

The Disenchantment of English as a Required Course – Taking Evening Department of a Technology University for Example

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English is a required course in most of the universities of Taiwan. The main reason is that competence in English is assumed by the policy makers of universities to be one of the requirements in the workplace, especially for university graduates, under the trend of globalization. Therefore, the English program lasts till the university. That is to say, before students enter the universities, they have to learn English from the fourth or the fifth year of the elementary schools, or even earlier in cram schools or from private tutors, and then in high schools as well. After students enter the universities, basically six to ten credits have to be taken by each student while the number of credits depends on policies of schools. It is assumed that students' competence in English will be enhanced and then helpful for them to find better jobs after their graduation.

However, in reality, for many positions in different enterprises, competence in English is not the required qualification at all. Besides, some university students, especially those in Evening Department, have lost interest in English after years of learning, for various reasons. Moreover, they may have decided to choose jobs unrelated to English. For these students, the required English course can be neither preferred by them nor required for their future careers. Based on the gap between the expectation from the school and the requirement in enterprises, the purpose of this research is to *disenchant* the idea behind the language program that English competence is required in the workplace so that English must be a required course. One technology university is taken as an example for elaboration in this research.

The term *disenchantment* was borrowed by Max Weber, one of the most outstanding sociologists, to describe the rationalization of the western society. Weber used this term to interpret rationalization in different fields such as religious ethics and economic lives. In this paper, this concept is adopted to argue the irrationality of the required English course program in the Evening Department of a technology university. To be more specific, this research aims to demonstrate that competence in English is only required in some enterprises rather than all of them. Thus, the idea of making English a required course for all the students in the university needs to be *disenchanted*, especially in some programs of some universities, because students' future careers will not be associated with their competence in English.

This paper consists of five parts. The first part is the brief introduction of Max Weber's academic achievement. The second part focuses on the meaning of *disenchantment* and how this term is used in Weber's interpretation of the western society. The third part is the description of the English course program of Evening Department in a technology university, which is picked up as an example in this paper, as well as the characteristics of technology universities in Taiwan. The fourth part includes two sets of data, the result of a survey questionnaire from employees in some private enterprises and the review of English requirements in some popular enterprises. What follows is the analysis of *disenchantment* in terms of the connection between English courses in the university and English competence required in the workplace. The last part is the conclusion.

Based on the concept *disenchantment*, the argument in this research is that it is irrational to make English a required course in Evening Department of this technology university. The main reasons are not only because English competence is required only in some enterprises but not all of them but also because English taught at school may not be what is required in the workplace as shown in the data. It is expected that the research result can highlight that right courses need to be designed and given to right learners so that the goal of enhancing students' competence as a whole for future careers can be reached.