Empowering Administrators: Exploring the Perceived Impact of ESP Learning on Private School Efficiency

Haitham M. Safwat
Head of the English Department
Al-Waha International School, Egypt
Email of corresponding author

Amr S. Wannas
English Instructor, Education Department , Magdi Yacoub Heart
Foundation, Aswan Heart Centre, Egypt
Amrsilem8842@outlook.com

Dr. May M. Ghoneim
Lecturer of Education, Humanities Department, College of Language
and Communication, Arab Academy for Science, Technology and
Maritime Transport, Egypt
mghoneim@egypt.asst.edu

Abstract

Administrators may need a basic understanding of English to communicate effectively with all the staff members, parents, and a few students identified as foreigners. Additionally, according to their job descriptions, administrators' required English proficiency depends on their specific roles and responsibilities. This study explores the perceptions of administrative staff in a private school on the impact of learning English for Specific Purposes on their assigned tasks and responsibilities. A qualitative exploratory design was used, where 22 administrative staff in a private school in Cairo, Egypt, shared via unstructured interviews their perceptions of the impact of learning English for Specific Purposes (ESP) on their administrative performance. Thematic analysis of the unstructured interviews showed that the responses of the private school administrative staff could be coded into challenges and proposed solutions to overcome these challenges. Participants, including private school employees, shared real-world challenges they encountered based on their professional experiences. Additionally, they proposed pragmatic solutions to address these dilemmas. Notably, this research diverges from existing studies, which predominantly focus on teaching methodologies, student attitudes, and perceptions of learning and teaching strategies. The findings underscore the need for administrators to actively promote, inspire, and facilitate employees' utilization of English for specific purposes, thereby ensuring future benefits and supporting enhanced performance. Furthermore, institutional policies and leadership principles must evolve to align with the evolving needs of both staff and educational organizations.

Keywords: Egyptian Private Schools, English for Employees, Private Schools Admins, ESP.

تمكين الإداريين: استكشاف التأثير المدرك لتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية للأغراض المتخصصة على كفاءة اداريي المدارس الخاصة

أ. هيثم مصطفى محمد صفوت

حاصل على ماجستير فى اللغة الانجليزية للأغراض المتخصصة
رئيس قسم اللغة الانجليزية بمدرسة الواحة الدولية، جمهورية مصر العربية

Haisam_mostafa@yahoo.com

أ. عمرو سليم ونس

حاصل على ماجستير فى اللغة الانجليزية للأغراض المتخصصة، مدرس لغة انجليزية بقسم التدريب بمؤسسة مجدي يعقوب لأمراض وابحاث القلب، مركز أسوان للقلب، جمهورية مصر العربية

amrsilem8842@outlook.com

د.مى محمد غنيم

حاصلة على دكتوراة فى التربية، مدرس بقسم الانسانيات بكلية اللغة والاعلام بالاكاديمية العربية للعلوم والتكنولوجيا والنقل البحري بالإسكندرية، جمهورية مصر العربية

mghoneim@egypt.aast.edu

المستخلص:

قد يحتاج الإداريون إلى فهم أساسي للغة الإنجليزية للتواصل بشكل فعال مع جميع أعضاء هيئة التدريس وأولياء الأمور وعدد قليل من الطلاب الذين تم تحديدهم على أنهم أجانب. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، وفقًا لوصف وظائفهم، فإن الكفاءة المطلوبة للإداريين في اللغة الإنجليزية تعتمد على أدوارهم ومسؤولياتهم المحددة. تستكشف هذه الدراسة تصورات الموظفين الإداريين في مدرسة خاصة حول تأثير تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية للأغراض المتخصصة على المهام والمسؤوليات الموكلة إليهم. تم استخدام تصميم استكشافي نوعي، حيث شارك ٢٢ موظفًا إداريًا في مدرسة خاصة في القاهرة، مصر، عبر مقابلات غير منظمة تصوراتهم حول تأثير تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية لأغراض محددة على أدائهم الإداري. أظهر التحليل الموضوعي للمقابلات غير المنظمة أنه يمكن ترميز استجابات الموظفين الإداريين في المدرسة الخاصة في التحديات والحلول المقترحة للتغلب على هذه التحديات. وتبادل المشاركون، بما في ذلك موظفو المدارس الخاصة، التحديات الواقعية التي واجهوها بناءً على تجاربهم المهنية. اعتمد الباحثون تصميم بحث نوعي يستخدم المقابلات غير المنظمة لجمع البيانات من المشاركين. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، اقترحوا حلولاً عملية لمعالجة هذه المعضلات. والجدير بالذكر أن هذا البحث يختلف عن الدراسات السابقة، والتي تركز بشكل أساسي على مناهج التدريس، ومواقف الطلاب، وإدراكهم لاستراتيجيات التعلم والتدريس. وتؤكد النتائج على الحاجة إلى قيام الإداريين بتشجيع وإلهام وتسهيل استخدام الموظفين للغة الإنجليزية للأغراض المتخصصة، وبالتالي ضمان الفوائد المستقبلية ودعم الأداء المحسن. وعلاوة على ذلك، يجب أن تتطور السياسات المؤسسية ومبادئ القيادة لتتماشى مع الاحتياجات المتطورة لكل من الموظفين والمؤسسات التعليمية .

الكلمات المفتاحية :المدارس الخاصة المصرية، اللغة الإنجليزية للموظفين، مديري المدارس الخاصة، اللغة الإنجليزية للأغراض الخاصة.

