Exploring Indonesian Graduates' English Language Skills and Companies' English Language Skills Requirements in East Kalimantan, Indonesia.

Rachmie Sari Baso M.Ed

***Abstract*:** *This paper explores a study of Indonesian graduates' English language skills and companies' English language requirements in the workplace in East Kalimantan, Indonesia. Through questionnaire- based surveys submitted to the multinational companies and graduates from three higher education institutions; head of department, teachers and students as the graduates, results revealed that the use of an internal standard English language proficiency for students in the most of the institutions in Balikpapan, East Kalimantan, Indonesia, should be considered for re-evaluation in order to meet the companies' English language requirements. The suggestion to include TOEFL preparation in the curriculum for students prior their graduation should be addressed followed by the importance of English for Specific Purposes and English for communication events both oral and written. These are relevant to the study's findings in terms of companies' requirement. Therefore, it is crucial for educators at university level in East Kalimantan to design an ESP Program which is focused on both oral and written communication skills.*

I.   INTRODUCTION

The status of English as an international language plays a very important role in the workplace, especially in multinational companies. Most employers look for candidates who not only have excellent academic performance but also possess good communication skills especially in English language.Lauder (2008 p. 12) states that, " Organizations which wish to enter in the international market are not likely to be able to do so without using English...any multinational business with international offices must have staff who can work in English". Similarly, Rawung and Li (2008 p.1) explain that in the trans-national activities of world trade, English is utilised as the dominant language in doing business. Thus, in the importance of the role of English for graduates as prospective employees, it should be considered that they have proficiency in English language skills to obtain in employment with the multinational companies. However, Vincent (2001) as cited in Adawiyah (2007 p. 233) states that an interesting phenomenon at the tertiary level in Indonesia is the inability of Indonesian graduates to adjust to the workplace as one of the problems faced by Indonesian graduates to evolve in the workplace is the weakness in English language skills.

Phang (2006), as cited in Kasim and Ali (2010 p. 168), states that in Malaysia in 2006, around 45,000 college graduates were unemployed due to poor English language skills. Even though they were highly qualified academically, their English language skills were below the standard required by the employers. One of the factors that contributed to the increased unemployment rate in Malaysia in 2008 was that the "graduates are [were] not ready in the workplace" and that they needed to be equipped with other skills besides their technical skills. One of these skills is English language competency (Zaharim, et al (2009 p.23). This study from Malaysia may indicate the likelihood of a similar situation in Indonesia especially in graduates' English language skills.

In East Kalimantan, Indonesia, this is very much the case. Many well-known multinational companies in the fields of mining, gas, oil and forestry operate in this area, such as PT. Chevron, PT. Thiess and BHP Billiton (Setdaprovkaltim, 2011). These multinational companies offer work opportunities for the local graduates (Iskandar, 2011).In contrast, if they lack English language skills even they are highly qualified academically; they would have difficulty gaining employment in their local areas.

Universities are viewed by their stakeholders as having a responsibility to provide graduates with fundamental workplace skills, contribute to their achievement of short and long term goals and also to provide a satisfying study experience for graduates (Richardson and Kabanoff, 2003 p. 1). With this statement, Indonesian higher education should consider the need to provide graduates with the skills required to be successful in entering the workplace. At the moment, at tertiary education level in Indonesia, there are approximately 3000 private institutions and around 250 state institutions in the country (KopertisWil.XI, 2012). The majority of private institutions at university level in Indonesia due to the demographic structure of the country which has around 32 provinces and the government has limited funding to open many universities and colleges around this country. In order to support the government, the private sectors are given access to open universities and colleges.

In the East Kalimantan province, there are one hundred and sixty six (166) private and three (3) state higher education institutions in this area and the surrounding area (KopertisWil.XI, 2012). In Balikpapan, one of the cities in East Kalimantan in which many multinational companies operate, there are eleven (11) private institutions at tertiary education level. One university, two colleges and nine vocational schools were established in this area. As a consequence, the universities should provide graduates properly to face the challenges of working competitiveness. Thus, the graduates have a good opportunity to find employment in the multinational companies in their local area.

This paper reports the study of Indonesian graduates' English Language skills and the English language skills required by the workplace in East Kalimantan. The study was focused on multinational companies; graduates, teachers and students at university level in Balikpapan city as the samples of participants. The aim of the study explored the gaps between graduates' English language skills and employers' English language requirements in the multinational companies in East Kalimantan.

II.   LITERATURE REVIEW
2.1 English language skills in Indonesian workplace
Many studies have shown that English language proficiency is one of the skills most in demand which many of graduates have incompetence to enter the workplace (Lechtonen and Karjaleinen, 2009; Ngah, et al 2011; Kassim and Ali, 2009; Al-Khatib, 2005). Many multi-national companies have adopted English policy and instructions and highlighted impact on demand for workplace program (Chiver, 2010 as cited in Newton and Kusmierczyk, 2011 p. 76). Chang's (2004) study as cited in Ngah, et al (2011 p. 1493) states that "Proficiency in English means, the ability to present ideas, explain issues and problems faced, to speak up in a constructive manner, to resolve the problems, to understand issues and problems faced by companies [multinational companies]". number of studies reveal English as being the most important language in multinational companies in many countries. For example, a study in Finland, Lechtonen and Karjaleinen's (2009 p. 413) found that English was considered more important by employers than their national language, Finnish. English is the language most used in the work-related environment in Finland, particularly in commerce. In Thailand, Rawung and Li (2008 p. 1) in the study of English as a workplace language for engineers has shown that the importance of English language competency is crucial for the graduates as perspective workers entering the automotive industries in Thailand. They also note that companies prefer that graduates have fluent English communication skills as 'a global passport' to international business.

In terms of English language skills, many studies focused on the importance role of the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) used in the workplace. Edward (2000) as cited in Al-Khatib (2005 p. 178) emphasis that there is a connection between the workplace and the effective language needs in employment in terms of language skills [English] practiced, terminology used and syllabus design and materials for employees. Several studies have provided evidence that using English language for Specific Purpose in the field of industry and the importance to include ESP in the curriculum at university level is beneficial to graduates entering the workplace. Zaharim's, et al (2009 p. 23) in their study regarding employers' perception and expectation toward engineering graduates in the Malaysian workplace, state that "in the level of employers' satisfaction to [with] the engineering graduates, the English proficiency is mostly needed in a multinational company". Moreover, Zaharim's, et al (2009 p.28) findings mostly emphasizes the ESP courses which have to be included in the university curriculum should based on the need analysis of companies' demands.

