English Language Use and the Validity of English Test Score Interpretation in Two Korean Global Corporations

한국 대기업의 영어 사용 현황과
영어 시험 점수 해석의 타당성 연구

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English Language Use and the
Validity of English Test Score Interpretation in
Two Korean Global Corporations

by

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Approved by Thesis Committee:

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ABSTRACT

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English serves as a *lingua franca* for communication in the increasingly

global corporations and often serves as a shared language between speakers

whose native language is not English. It is a widespread practice in Korean

industries to use English language test scores as a definitive tool to screen

qualified candidates during recruitment and promotion. The research study

examined the current conditions of English language use in the South Korean

corporate world in order to evaluate the validity of English test score

interpretation practice on the basis of Messick's (1989) framework of construct

validity.

The study investigated two major Korean corporations in the following

two steps: First, the actual use of the English language in the Korean workforce

by organizational divisions was examined. Second, the study delved into a

proportion of the workforce that regarded the Test of English for International

Communication (TOEIC) score as a reflection of English proficiency and overall working competency to investigate the validity of test score interpretation.

For the first part of the study, businesses comprised of four functional organizational divisions- administration, production, sales & marketing, and research & development- were investigated. Two Korean businesses were sampled for the study and a total of 193 questionnaire survey participants were included in the final analysis. A One-way Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was conducted to illustrate the relationship between the functional organization and English language skills, reading, listening, speaking, and writing. The second part of the study set out to examine, through a written interview, certain values that may be embedded in the TOEIC score interpretation as proposed by Messick (1989). A total of 19 interview respondents were included in the final analysis.

The findings revealed consistency in the highest and least demanded skill across all four organizational divisions: reading and speaking skill. In the actual use of the English language in two companies, sales & marketing organizational division was significantly more likely to employ English skills compared to other organizational divisions. However, even the reading skill was demanded less than moderate across the four divisions in both corporations and the speaking skill was almost never used.

Furthermore, the proportion that regarded the TOEIC score and English

proficiency, which is widely misassumed to be only the speaking skill, as not having relevance comprised to approximately 89%; yet, the TOEIC score was being used as an essential tool for recruitment. In fact, the reason behind the paradoxicality was indeed values embedded in the interpretation of the TOEIC scores. Some participants interpreted the test score as indicators of diligence, intelligence, and better working skills, rather than a measurement of English language ability, a practice that puts its construct validity at a risk.

In sum, although the TOEIC score is being required as a prerequisite for the hiring process in South Korea, it was revealed through the data that the English skills were not used often in the two corporations for all candidates to be obliged to submit an English standardized test score for employment. Also, the practice of placing value implications on test scores in the hiring practice may threaten the construct validity of score interpretation in the context of the South Korean workforce. As a result, some participants reflected the need for a better assessment tool than the TOEIC.

It is necessary to draw attention to the discrepancy between very little actual speaking ability and relatively high level of perceived importance of the skill in the Korean workplace. Thus, the TOEIC may be a legitimate test; however, only if the TOEIC score is used and interpreted as an indicator of nothing more than English language proficiency. Hence, future research should take into consideration the unanticipated adverse effects that could arise from the

widely believed notion of perceived importance of the speaking skill and assist

corporations of a more suitable and authentic tool of English assessment and/or

methods of assessment interpretation, which removes the side effects of

misinterpreting the English test score in Korean companies.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

The present study aims to explore the use of the English language in the Korean job market and its relationship with the interpretation of test scores in the recruitment phase. The current chapter provides an overview of the purpose and organization of the thesis. The first section highlights the background of the study and the second section presents the area of focus with special attention given to the importance of the English language in South Korea. These sections are followed by a statement of purpose, along with the research questions (RQ) in section four.

1.1 Background

"Language testing almost never takes place in isolation" (Bachman, 1990, p. 2).   As emphasized, testing and assessment are done for a particular purpose in a specific context. Employers in the global market are constantly assessed and evaluated for the purpose of testing their international corporative suitability, in which the most legitimate tool of measurement is considered to be English standardized tests (Choi, 2002). Given the position of English working as a *lingua franca*, English standardized tests heavily influence the world and their powerful presence is likewise felt in South Korea on an unimaginable level, as the ever-increasing use of the English standardized scores are influencing

employee career prospective (Spolsky, 1997).

South Korea has an extensive history of regarding the English language as an important asset. There were two significant periods that served to influence the predominance of English language education expansion: the influence of Christian missionaries and the influence of Korean War (Choi, 2002; Hwang, 2004). In 1885, Christian missionaries, who were also doctors, opened prestigious schools and taught English as an avenue of missionary work. There is no denying that their great work sowed the seeds for the most prestigious higher education institutions in South Korea (Choi, 2002). In like manner, English language education gained more recognition post Korean War when the U.S. aided reconstruction and development in South Korea (Hwang, 2004). A great deal of effort had been placed to reconstruct the development of Korean education along with the establishment of democratic capitalistic political system and a market-driven economy, which mainly relied on the U.S. militarily, economically, and educationally (Choi, 2002; Kim, 1999). For this reason, the country depends on English language scores for meaningful decision-making processes today (Choi, 2008). The job market in South Korea is highly competitive, where prospective employees are assessed for their English language ability, mainly due to the fairly recent recognition that South Korea has been open to the international arena and a certain degree of English competence would be needed to communicate (Choi, 2008).

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In contrast to the emphasis on the English language in the corporate world, traditional English tests had been widely believed to be "incapable of inculcating actual communicative competence in Koreans" (Park, 2011, p. 448). While the assessment tools were lacking, globalization has rapidly accelerated in recent years and language testing and assessment have become a central part of evaluating employees in South Korea- that is, a more accurate evaluation of English language communicative skills that fully embodies an individual's holistic global communication ability was indeed very much in need (Hwang, 2004). The main problem of the traditional regime of the local evaluation was that it stereotypically placed much attention on assessing knowledge of grammatical structure. As a solution, by 1995, several multi-business companies began adopting various international standardized tests, in particular, Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC)[1] (Park, 2011).

However, the reality is that even to this day, the frequency of English language used in everyday work is quite limited (Cho, Shin, Jeong, Kim, & Park, 1998; Choi, 2002; Park & Jung, 2008). Given the emphasis on English standardized testing, questions related to the use of the English language in the job market and the validity of English test score interpretation deserve

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[1] The TOEIC is a paper and pencil test that consists of two equally graded sections, Listening and Reading, totaling up to 990 points. There are also TOEIC Speaking and Writing tests, which are administered online and scored on a scale of 0-200 (The TOEIC® Program, n.d.). The TOEIC listening and reading will be referred to as TOEIC hereinafter.

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considerable attention. Yet, as of now, there is a lack of research in this area. The present research will attempt to address the issue by investigating the extent of actual English used and the validity of English test score interpretation in the South Korean corporate world.

1.2 Area of Concern

English standardized tests of various domains are now being used to govern access to employment, and test preparation has become a massive enterprise that exerts considerable influence on the phenomenon (Park, 2011). This has led to a veritable 'boom' in studying for English standardized tests, especially the TOEIC, as represented in Table 1.1 by the number of universities and corporations using the TOEIC score in South Korea (The Institute for International Business Communication [IIBC], 2017). In a survey of 204 Korean universities conducted by YBM, 65 of them used the TOEIC for admission. In a survey of 514 Korean corporations, 343 of them used the TOEIC for employment and promotion.

Table 1.1

Use of TOEIC Score in Universities and Corporations in Korea

Description	Purpose	No. of universities/ corporations
4-year universities	Admission	65
	Graduation qualification	118
Major corporations	Employment and promotion	343

Note. Adapted from IIBC (2017), p. 3.

The increasing use of standardized English testing influences the

recruitment process in Korea, as English test scores play the gatekeeper role in

the application process. "It [TOEIC] is considered a high stakes test as it serves

as the largest gatekeeper to professional employment in South Korea"

(Nicholson, 2015, p. 222). Because Korea is heavily dependent on international

business for its economic growth, English is perceived to be a critical tool for

success in virtually all aspects of one's life (Park, 2011). However, despite

psychological and monetary investment placed in English education and its

predominance across various fields, studies show that English is indeed not used

as much in the Korean society (Cho et al., 1998; Choi, 2002; Nicholson, 2015;

Park & Jung, 2006). Nevertheless, employees in South Korea are encouraged to

develop their English qualifications to meet the challenges posed by the job

market in the country. It is important to note that English language tests should be administered according to the needs of the English language in a target language use (TLU) domain. Requiring English test scores from employees in the recruitment process may not be particularly advisable, especially if their specific job or task does not require English competence. The phenomenon of requiring English test scores even when there is no obvious need is so odd that countless news articles have touched on the matter of the significant discrepancy (Hadid, 2014; Lee, 2014; Yoon, 2015). Moreover, the discrepancy has created an additional problem of washback effect, as test-takers strive to improve their test-taking strategies more than their genuine English proficiency in order to obtain high scores required for employment in a short time, thus creating a gap between applicants' test scores and their English proficiency (Kang, 2005). This has invited scrutiny into the way language testing is being used in the South Korean workforce. Ironically, it is the persistence of the heavy English score dependency that ultimately makes the researcher question whether the scores are interpreted in a legitimate way or not. If not, serious questions are to be raised and critical investigations are to be conducted on the interpretation of English standardized test scores in the recruitment process in South Korea.

1.3 Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine and outline the current conditions of language assessment practices and evaluate the validity of how standardized test scores are interpreted and used within the South Korean workforce. Those with some familiarity with language testing understand that a language standardized test score alone cannot be an ideal indicator of job seeker's English language competence, and probably should not be used as a measuring tool for qualities unrelated to English language competence (Park, 2011). O'Sullivan supports this claim by metaphorically comparing language test scores to a snapshot: "It's slightly out of focus and you can never get it to focus. If you want to identify someone from a photograph, you need more evidence. Testing is not a definitive science, it can't be" (O'Sullivan, 2018).

While it is clear that English plays a significant role in the Korean society, questions still remain concerning the precise extent of the English language that is actually needed and used in the workforce today. Thus, by surveying approximately 200 employees, this study will investigate the legitimacy of English standardized tests interpretation and examine the types of English skills actually used on the job site. Furthermore, this study will delve into whether English test scores translate into qualities other than the applicant's English language competence.

1.4 Research Questions

This research is being conducted due to the wide prevalence of English standardized testing in South Korea. In order to understand the validity of its use in the Korean workforce, the following two RQs will be dealt with:

1) To what extent are English language skills required for employees in different organizational divisions to perform their job tasks?
2) How are the TOEIC scores interpreted in hiring decision-making processes?

To this point, the paper has considered the background of English language education in South Korea and discussed the area of focus. The next chapter will introduce the concept of validity in assessment, focus on the status of English language use in Korean companies, and examine the types of standardized tests required in the Korean workforce.

CHAPTER 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The current chapter introduces the theoretical frameworks and findings of Messick's (1989) construct validity matrix and reviews the literature relevant to the use and interpretation of English standardized tests in the South Korean workforce, especially focusing on the status of English language use and types of English testing.

2.1 Theoretical Framework of Validity

A language test can be said to be valid when the inferences made on the basis of test score appropriately represents the language skills the language test purports to measure. Furthermore, valid tests should be able to ensure the legitimacy and fairness of interpretations that are derived based on test performance (McNamara, 2000). Messick (1989) took a similar position on validity by denoting that:

> Validity is an integrated evaluative judgment of the degree to which empirical evidence and theoretical rationales support the adequacy and appropriateness of inferences and actions based on test scores or other modes of assessment (p.13).

Simply put, validity is not a number, but an overall claim about how well the test is functioning based on evidence and rationales. Supporting this claim, Bachman and Palmer (1996) expanded the concept of 'evidence' in validity of language assessment by stating that "we need to provide evidence that the test

score reflects the area(s) of language ability we want to measure, and very little else" (Bachman & Palmer, 1996, p. 21).