Empowering Administrators: Exploring the Perceived Impact of ESP Learning on Private School Efficiency

1. Introduction :

The English language has become a dominant language, replacing some other languages, due to its remarkable role in dispute resolution and international communication, and has revolutionized several global sectors (Adejimola, 2009). Gunantar (2016) identified two factors that contributed to the prevalence of the English language: powerful British colonialism and the explosive economic growth of the United States of America. Consequently, learning and teaching English have been influenced. Renandya et al. (2018) reported that the number of non-native English speakers among English-speaking users and organizations worldwide has increased at an unprecedented rate. Goullier and Hughes (2012) suggested that an international standard was needed to assess language users' abilities within a language system. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), which divides language learners of foreign languages into three categories: basic users, independent users, and proficient users, was developed to address this need.

Cozma (2015) posits that children, teenagers, and young adults are the traditional target audiences for foreign language education. However, teaching adults is considered more challenging because they actively choose to participate in a certain kind of training and are older than the average age for regular schooling. As a result, adults are self-directed, have a plethora of life experiences, are willing to learn when given new tasks, use a task- or problem-centred approach to learning, and are motivated to study for personal reasons. Michalska (2015) adds that adult learners are those who are 19 years of age or older and have reached full intellectual and social development. They have had a terrific learning experience and have generated strong ideas about how the teaching and learning process should be conducted. Despite having a great desire to study, many are unable to do so because of their commitments to their jobs and families. Learners need to be aware of their requirements and expectations, as well as their ages, preferences, politics, attitudes, knowledge, experience, aptitude, ability, and intellect. Ananyeva (2014) proclaims that adult learners struggle to recognize both their own and the target audience's learning

requirements, with different perspectives on academic issues, poorly defined learning standards and objectives, the transfer of L1 learning experiences, and a need for resources. However, when adults receive a content-based education, they have a greater chance of academic and professional success.

According to Rodríguez González (2021), after World War II, English began to be used for specialized reasons. The early 1970s oil crisis led to a significant movement of finance and Western specialists to oil-rich nations, which hastened this trend. The second reason was a socioeconomic language revolution. The third and last factor was the rise of new educational styles that made the student the center of the teaching-learning process and emphasized their leadership role. Thus, the interaction of these three elements greatly aided in the formation of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). In this sense, the business market has a growing need for employees who can communicate in different languages, but English is often prioritized as a foreign or second language. One significant challenge in private schools is that administrators may need a basic understanding of English to engage with all the staff members, parents, and a few students who are identified as foreigners effectively. Furthermore, the required proficiency in English for administrators fluctuates based on their specific roles and responsibilities. Consequently, this research examines the perspectives of administrative personnel within an Egyptian private school aiming to discover the challenges and opportunities confronted by administrative staff with regard to English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and the way it impacts efficiency. The study will address the following concerns:

Research Question 1: What are the perceived challenges with reference to ESP that affect Egyptian private schools' administrative staff fulfilling their tasks?

Research Question 2: How can private schools' administrative staff overcome these challenges according to their perceptions?

2. Literature Review:

Gritsenko and Laletina (2016) argue that a theoretical framework is necessary to address the dynamism and hybridity of communication and provide a more nuanced understanding of how the spread of English manifests itself in the age of globalization. Since most industries have selected English as their primary language of communication to stay up with the latest international

standards, Cheng et al. (2021) add that communicative competence includes knowledge of how to use the language in a social context and performance, which should be based on practical needs in the real world. Rajprasit and Hemchua (2015) assert that English for Specific Purposes (ESP) distinguishes itself from General English (GE) study through a focus on particular, purposeful uses of language. This is especially important given the countless learners and professionals around the world who are now required to gain fluency in the conventions of their particular communicative domain of English to steer their learning and promote their careers. Additionally, Anthony (1997) states that since its inception in the early 1960s, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has grown to become one of the most significant areas of EFL instruction today. ESP is mainly concerned with meeting the particular needs of its learners by using language that is appropriate for a given setting. In addition, most ESP courses presuppose some familiarity with the language systems.

Otilia and Brancusi (2015) emphasize the importance of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in addressing the global need for fluency in English for professional advancement. ESP focuses on acquiring and analyzing information based on learner needs, ensuring that needs are translated into benefits. The core of ESP is needs analysis, which assesses students' requirements and identifies target scenarios and learning environments. The primary objective of ESP is to link English education and learning to learners' communicative needs. Needs analysis and material evaluation are interconnected, requiring goals and objectives to develop tests, materials, instructional activities, and assessment systems for better outcomes.