Many studies reported that English communication is highly recommended to new employees in the multi-national companies. Goh and Chan (1993) as cited in Kassim and Ali (2009 p. 170) reports that, in the study of communication needed for engineering graduates perceived by employers found that English communication skills, both oral and written were significant in communication events such as recruitment and promotion. Kassim and Ali's (2009) study also found that, in English communication events and skills needed in the workplace for engineering graduates, the communicative events that proved frequently important for multi-national companies were oral and written communication, such as teleconferences, networking and presentation. Similarly, in Hong Kong, Qian's (2009) study (as cited in Newton and Kusmierczk, 2011 p. 8) states that, the needs to improve in their oral English were more important than the needs to improve in writing skills for technical reports.

However, Sui-Mui and Mead's (2000) study, also in Hong Kong, investigated the importance of the use of English to meet the demands of communication in the textile and clothing industry and found that it was important to facilitate communication with customers, in letter writing (focused on fax and email), and also in describing the products and materials, for examples Thus, it can be seen that the different needs of communication events in oral and written skills in the workplace are based on the needs companies focused on. In the engineering industry, for example, Malaysian engineers may find it necessary to be able to communicate highly technological data to peers and therefore require a high level of English verbal communication. Whereas, in the textile and clothing industries in Hong Kong, they focused on the communication face to face with

customers in terms of describing the product to them which followed by the importance of written communication in terms of using fax and emails. Thus, it is important to explore the different levels of communication needs based on industry fields in regards to English for Specific Purposes at university level to include in the curriculum. "Knowing the language communication demands at the workplace helps [the] university to plan their degree requirement and curriculum. This, in turn to facilitate the graduates' adjustment to this demands" (Lehtonen and Karjalainen, 2009 p, 411).

2.2 English in the Indonesian workplace

In the Indonesian workplace, all official functions and written communication in government and all public organizations are carried out in Bahasa Indonesian. English is used mostly in multinational and foreign companies operating in Indonesia. English is a crucial communication tool used in multi-national companies' environment and, as the status of English as an international language in Indonesia, companies that wish to evolve in the international market should use English as part of their working environment (Huda, 2000 as cited in Lauder, 2008 p.12).

Regarding graduates' English language skills in the workplace, to date not many studies have been conducted in this environment in Indonesia. One study that has been conducted by Adawiyah, et al (2009), is the study of the customers' satisfaction with economic graduates of the University of Djendral Soedirman, Indonesia. They investigated English from a company's perspectives and found that English was very important to support employees' technical skills in their jobs. They investigated the level of employers' satisfaction with the economic graduates. The study found that English communication skills was one of many other factors that were important to companies' satisfactions. This study may not be sufficient to examine English language skills in the Indonesian workplace in particular due to the study investigation not being focused on graduates' English language skills in the Indonesian workplace.

Furthermore, as many studies have shown, English for Specific Purposes is definitely necessary in the field of industry. In Indonesian context, ESP at university level in Indonesia still face a problem in being conducted within curriculum. English language study is compulsory for all Indonesian universities across all disciplinary areas for first year students. Marwan (2009 p.1) explains that, English language teaching in Indonesia universities can generally be divided into two categories: ELT for general English (EGP) and ELT for specific purposes (ESP). Students majoring in English studies were taught general English while students in different disciplinary areas were taught English for Specific Purposes. However, to be practical, the implementation of ESP at university in Indonesian was more focused on the mix between general English and ESP itself. In the many aspects that influence this issue, Yuwono and Harbon (2010 p 148-149) explain that many problems were faced in teaching the English language in Indonesia. The problems faced from time to time were in terms of the choice of teachers' qualifications and teaching materials still used to teach English in Indonesia. Similarly, Marwan's (2009 p. 6) study when he interviewed in-depth with of ESP teachers in the vocational institution in Indonesia, found that institutions do not have quality resources to support students and teacher in ESP classroom. He also found that it had not enough academic resources, such as books, journal article which can be used for ESP teaching and learning. Therefore, the problems can also be related to the quality of planning and preparation including teachers and academic matters within universities provide ESP course designs in regards to students' successful in their future careers.

In addition, Darjowijoyo (2000 p. 23) states that "English teachers [in Indonesia] do not have themselves mastered in the language they are teaching" At university level, most of the teachers do not have sufficient vocabulary and knowledge in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) which tailored to the students' needs. Moreover, As a result, they tend to teach general English in the classroom. This therefore has negative impact on the graduates' English ability as they have insufficient English skills on entering the workplace. However, to date not many studies examined the role of ESP at university level and the workplace needs in Indonesia. Thus, due to the limitation of study in English language skills in the Indonesian workplace; more research needs to be conducted to investigate the level of English language skills required by multinational companies in Indonesian market.

III.   RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To achieve better understanding in the issues of Indonesian graduates' English language skills and companies' English language requirement in the workplace, I formulated the research questions as follow:
1.   Do the universities in East Kalimantan have an internal or external standard of English language competency for graduates?
2.   Do the companies have the standard of English language requirements for the new entrants?

2.1   If they have, do they have differences or similarities to the universities' English language skills standard?

2.2   Are there any gaps between them? If yes, how well do the graduates and universities meet these gaps to comply the companies' requirements?

IV.   METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

This study is a limited research project and the methodological approach used a mixed method of quantitative and qualitative research. A mixed method was determined to obtain the data collections based on the phenomenon that encountered. A mixed method is a procedure for collecting, evaluating, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative research and methods in a single study to comprehend a research problem (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007 p. 5, Creswell, 2008 p. 552).