Despite various ways of justifying the definition of validity framework, the concept of validity has evolved over time, creating past and current conceptions that have contributed largely to understanding validity. The past conception of validity involved three major traditional validation models, for which each is related to an aspect of evidence: content validity, criterion-related validity, and construct validity (Cronbach & Meehl, 1955). First, content validity deals with whether the measure adequately captures the full meaning of a concept. It is the degree to which all items in a test represent all the facets of the variables being measured (Hughes, 2003). As Fulcher and Davidson (2010) also note, content validity is having the degree of evidence that "shows the content of the test is a representative sample from the domain that is to be tested" (p. 18). In other words, a test is said to have content validity when it contains the language skills or structure that the test is supposed to measure. Equally important is the criterion-related validity, which is the degree to which the result of the test aligns with a criterion to which people wish to make predictions of the test-taker. Simply put, criterion-related validity examines if the test reflects a certain set of abilities, which can be "assessed by comparing it to a known standard" (Hughes, 2003). This can be further broken down into concurrent validity and predictive validity. Concurrent validity is said to be active when "the test score and

criterion score are determined at essentially the same time" (Cronbach & Meehl, 1955, p. 281). For instance, in language proficiency tests, the scores would be compared to another similar and commonly used proficiency test. On the other hand, predictive validity is the extent to which a score on a scale predicts scores on some criterion measure.

Despite various definitions posed by many scholars on validity, validity actually involves factors other than test content and test criterion, which leads to the final type of validity: construct validity, a degree to which a score can be interpreted as an indicator of what it claims to measure. The current conception is a unitary concept of validity that takes construct validity as a general framework, which will be discussed further in the following section. Table 2.1 shows an overview of the difference between the past conception of validity and the current unitary conception of validity.

Table 2.1

Summary of Contrasts between Past and Current Conceptions of Validation

Past	Current
Validity was considered a *characteristic* of a test: the extent to which a test measures what it purports to measure.	Validity is considered an *argument* concerning test interpretation and use: the extent to which test interpretations and uses can be justified.
Construct validity was seen as one of three types of validity: 1) Content validity 2) Criterion-related validity 3) Construct validity	Validity is a unitary concept with construct validity as central (content and criterion-related evidence can be used as evidence for construct validity).
Establishing validity was considered within the purview of testing researchers and developers.	Justifying the validity of test use is the responsibility of all test users.

Note. Adapted from Chapelle (1999), p. 258.

2.1.1 Construct Validity as a "Unitary" Concept

In any validity study, the intended meaning and interpretation made on the basis of test scores is investigated. Construct validity has come to represent the extent to which a test score can be interpreted as an indicator of the constructs or abilities that are to be measured (Bachman & Palmer, 1996). Central to drawing inferences from test scores lies the question of what evidence can be provided to support score interpretation. In other words, the key element of construct validity is test score interpretation from the evidence (Fulcher & Davidson, 2010). Following this argument, all evidence strengthens or weakens the intended test score meaning, including specific inferences that the developers had initially intended (Messick, 1989).

The theoretical views of construct validity were shaped by Messick's

(1989) view, which introduced a new understanding of validity: a single, unitary

framework with several aspects of evidence contributing to construct validity.

The new notion stands in contrast to the three categories of previously discussed

validity, which were divided as content, criterion-related, and construct. Thus,

Messick (1989) has fundamentally changed the way validity had been

understood. The definition of Messick's (1989) understanding of validity is as

follows:

> Because content- and criterion-related evidence contributes to score
> meaning, they have come to be recognized as aspects of construct
> validity. In a sense, then, this leaves only one category, namely,
> construct-related evidence (p. 20).

Thus elaborated, construct validity is the force that unites the two

characteristics of validity, content and criterion-related, as forms of evidence for

construct validity. Or in words of Fulcher and Davidson (2010), validity is "not a

property of a test or assessment but the degree to which we are justified in

making an inference to a construct from a test score" (p.13). As presented in

Table 2.2, types of arguments used to justify testing outcomes can take the form

of evidential basis, which refers to the unified theory of validity, and

consequential basis, which recognizes "a diversity of values, with the possibility

that validity may vary with different value perspectives" (Messick, 1998, p. 37):

Table 2.2

Facets of Validity as a Progressive Matrix

Justification	Test Interpretation	Test Use
Evidential basis	Construct Validity (CV)	Construct Validity + Relevance/Utility (R/U)
Consequential basis	CV + Value Implications (VI)	CV + R/U + VI + Social Consequences

Note. Adapted from Messick (1989), p. 22

In the above table, four cells bear on the evidential and consequential grounding of test interpretation and test use, which are "distinguishable but interrelated" (Messick, 1989, p.23). Messick recognizes that the distinctions are 'fuzzy' because they are cutting through what he views as a unitary concept (Messick, 1989). In Messick's (1989) facets of validity, the evidential basis of test interpretation, upper-left cell, pertains to the trustworthiness of score meaning, which is construct validity. The evidential basis of test use, upper-right cell, is also construct validity, but the evidence of score meaning is intensified by the relevance of claims to the decision and by the utility of the scores. Fulcher and Davidson (2010) also explain the evidential basis of test use is construct validity, but with specific evidence to the applied setting for which a test is designed or used. The consequential basis of test interpretation, lower-left cell, refers to value implications attached to score meaning, as well as the construct validity. Namely, it is concerned with the value that is placed other than what the

test score is supposed to represent as part of test score interpretation. Finally, the consequential basis of test use, lower-right cell, includes all types of justifications discussed above. This cell primarily indicates the social consequences of test use, which results from the value implications embedded in the test construct (Im & McNamara, 2017; Messick, 1989). This concept is further explained as "the appraisal of both potential and actual social consequences of the applied setting" (Messick, 1989, p.10). Therefore, social consequences play a part in actually using the test and contributing to evidence of score interpretation. The fundamental matter of this cell is determining how the scores are used and decided by those who receive them and the kinds of consequences the decisions have as a result.

The new unitary concept of validity framework introduced by Messick (1989) has influenced current validity researchers because it takes value implications and social consequences into consideration, further accentuating the appropriateness of interpretations of test scores for an intended use of tests, which has made validity a concept more open-ended endeavor.

With the above concept of validity in mind, utilizing English tests as a multi-purpose test may compromise the validity of the test (Bachman, 1990). In fact, it is inaccurate to discuss the validity of English standardized test itself, but rather it is more accurate to recognize the validity of a particular interpretation of test scores made by a particular social sample of candidates and provide

evidence to whether the scores are legitimately used or not (Weir, 2005). Furthermore, evaluating the appropriateness of score interpretations may be more important than merely validating the assessment result (Messick, 1989).

2.1.2 Value Implications

Messick's (1989) validity framework has prompted validity to consider its social dimensions, in which it has especially led researchers to consider value implications placed on test interpretation. According to Im and McNamara (2017), value implications are defined to be values "added to the meaning of test scores and uses of test scores are affected by the values" (p. 76). An example of value implications is well represented in Akiyama's (2004) study, which notes that there were opposing views between middle school teachers and high school teachers on whether introducing an English speaking test in the university entrance examination in Japan was legitimate or not. Middle school teachers agreed on implementing an English speaking test while high school teachers disagreed. The reason for disagreement being that high school teachers believed speaking tests were more beneficial to students who have had extensive experience living abroad, which led McNamara and Roever (2006) to believe the high school teachers valued "diligence and hard work" over actual English proficiency, putting forward qualities that reflect Japanese cultural values before actual English language competence (p. 78).

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The South Korean workforce is an example that may appropriately portray such case. Many South Korean companies systematically require English standardized test scores during recruitment and promotion as a tool for assessing an individual, often leading to question the validity of decisions made on the basis of test scores (Fulcher & Davidson, 2010). As the notion of validity has been broadened (Messick, 1989), it is important to reflect upon and consider the underlying values behind the construct measured in the English standardized test scores because they influence not only the interpretation of test scores but also inferences and consequences of test use.

2.1.3 Authenticity

One of the main concerns in language testing is to appropriately "capture or recreate in language tests the essence of language use, to make our language tests 'authentic'" (Bachman, 1990, p. 207). Test authenticity is defined as the extent to how well language tests can be related to actual language use facets in a TLU domain (Bachman & Palmer, 1996). In any event of language assessment, authenticity is considered a prerequisite to construct validity, as authentic test tasks require test takers to engage in language use that is actually required in a non-test context; therefore, performances on authentic tasks can be better interpreted as test taker's language use ability in the TLU domain. Given this notion of authenticity of a test, it works as a form of validity in test score

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interpretation as an indicator of real-life language use ability (Bachman &

Palmer, 1996). For a better measure of an individual's language proficiency,

language test scores should be in agreement with language performance in non-

test situations. Spolsky (1985) further describes the authenticity matter as

follows:

> In sum, the criterion of authenticity raises important pragmatic and ethical questions in language testing. Lack of authenticity in the material used in a test raises issues about the generalizability of results (p. 39).

Given the gravity of decisions made based on English standardized test

scores, systems should be set to ensure they are measuring the language skills

and abilities that are actually used in the workplace in an appropriate manner.

This is supported by Fulcher (1995) who states that authenticity would be the

degree to which it could be shown that there is a correspondence between the

real-world facets and the test facets, and score meaning could only be

generalized to corresponding real-world tasks (Fulcher, 1995; Fulcher &

Marquez, 2003). Therefore, inferences made on the basis of test scores can be

validated when tasks used in the test are an authentic representation of actual

tasks.

2.2 Perception of English in Korean Workplace

In Korean society, it is assumed that English proficiency is the vital means for economic and social development, despite the fact that most domains of social life are predominantly monolingual (Park, 2011). When the Korean economy suffered the financial crisis in 1997, the promise of English became even more prominent. As a way to recover from its economic crisis, corporations began to embrace globalization, creating a shift towards a pursuit of global corporate culture. South Korea worked on the reconstruction of its economy and reorientation of the country's system of employment. The nation's transformation especially affected the corporate recruitment culture, as new tools of assessment were introduced to scrutinize the range of skills the candidates possessed. Through the restructuring of hiring practices, there was a driving force for competition between the candidates in striving to become appealing as a global applicant (Chung, 2017; Jang, 2010). In order to be in line with the continuously growing global economy of the modern world, South Korean corporations have focused more on business skills and qualifications that are directly applicable in the workplace (Jang, 2010).

Given the export-dependent nature of the Korean economy, international business communication has become an essential concern for Korean corporations, which has led to English becoming the primary gatekeeper in the white-collar recruitment culture in South Korea. English is considered a

necessary resource to survive in the global market. With English, it is believed,

companies can remain competitive in the international market, and ultimately,

gain recognition as an international business worldwide (Park, 2009). Thus,

much weight has been placed on English standardized tests and the score has

been a decisive factor in determining workers with English competence. As a

result, many working people are "driven by the belief that good English skills

will translate into good jobs" (Park, 2011, p. 446). In the white-collar job market

especially, a worker's English competence plays a key role for employment and

promotion- even though studies have repeatedly shown findings that even the

workplace is ironically strictly monolingual except specified job types that deal

with foreign corporations (Cho et al., 1998; Choi, 2002; McTague, 1990; Park,

2011; Park & Jung, 2006). It is important to keep in mind that Cho et al.'s (1998)

research was conducted immediately following the financial crisis that occurred

in 1997, a time when Korea had to be heavily dependent on other countries. The

needs to learn English increased substantially during this particular period;

nevertheless, Cho et al.'s (1998) study showed English language use was quite

low within corporations. Furthermore, Park's (2011) study has shown that the

use of English has not increased much in the workplace even after the crisis.

Choi (2002) conducted a similar study, where the focus was on manufacturing

companies because it was hypothesized that the manufacturing industry would

use the most amounts of English in the workplace. However, the results of the

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study showed even the most required English language skill, which was found to be reading skill, was rarely used, indicating an almost negligible need for the English language on the job site.

Within everyday operations of the businesses investigated in previous studies, the use of English is largely localized and concentrated in particular departments that specialize in handling business communications. This means only a handful of employees have chance occasions to be in situations to carry out business wholly in English (McTague, 1990). Speaking ability is especially not used much, as McTague (1990) explains, "For speaking in English, few persons do so significantly other than loanwords (job-related, or more "social", lexical code-switching)" (p. 58). It is remarkable that English is perceived as needed in demand regardless of whether an employee's job actually involves English or not; therefore, English standardized test scores are often required regardless of the nature of the applicant's job description. Cho et al. (1998), Choi (2002), and Park and Jung (2006) have carried out large-scale investigations to examine the English language use on the job site and have similarly pointed out that English standardized tests cannot appropriately measure an individual's actual English skill. This phenomenon reflects the prominence of the English language working as a mode for international communication and as a symbol of global qualification (Park, 2009). In fact, English skills are not considered as one of many qualifications, but "a fundamental part of what defines an *injae* 'human

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talent/talented person' desired by today's corporations" (Park, 2009, p. 43). In the global age, an ideal employee in a globally oriented corporation must be global as well, a quality believed to be indicated in the English standardized test score. In other words, English is not a skill that can be compensated for some other skill, but rather a fundamental quality that defines a global person in the global age (Park, 2009, 2011).