Figure 1

Self-determination Theory
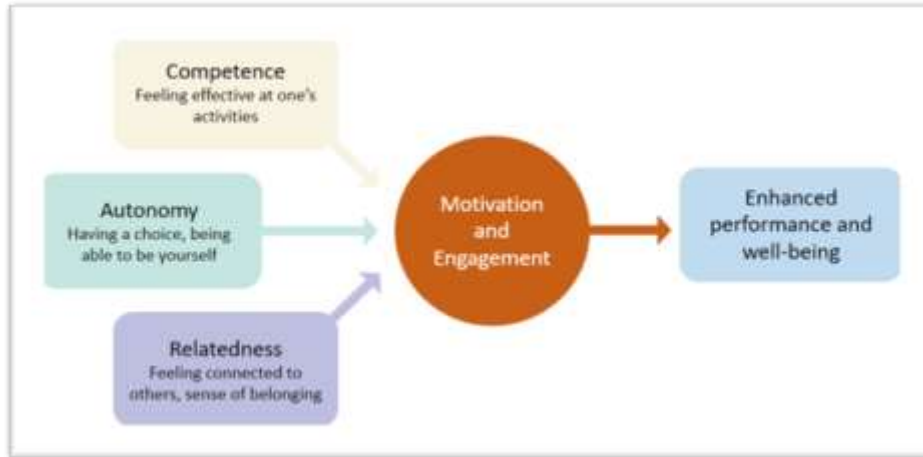
The self-determination theory is one theory that tackles the issue of motivation and improved performance. Deci and Ryan (2000) asserted that motivation and engagement are prerequisites for enhancing an individual's performance and well-being. To get to this point, they need to feel competent, independent, and a part of their organizations (Figure 1). Deci and Ryan (2000) maintained that relatedness has to do with a person's sense of belonging, autonomy has to do with having the ability to make decisions and accept responsibility for them, and competence is about feeling like you have an impact on an organization.

According to Ahmad (2016), most institutions support certain language skills in specific domains of social life for better communication, and communication leads to constructive outcomes. Furthermore, interpersonal communication is essential for any company since it occurs in an environment defined by official and informal working interactions. Employers also consider language communication skills to be among the most valuable applied talents. Moslehifar and Ibrahim (2012) clarify that the most essential skill employers need at work is the ability to use and communicate in English effectively. It is especially significant for the private sector since communication at all levels is a necessary component of market communication. Thus, Marra (2012) declares that understanding the role and practice of English in the workplace is a key concern for English for Specific Purposes (ESP). As a result, Roberts (2005) states that both native and non-native English-speaking countries are placing

increased emphasis on English as the global language. Consequently, Kassim and Ali (2010) assert that universities have played a crucial role in preparing qualified graduates who fit the workplace market. Graduates are constantly and continuously required to work towards meeting and exceeding the standards of their chosen business.

Lam et al. (2014) stress the importance of professional communication skills for workplace interactions and possible employment. Employees must communicate at work, especially in today's connected and knowledge-based environment. Language misunderstandings, which decrease organizational productivity and affect economic or societal progress, can all stem from ineffective communication. Thitthongkam (2011) adds that the capacity for internal communication in a foreign language is crucial for mutual understanding and positive interpersonal relationships. Internal communication, which includes verbal, written, face-to-face, virtual, and group communication, is essential to an organization's success. Coleman (2010) clarifies that the correlation between the English language and development is well-known to be advantageous. Any consideration of growth or the use of the English language internationally must consider the phenomenon of globalization, particularly that of international mobility. Hence, English has been tasked with serving as a lingua franca, or neutral language, since it is crucial in allowing access to information and development possibilities in various environments. Thus, English performs a variety of roles in development. In this respect, Dewi (2014) contends that the employment of English in different interactions with its clientele such as success in the job market or improving communication between language users, has led to an increase in the number of so-called non-native English speakers who now consider English essential, especially since many nations worry about graduates' employability and their high unemployment rate, which is frequently ascribed to their weak communication and English language skills.

According to Rahman (2008), multilingualism consists of varied outlooks towards languages as well as the practical capability to access them alongside their potential accessibilities. Understanding persistent behaviour patterns that can be used to forecast and explain behaviour is a useful and effective process because doing so makes it possible to comprehend the dynamics behind behaviour, and understanding what causes particular reactions

enables improvements. Crismore et al. (1996) argue that language attitudes lay the groundwork for a society's acceptance and expansion of language variants. Users of different languages can shed light on linguistic trends when the conventional norm of a language and its non-native variant are practically employed simultaneously, because they can provide a special viewpoint on the language and its development. People frequently carry their home language's customs and norms while learning a new language, this might result in the introduction of previously unknown use patterns. Elfers and Stritikus (2014) add that leaders have a special opportunity and obligation to foster a climate of high standards and a supportive atmosphere where administrators can pursue their professional growth. This can not only improve outcomes for the English-speaking environment but also generate dynamic, multilingual areas that are beneficial to these organizations since they may give information on the language's usage in various settings and how it has changed over time. Moreover, people who speak many languages have a distinctive viewpoint on language usage and can spot linguistic trends that monolingual speakers might miss.

Schaub (2000) showed that for many Egyptians, English is an essential language. Schools and universities are among the communities and domains where it is employed. In a nutshell, learning English is a step towards accomplishing the learner's goals. The ability to seek and choose more career options will mostly be made possible by learning English. As the labor market is now global, many companies are searching for people who can work with clients and partners all over the world. Typically, this involves employing people who can speak English. Dimock (1937) stated that the success of the science of administration, a social science concept that may be applied to all forms of organized group activity, rests on the support and cooperation of the general public. Modern administration is a new synthesis that considers all fields and branches of knowledge, including language. The most important factors in effective administration are the cohesion, flexibility, responsiveness, atmosphere, and spirit of the management team. Flexibility is necessary to respond to market changes, technology, and preferences. The difficulty for administrators is to reduce or get rid of the negative impacts. Consequently, the unfavourable elements can disappear by applying enough principles to large organizational units.

In previous studies, communication curriculums were recommended to be overseen and taught by professionals with specialized training in the field (Ilyosovna, 2020). Additionally, successful organizations and careers depend on effective communication (Rajprasit & Hemchua, 2015). Professionals have greater understanding, support, and commitment to working with second language learners (Rahman, 2008). Language learners have a very positive outlook on English since they believe it makes excellent impressions and has benefits when applying for jobs because they wish to expand their linguistic repertoire (Gritsenko & Laletina, 2016).