For the quantitative part of the research, a survey was constructed in the form of a questionnaire. "Survey designs are procedures in quantitative research in which you administer a survey or questionnaires to a small group of people (called sample) to identify trends in attitudes, opinions, behaviours or characteristic of a large group of people (called population)" (Creswell, 2008 p. 61). The content and questions were developed from the reading of studies and articles that focused on English language skills in the workplace. The survey was aimed at identifying the   standard of English language skills used in, and required by, multinational companies in East Kalimantan from both companies' and graduates' perspectives. Questionnaires were utilised to companies due to them being the primary resources for the problems faced by graduates as prospective employees. With the graduates, the purpose was to gain information on their experiences in working in multi-national companies in East Kalimantan.

Interviews were designed for universities, teachers and students to address the qualitative aspect of the research. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in these sections. Interviews were conducted with academic heads, teachers and current students to elaborate more in-depth on the current conditions of English teaching at university level. The information included their standards, methods, teaching atmosphere and students' experiences in learning English at university level. The participants were encouraged to explore their opinion in detail. Interview is suitable tool to gaining data collections about their relationship, experiences and feelings (Sharp, 2009 p. 74).

4.2 Data Collections
4.2.1 Sample

All the participants chosen were from Balikpapan city, East Kalimantan. The consideration taken into account in choosing this city was because it has many multinational companies operating in this area. Local graduates as current employees and the local universities, including teachers and current students were taken into account with regards to the relationship between the workplace and the university. Employers from the eight (8) large multinational companies in Balikpapan, East Kalimantan were considered for the qualitative part of the research. Of the eight (8) companies, only four (4) companies returned the survey:

1.   PT. Chevron Indonesia
2.   PT Hexindo,
3.   PT Thiess Indonesia
4.   PT. Alkon Trainindo Utama Balikpapan.

The 2nd part of the quantitative involved survey questionnaires to 60 graduates. They were chosen from three institutions in Balikpapan, namely:

1.   A university – Universitas Balikpapan (UNIBA).
2.   A college – Akademi Bahasa Asing Balikpapan (ABA Balikpapan).
3.   A college – Mining Vocational school (STTMIGAS) Balikpapan.

Institutions were selected based on the level of degree of tertiary education: one university, one college, and one academy in Balikpapan. The Balikpapan institutions were chosen to coincide with location of respondents companies. However, from 60 survey questionnaires, only 41 were returned.

Initially, for the qualitative part of the research, preliminary open interviews were conducted with the academic heads of eleven (11) institutions in Balikpapan, East Kalimantan. From the eleven (11) were interviewed, only six (6) respondents responded, namely:

1. University of Balikpapan (UNIBA).
2. Mining, gas and oil Vocational School (STTMIGAS).
3. Economic Vocational School of Balikpapan (STIEPAN).

4. Economic Vocational School (STTMADANI).
5. Computer Vocational School (STIKOM).
6. Foreign Language Academy of Balikpapan (ABA Balikpapan).

Subsequently, four (4) English teachers and twelve (12) students from the same three universities as the graduates were interviewed with random. Only four English teachers were chosen due to the limited number of English teachers at university level in Balikpapan, East Kalimantan. Some universities were found to have one or two English teachers. Current students with a variety from top to lower grades in English as a subject were chosen at random to participate in the study.

4.3.2 Questionnaires

Questionnaires were based on preparatory reading of various studies in this area and questions based on Kassim and Ali (2009) that proved useful to research were modified for the purpose. Kassim and Ali's (2009) study regarding the needs of English communications used in multinational companies in Malaysia, was found to be appropriate to the research. Their questionnaires were based on the importance of English language skills in the workplace therefore the focus of the research was placed. The questions were based on the English requirements perceived by employers and English in communication in the workplace. The questions that were constructed based on the necessary needs to identify the standards of English language skills from employers' perspectives and graduates' perspectives of their experiences in working in the multinational companies in East Kalimantan were then modified to suit the subject matter.

The company's questionnaire consisted of two sections, namely section A and section B. Section A contained demographic data of participants such as name of the company, location, genders and job position. Section B consisted of twelve (12) items divided into three areas:

1.   The importance of the standard of English language skills in the company.
        (Statement no. 1 – 4).
2.   The use of English in daily activities and the working environment.
        (Statement no. 5 – 8).
3.   The use of four English language skills in the workplace. (Statement no. 9 – 12).
        Thus, based on the areas above, each question was categorised into five (5) categories as follows:
1.   Strongly Agree
2.   Agree
3.   N/A (Not applicable)
4.   Disagree
5.   Strongly Disagree

In the questionnaires submitted to graduates, the questions were also divided in two sections. The first section contained the demographic data and included the name of employee, companies, genders and working experience. The second section was composed of eleven (11) items which is divided also into three main areas:

1.   The graduates' experience in English language skills in the workplace (Statement no. 1 – 3).
2.   The use of English language in the communication events (Statement no. 4 – 7).
3.   The use of four English language skills in the working environment (Statement no. 8 – 11).
        Therefore, based on the areas above, each item was categorised into five (5) categories as follows:
1.   Strongly Agree
2.   Agree
3.   Neutral
4.   Disagree
5.   Strongly Disagree
        Thus, this scale was sufficient to explore respondents' expressions and responses in the questionnaires.

4.3.3 Interviews

Initially, the academic heads of the tertiary institutions in Balikpapan, East Kalimantan were interviewed. The aim was to explore the standard of English language skills used by the institutions. From eleven (11) respondents, only six (6) returned the completed questionnaires (refer to the list of institutions mentioned in 4.2.1). The questions to the academic heads were seen as follow:
1.   Do you have a standard of English language proficiency for students prior to graduation? What kind of standard is used? Is it an internal standard (institution standard) or external standard (TOEFL, IELT i.e. kinds of international English language testing)?

2.   a. If you use an internal standard, is it your own standard or based on the national curriculum of English as how to the subject should be taught for first year student at university level?

b. If you use an external standard, what is the standard? At which level or grade should a student pass this standard?

A small number of teachers were chosen to interview. The participants were four (4) English teachers from following three (3) institutions: University of Balikpapan (UNIBA), Akademi Bahasa Asing Balikpapan (ABA Balikpapan), and Mining Vocational School (STTMIGAS) from a variety of faculty namely Economic, Mining and Foreign language school. A semi-structured interview was developed to assist in ensuring as much information as possible was gained. Sharp (2009 p. 74) explains that, "Semi structured [interview is] where the control of the interviews is shared or leans more one way or other by using a mixture of questions (these are well suited to individual research projects)". Therefore, this approach was justified with the research design.