2.3 Use of English Language Skills in Korean Workplace

Research by Cho et al. (1998) divided the English skill into four skills, speaking, writing, listening, and reading, to compare them with English required in companies in South Korea. The result showed the English ability was mostly needed for reading comprehension, and writing and speaking abilities were next in line. However, the four skills rated as needed were on average less than moderately used in the workplace. The same study conducted a needs assessment of English language skills in the Korean workplace by examining the frequency of use, proficiency level, and perceived needs for continued language training. Although both private and public sectors were examined, the study's result revealed an almost negligible need to employ English language on the job. Research conducted by Choi (2002) examined a total of 251 participants with Bachelor's Degree or above degrees that worked at manufacturing companies with high records of exports. The study organized the departments into four

functional divisions: administration, production, sales & marketing, and research & development. Yet, Choi's (2002) study highlighted that while the corporations being studied exerted much effort to develop employees' English skills, only about 20% of the workforce had the opportunity to use the English language at all. Kim and Jung's (2006) study further accentuated Choi's (2002) study results by observing workers from diverse backgrounds. The total number of participants of Kim and Jung's (2006) study was 300, composed of 84 government officials, 177 corporate employees, and 39 service industrial employees. The findings' similar results strengthened previously discussed studies, as only 12.4% of the workforce regularly used the English language at work. In light of the discussion so far, the results of the multiple studies that have investigated different companies in South Korea can be summed up as having similar tendencies, in which the overall profile of English within the Korean workforce is rather low (Cho et al., 1998; Choi, 2002; McTague, 1990; Park, 2011; Park & Jung, 2006). The following paragraphs address each of the four English language skill in previous significant studies, Cho et al. (1998), Choi (2002, and Park and Jung (2006), in greater depth.

Cho et al.'s (1998) study examined the need for English reading skills, which were more specifically identified under 'comprehension' skill. Although the general frequency of the use of reading skills was on the extreme low end, employees were required to use their English comprehension skills for several

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purposes. As an instance, the skill had to be used to read business letters, faxes, and e-mails. It was also found that some work tasks were related to reading and understanding international conference materials, business plans, proposals, and product brochures written in English. On the contrary, Choi's (2002) study found that on items related to the frequency of reading and understanding documents written in English, the mean response earned more than a fair amount, which is a significantly higher score compared to Cho et al.'s (1998) study. Moreover, Park and Jung's (2006) study results showed a similar tendency to Choi's (2002) research findings, despite the various working fields of the participants in the research by Park and Jung (2006).

English writing skill, according to Cho et al. (1998), often used for exchanging faxes, letters, and e-mails with foreign business counterparts, was used less than moderately. Other situations that called for English writing skills were writing resumes, creating company brochures, drawing up company contracts, and making presentation materials for international conferences. Park and Jung's (2006) study showed even lower use of writing skill on the job in which the results showed that writing skills were used approximately three to four times year. Hence, it can be assumed that writing skills are rarely used on Korean job site.

English listening and speaking are skills that can be identified under a single category (Cho et al., 1998). St. John (1996) supports this claim by

emphasizing that listening and speaking are abilities that work simultaneously;

for instance, while giving presentations, negotiating, and attending business

meetings conducted in English with foreigners, there are continuous listening

and speaking skills involved throughout, where the two skills are demanded

concurrently. Thus, distinguishing and deciphering listening and speaking skills

separately would be ineffective and would be a troublesome task. In like manner,

Choi's (2002) study found that English listening and speaking skills were

demanded neck and neck, further underlining that the two language skills are

"inseparably juxtaposed and interspersed" especially in business settings (Choi,

2002, p. 55).

In Cho et al.'s (1998) study, the most frequent ability used in the

speaking and listening skills was telephoning with business counterparts, along

with listening to business presentations, which were called for about once a

month, a moderate use according to Choi's (2002) study. On the contrary,

research conducted by Park and Jung (2006) showed a slight difference in the

results. Speaking with and listening to foreigners were rarely called for, which in

their research, listening and speaking skills were comprised of attending

meetings, telephoning, and negotiating altogether. Such situations were only

called for about three to four times a year. It is important again to note that the

participants in Choi's (2002) study were employees working specifically in

manufacturing industries, whereas Park and Jung's (2006) study participants

were from diverse employee groups composed of government employees, corporate employees, and service industry employees. Regardless of the diverse pool of participants, listening and speaking skills were indeed least in demand, with occasional need among an isolated population to make oral presentations in meetings with foreign business partners or clients (Cho et al., 1998; Choi, 2002; Park & Jung, 2006).

2.4 Use of TOEIC in Korean Workplace

South Korea is a country where the English standardized test score occupies an extremely important place in the decision-making process during employee-screening. This phenomenon has led many candidates to invest much time and money in increasing their test scores, especially the TOEIC score (Choi, 2008). As a result, the TOEIC has grown to be one of South Korea's largest high-stakes proficiency tests. According to Nicholson's (2015) study, the multi-business conglomerates in South Korea, such as, Daewoo Shipbuilding and Marine Engineering, Hynix Semiconductor, Hyundai Motor Company, Korean Air, LG Electronics, S-Oil Corporations, and many more, use the TOEIC score as a criterion for recruiting, promoting, and measuring English communicative skills (Educational Testing Service [ETS], 2004). This has influenced numerous *hagwons*, private institutions, to offer TOEIC test-preparation courses for business people and has affected countless students who

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are seeking to increase their employability. According to Kookmin Bank [KB] Financial Group Management Institute (2012), a total of 17,053 *hagwons* offered TOEIC courses in the year 2009 in South Korea. In order to address the excessive TOEIC dependency in the hiring practices of corporations, we turn to a brief historical account of the TOEIC in South Korea.

In light of the efforts to change the workplace into a globalized landscape, the TOEIC began receiving considerable attention in 1993, which was a time when English education in South Korea focused primarily on grammar and reading comprehension skills. The TOEIC, on the other hand, included a more practical evaluation of communicative skill, and Samsung became the first company to employ the TOEIC test to evaluate the English skills of its employees (IIBC, 2017). In the 1990s, a widespread restructuring of Korean corporations was taking place, mainly centering around government-driven globalization. This meant that more companies were focusing on improving their employee's English language skills to gain worldwide recognition. When the notion, that English communicative skill is a necessity to compete in an international market, became prevalent, the number of TOEIC test-takers began to increase exponentially. Choi (2008) expands on this argument by stating the "TOEIC has been accepted as practically the one and only EFL test for hiring employees at major Korean corporations since the late 1980s" (p. 44). As shown in Figure 2.1, the number has drastically increased, especially in recent years.

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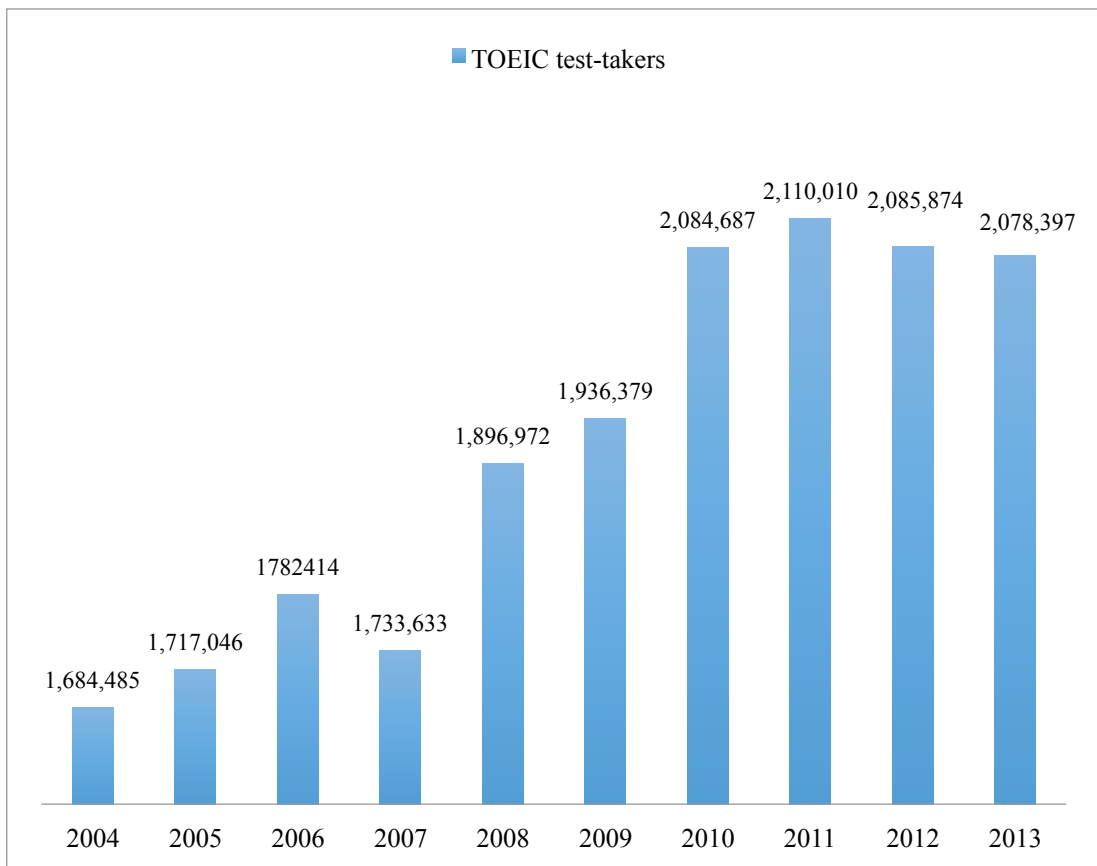
Figure 2.1.[2] Number of TOEIC test-takers from 2004 to 2013 in South Korea.

Note. Adapted from Park (2017).

Over the past three decades, there have been a few major milestones that have marked the highest number of TOEIC test-takers in South Korea. The TOEIC began with 504 test-takers in 1982; however, the number reached the 100,000-mark in 1993, quickly hitting 200,000 by 1994, and 400,000 by 1995. The number had reached 1.1 million by 2002. Based on Figure 2.1, the number

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[2] The number for TOEIC test-takers has been kept confidential by YBM Education since 2014, and remains unknown (Park, 2017).

continued to increase hitting 2.08 million in 2010 and 2.11 million in 2011. In fact, more than 6 million TOEIC tests have been administered worldwide in 2017 (IIBC, 2017), making the test "the largest and most widely used English language assessment for the workplace" (ETS, 2011, p.12). What is remarkable is that of the 6 million tests administered worldwide, approximately 2 million tests were administered in South Korea alone (Thomson, 2012). Moreover, up to 47.1% of the entire English as a Foreign Language (EFL) testing in Korea was reported to be the TOEIC (Choi, 2008). Choi's (2002) study showed that 93% of the participants replied they have taken an English test or is planning to take one, among whom 68.4% having taken the test for the purpose of recruitment and 94.4% having taken the test in their corporations for promotion. This demonstrates how predominant a role the TOEIC has been playing in the Korean workforce.

Such developments, ironically, have been unraveling against a backdrop of low use of English in the workplace. While the TOEIC has been hailed as a primary assessment tool that could appropriately measure a candidate's English ability for employment and promotion, actual English use on the job site was significantly low (Choi, 2002; Park & Jung, 2006). Supporting the findings, there was an instance where "84 of the 93 employees who joined the company [Hyundai Mobis] in 2010 submitted a score from the TOEIC test" (Nicholson, 2015, p. 225). Furthermore, 90% of Korea's top 100 companies require a TOEIC

score as a prerequisite for employment (Data & Analysis, 2014). Likewise, many

leading companies in South Korea use the TOEIC score as a criterion for

recruitment, promotion, and measurement of English training progress

(Nicholson, 2015).

Despite the ever-increasing test takers of the TOEIC in South Korea, it is

necessary to understand the intended objective proposed by the test developers

of the TOEIC.

> The TOEIC Listening and Reading test measures the everyday English
> listening and reading skills needed to work in an international
> environment. Test questions simulate real-life situations that are relevant
> to global workplace (ETS, 2018).

As stated by ETS (2018) above, the intended objective of the TOEIC is to

measure actual everyday English skills that are needed in the workplace. In sum,

the TOEIC score should be used to assess English proficiency that the workplace

requires in a candidate (Choi, 2008).