In addition, several studies have been conducted to investigate the English needs at the workplace, for instance, in supply chain (Zarian et al., 2020), engineering industry (Kassim & Ali, 2010; Kleunsuwan et al., 2019), employees in different sectors (Verapornvanichkul, 2011); Dawson et al., 2014; Boonyachokanan, 2017; Karachedee, 2017; Mat Husin & Radzuan, 2021), and computer engineering professionals (Rajprasit & Hemchua, 2015). Other studies developed training programs to teach administrative staff English language skills such as Reynolds and Yu, 2018 and 2021; de Bohun Clark and Ackerely (2019), and Jassim (2020). Two research papers addressed the English language needs of administrative staff at the university level. In their study, Mat Husin and Radzuan (2021) examined the English language needs of support staff at a public university. The participants' perceptions of their English language skills and how they used them were also investigated. Data was collected through a survey. Results showed that there was a consensus among the participants that good language skills were necessary for job promotion and that they used speaking mostly with foreigners. Furthermore, they expressed the need to enhance their writing skills. The other study was by Boonyachanakan (2017) who investigated the necessities, wants and difficulties of 80 employees in a private university in Thailand. She used a questionnaire to collect data. In addition, participants were asked to rate their English language skills where speaking was the most problematic skill, followed by listening, writing and reading. They agreed that they needed to improve their speaking skills.

Similar to the setting of the aforementioned studies, the current study aims at investigating the perceptions of administrative staff in a private school. However, the current study, to the best knowledge of the researchers, is the first to examine the perceptions of administrative staff of the impact of learning ESP

on their carrying out their tasks efficiently in a private school in Egypt. It is hoped that by conducting this study, this lacuna in literature will be addressed. This, in turn, resonates with Elfers and Stritikus' point of view (2014) that many Egyptians and Cairenes still lack and struggle to speak English and there is no certainty that it will ever become widely used for interpersonal interactions (Schaub, 2000).

3. Methodology :

3.1 Research design

The underlying philosophical foundation of the study is interpretivist as the study adopted a qualitative exploratory design operationalized through a 4-item unstructured interview questions. This phenomenological design was selected to give space to private schools' employees to openly and freely discuss, express and report their concerns and recommendations. The study explores a new realm of knowledge that has not been approached before. In general, qualitative research is commonly used in the humanities and social sciences, in subjects such as education, in an attempt to gather in-depth insights into the paper's questions and to generate ideas for research points.

3.2 Participants

The participants in this study were 22 administrative staff members, working as administrators in one of the private language schools in Cairo, Egypt. Only 17 participants agreed to take part in the study, reflecting a gender distribution of 64.71% females and 35.29% males, respectively. Their age groups ranged from 21 to 60 years. They held different administrative positions in the private school such as directors, heads of departments, secretaries and security personnel.

3.3 Instruments

Unstructured interviews were used to collect data. The researchers prepared the questions that were adapted from similar research studies (see Appendix A). The questions of the interviews were based on the candidates' milieu and nature of work. The focus of the unstructured interview questions was to try to find an answer for the research questions by probing into school administrative staff perceptions with regard to the perceived ESP challenges

that could impede the fulfilling of the administrative staff of their tasks. Furthermore, it was hoped that by conducting the interviews this would shed light on how the participants could overcome these challenges.

3.4 Procedures

Prior to the administration of the unstructured interviews, one of the researchers visited the school and asked the participants to take part in the study. He explained to them the importance of scientific research and answered any queries they might have had regarding taking part in the study and whether this could impact their work negatively. All participants were assured that their participation in the study was totally confidential.

However, the researchers faced some difficulties at the beginning of the administration of the interviews. Many participants were willing to do the interviews, nonetheless, they had some reservations with regard to shyness, privacy and time constraints had the interviews been conducted face-to-face. As was mentioned above (see 3.2. Participants), the percentage of female participants was 64.71 %. Hence, they expressed shyness with face-to-face interviews. Others voiced their concerns about privacy and time constraints especially that they were in high positions in their school; at the same time, they did not like the idea of face-to-face interviews preferring to record their responses and send them on a WhatsApp application. Accordingly, the majority of the participants suggested using a tool like WhatsApp application as it would let them feel at ease and relaxed and they promised, in turn, to exert their utmost efforts to answer the interview questions openly.

Upon giving the private school employees the full opportunity to record their responses, after one week, 11 candidates only did the interviews, and this required the researcher to give another visit to the school to encourage other administrative staff to complete the interviews, ensuring that their responses would never affect their positions or salaries as all of the cases were confidential. After that, only four candidates did the interviews. Finally, the researcher gave one more extra visit to the school to ask for the rest of the responses. It was a surprise that the last candidates who did not send their responses via WhatsApp had already written their responses on Word program and insisted on giving them to the researcher, but hand in hand; they even apologized for being late. One of them said "my husband told me not to send

any documents", even by sending voice notes. He only let her type her answers on the Word program and deliver it to the researcher. The second one did not feel at ease with sending her responses via WhatsApp application. Rather, she preferred to type them instead. Finally, the data were collected to be analyzed.