The interview content for teachers focused on university English language skill preparation for students prior to graduation, teachers' experiences in teaching English methods, and the strategies and their perspectives of the students' English achievements. Interviews were conducted in English based on the assumption teachers would have sufficient fluency in English due to their teaching background. The example of questionnaires can be seen in Appendix 5.

The interviews for students were focused on their belief in English learning at the university and their opinion about companies English language requirements. Interviews were conducted in a friendly, informal setting and investigations were based on the same set of questions. The interviews with students were conducted in Indonesian, as the native language of participants. It was crucial to ensure that they understood the questions in order to facilitate their expression in answering the questions to gain data. The transcripts were analysed to address the significant concern and obtain results (See appendix 6 for detail).

Findings

In this study, three main areas were categorized for company and graduates in the questionnaires. The following categories are as follow:

Table A. Company's questionnaires:
1.   Area 1. The importance of standard of English language skills required by company in the workplace (Statement no. 1 -4).
2.   Area 2. The use of English in the communication events, daily activities and working environment (Statement no. 5 – 8).
3.   Area 3. The use of the four English language skills (speaking, writing, reading and writing) in the workplace (Statement no. 9-12).

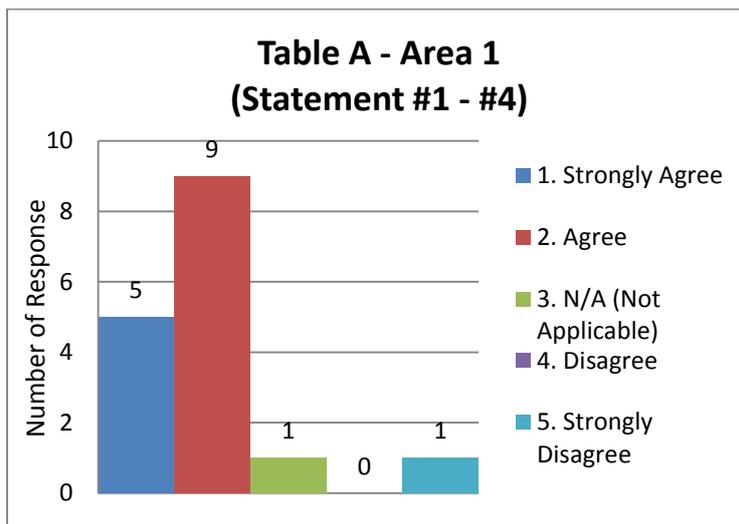| Tabel A COMPANY'S QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS Responses were collected from 4 (four) companies.	Response Category					Total
	"Agree" Trend			"Disagree" Trend		
	1. Strongly Agree	2. Agree	3. N/A (Not Applicable)	4. Disagree	5. Strongly Disagree	
Questionnaire - Area 1						
1 The company **has a standard** of English language competency for new applicants.	1	3	0	0	0	4
2 English for Specific purposes is needed to be learnt by the new applicants as the company's English language **standard of requirement**.	1	2	1	0	0	4
3 The company offers **extended English training** for the new employees who have no meet the standard of requirements; however, they have high technical skills.	2	2	0	0	0	4
4 The company takes into account of employees' **English achievement** to promote them in higher position.	1	2	0	0	1	4
Total responses for Area 1	5	9	1	0	1	16
Response trend percentage	0.88		0.06	0.06		1.00
Questionnaire - Area 2						
5 The use of English in **communication in daily tasks/written forms**, such as email, reports and written instructions.	2	2	0	0	0	4
6 The use of English in **communicating with managers/supervisors**.	2	1	0	0	1	4
7 The use of English in **communicating with subordinates**.	1	1	1	0	1	4
8 The use of English in **communication in the meetings**.	2	1	1	0	0	4
Total responses for Area 2	7	5	2	0	2	16
Response trend percentage	0.75		0.13	0.13		1.00
Questionnaire - Area 3						
9 The use of English **speaking** skill in the workplace.	1	3	0	0	0	4
10 The use of English **writing** skill in the workplace.	1	2	1	0	0	4
11 The use of English **reading** skill in the workplace.	2	2	0	0	0	4
12 The use of English **listening** skill in the workplace.	1	3	0	0	0	4
Total responses for Area 3	5	10	1	0	0	16
Response trend percentage	0.94		0.06	0.00		1.00

Figure 1. The importance of standard of English language skills required by company in the workplace (Statement no. 1 -4)

Table A, area 1 indicates that the trend agree percentage was of 88% of four (4) companies which agreed on the importance of the standard of English language skills for new applicants compared to only 6% of respondents who "disagreed" and 6 % marked N/A (not applicable). The study highlights the significant trend that companies' agree that they have a standard for English language skills in the recruitment of new applicants. Moreover, all companies agreed that extended English courses were given to the applicants if they had high technical skills but their English language skills did not meet the standard. It can be seen that the companies will support the qualified applicants to improve their English language skills.
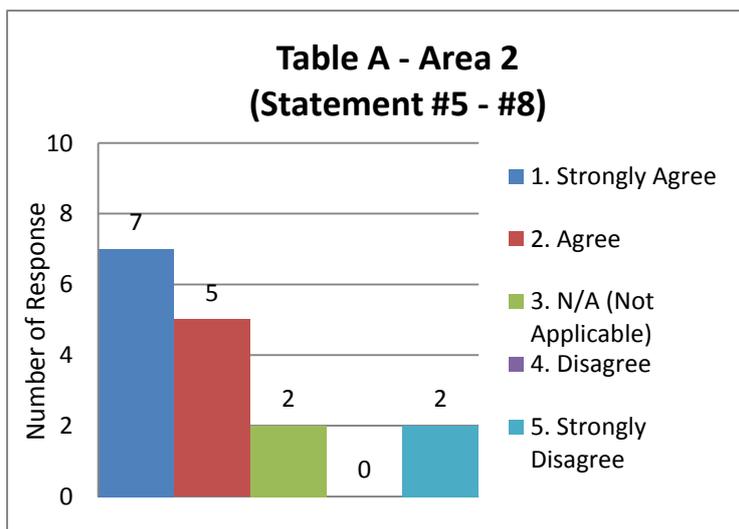

