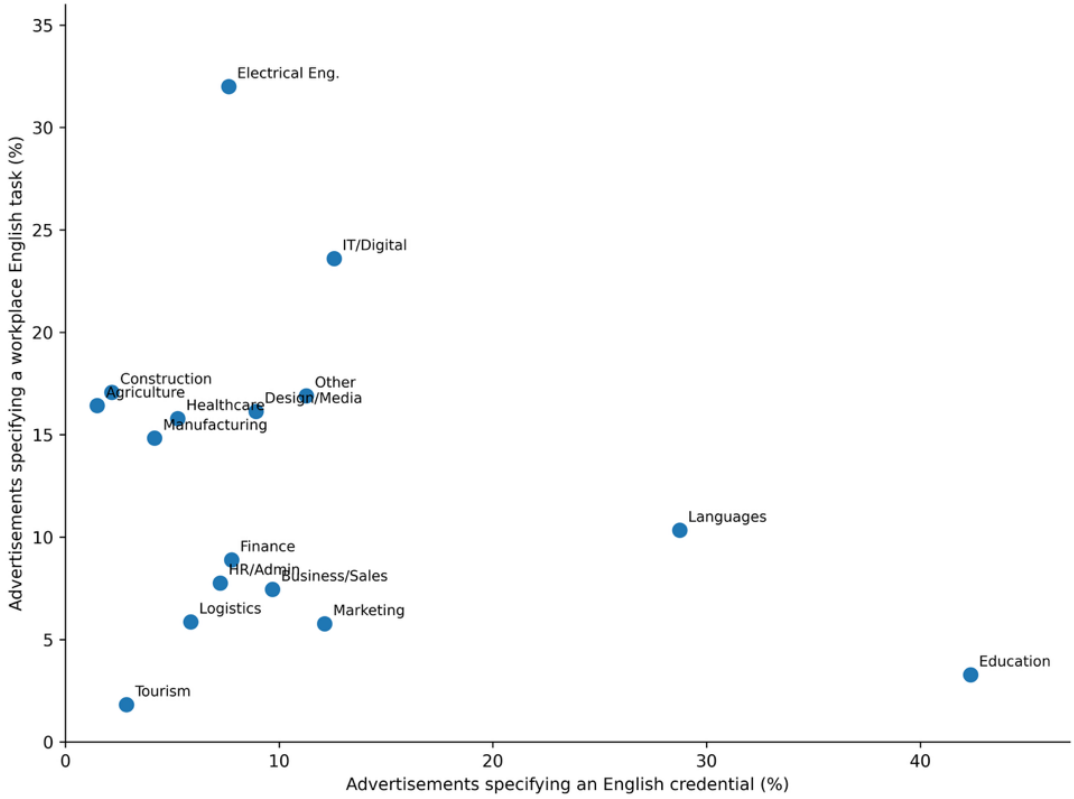


Figure 2. Credentialisation and Workplace-Task Specification Across Occupational Sectors

4.4. Credentials and Workplace-Functional Patterns

IELTS and TOEIC dominated the credential landscape. IELTS occurred in 525 credential-bearing postings and TOEIC in 458; 160 postings named both. Recoverable IELTS thresholds had an overall median of 6.5 (n = 465), while TOEIC thresholds had a median of 600 (n = 407). Education specified substantially higher thresholds than the rest of the market: median IELTS 7.0 versus 6.0 (rank-biserial = .538) and median TOEIC 850 versus 550 (rank-biserial = .722), both $p < .001$.

Workplace-functional English showed a different distribution. Document-related use was the most frequent explicit task (722 postings), followed by domain-specific English use (198), general workplace use (142), email-related use (102), and interaction with clients or partners (92). Electrical Engineering and IT/Digital were especially document- and reading-oriented. In Electrical Engineering, sector keyness identified strong overrepresentation of tài liệu (log-ratio = 1.80, adjusted $p < .001$), đọc hiểu (1.36, adjusted $p < .001$), and tài liệu kỹ thuật (2.53, adjusted $p < .001$). In IT/Digital, khả năng đọc (log-ratio = 1.97), communication

skills (2.15), written (1.84), and tài liệu [ENGLISH] (1.93) were also significantly overrepresented after Benjamini-Hochberg correction. Tourism/Hospitality, by contrast, foregrounded broad communication: 57.74% of direct-English postings referred to communication, but only 1.82% specified a concrete task. Keyness likewise favoured giao tiếp [ENGLISH] (log-ratio = 1.08) and [ENGLISH] giao tiếp (0.89).

Concordance inspection showed how these quantitative patterns were realised in recruitment wording. As Table 6 illustrates, some postings connected English directly to technical documents, international clients, reporting, email, or routine work, whereas others paired broad communication requirements with a credential threshold. The examples therefore clarify the difference between merely naming a language skill and situating English within an occupational activity.

Table 6. Representative Concordance Evidence of English Requirements

Sector	Corpus requirement	Representation
Electrical Engineering	Good English communication skills and the ability to read and understand specialised documents.	Communication + specialised-document reading
IT/Digital	The ability to use English at work (for communication, reporting, and email) is an advantage.	Communication, reporting + email
HR/Admin/Legal	The ability to communicate in English with foreign clients is a major advantage.	Communication with foreign clients
Finance/Banking	(English Verbal Communication and writing) Interest in working in a foreign environment, and daily use of English.	Routine workplace use + writing
Tourism/Hospitality	English communication skills (for serving customers and communicating with partners when needed).	Customer/partner communication
Education	Good English communication skills (IELTS 6.0 or higher, or an equivalent international certificate).	Communication + credential threshold

Table 6 also shows why workplace-functional specificity cannot be inferred from the mere presence of English. Technical-document reading and communication with foreign clients identify the occupational purpose directly, whereas the Education example combines a broad communication descriptor with a credential threshold without specifying a concrete task. The concordance evidence therefore supports the quantitative distinction between credentialised and workplace-functional representations.