3.5 Data analysis

The interviews' responses were analyzed thematically constructing two major themes: challenges and solutions (see Appendix B). Codes extracted from the participants' responses with respect to challenges included 7 challenges, namely, communication, documentation, professional development, work promotions, personal and professional image, fear of losing a job, and fear of discrimination. As regards solutions, codes pertained to: requesting the assistance of school's English teachers, providing language activities where they can use the language learned and offer various online programs providing suitable learning resources and content, evaluating the staff's performance from every now and then, and using mobile applications that can assist them with their language learning process learning resources. All interviewees were given pseudonyms to hide their identities as they expressed concerns regarding the exposure of their identities and the consequent impact of such an event. These names involved letters like A and S with a number. "A" refers to Administrative and "S" refers to Staff. The number was the order through which the researchers received their responses.

4. Findings and Discussion:

Since the principal aim of the study is to explore the perceptions of Egyptian private school administrative staff regarding the value and utilization of English for specific purposes in their current roles, the researchers conducted interviews to collect qualitative data through their responses. These responses manifested and reflected the real-world challenges confronted by administrative staff in Egyptian private schools as well as some feasible solutions in an attempt to motivate them to leverage their English proficiency to the extent that conduces to effective and successful performance in their current roles. This, in addition, goes in line with their needs for practical English at work. In terms of the challenges revealed through the interviewees' responses, it was found that there were 7 challenges. They included communication, documentation, professional development, work promotions, personal and professional image,

fear of losing a job and fear of discrimination. As regards the provided solutions, the interviewees suggested 5 feasible ways to overcome this hurdle: requesting the assistance of the school's English teachers, providing language activities where they can use the language learned and offer various online programs, providing suitable learning resources and content, evaluating the staff's performance from every now and then, and using mobile applications that can assist them with their language learning process (see Figure 2).

With regard to the first challenge, communication, it could be further subdivided to entail the four language skills in addition to the choice of correct vocabulary and grammar usage. AS 3 states *"The difficulty of communicating with parents, students and other staff who master the language. English is the official language in private schools, so it is the language used in all formal and informal communications. Thus, the lack of proficiency in English constitutes a major obstacle to effective communication with those mentioned above"*. This quotation reveals that the speaking skill of the participants suffered severely as could be deduced from their responses particularly that they consider it to be an "obstacle". The pronunciation of the administrative staff could be incorrect and this, in turn, would make their speech ineligible. Furthermore, the administrative staff could lack the ability to select the right lexical items or speak using the correct grammar. These results concur with both Jalal (2016) and Boonyachokanan (2017) where the participants reported that the speaking skill was the most problematic skill given that they were not able to choose either the right vocabulary or grammar and their pronunciation was unclear. Moreover, the administrative staff faced difficulty with the reading skill. AS 17 adds *"I find it difficult to understand the Department's instructions, which can lead to mistakes or failure to fulfill the required tasks"*. As for the challenge of documentation (e.g., emails, reports), AS 4 reports *"I find it difficult to access important information or documents written in English. Many educational information and documents are published in English only, especially if they belong to the donor of the school's operating license. Thus, the lack of proficiency in English is a barrier to access to this information and documentation, which can affect my ability to perform my duties properly."* The participants in this study found it difficult to understand instructions and emails and reports because being proficient at the English language is not a job requirement for accountants, secretaries or any other managerial work in a

private school. Rather, being good at the job is the criterion for selecting the applicant. These findings concur with Buddhithammaporn (2013) as the employees in his study had difficulties with reading emails, instructions, manuals and English websites which was part of their job responsibility. The administrative staff could have resorted to translating these documents, which in turn, could have been inaccurate and the message could have been misunderstood. The same results were revealed by Dawson, Madera, Neal and Chen's (2014) study where managers relied on translating documents which were unclear and the message was incorrect. Also, when it comes to professional development workshops or training sessions, English may hinder comprehension as AS 7 posits "*I find it difficult to participate in professional trainings. Professional pieces of trainings are often offered to administrative staff at private schools in English. Thus, not being proficient in English is an obstacle to participating in these trainings, which may affect my ability to develop my professional skills*". This quotation exemplifies the challenge the administrative staff faced with the speaking skill. They found it difficult to understand the spoken language of the trainers, for instance. They might have been unfamiliar with the speakers' accent, pronunciation or even the pace of speaking. These results are in congruence with Jalal (2016) and Boonyachokanan (2017) where respondents found it difficult to understand "slang, idiomatic expressions, accents, pronunciation, colloquialisms, and technical terms". With regard to speaking, the reason for having problems with communication could be attributed to the fact that Egyptian administrators are non-native speakers and they do not use English in their everyday life. They resort to Arabic when communicating with their colleagues and seldom use English. This is in line with Zarina, Rosly, Nurain and Khalid's (2020) study results. Participants did not use English with their co-workers. Rather, they preferred to use their mother tongue given that they were familiar with each other. Hence, they resorted to their mother tongue in the work-related and non-work-related issues. In the same vein, respondents in Verapornvanchkul's (2011) study considered the cause of their inadequate English skills could have stemmed from their infrequent use of English in their everyday life. Moreover, English is not the mother tongue and in jobs such as accountants, secretarial work, and managerial work having good command of English is not a requirement for appointment. Rather, being proficient in the field of specialization is the criterion for selecting the administrative staff members.

However, in today's competitive challenges, possessing a good command of the English language and skills have become an asset in the recruitment process.