Figure 2. The use of English in the communication events, daily activities and working environment (Statement no. 5 – 8)

Table A area 2 reveals that 75% of four (4) companies agreed significantly on all questions in this category. Whilst this figure shows the responses higher rate of disagreement than the responses in the area 1, this was due to 13% of participants who answered trends "disagree" and 13% responded N/A (not applicable). It can be highlighted that in the statement of the use of English in communication in daily tasks/written forms was more important than others in communication events and all companies agreed with this statement. Therefore, it should be recognize that companies emphasized the necessity to use English in daily tasks in the workplace. Therefore, graduates should take most consideration to have ability in this part.
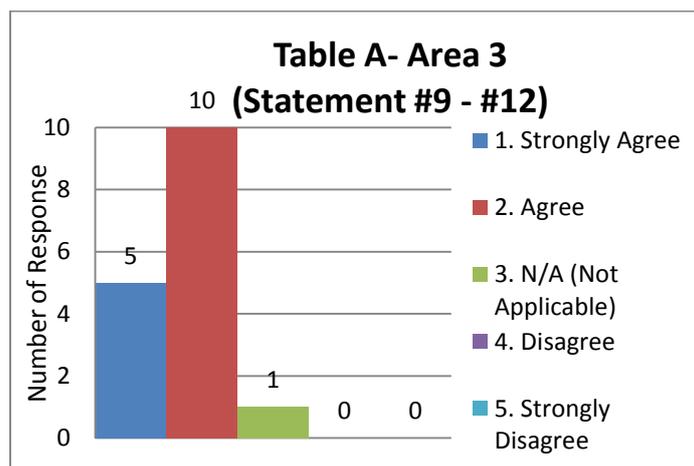
Figure 3. The use of the four English language skills (speaking, writing, reading and writing) in the workplace (Statement no. 9-12)

Table A, area 3 indicates companies' responses shows that the use of the four basic English skills (speaking, writing, reading and listening) in the workplace was very significant. It reveals that the trend to agree was 94% of four (4) respondents who responded to this area. English speaking skills in the workplace should be given high priority consideration for new entrants above others skills (writing, reading and listening) in regards to meeting the companies' English requirements for employment with companies in this area.

B. Table B. Graduates' questionnaires
Table B. Graduates' questionnaires:
1.   Area 1. The importance of standard of English language skills required by company in the workplace (Statement no. 1 -4).
2.   Area 2. The use of English in the communication events, daily activities and working environment (Statement no. 5 – 8).
3.   Area 3. The use of the four English language skills (speaking, writing, reading and writing) in the workplace (Statement no. 9-12).

Tabel B GRADUATE'S QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS (GRADUATE AS EMPLOYEE) Responses were collected from 41 (fourty one) graduates of 3 institutions of tertiary-level.	Response Category					
	"Agree" Trend			"Disagree" Trend		
	1. Strongly Agree	2. Agree	3. Neutral	4. Disagree	5. Strongly Disagree	Total
Questionnaire - Area 1						
1 My English level was sufficient enough when the first time I have been working for this company.	9	21	6	3	2	41
2 The company offered the intensive English course to support my English skill.	2	20	12	5	2	41
3 What I have learnt at the university, my English skills are useful to support me in the workplace.	6	19	9	6	1	41
Total responses for Area 1	17	60	27	14	5	123
Response trend percentage	0.63		0.22	0.15		1.00
Questionnaire - Area 2						
4 I use English in **communication in daily tasks/written forms**, such as emails, reports and written instructions.	4	16	13	6	2	41
5 I use English in **communicating with managers/ supervisors**.	3	18	11	7	2	41
6 I use English in **communicating with subordinates.**	6	17	9	7	2	41
7 I use English in **communicating in the meetings.**	1	21	10	7	2	41
Total responses for Area 2	14	72	43	27	8	164
Response trend percentage	0.52		0.26	0.21		1.00
Questionnaire - Area 3						
8 The use of English **speaking** skill in the workplace.	15	13	8	4	1	41
9 The use of English **writing** skill in the workplace.	10	18	9	3	1	41
10 The use of English **reading** skill in the workplace.	8	21	8	3	1	41
11 The use of English **listening** skill in the workplace.	15	16	7	2	1	41
Total responses for Area 3	48	68	32	12	4	164
Response trend percentage	0.71		0.20	0.10		1.00

Table B: Questionnaire - Area 1 (Statement #1 - #3)

(Bar chart showing "Number of Response" on the y-axis from 0 to 80)

- 1. Strongly Agree: 17
- 2. Agree: 60
- 3. Neutral: 27
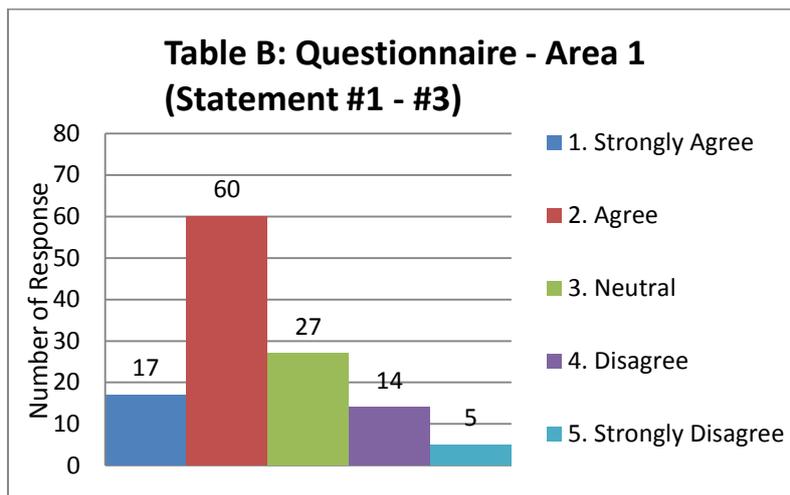- 4. Disagree: 14
- 5. Strongly Disagree: 5

Figure 1. The graduates' experience in English language skills in the Workplace (Statement no. 1 – 3).