2.5 Research Gap

As discussed in the current chapter, English language scores serve as a

major criterion in the hiring of candidates in South Korea. The current paper

examines two research gaps that were found in the literature review. First,

regardless of the weight placed on test scores by numerous corporations, only a

few pieces of research have been conducted to examine the extent of English

proficiency actually used in the workplace. Moreover, the few studies that were

found were outdated, mostly studied in the late 1990s or early 2000s (Cho et al., 1998; Choi, 2002; Park & Jung, 2006). Therefore, a more recent study that examines the actual use of English in the workplace is in need.

Second, Messick's (1989) facets of construct validity focusing on value implications have been incorporated into studies of few researchers and theorists (McNamara, 2006; O'Loughlin, 2013); moreover, most of the previous works were implemented to test the relationship between English standardized test scores and Korean university admissions, rather than the Korean workforce. Thus, the researcher of this paper combines the two gaps to investigate the validity of standardized test score interpretation in the hiring process in Korean corporations on the basis of Messick's (1989) definition of construct validity.

In the next chapter, a discussion of research methodology models, which were implemented to investigate the English language use in the South Korean workforce and test score interpretation, will be further elaborated.

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

This chapter introduces and contains a discussion of the methodological

approach and research design to examine the relationship between the current

status of the use of English language in the Korean workforce with the validity

of interpreting English standardized test score for employment and promotion. In

this study, a mixed-method design (Creswell & Clark, 2011) was adapted

employing both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection.

3.1 Overview of Steps of Research

The research was conducted using two methods of data collection. First, a

quantitative instrument, a questionnaire survey was distributed to employees

involved in the four functional divisions – administration, production, sales &

marketing, and research & development (Choi, 2002). Second, a qualitative

method, a written interview with selected participants, was conducted to

understand the participants' responses to the questionnaire items more

thoroughly. The following sections will describe the research methods and

instruments used for the present study and will present procedures used for data

collection and data analysis. The study adheres to the following three steps of

data collection:

First, document analysis of company online brochures was performed as

means of determining which major Korean global corporations use the TOEIC scores in their application process in order to identify the two similar corporations to distribute the questionnaires to.

After selecting the two corporations to be used as the focus for the current study, questionnaires were distributed to each organization's four functional divisions: administration, production, sales & marketing, and research & development, to elicit opinions regarding the issues considered in the two RQs.

Finally, participants from each organization were selected with the hope of better illuminating survey questionnaire responses. Information provided in the above steps of data collection is elaborated in more detail below.

3.2 Participants

Information about the implementation of the TOEIC scores was investigated by visiting the company website and contacting the human resources department. The researcher tracked down major Korean corporations that require TOEIC scores as a prerequisite for employment. Data collection was carried out using one source, working white-collar employees from two large-scale global corporations, which are two of the largest major global airlines and flag carriers of South Korea. The two corporations are both headquartered in Seoul, South Korea, and the airlines employ more than 20,000 workers with revenue that account to more than 13 billion USD per company. The researcher

chose the two major airline corporations, as they are internationally prestigious

global businesses that are regarded to have the highest demand for English

language use in the Korean workforce. In turn, job seekers share much

awareness of the popularity and competitiveness of the two corporations,

recording more than 10,000 applicants during January recruitment of 2018 (Kim,

2018). The two corporations comprised of four functional divisions:

administration, production, sales & marketing, and research & development will

remain anonymous throughout the paper.

Then, questionnaires were distributed to employees in two major

corporations through four contact persons. The researcher had originally planned

to collect approximately 200 responses for final analysis; therefore, 250

questionnaire surveys were distributed, with an expected response rate of

approximately 80%. A total of 225 participants responded; however, 32

questionnaires were eliminated from the final analysis, as the participants were

flight attendants, which is a specialized occupation that cannot appropriately

represent the workforce population. Thus, a total of 193 responses were included

in the final analysis of the questionnaires.

Out of those respondents who agreed to answer additional interview

questions, written interviews were conducted separately just after the

questionnaires were submitted. A total of 20 interview responses were collected,

but 19 responses were analyzed in the final analysis for the written interviews

due to one participant having to be eliminated for being a flight attendant. For more specific information on the data collection procedure, refer to Section 3.4 of this study.

The first method of data collection, the questionnaire survey, spanned a three-week-long period from early October to mid-October 2018 and the second method, the written interview, was performed during the same period. The research methodology and the number of participants involved are described in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1

Overview of Research Activities

Methods	Number of Participants Involved	Distributed Time	Collected Time
One	Questionnaire surveys originally responded by 225 employees; however, 193 counted for final analysis		
Two	Written interviews conducted with 20 employees who had already responded to the questionnaire survey; however, 19 counted for the final analysis	Early October 2018	Mid October 2018

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3.3 Instruments

The questionnaire items in the study were designed based on the items in Cho et al.'s (1998), Choi's (2002), and Park and Jung's (2006) studies on English use in Korean corporations. The questions were re-written to fit the context in areas that appeared to be outdated. Previous studies were conducted more than a decade ago, so the questionnaire items were based on a traditional working culture; therefore, the words were rephrased to suit the contemporary workplace setting. For instance, exchanging a hand-written letter is a rare medium of communication today; thus, such words that portray the traditional working styles were eliminated from the survey item. The questionnaire items also underwent revisions to provide more clear and comprehensible wording, which were later translated into Korean by the researcher before being distributed in October of 2018 (See Appendix 1). The questionnaire surveys were distributed to the participants in the Korean version.

All participants were asked to provide information on their individual demographic background, corporate functional division, corporate rank hierarchy, type of English language screening they underwent for employment, and the frequency of English language use on the job in the given questionnaire. Finally, participants who have agreed to answer written interview questions were asked to freely write their thoughts and opinions that reflect the appropriateness of the way English standardized test scores are being interpreted for employment

in their workplace (see Appendix 2 and 3). The written interview questions were provided in Korean.

Individual Demographic Background

The participants were asked to provide information on their demographic background related to sex, age, corporate rank hierarchy, and tenure (number of years in the position of responsibility). The age category and tenure were each represented by six categories, and the corporate rank hierarchy was divided into five categories. The participants were also asked to mark one of the six corresponding years of experience in their companies. (See Questions 1-4 in Appendix 1).

Corporate Organizational Division

The four corporate functional divisions served as an independent variable in the study. All the participants were asked to mark their corresponding affiliation of the four functional divisions: administration, production, sales & marketing, and research & development (See Question 5 in Appendix 1). The second follow-up question broke down the four divisions into the specific nature of their job according to the marked division. The administration was further broken down into HRM & HRD, and public relations. Production was further divided into finance and strategy & management. Sales & marketing was

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branched off to marketing strategy and overseas sales. Finally, research &
development was represented as product design and quality control. (See
Question 6 in Appendix 1).

English Language Screening for Employment

Two questions were related to whether the participants were screened for
English language skills for recruitment. The first question asked for the type of
screening they were subject to submit or undergo during the hiring stage, ranging
from TOEIC, TEPS, OPIc, TOEIC Speaking, to English interview. This question
was followed by a second question that asked if they had submitted a TOEIC
score to be hired at the company, and if so, the participants were asked to
indicate their listening score, reading score, and the total score. (See Questions 7
and 8 in Appendix 1).

English Language Use

Two questionnaire items (See Questions 9 and 10 in Appendix 1) directly
asked the participants about the extent of English language use in their
workplace. The first question asked a general question about the frequency of
each of the four skills used in their workplace on a five-point Likert scale.
Question 10, comprised of 20 sub-questions where each question was
correspondingly measured on a five-point Likert scale, delved deeper into each

specific tasks required by each English language skills. The two questionnaire items were designed in a way where participants could mark on the number they felt the most appropriate ranging from 1 (rarely) to 5 (more than once per day). Moreover, questions on listening and speaking had to be grouped, as the two skills work concurrently in the workplace (St. John, 1996).

In measuring reading skill, all participants who responded to the questionnaires were asked to respond to five questions (See Questions 10-1 to 10-6) pertaining to descriptions of situations that would call for reading English related materials in their workplace setting. The reliability measure for the items related to English reading skills measured by Cronbach's alpha (α) yielded .936, which is a reliability value well above the required Cronbach's α of .70 for social scientific research. The researcher measured the level of English writing skills used in the workplace setting with seven items (Questions 10-14 to 10-20). The reliability measure for items related to the writing skill measured by Cronbach's α generated .953. A total of seven questions (See Questions 10-7 to 10-13) measured the level of English listening and speaking skills demanded in the workplace setting. The reliability measure for the items related to listening and speaking skills measured by Cronbach's α produced .951.

Validity of English Test Score Interpretation

Question 11 of this study was composed of six questions that ask the participants about their personal opinions regarding how strong the relationship between the TOEIC score is with working competency, English competence, and personal advancement on a four-point Likert scale. Specifically, items 11-1 and 11-3 were related to working competency, items 11-2 and 11-5 pertained to English proficiency, and lastly, items 11-4 and 11-6 represented the theme of personal advancement. Questionnaire items 11-1 and 11-3 generated Cronbach's α .932, questionnaire items 11-2 and 11-5 yielded Cronbach's α .854, and questionnaire items 11-4 and 11-6 produced Cronbach's α .935. However, items 11-4 and 11-6 were eliminated from the final analysis, as personal advancement may be a broader topic that questions life values that are rather unrelated to test score interpretation and the working environment, whereas working competence and English proficiency can portray interpretation values that facilitate employability directly needed in the workplace.

The interview was conducted in a written form because interviews conducted in written forms can be "much more detailed, ideographic, and complex" (Sandvik, Diener & Seidlitz, 2009, p. 321). The interview questions were comprised of three open-ended questions that asked for further elaboration on the questionnaire survey questions. The question items for the interview asked: (1) whether the TOEIC scores provided accurate evidence of English

language proficiency, (2) whether the TOEIC scores were related to working skills and (3) opinions about utilizing English standardized test scores for entry-level recruitment process and for promotion (See Appendix 2). Table 3.2 below shows the two RQs under study and their corresponding questionnaire survey and interview items.

Table 3.2

Research Questions and Their Corresponding Questionnaire and Interview Items

Research Questions	Item(s)
1) To what extent are English language skills required for employees in different organizational divisions to perform their job tasks?	Questionnaire No. 5, 6, 9,10
2) How are the TOEIC scores interpreted in hiring decision-making processes?	Questionnaire No. 7, 8, 11, Interview No. 1, 2

3.4 Research Procedure of Data Collection

The previously discussed research procedure is elaborated in greater depth in this section. The researcher tracked down companies that require a TOEIC score as a prerequisite prior to employment and several contacts were made with the HR department of each company for permission to conduct the study. Four companies finally approved; however, only under strict supervision.

Information security and the confidentiality bar were set extremely high against company outsiders. As a result, the researcher had to undergo several stages of scrutiny by the companies being studied. Moreover, although the questionnaires were approved for distribution within the company, the researcher was prohibited to directly distribute the online surveys within the physical compound. Thus, four contact persons, who acted as intermediate persons, were established for the four businesses, two of which were eliminated for the final analysis. The original plan for the questionnaire survey was to collect approximately 200 questionnaires from four major corporations comprised of four functional divisions. However, the researcher was only able to collect a sufficient and analyzable amount of surveys from two corporations. The number of questionnaires collected from the two other corporations, not included in the final analysis, was approximately 10, which was considered too insignificant to be analyzed. Due to the small unrepresentative samples, the data from these two other corporations had to be removed from the final analysis.

The surveys were distributed in early October of 2018, and the data was collected over mid and late October 2018. The questionnaires were purposely collected towards the end of the year, as the majority of questions in the survey required the participants to recall the past one-year of their experience in their organization of the workplace. Given that majority of Korean companies recruit at the beginning of each year, it was most appropriate to conduct the research at

the end of the year to gather questionnaires from those whose tenure amounted

to a full year.

Follow-up written interviews were conducted with 20 consenting

participants. At the bottom of the questionnaire was an agreement consent asking

the participants if they were willing to answer further interview questions. Each

written interview took five to ten minutes, depending on the participant's

available time and enthusiasm for the topic under study. Both the survey

questionnaire items and interview items were originally written in English,

translated into Korean, and distributed in the Korean version by the four contact

persons.

3.5   Data Analysis

This study examines the current status quo of the English language in the

Korean workplace setting to investigate the validity of the interpretation of the

English standardized test score. In order to do so, the study employed both

quantitative (survey questionnaire) and qualitative (written interview) methods

of data collection as mentioned in previous sections. Here, descriptive statistics

derived from raw data of the questionnaires were performed in order to provide

meaningful statistical analysis of the use of English language on the job. The

statistical analysis of the present study was carried out through the Statistical

Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) developed by IBM Analytics (Version

15.0, Released 2017).