Figure 2

A Representation of the Perceived Challenges and Solutions

Additionally, for work promotions, AS 8 reports *"A staff member who is not fluent in English may have difficulty with job promotion, as private schools prefer staff with English language skills."* In today's competitive market, criteria for selecting administrative staff has changed. The more skills and mastery of language, particularly, the English language applicants have, the more chances they have in order to get a job. Accordingly, the participants were concerned about not being promoted due to poor English language skills. The same has been voiced by the respondents in Husin and Radzuan's (2021) study who agreed that their English language proficiency may have a negative impact on their job promotion particularly after they have rated it as inadequate. This idea is related to two other challenges, namely, the fear of losing one's job and discrimination as revealed by AS 1 and AS 11. AS 1 states *"I am afraid of the day when my boss is the one who is younger and less competent but whose language is what distinguishes him."* This statement proves that English is sometimes conducive to administrative malpractice and discrimination. AS 11 also corroborates this reporting that "a staff member who is not fluent in English may feel marginalized in the working environment, where he or she may be discriminated against because of his or her lack of English." These two examples reveal that the participants strongly believed that their English

competence was inadequate and that it could threaten their keeping their jobs. Similarly, they agreed that being incompetent in the language would not only affect them adversely but would harm the image of the school as well. AS 10 confirms this view stating that *"Inadequate English among administrative staff may lead to a negative image of the school among parents and students, which may affect the school's reputation and attract students and parents"*. This concurs with Karachedee's (2017) study that employees' possession of high skills would reflect on the image of the company.

To address the aforementioned challenges, the same interviewees offered and provided feasible solutions out of a feeling of the importance of the utilization of English at the workplace. AS 1 suggested that they *"use competent English teachers to help develop language aspects through specialized workshops or courses so that they benefit the school community and develop specialized language for knowledge and success."* The participants were aware that English teachers need to develop courses for administrative staff to be able to communicate using the English language. This is in line with participants' view in the studies of both Reynolds and Yu's (2018) and Boonyachokanan (2017) who expressed the pressing need to have training to be able to communicate with international students and visitors to their university. In addition, the participants in this study proposed two practical solutions, namely, conducting miscellaneous language activities such as workshops and intensive summer tutorials throughout creating a collaborative learning environment and online programs. Language activities can be conducted in various methods and at different times (e.g., the summer vacation time, schools working days). To clarify this AS 9 states *"Real workshops and real training during the school day is a very important aspect to study the specialized language"*. Furthermore, AS 15 suggests that *"summer tutorials where summer tutorials can be a great way to improve our skills as management staff in specialized English. These programs offer a variety of linguistic educational activities, I hope they are intensive"*. The schools can also be active in this process through the provision of *"online-paid courses are the shortest and best route for linguistic growth even if the school pays tuition fees as an incentive at first"* (AS 8). This can be an encouraging and motivating way to enhance the performance of private schools staff in general, not only the administrative staff. In doing so, English teachers also have to design or develop convenient content for this process to be

successful as AS 2 states *"The school should provide high-quality educational course content that can be borrowed from the school."* The same recommendations were supported by several studies such as Reynold and Yu (2021) who developed a course to teach administrative staff in a university, and de Bohun Clark and Ackerely (2019) who prepared a training course to address the needs of Italian administrative staff and enhance their English language skills. The provided solution can even be used by the staff without a tutor as AS 14 recommends *"Staff can learn independently by using the resources available online or in the library and under the supervision of the school I mean here English teachers or development unit officers"*. Fostering the autonomous administrative staff who can learn independently and improve their English language skills is an objective that English language trainers aspire to achieve. Moreover, it is helpful to evaluate the performance of the staff from time to time so as to feel the severity of issue and start planning a course of action as AS 3 suggests *"The school must evaluate the staff through internal tests that measure the level of linguistic progress and constantly identify their strengths and weaknesses with continuous direct and indirect support and then provide an appropriate way of studying the language in order to work through which staff can progress at the linguistic level and thus better serve the school community"*.

Given that technology has changed our everyday life and in order to exploit its advantages, mobile phones can play a vital role in this process as AS 16 states *"Educational......mobile applications can help employees practice English anytime and anywhere under school supervision"*. Finally, with all these challenges and solutions and drawing on the theory of self-determination, stakeholders of academic institutions should plan a course of action to enhance the competence, autonomy and relatedness of their employees thereby minimizing turnover and increasing their engagement and motivation thereby enhancing their professionalism and productivity.

5. Conclusion:

The study initiated an investigation into the importance of learning ESP in the context of private schools' employees. Participants described real-world issues confronted by them through their own experiences. They also provided practical solutions for such dilemmas. Surprisingly, no previous study has

specifically investigated ESP within the private school context. Current research primarily centers on general language teaching methods, student perspectives, and instructional approaches. Consequently, this investigation addresses a significant void by examining the distinct requirements of staff members in private schools. Additionally, administrators must prioritize fostering, motivating, and facilitating the use of English for particular purposes among their staff to yield future benefits and assistance. Moreover, employees should recognize their ongoing professional growth as an inherent entitlement, while institutional policies and leadership strategies need to be adapted to meet the changing needs of both staff and educational institutions.

References:

Adejimola, A. S. (2009). Language and communication in conflict resolution. *Journal of law and conflict resolution*, *1*(1), 001-009.

Ahmad, S. R. (2016). Importance of English Communication Skills. *International Journal of Applied Research*, *2*(3), 478–480.

Ananyeva, M. (2014). A Learning Curriculum: Toward Student-Driven Pedagogy in the Context of Adult English for Academic Purposes, English for Specific Purposes, and Workplace English Programs. *TESOL Journal*, *5*(1), 8-31.

Anita, D. (2014). Perception of English in relation to communication and identity. *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication*, *24*(1), 1-20. https://doi.org/10.1075/japc.24.1.01dew.