Table B, area 1, findings shows that 63% of 41 graduates agreed that their experiences in learning English at university influence their career. The highest response to the statement was their belief in their English ability when they entered the workplace (30 respondents). It also shows that the graduates who answered this statement were confident that their English skills were sufficient to meet the companies' English requirements. In contrast, 22 participants (more than 50% of participants disagreed with the statement that "the company offered Extended English Language courses to the new applicant" This raises the assumption that the graduates (as employees) were not sure if the companies would give additional English classes to improve their English ability during their career.
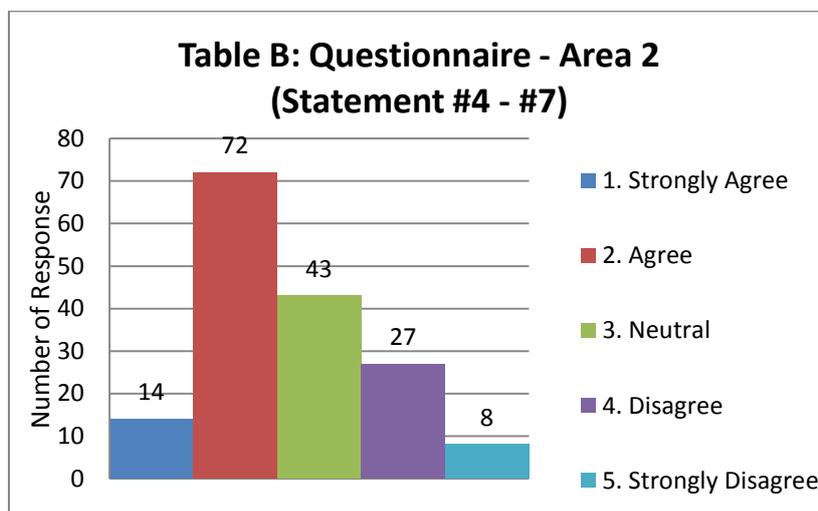
Table B: Questionnaire - Area 2 (Statement #4 - #7)

(Bar chart showing "Number of Response" on the y-axis from 0 to 80)

- 1. Strongly Agree: 14
- 2. Agree: 72
- 3. Neutral: 43
- 4. Disagree: 27
- 5. Strongly Disagree: 8

Figure 2. The use of English language in the communication events (Statement No. 4 -7)

In area 2 of Table B, the findings show that the respondents answers in the category of English used in communication events; 52% of 41 respondents agreed that English is used in many communication events. It can therefore be highlighted that, in doing daily tasks (email, reports and written instructions), 22 % of the participants answered that it was not quite as significant compared to the use English in communicating with their subordinates. It can be assumed that the graduates were minimally involved in written tasks forms, so they emphasized that to communicate in English with subordinates is more important. However, serious consideration should be given to the fact that not many subordinates would be fluent in English language skills, thus it could create misunderstanding and misinterpretation of jobs' requirements and work instructions.
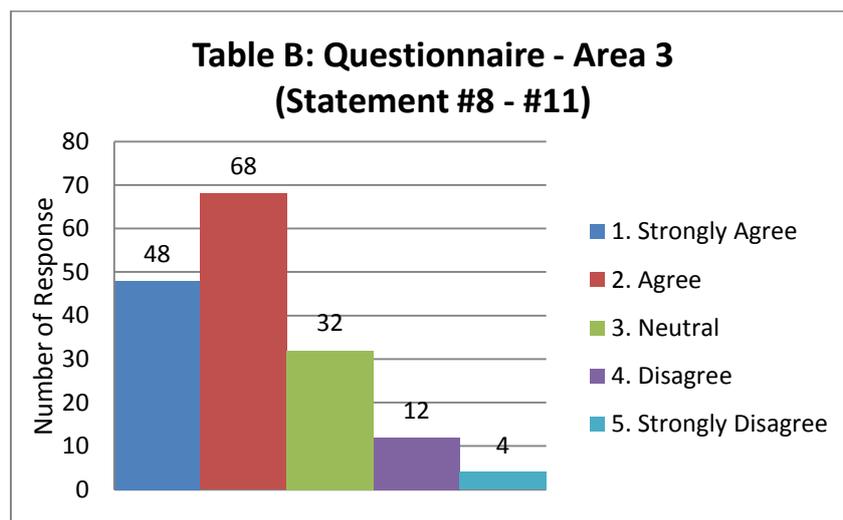
Figure 3. The use of the four English language skills (speaking, writing, reading and writing) in the workplace (Statement no. 9-12)

In area 3 of Table B, the figure shows that this category is very important to compare the two previous categories. It reveals that 71 % of respondents or 31 respondents answered agreed that the use of listening skill was very significant in their jobs. This finding is quite interesting based on the fact many studies found that speaking is most importance in the workplace. So, it can be concluded that the graduates may faced English speaking managers/ supervisors and experience difficult in understanding and interpreting work-related instruction.

V. DISCUSSION

In order to answer the research questions, discussions were conducted based on the findings from the survey questionnaires submitted to multinational companies and local university graduates in Balikpapan, East Kalimantan Indonesia and from qualitative data collected, through interviews with Head of departments, teachers and students in Balikpapan, East Kalimantan. Two main areas were addressed in the research questions:

RQ 1: Do the universities in East Kalimantan have an internal or external standard of English competency for graduates?

The findings from interviews with six (6) institutions in Balikpapan East Kalimantan showed that all of the institutions use an internal standard of English language skills for the students. They rely on the National Curriculum for English subject at university level that English should be taught compulsory for two semesters and two contact hours (100 minutes) per week in the first years of study (Darjowijoyo, 2000 p. 23). Thus, this is the reason why most universities implement these statements as the basis of their internal English standard. However, two institutions namely Mining Vocational School (STT MIGAS) and Foreign Language Academy (ABA Balikpapan) reported that they offered English for two semesters, but that they had additional English proficiency tests prior student's graduation with the aims to have adequate skills before entering the workplace. It can be seen from the two institutions, they concerned on graduates' English language skills and their visions also based on the chance that one of their local graduates may find employment in the multi-national companies in East Kalimantan. Then he or she has a chance to improve his/her standard of living and then can contribute positive impact to the economic welfare in East Kalimantan particularly.