The first part of this study examined the extent of the English language skills required for employees to perform their job tasks on one level: the effect of organizational divisions. This part was employed by one-way Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) to observe significant differences among group means. The four organizational divisions, which were administration, production, sales & marketing, and research & development, were employed as an independent variable with four levels, for which the four English language skills composed of reading, listening, speaking, and writing were dependent variables. Therefore, one-way MANOVA was performed once to measure organizational divisions regarding the actual use of English skills needed in the workplace.

The second part of the study, questionnaire items 7,8, and 11 and the written interview, set out to examine whether working employees embedded values in interpreting the TOEIC scores. Items in question 11, that included working competency (11-1 and 11-3) and English competency (11-2 and 11-5) were marked by all participants on the number they felt most appropriate ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). Then, the collected scores were calculated by averaging the mean of each item in the instrument. For the analysis of the written interview data, similar themes were grouped together; salient quotations that reflect the themes were coded in terms of whether they were

representative of all interviewees or a particular sub-group or were unique comments. Next, a frequency distribution on the status of English standardized score submission was measured using questions items 7 and 8.

This chapter has outlined the research design and described the research procedures used in detail. In the next chapter, data results will be presented and analyzed by revisiting the RQs proposed in Chapter 1 of the present study.

CHAPTER 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The primary purpose of the present chapter is to introduce the statistical results of the study. The first section of this study documents quantitative data and discussions focused on the frequency of English language skills used under research by organizational divisions. The second section addresses quantitative and qualitative analysis and discussions that are centralized on the theme concerning the validity of English test score interpretation in Korean companies.

4.1 English Language Use in Korean Workplace by Organizational Divisions

4.1.1 Demographic Background

Descriptive statistics were employed to examine a pool of participants who were selected to be a representation of the two global corporations. The participants that were sampled are identified in Table 4.1, which illustrates the demographic background of the participants by sex, age, job rank, tenure, and organizational divisions. The data revealed the highest percentage of each category to be the following: 54.4% (N=105) were male participants, approximately one-half of the participants; 48.2% (N=93) of the sampled population were between the ages of 30 to 39; 38.9% (N=75) of the respondents

were assistant managers; and 24.9% (N=48) participants have been working for over 8 years in their current company. Furthermore, 37.3% of the participants (N=72) were from sales & marketing division.

Table 4.1

Number and Percentage Data of Demographic Background

Variable	N	Percentage
Sex		
Male	105	54.4
Female	88	45.6
Age		
Between 20-29	71	36.8
Between 30-39	93	48.2
Between 40-49	22	11.4
Between 50-59	7	3.6
Job rank		
Executive	1	.5
Senior Manager	20	10.4
Manager	43	22.3
Assistant Manager	75	38.9
Staff Employee	54	28.0

Tenure

Over 8 years	48	24.9
6-7 years	26	13.5
4-5 years	37	19.2
2-3 years	42	21.8
1-2 years	40	20.7

Organizational Division

Administration	38	19.7
Production	32	16.6
Sales & Marketing	72	37.3
Research & Development	51	26.4

Specific Organizational Division

HRM, HRD	18	9.3
Finance	16	8.3
Public Relations	21	10.9
Strategy & Management	22	11.4
Marketing Strategy	31	16.1
Product Design	27	14.0
Overseas Sales	25	13.0
Quality Control	33	17.1
Total	193	100.0

4.1.2 English Language Use in Korean Workplace

Descriptive statistics shown in Table 4.2 revealed that among the four English skills used in the Korean workplace, reading (M=2.17) was used most frequently, sequentially followed by listening (M=2.02), writing (M=1.92), and

speaking (M=1.88) on a five-point Likert scale. The five-point Likert scale represents the frequency scale of English language use, in which 1 represents 'rarely,' 2 corresponds to 'a few times a month,' 3 represents 'a few times a week,' 4 serves as 'almost everyday,' and 5 corresponds to 'more than once per day' (See Question 9 in Appendix 1). It is important to draw attention to the fact that even the highest mean, found in the reading skill, did not exceed the median number, three on the five-point Likert scale, meaning that the English language is used less than a few times per month within the two corporations.

Table 4.2

Descriptive Statistics of English Language Use

Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Reading	193	1	5	2.17	1.0
Listening	193	1	5	2.02	1.1
Speaking	193	1	5	1.88	1.17
Writing	193	1	5	1.92	1.1

A more detailed observation of the four skills of English language used in each of the four organizational divisions is presented in Table 4.3 below. Across all skills of English use, sales & marketing division revealed the highest frequency of English language use, sequentially followed in order by research & development, administration, and production divisions. Within sales & marketing division, reading skill was used the most (M=2.79) and speaking and

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writing skills were used the least (M=2.53); In the research & development division, reading skill was the most frequently used skill as well (M=1.90) and speaking skill was used the least (M=1.57); In the administration division, reading skill showed similar results to results of sales & marketing and research & development, as the reading skill was also used in similar frequency (M=1.76) in the administration division. The lowest used skill was speaking skill (M=1.47) in the administration division; Lastly, production division used reading skill the most (M=1.69) and listening and speaking skills were demanded the least (M=1.41). Overall, all four organizational divisions revealed a similarity of results in the most required skill, reading. Slight differences were shown across the departments on the skill demanded the least; however, all divisions shared a common denominator of having the speaking skill as the least required skill. It is important to note that the highest mean was found in sales & marketing department, the reading skill (M=2.73). Nevertheless, the highest mean did not exceed the median of three points out of five-point Likert scale, which means that reading skill is unlikely to be used even a few times per week. Moreover, it may well be argued that in administration and production divisions, even the highest demanded skill is rarely used, as the mean number for the reading skill is just around 1 on the scale.

Table 4.3

Descriptive Statistics of English Use by Organizational Divisions

	Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation
Reading	Administration	1.76	0.14
	Production	1.69	0.16
	Sales & Marketing	2.79	0.10
	Research & Development	1.90	0.12
Listening	Administration	1.61	0.16
	Production	1.41	0.17
	Sales & Marketing	2.64	0.11
	Research & Development	1.84	0.14
Speaking	Administration	1.47	0.17
	Production	1.41	0.19
	Sales & Marketing	2.53	0.13
	Research & Development	1.57	0.15
Writing	Administration	1.58	0.16
	Production	1.44	0.18
	Sales & Marketing	2.53	0.12
	Research & Development	1.63	0.14

One-way MANOVA was performed to determine whether organizational groups differ in the frequency of the use of the English language. However, MANOVA alone could not provide sufficient information on determining differences among the groups. For this reason, Scheffe post-hoc tests were

employed, which helped better observe the significant differences between groups in greater depth. The four skills of English language, dependent variables, was examined by one-way MANOVA with the four organization divisions – administration, production, sales & marketing, and research & development – each as an independent variable. Table 4.4 below shows the effect of organizational divisions on English language use. All four test statistics (Pillai's Trace, Wilks' Lambda, Hotelling's Trace, and Toy's Largest Root) found a significant difference in the use of English across the four organizational divisions, as the p-value was less than .001.

Table 4.4

One-Way MANOVA of Effect of Organizational Divisions on English Use

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Sig.	Observed Power
Organizational Divisions	Pillai's Trace (V)	0.23	4.88	12.0	0.0	1.0
	Wilks' Lambda (Λ)	0.73	5.22	12.0	0.0	1.0
	Hotelling's Trace (T)	0.36	5.52	12.0	0.0	1.0
	Roy's Largest Root (Θ)	0.31	14.78	4.0	0.0	1.0

For the aim to examine differences among organizational divisions in the use of the English language, Scheffe post-hoc tests were carried out across all four skills (reading, listening, speaking, and writing). The results of post-hoc comparisons are provided in Table 4.5. The findings revealed that participants representing the population for administration, production, and research & development showed a significant difference in their reading, listening, speaking, and writing skills on the job compared to sales & marketing ($p < .01$).

As shown in Table 4.5, the use of reading skills between sales & marketing and production divisions were significantly different from each other (M=-1.10), as was the case between sales & marketing and administration (M=-1.03) and sales & marketing and research & development (M=.89). The post-hoc test revealed that in the use of listening skills, the greatest group differences across all organizations were identified to be between sales & marketing and production divisions (M=-1.23). The group difference was sequentially followed in order by sales & marketing and administration (M=-1.03) and sales & marketing and research & development (M=.80).

In the post-hoc analysis conducted for group differences for speaking skills, sales & marketing and production revealed the greatest difference (M=-1.12), followed by sales & marketing and administration (M=-1.05) and sales & marketing and research & development (M=.96). The analysis further indicated that for writing skills, sales & marketing and production led the race again (M=-

1.09), sequentially followed by sales & marketing and administration (M=-.95) and sales & marketing and research & development (M=.90). It should be noted that close proximity of mean differences of sales & marketing to administration and research & development in the writing skills signifies that English writing is used in similar frequency in the two divisions.

In sum, the greatest group differences across all four language skills were observed to be between sales & marketing and production with a mean difference of -1.10 in reading, -1.23 in listening, -1.12 in speaking, and -1.09 in writing. Between-group post-hoc comparisons for the three divisions, excluding sales & marketing, were not found to be significant ($p > .05$). The similarity in the sequential order of significant group differences (sales & marketing, research & development, administration, and production) across all four language skills conveys the message that sales & marketing, by nature, employs the English language skills more than other divisions, for they are involved in the task of promoting and selling goods and services. Notwithstanding, research & development also encounters situations that call for English language use, taking as an instance dealing with various foreign publications with a great pool of information.

Table 4.5

Post-hoc Test of Organizational Group Differences in English Language Use

Dependent Variable		Mean Diff.	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Reading						
Administration	Production	0.08	0.212	0.722	-0.34	0.49
	Sales & Marketing	-1.03*	0.18	0.0	-1.38	-0.68
	Research & Development	-0.14	0.19	0.47	-0.51	0.24
Production	Sales & Marketing	-1.10*	0.19	0.0	-1.48	-0.73
	Research & Development	-0.21	0.2	0.28	-0.61	0.18
Sales & Marketing	Research & Development	0.89*	0.16	0.0	0.57	1.21
Listening						
Administration	Production	0.2	0.24	0.4	-0.27	0.67
	Sales & Marketing	-1.03*	0.2	0.0	-1.42	-0.64
	Research & Development	-0.24	0.21	0.26	-0.66	0.18
Production	Sales & Marketing	-1.23*	0.21	0.0	-1.65	-0.82
	Research & Development	-0.44	0.22	0.05	-0.88	0.00

Sales & Marketing	Research & Development	0.80[*]	0.18	0.0	0.44	1.15

	Speaking					
Administration	Production	0.07	0.26	0.79	-0.44	0.57
	Sales & Marketing	-1.05[*]	0.21	0.0	-1.47	-0.63
	Research & Development	-0.09	0.23	0.68	-0.54	0.35
Production	Sales & Marketing	-1.12[*]	0.23	0.0	-1.57	-0.68
	Research & Development	-0.16	0.24	0.5	-0.64	0.31
Sales & Marketing	Research & Development	0.96[*]	0.2	0.0	0.58	1.34

	Writing					
Administration	Production	0.14	0.24	0.56	-0.33	0.61
	Sales & Marketing	-0.95[*]	0.2	0.0	-1.34	-0.55
	Research & Development	-0.05	0.21	0.82	-0.47	0.37
Production	Sales & Marketing	-1.09[*]	0.21	0.0	-1.51	-0.67
	Research & Development	-0.19	0.23	0.40	-0.63	0.25
Sales & Marketing	Research & Development	0.90[*]	0.18	0.0	0.54	1.26

Note. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

4.1.3 English Language Use Discussions

The first RQ investigated the extent of the English language skills required for employees to perform their job tasks by organizational divisions. The grand mean for descriptive statistics revealed that among the four English skills used in the Korean workplace, reading (M=2.17) was used most frequently, however, used very moderately averaging approximately a few times per month. The results were consecutively followed by listening (M=2.02), writing (M=1.92), and speaking (M=1.88) on a five-point Likert scale. Choi's (2002) study found similar sequential order for English language skills used in Korean manufacturing companies, which were found to be reading (M=3.20), listening (M=2.27), speaking (M=2.24), and writing (M=1.91) on a five-point Likert scale. Research by Park and Jung (2006) revealed similar results, as the resulting mean response was 2.81 points on a four-point scale for the reading skill. The consistent findings lend support to Choi's (2002) acknowledgment of the weakness of the use of English language in the Korean workforce.