Anthony, L. (1997). Defining English for specific purposes and the role of the ESP practitioner. *Center for language research 1997 Annual review*, 115-120.

Boonyachokanan, P. (2017). *Problems and need for English communication improvement of employees at a private university*. Unpublished MA thesis. Thammasat University.

Buddhithammaporn, N. (2013). *Problems with the English Communication Skills ofEmployees at OELT LTD*. Retrieved from

http://beyond.library.tu.ac.th/cdm/compoundobject/collection/thesis/id/26725/rec/1

Cheng, L., Im, G. H., Doe, C., & Douglas, S. R. (2021). Identifying English language use and communication challenges facing "entry-level" workplace immigrants in Canada. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, *22*, 865-886.https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-020-00779-w.

Coleman, H. (2010). Teaching and learning in Pakistan: The role of language in education. *Islamabad: The British Council*, 1-56.

Cozma, M. (2015). The challenge of teaching English to adult learners in Today's World. *Procedia-social and behavioral sciences*, *197*, 1209-1214.

Crismore, A., Ngeow, K. Y. H., & Soo, K. S. (1996). Attitudes toward English in Malaysia. *World Englishes*, *15*(3), 319-335.https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-971x.1996.tb00118.x.

Dawson, M., Madera, J. M., Neal, J. A., & Chen, J. (2014). The influence of hotel communication practices on managers' communication satisfaction with limited English–speaking employees. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research, 38*(4), 546–561. https://doi.org/10.1177/1096348012461552

De Bohun Clark, C. M., & Ackerley, K. (2019). Meeting the challenges of delivering specialised English language training for university staff. *Linguæ &-Rivista di lingue e culture moderne*, *18*(2), 13-29. https://www.ledonline.it/index.php/linguae/article/view/1708

Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). The "what" and "why" of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behavior. *Psychological Inquiry, 11*, 227-268. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327965PLI1104_01

Dimock, M. E. (1937). The study of administration. *American Political Science Review*, *31*(1), 28-40.

Elfers, A. M., & Stritikus, T. (2014). How school and district leaders support classroom teachers' work with English language learners. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *50*(2), 305-344. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161x13492797.

Gritsenko, E., & Laletina, A. (2016). English in the international workplace in Russia. *World Englishes*, *35*(3), 440-456. https://doi.org/10.1111/weng.12211.

Gunantar, D. A. (2016). The impact of English as an international language on English Language Teaching in Indonesia. *Language Circle: Journal of Language and Literature*, *10*(2), 141-151.

Hyland, K. (2022). English for specific purposes: What is it and where is it taking us?. *Esp Today*, *10*(2), 202-220. https://doi.org/10.18485/esptoday.2022.10.2.1 .

Ilyosovna, N. A. (2020). The importance of English language. *International Journal on Orange Technologies*, *2*(1), 22-24.

IvyPanda. (2020, January 21). *The Role of Contact between English and Arabic in Egypt.* https://ivypanda.com/essays/the-role-of-contact-between-english-and-arabic-in-egypt-essay/

Jalal, T. S. T. A. (2016). Workplace English: An analysis of communication needs. In *International conference on industrial engineering and operations management* (pp. 1379-1388).

Jassim, L. (2021). Using and Learning English by Administrative Staff for Communication purposes. , 26, 78-108. https://doi.org/10.51424/ISHQ.27.29.

Karachedee, P. (2017). Needs for English communication skills of Thai employees in a multinational company. *Unpublished Master's thesis). Burapha University, Thailand*.

Kassim, H., & Ali, F. (2010). English communicative events and skills needed at the workplace: Feedback from the industry. *English for specific purposes*, *29*(3), 168-182. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.esp.2009.10.002 .

Kluensuwan, P., Chaisiri, T., Poomarin, W., & Rungruangsuparat, B. (2019). Needs analysis of English for engineering staff in the Electronics Industry in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya and Pathum Thani, Thailand. NIDA, 24(36), 64–90.

Lam, P. W., Cheng, W., & Kong, K. C. (2014). Learning English through workplace communication: An evaluation of existing resources in Hong Kong. *English for Specific Purposes*, *34*, 68-78. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.esp.2013.09.004 .

Little, D., Goullier, F., & Hughes, G. (2012). European language portfolio. *Perspectives from the European Language Portfolio: Learner Autonomy and Self-assessment*, 7, 15-16.

Marra, M. (2013). English in the workplace. *The handbook of English for specific purposes*,120, 175-192.

Mat Husin, M.Z., & Radzuan, N.R. (2021). Identifying English language needs among administrative support staff in Malaysian public university: A preliminary study. *English Language Teaching Educational Journal, 4*(3), 199-212.

Michalska, M. (2015). Teaching English to adults. *World Scientific News*, (2), 118-131.

Moslehifar, M. A., & Ibrahim, N. A. (2012). English language oral communication needs at the workplace: Feedback from human resource development (HRD) trainees. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *66*, 529-536. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.11.297

Otilia, S. M., & Brancusi, C. (2015). Needs analysis in English for specific purposes. *Annals of the Constantin Brâncuşi University of Târgu Jiu, Economy Series*, *1*(2), 54-55.

Rahman, A. R. M. M. (2008). Attitudes towards English among Malaysian undergraduates. *Language in India*, *8*(2), 3-13.

Rajprasit, K., & Hemchua, S. (2015). The English language & communication in the international workplace: An examination of Thai computer engineering professionals. *3L, Language, Linguistics, Literature*, *21*(3).