However, regardless of the two institution's efforts to support their students above, conducting an internal standard of English for only two semesters, it is insufficient to support students' English language proficiency on entering the workplace. From interviews with teachers and students, all of them responded that the biggest issue was the lack of time to learn English at university level in East Kalimantan (see Darjowijoyo, 2000 p. 23). From the students' perspective, when they were asked whether their English language skills were sufficient or not to meet the companies' English requirements, only five (5) students responded sufficient and in contrast the rest of them (seven (7) students) said their English proficiency were inadequate.

Moreover, based on interview with the academic heads, teachers and students, the concerns in were concluded to be as follows:

a. The institution tends to focus on their discipline areas, such as mining, economic, and technical skills rather than students' English language skills.

b.   The limited time of study influences the achievement of students' English ability.
c.   The institutions have no financial support to conduct additional English program, such as TOEFL preparation course (An international English language testing or other English language proficiency tests).
d.   The institutions have no connection to the workplace regarding English language requirements.

In short, it can be seen that in the use of an internal-based standard, it should be considered to be re-evaluated. As mentioned previously that the National curriculum English at university level is English compulsory to be taught in the first year of study. However, The Indonesian National Education System Act No. 20/2003, article 37 emphasizes that, the institutions are given the authority to develop their own curriculum to justify the potential of students to achieve objectives of learning. Thus, the initiate to institutions should be addressed to align and achieve this statement.

RQ 2: Do companies have the standard of English language requirements for the new entrants? If they have, do they have differences or similarities to the universities' English language skills standard? Are there any gaps between them? If yes, how well do the graduates and universities meet these gaps to comply the companies' requirements?

The findings from the quantitative methods show that most of companies indicated a significant response to the importance of the standard of English language skills in the workplace. It can be seen on Table A. area 1, that 88% of the respondents indicated a trend to agree to the three (3) statements on the questionnaires compared to only 6% in a trend disagree. It can be assumed that they have their own standard for English requirements for the new applicants. In an additional interview with the companies, there were two companies who use TOEFL criteria as their English language skills standard. They agreed that the level of 450 for a TOEFL score is the minimum English requirement for the new applicants.

The other two companies only mentioned that the applicants had a good command of English within the interview section of recruitment. Therefore, the standards of companies are clear in that they use the international testing standard TOEFL and the fluency of English language skills in interview section for applicants. However, as the use of an internal standard, many universities do not have these criteria. They only focused on the conventional measurement, such as mid-term test and final test. Thus, there are significant issues that university should pay to with regard to these standards and include in the curriculum.

In terms of similarities and differences of a company's standard of English language skills requirement, from Table A area 2, companies' responses indicated that 75 % of companies' trend to agree that the use of English in communication events, especially in daily activities, such as email, project reports, and written instructions are important in the workplace. Nevertheless, on Table B, area 2, only 52 % of graduates responded and the significant point was the use of English in communicating with subordinates. This is interesting due to the fact that companies' perspectives and many studies have shown that the importance of English in communication events in the workplace, especially in communication both written and oral (Kassim and Ali, (2009), So-Mui and Lead (2008), Iskandar (2011)). Thus, it seems the reason why graduates in East Kalimantan preferred to choose that statement, was that perhaps most of them had not had much involvement in job activities such as email, written tasks or reports in their jobs. They may have been involved in jobs on site such as operating machinery or related matters. Thus, they do not necessary use English frequently both in written and oral.

Similarly, at university level, from the interview with teachers, they said that the strategies used in learning English are diverse. They recognize in English language skills that a variety of teaching styles are important due to the four English basic skills (speaking, writing, reading and listening) needs to be practice regularly (Harmer, 2001). Moreover, teachers also said that the use of English for Specific Purposes for students is necessary. The recent study in Hong Kong, So-Mui and Lead (2008) investigated 360 graduates from two universities in Hong Kong with regards to the need of communication skills in terms of English for Specific Purpose. The study found that it was important to provide the graduates with ESP skills in the university, in this case for textile and clothing industry in order to communicate with the customers in specific English terms to convey the details of materials. This is a similar point from companies' perspectives that ESP is important in the workplace as shown on Table A, area 1. However, on the problem that was faced on conducting ESP at university level in Indonesia, Kirkpatrick (2006 p.3) states that:

"at the college or university level, Indonesian college students who are not English major are commonly required to take two or three credit hours of MKD Bahasa Inggris (English language), an based on ESP course-…[however] as entry level of most students is very low, this English class is Grammar and translation class thus, most of ESP programs fail to develop students' proficiency in English".

The use of English for Specific Purposes should be implemented at university level in East Kalimantan. However, based on teachers and students' points of view the question was why their English language skills were still in question when it comes to meeting the companies' requirements. Some of the students responded

that they need to focus on vocabulary rather than grammar. Some of teachers responded the limited time to conduct this subject in order to focus on English for Specific programs. Thus, Kirkpatrick's (2002 p.2) findings can be reflected upon as the condition of why these issues are still problems. Moreover, critically perspective in using ESP at university level is also mentioned by Marwan (2009 p. 1494). He claims that most English teachers [in Indonesia] do not have sufficient vocabulary knowledge for English for Specific Purposes. In the arguments about ESP at university level in East Kalimantan, it was also found in the interview with one teacher from Mining Vocational school in Balikpapan (STTMIGAS) that in the first semester, students were taught in general English, and then in second semester, they were taught ESP. Thus, logically insufficient time is spent on learning and it is difficult to obtain students' English language proficiency by teaching ESP in only one semester during their study which is a minimum four years. Therefore, English for Specific Purposes and emphasis on the work-related activities.