4.5. Discussion

4.5.1. RQ1: Prevalence and Occupational Variation

Direct English demand was unevenly distributed across occupational sectors, consistent with earlier Vietnamese and European evidence of sectoral variation (Doan & Hamid, 2021; Marconi et al., 2023).

4.5.2. RQ2: Forms of Valued English Competence

The present corpus extends this sectoral evidence by showing that sectors foreground different evidence of valued competence. Education externalises English value through formal credentials. This reinforces the sector's credential-oriented profile and aligns with evidence

that IELTS scores have become salient recruitment criteria in Vietnamese private English-language education (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2026). Engineering and IT more often operationalise it through reading, documentation, and identifiable tasks. These patterns are consistent with research describing engineering English as embedded in technical and professional practices (Hodges & Seawright, 2023). Tourism/Hospitality foregrounds broad communication. This gap between broad communication labels and actual workplace practices is consistent with hospitality research showing that occupational interaction involves specific communicative demands not fully captured by general proficiency descriptions (Youngblood et al., 2021). This supports a Bourdieusian view in which the same linguistic resource acquires different forms of value in different occupational markets.

The predominance of broad formulations is equally important. Their limited occupational specificity does not imply that these jobs lack functional language demands. Rather, recruitment discourse frequently compresses or presupposes such demands instead of articulating them. This is why job advertisements are valuable evidence of what employers choose to make visible, but not complete descriptions of workplace language needs (Koester, 2021). More broadly, the contrast among graded proficiency descriptors, preference markers such as "advantage" and "preferred", and compulsory cues such as "required" and "mandatory" constructs English as a market-valued applicant resource whose recruitment value ranges from desirable advantage to a condition of access to employment.

This is the conceptual purpose of English employability capital in the present study: not to propose a new independent form of capital, but to operationalise how linguistic capital becomes visible in recruitment discourse. For English for Specific Purposes, the distinction also implies that labour-market evidence should separate certification demand from activity-specific language demands. Where job advertisements remain broad, they are best treated as a starting point for needs analysis rather than a complete account of workplace communication (Koester, 2021).

4.5.3. RQ3: Credentialisation and Workplace-Task Specification

The most distinctive contribution is the credential-task disconnect. Standardised language credentials can function as portable indicators of proficiency, but they do not themselves specify the occupational activities for which English will be used. Previous research has cautioned against assuming an automatic equivalence between test scores and workplace readiness (Pan & In'nami, 2017), while Hsieh (2023) further showed that the practical meaning of workplace English scores depends on how score users interpret them within particular decision contexts. The present study does not evaluate the validity of IELTS, TOEIC, or other language tests, nor can the corpus determine whether credentialed applicants perform better at work or whether particular scores predict occupational outcomes. Its finding is narrower but consequential: formal credentials and explicit workplace uses were rarely articulated together in the recruitment texts analysed here. Moreover, the negative association persisted after occupational sector was controlled, indicating that the pattern cannot be explained solely by the concentration of credentials in Education and workplace tasks in Engineering and other technical sectors. The credential-task disconnect should therefore be understood as a property of recruitment representation rather than as a claim about test validity.

The study therefore makes three related contributions. Empirically, it provides contemporary large-scale evidence across 16 Vietnamese occupational domains. Methodologically, it combines prevalence statistics with recurrent-pattern, keyness, credential, concordance, and workplace-task analyses rather than reducing language demand to a binary variable. Conceptually, it shows that English employability capital is better understood as differentiated market recognition: general proficiency, specific skills,

credentials, and workplace tasks are distinct ways of making English valuable, and credentialised competence should not automatically be treated as equivalent to explicitly functional competence.

5. Conclusion and Implications

Using a large contemporary corpus of Vietnamese online recruitment discourse, this study found direct English demand in 18.99% of 47,707 unique job advertisements and substantial variation across 16 occupational sectors. More importantly, most English demand was broad rather than occupationally explicit. Education showed a strongly credential-oriented profile, while Engineering and Information Technology more often connected English to technical reading, documentation, and other workplace functions. Across the corpus, credentials and explicit workplace tasks rarely co-occurred, and the negative association remained after controlling for occupational sector.

The main contribution is therefore not simply to reaffirm that English matters for employability in Vietnam. It is to demonstrate that the labour-market value of English is constructed through different forms of evidence and expectation. For English for Specific Purposes and employability-oriented language education, this distinction suggests that curriculum planning should consider not only proficiency certificates but also the communicative skills and occupational tasks that become salient in particular sectors.

The study has three limitations. Online advertisements represent recruitment discourse rather than actual workplace communication or hiring outcomes; VietJobs cannot represent every segment of the Vietnamese labour market; and conservative rule-based task identification may miss highly implicit workplace uses. Future research could compare recruitment corpora across countries or time periods and combine corpus evidence with workplace observation or employer interviews to investigate how advertised requirements correspond to language use in practice.

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