The present study's findings corroborate the speaking and writing skills results of Cho et al. (1998) and Choi (2002), as the two studies claimed that speaking and writing skills were most frequently in demand in sales & marketing division. However, reading and listening skills showed conflicting results, as Choi's (2002) study found the most frequent use of reading skills from research & development division and Cho et al.'s (1998) study found the most frequent

use of listening skills from administration division. Nevertheless, both Cho et al.'s (1998) and Choi's (2002) research underlines that the most demanded English language skill is the reading skill (M=2.79), specifically from sales & marketing division; however, the use is still at a quite moderate level. Therefore, the actual use of English by the two major Korean corporations reveals clear deviations from the high demand of English standardized test scores required within the Korean workforce.

4.2 Validity of English Test Score Interpretation

Response to the second RQ was elicited by both quantitative means, survey questionnaire item 11, and qualitative means, written interview questions. The qualitative analysis sought to detect any signs of TOEIC interpretation that might have been a result of the effects of value implication (Messick, 1989) as evidence of high demand for the requirement for an English standardized test score.

Table 4.6 shows the demographic background for 19 interview participants. The results revealed the highest percentage for each category to be 52.6% (N=10) male, 47.4% (N=9) between the ages of 30 to 39, assistant manager and staff employee both 36.8% (N=7) , 42.1% (N=8) from the administration department, specifically from the HRM/HRD division, and lastly all 19 participants, 100% (N=19), have submitted a TOEIC score to be hired in

their companies. The highest percentage-showing categories are similar to that of

Table 4.1, 193 participants' demographic information. However, compared to

the total sample, the administration division was more represented in the

interview group due to the reason that administration employees deal directly

with candidates during the hiring process of the company. Note here the

emphasis that employees working in the HRM/HRD could possibly place more

value on the interpretation of the TOEIC score compared to participants of other

divisions.

Table 4.6

Demographic Background of Interview Participants

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Sex		
Male	10	52.6
Female	9	47.4
Total	19	100.0
Age		
20-29	8	42.1
30-39	9	47.4
40-49	2	10.5
Total	19	100.0
Job Level		
Senior Manager	2	10.5
Manager	3	15.8
Assistant Manager	7	36.8
Staff Employee	7	36.8
Total	19	100.0
Division		
Administration	8	42.1
Production	3	15.8
Sales & Marketing	7	36.8
Research & Development	1	5.3
Total	19	100.0
TOEIC		
Yes	19	100.0

4.2.1 English Language Screening for Employment

In order to further investigate RQ 2, which questions how the TOEIC scores are interpreted in hiring decision-making processes, it was necessary to first examine the proportion of the workforce that had submitted an English standardized test score, especially focusing on organizational divisions. The results outlined a significant finding to the present analysis, as all the 193 participants had submitted an English language test score to be hired. What is more remarkable is that 188 participants out of 193 participants have submitted a TOEIC score for employment, marking 97.4% (N=188) of the respondents, to have submitted a score at their currently working company.

Table 4.7 provides the proportion of the population who were required to submit an English test score for employment in the current company and Table 4.8 shows the proportion of the population that had submitted a TOEIC score for employment as a prerequisite to employment. Some group differences were observed between the four functional divisions regarding their submission of the TOEIC score. 100% (N=72) of sales & marketing division marked as having been screened for TOEIC prior to employment, 100% (N=38) of administration division turned in a TOEIC score, 98% (N=50) of research & development division had submitted a TOEIC score for employment, and production division was of no exception with 87.5% (N=28) of participants who submitted a TOEIC score. In fact, readings skill, which was shown to be a skill required the most

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across all four organizational divisions, revealed the highest percentage of use in

sales & marketing division (M=2.79) and derived the lowest percentage in

production division (M=1.69). Thus elaborated, the TOEIC score seems to be a

type of English language test that organizational divisions with a comparatively

higher need for English may prefer. The next section discusses the results of

interview data to examine the relationship between the TOEIC score and English

proficiency in more depth.

Table 4.7

Frequency Distribution of English Language Test for Employment by

Organization

Organizational Divisions	English Language Test (Percentage)		Total (Percentage)
	Yes	No	
Administration	38 (100%)	0 (0.0%)	38 (19.7%)
Production	32 (100%)	0 (0.0%)	32 (16.6%)
Sales & Marketing	72 (100%)	0 (0.0%)	72 (37.3%)
Research & Development	51 (100%)	0 (0.0%)	51 (26.4%)
Total	193 (100%)	0 (0.0%)	193 (100%)

Table 4.8

Frequency Distribution of TOEIC for Employment by Organization

Organizational Divisions	TOEIC (Percentage)		Total (Percentage)
	Yes	No	
Administration	38 (100%)	0 (0.0%)	38 (19.7%)
Production	28 (87.5%)	4 (12.5%)	32 (16.6%)
Sales & Marketing	72 (100%)	0 (0.0%)	72 (37.3%)
Research & Development	50 (98.0%)	1 (2.0%)	51 (26.4%)
Total	188 (97.41%)	5 (2.59%)	193 (100%)

4.2.2 Views on TOEIC Scores Regarding English Proficiency

Questions that directly inquired the participants of their views on the

TOEIC scores regarding English proficiency were questionnaire survey items

11-2 and 11-5; and written interview question one (See Appendix 2). Table 4.9

shows the frequency and percentage of item 11-2 which states, *"There is a*

positive correlation between TOEIC score and English competence needed in the

working environment." As Table 4.9 shows, 63.2% (N=122) of the respondents

either strongly disagreed or disagreed on the relationship between the TOEIC

score and English proficiency, and approximately 36.8% (N=71) either agreed or

strongly agreed. Table 4.10 reveals the descriptive statistics of item 11-5 that

states, *"An individual can increase their linguistic competence by studying for*

TOEIC." The results in Table 4.10 show only a slight difference between the

participants who agreed and participants who disagreed in this item. The number

of participants who have either strongly disagreed or disagreed marked 43.6%

(N=84) compared to those who have agreed or strongly agreed, 56.5% (N=99),

showing a difference of N=15 participants.

Table 4.9

Responses to Question 11-2 on Survey Questionnaire.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	55	28.5
Disagree	67	34.7
Agree	51	26.4
Strongly agree	20	10.4
Total	193	100.0

Table 4.10

Responses to Question 11-5 on Survey Questionnaire.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	25	13.0
Disagree	59	30.6
Agree	70	36.3
Strongly agree	39	20.2
Total	193	100.0

In the response to the follow-up was written interview question asking if the TOEIC scores provided accurate evidence of English language proficiency. 17 out of 19 participants stated that the TOEIC scores and English language proficiency were not related, whereas two participants responded that there was a relationship. As addressed in Interview Excerpt 1 below, four participants working in the administration department, two of whom are senior managers, and one from the sales & marketing division stated:

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Interview Excerpt 1

Staff Employee of Administration Department (ID 30): It's unreasonable to assess an individual's English proficiency with the TOEIC score. The actual skill needed in the workplace is speaking ability, not grammatical ability.

Assistant Manager of Sales & Marketing department (ID 119): I think the TOEIC can be used to predict one's diligence, but it cannot assess the overall proficiency.

Assistant Manager of Administration Department (ID 180): Most people with high TOEIC scores cannot even engage in daily conversations in English. There would be problems when such people go in to have meetings with foreigners.

Senior Manager of Administration Department (ID 37): The TOEIC score can only assess how hard working an individual is, not English proficiency.

Senior Manager of Administration Department (ID 113): The TOEIC cannot be accurate evidence of English proficiency, because one can increase their scores with mere test solving skills.

As indicated in Interview Excerpt 1, employees working in the administration department did not acknowledge the TOEIC score as an indicator of English proficiency. ID 180 has especially highlighted that individuals with high TOEIC scores have low English speaking ability. Moreover, as according to ID 30, it is assumed that the skill needed in the workplace is speaking ability. Employees usually maintain the notion that speaking ability is mostly needed; however, the present study has revealed through the questionnaire items that the

most frequently used skill was, in fact, the reading skill and the least used skill was the speaking skill across all divisions. Therefore, such significant misunderstanding of the skill actually used could considerably devalue the fact that the TOEIC may possibly be assessing a skill that is needed in the workplace.

Investigation of values is no simple matter; however, two participants, ID 119 and ID 37, have stressed that the TOEIC can measure qualities related to diligence and hard work, rather than the employee's English proficiency. The responses that have highlighted hard work and diligence for interview question 1 match the findings of the study conducted by Akiyama (2004), where Japanese middle school and high school teachers disagreed on the decision to implement an English speaking test for university admissions because students with extensive experience living abroad have more advantage, which led McNamara and Roever (2006) to believe high school teachers in Japan valued "diligence and hard work" over actual English ability.

It is necessary to turn the attention to the participants who have further suggested a solution, calling for the need for a more appropriate mode of English assessment other than the TOEIC. The two interview respondents, a senior manager of administration department and a manager of sales & marketing department, stated:

Interview Excerpt 2

Senior Manager of Administration Department (ID 37): I think the TOEIC is just a formal test. There need to be other forms of assessment to test one's English proficiency.

Manager of Sales & Marketing Department (ID 78): We use the TOEIC score because it is the only way to assess a person at the moment. Unless some tool that could assess a person is invented, the English test is the only tool that we can depend on.

The above statements seem to question the authenticity of the items in the TOEIC, as the items may not be used to assess the actual ability required in the actual situations of English use in the Korean workplace. ID 78 especially implicitly inferred the TOEIC as an assessment tool that is used to assess a person rather than the English language proficiency, by stating: *"[…] Unless some tool that could assess a person is invented […]"* Likewise, the participant emphasized the need for a tool that could assess a candidate's working ability and traits rather than a tool that could assess one's English proficiency. This statement can work as evidence to probing to the validity of the interpretation of the TOEIC score for hiring decision-making purposes.

4.2.3 Views on TOEIC Scores Regarding Working Competency

As discussed above, the present study attempted to examine how standardized test scores were used in the hiring process. Therefore, the current section addresses the relationship between the TOEIC score and overall working competency, which were addressed in questionnaire survey items 11-1 and 11-3 and written interview question two (See Appendix 1 and Appendix 2). As shown in Table 4.11 below, 46.1% (N=89) of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed and about 53.9% (N=104) either strongly disagreed or disagreed to the item 11-1 that directly asks the participants about the relationship between TOEIC and working competency, *"English ability affects an individual's working competence."* Furthermore, Table 4.12 shows descriptive statistics of item 11-3, *"TOEIC scores submitted at the entry- level recruitment distinguishes employees with working potential from those without working potential,"* a statement about working competency, revealed similar results to item 11-1, as respondents who have either strongly agreed or agreed accounted to 45.1% (N=87) and approximately 55.0% (N=106) strongly disagreed or agreed.

Table 4.11

Responses to Question 11-1 on Survey Questionnaire.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	37	19.2
Disagree	67	34.7
Agree	60	31.1
Strongly agree	29	15.0
Total	193	100.0

Table 4.12

Responses to Question 11-3 on Survey Questionnaire.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	48	24.9
Disagree	58	30.1
Agree	66	34.2
Strongly agree	21	10.9
Total	193	100.0

A follow-up interview question asked why the participants would assume that there is a relationship between the TOEIC score and working competency. All 19 interview participants have initially marked in their questionnaire survey that there was no relationship on item 11; however, some have shown a disjunction between their response and their stated reason for the response. A few representative responses of participants, who have initially disagreed on the

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relationship between the TOEIC and working competency on item 11, reported that the TOEIC score could at least be evidence of intelligence, diligence, and better working skills. It is important to take notice of the paradox between the marked answer on the questionnaire survey and the provided reasons in the interview. As stated in Interview Excerpt 3, ID 37 pointed out that the TOEIC score is related to diligence; yet, the participant strongly disagreed to item 11-1 and 11-3 that directly questioned the relationship between the TOEIC score and working competency, only in a questionnaire survey format. ID 68 has also strongly disagreed to item 11-1 and 11-3 and has further indicated that the TOEIC scores and working competency are unrelated in the interview response, but ironically has mentioned that the TOEIC score can at least measure diligence, as it is a requirement for all employees. The full interview response is addressed below:

Interview Excerpt 3

Senior Manager of Administration Department (ID 37):
TOEIC is not very practical in a company. But, employees with
high TOEIC scores tend to exercise more, tend to be more
intelligent, have better working skills, can use office tools better,
etc. So from my perspective, TOEIC=diligence.

**Assistant Manager of Sales & Marketing Department (ID
119):** It may be somewhat relevant to working competency. But
that is only true in some departments; otherwise, sensible
employees tend to be better workers.