Finally, on Table A, area 3, all the companies have significant points of view that English speaking skills was the most frequently and then writing skills in the workplace. However, Table B area 3, shows the graduates emphasized that listening skills were more important than other English language skills. It can be highlighted that many studies have shown the importance of listening skills in working activities. Thus, the finding from the graduates in East Kalimantan was slightly different. In addition, it can be assumed that many graduates as employees in East Kalimantan faced difficulties in interaction with the instructions given by their English speaking managers/supervisors. The dialect or pronunciation may not be understandable to them due to the fact they rarely interact in the workplace with English speaking workers. There, to accommodate the findings, English language teaching at university level in East Kalimantan should be more focus in speaking, writing and listening, but it also not the exclusion of the important of reading skills.

VI. CONCLUSION

By considering the findings and discussions about English language skills in the workplace, it is clear that the discrepancy between the universities' preparation of students English language skills in East Kalimantan and companies' English language requirements should be addressed as needed. Additional English programs such as TOEFL preparation program should be followed through by incorporating this program into the curriculum at university level and in the meanwhile, the use of ESP in the classroom is required to be considered. An important concern is that the university should be kept up to date with the level of requirement of English language skills by companies' demands. Moreover, at tertiary education in East Kalimantan should be consider that students' English language skills are crucial as technical skills in order to challenge the companies' recruitment criteria. For teachers in East Kalimantan, their strategies in teaching English should be focused on English for Specific Purposes matters. As the findings show that, the use of English in communication events both written and oral, such as email, projects and written forms task should be implemented in the ESP curriculum designs. For English teachers at tertiary education in East Kalimantan, they should improve their own knowledge in English for Specific Purposes and then implement to the classroom with appropriate working activities. As many studies have been proved, it is very important aspects to be taught to produce successful students in the workplace.

For the companies, almost every big company in East Kalimantan has the community development program to support the society as part of their company vision. Therefore, through this department, the company can discuss with universities in East Kalimantan as their responsibility to community regarding English language skills required for new applicants.

It suffices to say then that the university can recognize the demand, design the curriculum and implement it in the classroom. This study explored the detailed investigation of Indonesian graduates' English Language skills in East Kalimantan and the companies' English language requirement in the workplace. The study expected to provide a solution which would enable to educators; institutions and teachers who are concern with this issue to provide a better standard of English language studies at tertiary level. While the study explored a small number of participants in Balikpapan East Kalimantan Indonesia, it is believes that the local graduates surrounding this area would have similar needs and conditions that would be benefit from this study. Further research especially in English communication skills and the use of ESP in the East Kalimantan workplace particularly, and in Indonesia generally, are required to be investigated.

REFERENCES

[1]. Adawiyah, R., Darmawati, D., and Istiqomah (2007). Kepuasan pelanggan terhadap lulusan ekonomi. *Jurnal Bisnis &Management Vol.7* No.2 2007 p. 233 -242

[2]. Al-Khatib, M (2005). English in the workplace: an analysis of the communication needs of tourism and banking personnel. *Asian Foreign Language Journal* Vol. 7 issue 2 2005 p. 174 -194

[3]. Chevron Indonesia (2012). *Chevron Indonesia career* Retrieved : 01 June 2012 From : http: //chevronindonesiacareer.blogspot.com.au/2012/05/chevron-indonesia-career-2012.html

[4]. Creswell, J. W. (2008). *Educational research: planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research. (3rd Ed).* New Jersey: Person International Edition.

[5]. Crosling, G., and Ward, I (2002) Oral communication: the workplace needs and uses of business graduates employees. *English for Specific Purposes* 21 (2002) 41-57

[6]. Darjowidjojo, s (2000) English teaching in Indonesia. *EA Journal* Volume 18 No. 1 p. 22 -30

[7]. Indonesian National Education System Act No. 20 (2003). *National education system.* Jakarta: The National of Education Department

[8]. Harmer, J (2001). *The practice of English language teaching.* Edinburg: Longman publisher.

[9].   Iskandar, A.K (2011). *Kualitas S1 yang diharapkan perusahaan ternama diIndonesia.* Retrieved: 06 November 2011 From: http://www.scribd.com/doc/51871460/Kualitas-Lulusan-S1-yang-Diharapkan-Perusahaan -Ternama-di-Indonesia

[10].   Kasim, H and Ali F (2010). English communicative events and skills needed at the workplace: feedback from the industry. *English for Specific Purpose, New York . N.Y* (0889 – 4906), 29 (3) 168 DOI: 10. 1016/j.esp.2009.10.002

[11].   Kopertis Wilayah XI (2012) *Profil Kopertis Wilayah XI Kalimantan.* Banjarmasin: Kopertis Wilayah XI Kalimantan.

[12].   Lauder, A (2008). The status and function of English in Indonesia: a review of the key factors. *Makara Sosial Humaniora* Volume 12 No. 1 Juli 2008

[13].   Lechtonen, T and Karjalainen, S (2008). University graduates needs as perceived by employers. *System Vol. 36 (2008) 492-503*

[14].   Li So-Mui, F and Mead, K (2000). An analysis of English in the workplace: the communication needs of textile and clothing merchandisers. *English for Specific Purposes* Volume 19 (2000) p. 351-368

[15].   Ngah, E., Radzuan, N., Fauzi, N., and Abidin, (2011) the need of competency work ready English language learners. *Procedia-Social Behaviour Sciences* Vol. 29 92011) p. 1490 – 1499.

[16].   Marwan, A (2009). ESP teaching challenges in Indonesia vocational higher institution. *The English* Teachers Vol. XXXVIII p. 1-12

[17].   Pattanapichet, F and Chinokul, S (2011). Competencies need oral communication in English among Thai undersgraduates public relations students: a substantial gap between expectation and reality. *RELC journal* 2011 p. 42;187

[18].   PT. Hexindo Adiperkasa (n.d) *Recruitment.* Retrieved: 01 June 2012 From: http://www.jobcgr.com/recruitment-staff-pt-hexindo-adiperkasa/

[19].   Setdaprovkaltim (2011) *Data penduduk kaltim* Retrieved: 15 November 2011 From: http://www.setdaprov.kaltim-info/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/data-penduduk-kaltim1-jpg

[20].   Zaharim, A., Yusoff, Y., Omar, M., and Mohammed, M (2009). Employers' persceptions and expectations towards English graduate: a study case. *The 6th WSEAS International Conference in Engineering Education*