Assistant Manager of Administration Department (ID 68): […]
English test score cannot assess one's overall English competence.
However, the TOEIC score is required for all employees, which
means it can at least measure diligence.

In contrast, ID 68 who has responded that there is no relationship
between the TOEIC score and working competency on the interview item
reported that the TOEIC only exists to prove to the employers that the candidates
have the ability to acquire an English test score and verifies nothing beyond the
score. ID 113 has responded similarly by expressing that the test score is not
helpful in doing office work, meaning the score itself cannot be an indicator of
working competency, as shown in Interview Except 4 below.

Interview Excerpt 4

Assistant Manager of Administration Department (ID 68):
There is no relationship between the TOEIC score and working
competency because the TOEIC is a test that exists only to prove
one's score.

Senior Manager of Administration Department (ID 113): The
test is not helpful in doing office work. So the TOEIC score and
working competency are not related.

4.2.4 Authenticity and Value Implications Discussions

The second RQ, as evidence of test validity, investigated the perceptions
of the TOEIC scores as an indicator of the applicant's English competence
and/or working competency. A previous study that examined the relationship
between the TOEIC and university admissions has found that English
standardized test scores reflected the applicant's academic efforts and promised a
secure job in South Korea (Im & McNamara, 2015). The current study, however,
managed to distinguish a number of other values that appeared to exert an
influence on the way the TOEIC scores are interpreted.

The common practice of the association of incorporating values in test
scores represents Messick's (1989) matrix of construct validity, where Messick
(1998) argued that the primary issues of test validity are defined by the
interpretability of value implications of test scores. With this concept of
construct validity in mind, to employ English standardized tests that create a

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discrepancy between the intended interpretations and the perceived interpretation of test scores is putting its validity at risk. As proposed by ETS (2018), the intended interpretation of the TOEIC is to measure English reading and listening skills in business settings and nothing more. Based on Messick's matrix (See Table 2.2 in Chapter 2), the current study's findings indicate the use of the TOEIC test score in the hiring process of Korean corporation context lacks validity. This lack of validity is clearly expressed through the interviewees who indicated that even the administration department employees did not view the test score as an accurate indicator of English proficiency: *"The TOEIC cannot be accurate evidence of English proficiency, because one can increase their scores with mere test solving skills"* (See Interview Excerpt 1). However, oddly enough, some interview respondents believed that a relationship existed between the test score and working competency: *" [...] employees with high TOEIC scores tend to exercise more, tend to be more intelligent, have better working skills, can use office tools better, etc. So from my perspective, TOEIC=diligence"* (See Interview Excerpt 4). This is an example of an unsound interpretation of the TOEIC score that may well place its validity at risk.

Although most participants have explicitly stated that the TOEIC is not an appropriate indicator of the English language skill, the English skill needed in the workplace is widely assumed to be the speaking skill. In other words, according to the participants, the TOEIC may not be an appropriate mode of

English language testing in the context of the two corporations. Strangely, the results of the present study has found that the most used skill is actually the reading skill, and the least used skill is, in fact, the speaking skill to the point that it is almost never used; as a result exposing a discrepancy between very little actual use of speaking skill and relatively high level of perceived importance of the skill. Then, the possibility of devaluing the TOEIC as a legitimate mode of English language testing should also be taken into serious consideration.

4.3 Summary of Results

This chapter presented the results and discussions of the statistical analysis for the quantitative method, 193 questionnaire survey responses, and for the qualitative method, 19 written interview responses from two major Korean corporations.

For quantitative analysis, the present study investigated the frequency of English language use in the Korean workplace by organizational divisions. The study found that the reading skill was required less than moderately, although the reading skill was the highest with an overall mean of 2.17 on a five-point Likert scale, with listening, writing, and speaking skills following sequentially. The statistical analysis of each of the four divisions revealed the same ordering of the frequency of the English skills used, which highlights the consistency of the reading skill being the most required skill across all departments. The skill

demanded the least across all departments was found to be the speaking skill. Specifically, the least required skill for administration department was speaking skill (M=1.47); the least used skill for production department was listening and speaking skills (M=1.41); the least required for sales & marketing department was revealed to be speaking and writing skills (M=2.53); the least demanded skill for research & development department was speaking skill (M=1.57), an almost negligible use of the skill. In the actual demand of English language use in the two companies, sales & marketing, as a group, was significantly more likely to employ the English language compared to other departments. Moreover, the greatest group differences of the four language skills were observed to be between the production department and the sales & marketing department.

While English is infrequently used across all four functional organizational divisions, the results illustrate that approximately 97% of the entire workforce has submitted a TOEIC score prior to employment at their current company. The highest proportion was observed to be sales & marketing and administration divisions, which yielded 100% TOEIC score submission. The data results are followed by 98% from research & development division and 87.5% from the production division. The most widely used assessment tool was the TOEIC test, which is the most prevalent tool for worker evaluation in South Korea. In all, statistical analysis not only revealed the infrequency of English language use among the Korean workforce, but also the high demand of the

English standardized test score, especially the TOEIC score.

The qualitative analysis aimed to find further evidence to validity, especially the value implication placed on the TOEIC score interpretation. With respect to value implications, the participants were asked of their thoughts on the relationship between the TOEIC score and English proficiency, in which all 17 out of 19 respondents have pointed out that there was no direct relationship. However, some respondents have highlighted that although the TOEIC score may not assess English proficiency, it can measure how hard working and diligent an employee is. The interview question also addressed the relationship between the TOEIC score and working competency, in which all 19 participants have initially stated on questionnaire survey item 11 that TOEIC and working competency had no relevance. However, some responses were paradoxical, as the responses indicated that a relationship existed in the interview item. Nevertheless, it was evident that some respondents viewed and interpreted the TOEIC score as evidence of intelligence, diligence, and better working skills, rather than an indicator of English proficiency. Furthermore, it was noticeable from the data that the reading skill was used the most and speaking skill the least within the two corporations, which leaves room for the possibility of reconsideration of the TOEIC being a rather legitimate mode of testing in the context of the South Korean workforce, only if it is used as an indicator of English language proficiency.

In the next chapter, a conclusion of the research findings, implications, and future suggestions for future studies are discussed.

CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSIONS

This chapter provides a detailed discussion of key research findings presented in Chapter 4, with reference to each RQ. The primary purpose of the current study is to examine the frequency of English language use in the Korean workplace and thereby observe the practice of requiring the TOEIC score as a prerequisite for employment in South Korea. The sections below further discuss the results to not only explore the use of English language in Korean corporations but also to investigate the validity following Messick's (1989) framework of the construct validity of test score interpretation.

5.1 Summary of Major Findings

The current study investigated the use of the English language within two major Korean corporations with a mixed method approach. While the primary method of the study was questionnaire survey research, an analysis of written interviews with consenting respondents was conducted.

The findings of English language use revealed that reading skill was demanded the most across all four organizational divisions in the two corporations studied, showing the greatest mean of 2.17 in reading on a five-point Likert scale. Note here that 2.17 signifies that the reading skill is only used a few times per month. The division that showed the highest mean in the use of

reading skill was sales & marketing (M=2.79), sequentially followed by research & development (M=1.90), administration (M=1.76), and production (M=1.69), which surprisingly conveys that English language reading skill is actually rarely used in the three divisions that follow. The least demanded English language skill across all divisions shared a common denominator of having speaking skill as one of the few least used skills. Moreover, one-way MANOVA revealed a significant difference in the use of English across the four organizational divisions, in which the post-hoc test further illustrated that the pool of participants representing research & development, administration, and production show a significant difference in their reading, listening, speaking, and writing skills on the job compared to sales & marketing division.

Messick's (1989) value implications were taken into consideration for the second RQ. Interestingly enough, 17 out of 19 interview participants responded that there was no relationship between the TOEIC score and actual English proficiency. It was revealed through the interview data that candidates' English business communicative proficiency did not measure up to their TOEIC score. Two respondents of the written interview have argued and even further suggested for the need to implement a more appropriate mode of English assessment other than the TOEIC test. The respondents have stated, *"[...] There needs to be other forms of assessment to test one's English proficiency,"* and *"[...] Unless some tool that could assess a person is invented, English test is the only*

tool that we can depend on" (See Interview Excerpt 2). Therefore, it is important

to turn our attention to the authenticity, which is a part of construct validity, of

using English standardized tests. In fact, the second statement implicitly reveals

and infers that the English test is used to assess a person, rather than their

English proficiency, which is not an appropriate justification for its interpretation.

Likewise, because the inferences made on the basis of test scores can only be

validated when the test is an authentic representation of the real-world task, this

leads to the lack of construct validity of the interpretation of English test score

for hiring and promotion purposes. Thus, the TOEIC score may not be an

authentic tool of assessment, as the score is translated as qualities beyond mere

English language skills needed in the South Korean workforce; yet the TOEIC

score seems to be the most prevalent in its acceptance rate across the country

(Data & Analysis, 2014).

All 19 interview participants stated that there is no relationship between

the TOEIC score and overall working competency. Note, however, that

questionnaire item (Survey Question 11) that asked the same question but in

different phrases on a four-point Likert scale, ironically revealed paradoxical and

contrasting results in the interview items. In general, some participants have

stated that although a relationship may not exist between the test score and

working competency, the TOEIC scores can help distinguish hard working and

diligent applicants. Again, some respondents stated that the test scores reflected

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"diligence, intelligence, and better working skills" (See Interview Excerpt 3). It appears that employees accepted the TOEIC score as an assessment tool in evaluating working competency, although they had a somewhat negative perspective of the test.

It is important to keep in mind that although all interview participants held a somewhat pessimistic view on the TOEIC test, as it may not accurately measure communicative skills (See Interview Excerpt 1), communicative skills do not only take into account the speaking skill but rather all skills in the English language dimension. As the speaking skill is used the least according to the present study's statistics data, an unanticipated possibility of the TOEIC being able to assess the English language skills needed in the workplace should be taken into account; however, only when value attachment is controlled.

5.2 Limitations and Suggestions for Future Study

The most obvious limitation in this research was only employees from two companies participated in this study; therefore, the generalizability of the findings should be interpreted with such limitations into consideration. The present study was further limited by the quality of the interview, which was conducted in a written form. In particular, while it was beneficial to employ written interviews for transparency, written interviews lacked detailed elaboration of the participants' responses and opportunities for follow-up

questions.

Despite the limitations, the results have provided further evidence confirming the infrequency of the English language used in the Korean workforce and certain values embedded in the interpretation of English test scores. What the present study has shed light on is that test users were using the TOEIC scores for purposes other than evaluating English language proficiency. Therefore, negative consequences should be taken into consideration, as excessive dependence on the TOEIC scores can lead to misinterpretation in selecting suitable and appropriate employees for the job at hand.

The present study suggests that more significant results can be expected with qualitative analysis being spoken rather than written, in order to gather more insightful and elaborative responses into the value implications of test interpretation. Furthermore, as the current paper examined the value placed in test score interpretation, future research should also take into consideration the significant consequences that come forward due to the way test scores are interpreted, and explore other assets of Messick's (1989) construct validity matrix.

Additionally, further research incorporating a similar design in other Korean corporations should possibly consider the unanticipated adverse effects that could arise from the widely assumed notion of perceived importance of the speaking skill. Thereby, assist corporations of a more suitable and authentic tool

of English assessment and/or methods of assessment interpretation, which removes the side effects of misuse and misinterpretation due to value attachment on the English test score in the context of the Korean workforce in Korean companies.

5.3 Implications and Conclusions

This chapter has summarized the present study's findings and discussed them with reference to each RQ. The study found that the extent of English language skills required for employees in different organizational divisions are moderately low, as the highest use of English skill was revealed to be from sales & marketing (M=2.79). It appears that employees hold a somewhat negative view of the TOEIC test and found the need for a better assessment tool, as the participants assumed the English speaking skill to be used the most in their workplace. However, the speaking skill revealed the lowest frequency of use and the reading skill revealed the highest frequency of use in the present study. Therefore, the TOEIC may be a useful test under the conditions of legitimate interpretation of the test score.

The results also established a basis for the reason why the Korean workforce highly demands the TOEIC score. Results pointed to a number of factors that participants perceived as being of value in influencing the interpretation of test scores. Although the TOEIC scores are mostly not viewed

to be indicators of neither English competence nor overall working competency,

it was outlined that values such as diligence, intelligence, and hardworking

ability were embedded in the interpretation of the TOEIC scores. Hence, the

practice of placing value implications on test use in the hiring practice may

threaten the construct validity regarding the authenticity of the test scores in the

context of the South Korean workforce. As Messick (1989) states,

> […] Both meaning and values, as well as both test interpretation and test use, are intertwined in the validation process. Thus, validity and values are one imperative, not two, and test validation implicates both the science and the ethics of assessment (Messick, 1989, p. 26).

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1:

The Survey Questionnaire in English

1. What is your gender?

   [ ] male   [ ] female

2. What is your age category?

   [ ] 19 or under

   [ ] between 20-29

   [ ] between 30-39

   [ ] between 40-49

   [ ] between 50-59

   [ ] 60 or older

3. What is your current job level at this company? (Please check one).

   [ ] Executive   [ ] Senior Manager

   [ ] Manager   [ ] Assistant Manager

   [ ] Staff Employee   [ ] Other: _____

4. How long have you been working in this company?

   [ ] Over 8 years   [ ] 6-7 years

   [ ] 4-5 years   [ ] 2-3 years

   [ ] 1-2 years

5. Which organizational division do you belong to?

    [ ] Administration   [ ] Production

    [ ] Sales & Marketing [ ] Research & Development

    [ ] Other: _____

6. What is the specific nature of your current job? (Please check one).

    [ ] HRM, HRD   [ ] Finance

    [ ] Public Relations   [ ] Strategy, management

    [ ] Marketing Strategy [ ] Product Design

    [ ] Overseas Sales   [ ] Quality Control

    [ ] Other: _____

7. Have you submitted an English test score when applying for this company?

    [ ] If "Yes," continue answering [ ] If "No," go to question 9

    7-1. Which English test did you take?

    [ ] TOEIC   [ ] TEPS

    [ ] OPIc   [ ] TOEIC Speaking

    [ ] English Interview   [ ] Other: _____

8. Have you submitted a TOEIC score to be hired at this company?

    [ ] If "Yes," continue answering   [ ] If "No," go to question 9

    8-1. What was your TOEIC score that you submitted for the application of
this company?

    Listening Score:

    Reading Score:

    Total Score:

9. In the past 1 year, how much English skills were required to carry out your task(s) in the four skill areas? (Please rate them on a 5- point scale)

1) Rarely   2) A few times per month   3) A few times per week
4) Almost every day   5) More than once per day

	1	2	3	4	5
Reading					
Listening					
Speaking					
Writing					

10. In the past 1 year, how often were your English skills required to carry out your tasks in your organization? (Please rate them on a 5- point scale)

1) Rarely   2) A few times per month   3) A few times per week
4) Almost every day   5) More than once per day

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Reading and understanding documents written in English.					
2. Reading and understanding business plan written in English.					
3. Reading and understanding an English description of a product.					

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4. Reading and translating any English documents into Korean.					
5. Reading and understanding foreign databases recorded in English.					
6. Reading professional publications in English.					
7. Conducting business meetings with foreigners.					
8. Understanding presentations given in English.					
9. Attending business luncheons, dinners, and receptions in English.					
10. Communicating with foreigners over the telephone in English.					
11. Negotiating and persuading a business deal or a business partner in English.					
12. Giving an oral presentation in English at international conferences.					
13. Orally giving job tasks in English.					
14. Writing meeting minutes in English.					
15. Exchanging fax, emails, or other mediums in English.					
16. Creating personal resumes in English.					
17. Writing a text description of your business in English.					
18. Preparing written material for use in meetings in English.					
19. Writing official contracts in English.					
20. Contributing articles and texts for publication in foreign publications.					

11. What is your personal opinion on the TOEIC score and abilities needed in the workplace? (Please rate them on a 5- point scale)

1) Strongly disagree   2) Disagree   3) Agree   4) Strongly agree

	1	2	3	4
1. English ability affects an individual's working competence.				
2. There is a positive correlation between the TOEIC score and English competence needed in the working environment.				
3. TOEIC scores submitted at the entry-level recruitment distinguishes employees with working potential from those without working potential.				
4. English standardized test scores affect promotion and/or recruitment.				
5. An individual can increase their linguistic competence by studying for TOEIC.				
6. There is a connection between a high TOEIC score and an individual's economic advancement.				

APPENDIX 2:

Written Interview Questions

Item	Question
1	Do you think that TOEIC scores provide accurate evidence of English language proficiency? Why?
2	To what extent do you think that TOEIC scores are related to working skills? Why?
3	Freely give any opinions about using English standardized exams for entry-level recruitment process and for promotion.

ID 26
Staff Employee from Administration Department
1) It could measure writing, reading, and grammatical skills, but not sure about communicative skills.   2) TOEIC does not have speaking and reading sections, so it can't accurately measure the overall English proficiency. It neither shows one's English proficiency nor their working competency.   3) It cannot assess the overall proficiency of a candidate so it shouldn't be used to assess someone's English.
ID 30
Staff Employee from Administration Department
1) It's unreasonable to assess an individual's English proficiency with the TOEIC score. The actual skill needed in the workplace is speaking ability, not grammatical ability.

2) A TOEIC score and an individual's working competency are two separate things.

3) TOEIC can only assess a fragment of one's English ability. It cannot assess the overall ability.

ID 33

Assistant Manager from Sales & Marketing

1) The TOEIC is not a suitable test to assess one's English proficiency.

2) The TOEIC score and an individual's working competency are not related at all.

3) It is really justifiable to assess the English ability of employees that do not even use English in their workplace? This is definitely problematic.

ID 37

Senior Manager from Administration Department

1) The TOEIC score can only assess how hard working an individual is, but not

English proficiency.

2) TOEIC is not very practical in a company. But, employees with high TOEIC scores tend to exercise more, tend to be more intelligent, have better working skills, can use office tools better, etc. So from my perspective, TOEIC=diligence

3) I think TOEIC is just a formal test. There need to be other forms of assessment to test one's English proficiency.

ID 68

Assistant Manager from Administration Department

1) How can a test that does not have writing and speaking sections measure one's English proficiency?

2) There is no relationship between the TOEIC score and working competency because the TOEIC is a test that exists only to prove one's score.

3) There are more negative aspects than positive aspects. English test score cannot assess one's overall English competence. However, the TOEIC score is required for all employees, which means it can at least measure diligence.

ID 78
Manager from Sales & Marketing Department

1) TOEIC can be useful when we exchange English e-mails with foreign companies, but people with high TOEIC scores are not very good at speaking in English.

2) The things that are assessed in TOEIC are very different from English actually used in the workplace. The TOEIC score is especially not relevant when we conduct meetings in English.

3) We use the TOEIC score because it is the only way to assess a person at the moment. Unless some tool that could assess a person is invented, the English test is the only tool that we can depend on.

ID 80
Senior Manager from Production Department

1) I personally have a high TOEIC score, but I have to train and practice to participate in English meetings.

2) There is not much relationship between personal working competency and the

TOEIC score.
3) Workers in international companies are somewhat proficient in English because English is a prerequisite in an international environment.
ID 113 **Senior Manager from Administration Department**
1) TOEIC cannot be accurate evidence of English proficiency, because one can increase their scores with mere solving skills. 2) The test is not helpful in doing office work. So the TOEIC score and working competency are not related. 3) There have been many incidents where the TOEIC score and speaking ability are rather opposite. Assessing one's English competence with just a TOEIC score is problematic.
ID 119 **Assistant Manager from Sales & Marketing Department**
1) I think TOEIC can be used to predict one's diligence, but it cannot assess the overall proficiency.

2) It may be somewhat relevant to working competency. But that is only true in some departments; otherwise, sensible employees tend to be better workers.

3) I have never used English in the past year that I got hired here. I don't know how things will change when I get promoted, but at the moment, I don't use any English.

ID 125

Senior Manager from Production Department

1) The TOEIC score cannot assess the overall proficiency.

2) People with high TOEIC scores are not good at conversing in English. Moreover, it doesn't affect working competency as well.

3) Because the TOEIC score fails to assess the overall competence, it is not legitimate to use it for employment and promotion.

ID 126

Staff Employee from Administration Department

1) I've seen many with low English proficiency but have high TOEIC scores.

2) TOEIC score does not prove anything in the workplace.

3) It depends on the frequency of the required work.

ID 180

Assistant Manager from Administration Department

1) The TOEIC score doesn't reflect an individual's English proficiency well enough.

2) Most people with high TOEIC scores cannot even engage in daily conversations in English. There would be problems when such people go in to have meetings with foreigners.

3) I think the result would be highly dependent on how much English test score is reflected.

국 문 초 록

한국 대기업의 영어 사용 현황과
영어 시험 점수 해석의 타당성 연구

유 진 아

외국어교육과 영어전공

서울대학교 대학원

영어는 모국어를 달리하는 사람들이 상호 의사소통을 위하여 글로벌 기업에서 주로 사용하는 국제 공용어(lingua franca)이다. 따라서 한국 대기업에서는 영어 시험 결과가 입사와 승진 시 실력 있는 지원자를 가려내기 위한 중요한 도구로 사용되고 있다. 본 연구는 한국 대기업의 영어 시험 결과에 대한 해석의 타당성(validity)을 검증하기 위해(Messick, 1989) 영어가 기업 내에서 현재 어느 정도로, 그리고 어떠한 형태로 사용되고 있는지 살펴보았다. 구체적으로 기업 부서에 따른 영어 사용의 유형별 차이를 살피고, 영어 시험 결과에 대한 해석의 타당성을 검증하기 위해 토익시험(TOEIC) 결과와 영어 능력(English proficiency) 뿐 아니라 토익시험 결과와 업무 능력(working

competency)의 관계를 알아보았다.

양적 연구와 질적 연구를 동시에 진행했으며 양적 연구는 설문조사로, 질적 연구는 인터뷰로 시행하였다. 기업 업무에 따라 4개의 대표 업무 부서인 인사부/관리부, 영업마케팅부, 생산부, 연구개발부에 종사하는 참여자들을 모집하였다. 두 대기업을 중심으로 진행되었으며 설문지 참여자 193명을 대상으로 4개의 부서들과 4개의 영어 사용 영역(말하기, 듣기, 쓰기, 읽기)을 일원 다변량 분산분석(One-way MANOVA)으로 통계분석 하였다. 마지막으로 참여자 19명의 개방형 인터뷰 질문 답변을 분석하였다.

영어 읽기가 전체 업무 부서에서 가장 사용 빈도가 높은 영역으로 일관되게 나타났으며, 그중 다른 부서에 비해 영업마케팅부의 빈도가 가장 높은 것으로 확인되었다. 하지만 읽기 사용 빈도가 가장 높았던 영업마케팅부에서 조차도 그 비율은 낮았다. 한편 업무 부서 전체에서 가장 사용 빈도가 낮은 영역은 말하기로, 거의 사용되지 않는 것으로 확인되었다. 참여자의 89%는 토익시험 결과와 영어 능력은 연관성이 없다고 답했으나 토익은 여전히 입사 조건에서 가장 중요한 역할을 하고 있는 것으로 확인되었다. 이는 토익시험 결과가 영어 실력 측정보다는 지원자의 성실성, 지능, 업무능력 측정을 위해 기능하며, 토익시험 결과에 가치를 부여(value

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implications)하기 때문임을 알 수 있다. 이는 명백하게 시험 결과 해석에 대한 타당도를 위협할 수 있는 사례이며, 오히려 토익 점수를 업무 능력과 상관 없이 영어 읽기와 듣기 능력만을 재는 척도로 사용하는 것이 타당하다고 볼 수 있을 것이다.

현재 한국 기업의 영어 사용 빈도가 전반적으로 낮다는 결과를 고려해 볼 때, 모든 직장인에게 영어 시험 점수를 요구하는 것이 바람직한지는 재고해볼 필요가 있다. 또한 영어 시험 점수에 영어 능력 외의 가치 부여를 하는 행위는 Messick(1989)이 제안한 구인타당도(construct validity)를 위협할 수 있으며, 더 나아가 시험의 진정성(authenticity) 또한 훼손할 수 있다. 즉, 한국 기업은 점수를 입사 필수 조건으로 내세우고 있지만, 일부 참여자는 지원자의 실력을 더 정확히 평가할 수 있는 도구가 필요함을 토로했다. 본 연구는 언어 평가 연구자들과 국내 기업인들이 외재적 변인이 통제된 기업 영어 능력만을 측정할 수 있는 타당한 방법을 연구하고 개발할 것을 촉구하고, 우리나라 기업 영어 시험 결과 해석에 영향을 미칠 수 있는 다른 특성들을 규명해주는 후속연구를 제안해 본다.

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