Rao, P. S. (2019). The role of English as a global language. *Research Journal of English*, *4*(1), 65-79.

Renandya, W. A., Hamied, F. A., & Nurkamto, J. (2018). English language proficiency in Indonesia: Issues and prospects. Journal of Asia TEFL, 15(3), 618.

Reynolds, B. L., & Yu, M. H. (2021). A language course to teach administrative staff English for communication in an international university. *Education as Change*, *25*. https://doi.org/10.25159/1947-9417/8749

Reynolds, B. L., & Yu, M. H. (2018). Addressing the needs of administrative staff in Taiwan's internationalized higher education: call for an English as a lingua franca curriculum to increase communicative competence and willingness to communicate. *Language and Education,* 32(2), 147-166.

Roberts, C. (2005). English in the workplace. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning(pp. 117–136). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.*(14) (PDF) Teaching Second Languages for the Workplace.* Available from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/231956795_Teaching_Second_Languages_for_the_Workplace .

Rodríguez González, E. N. (2021). *English for specific purposes and the communication skills in adults, during the year 2020* (Bachelor's thesis, Guayaquil: ULVR, 2021.).

Schaub, M. (2000). English in the Arab Republic of Egypt. World Englishes, 19(2), 225–238. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-971X.00171

Thitthongkam, T., Walsh, J., & Banchapattanasakda, C. (2010). The roles of foreign language in business administration. *Journal of Management Research*, *3*(1). https://doi.org/10.5296/jmr.v3i1.509

Verapornvanichkul, P. (2011). Survey of problem in oral communication skills when dealing with English client: a case study of employees at one of the big four audit firm in Thailand. Master's thesis, English for Careers in English Institutes, Thammasart University.

Zarina, M.K., Rosly, S., Nurain, J., & Khalid, I. (2020). The use of English among supply chain workers in Malaysia. *International Journal of Innovative Technology and Exploring Engineering (IJTEE)*, 9(3). **DOI**: https://doi.org/10.35940/ijitee.C9227.019320.

Appendices

Appendix A

Interview Questions

1- What are the challenges faced by administrative employees in private schools due to limited English proficiency, and how does this language barrier impact their ability to perform effectively?

2- How would improving English language skills benefit administrative employees in private schools and streamline administrative processes?

3- How can enhancing English language skills among administrative employees in schools improve collaboration and teamwork?

4- Why should schools invest in English language training for administrative employees, and how can this promote their professional development?

Appendix B

Analysis of Interview Responses

	Interview Responses	Codes	Themes	
AS 3	The difficulty of communicating with parents, students and other staff who master the language. English is the official language in private schools, so it is the language used in all formal and informal communications. Thus, the lack of proficiency in English constitutes a major obstacle to effective communication with those mentioned above.	Communication	Challenges	ESP for Private Schools Admins
AS 5	I may have difficulty understanding the department's instructions or communicating with parents about important issues related to their children.			
AS13	I find it very difficult to understand new educational concepts and techniques, or to share my thoughts and experiences with others that are an impediment to effective performance.			
AS 15	My difficulty is communicating with parents about important issues related to their children, which can lead to misunderstandings or frustration.			
AS 17	I find it difficult to understand the Department's instructions, which can lead to mistakes or failure to fulfill the required tasks.			
AS 4	I find it difficult to access important information or documents written in English. Many educational information and documents are published in English only, especially if they belong to the donor of the school's operating licence. Thus, the lack of proficiency in English is a barrier to access to this information and documentation, which can affect my ability to perform my duties properly.	Documentation		
AS 6	As a school employee, for example, I have difficulty understanding curricula or lesson plans, or accessing student reports and assessments because it is at the heart of my work to send written reports on the above.			
AS 7	I find it difficult to participate in professional trainings. Professional trainings are often offered to administrative staff at private schools in English. Thus, not being proficient in English is an obstacle to participating in these trainings, which may affect my ability to develop my professional skills	Professional Development		
AS 14	It is extremely difficult for me to communicate my ideas and experiences with others in a way that hinders successful performance, or to comprehend new educational concepts and practices.			
AS 16	An employee who can not speak English well may find it difficult to go for work or study overseas, since many employment and educational programmes need fluency in the language.			

AS 8	Difficulty with job promotion: A staff member who is not fluent in English may have difficulty with job promotion, as private schools prefer staff with English language skills.	Promotion		
AS 9	Inadequate English among administrative staff may lead to a negative image of the school among parents and students, which may affect the school's reputation and attract students and parents	Professional Image		
AS 10	I find it particularly difficult during a period of tests that do not bear any mistake, especially if there is third party monitoring the progress of tests, which can lead to lack of understanding and thus to sharply embarrassment and increased errors.			
AS 1	The challenges faced by management staff in private schools due to limited proficiency in English, many of which are fear of the future. I am afraid of the day when my boss is the one who is younger and less competent but whose language is what distinguishes him.	Fear of Losing Job		
AS 12	I'm afraid to lose my job because of my bad language.			
AS 11	A staff member who is not fluent in English may feel marginalized and marginalized in the working environment, where he or she may be discriminated against because of his or her lack of English.	Fear of Discrimination		
AS 1	Use competent English teachers to help develop language aspects through specialized workshops or courses so that they benefit the school community and develop specialized language for knowledge and success.	School's English Teachers	Solutions	
AS 2	The school provides high-quality educational course content that can be borrowed from the school. The educational content used by the staff is high-quality and suited to the staff level and helps them advance their language skills	Provide Suitable Content		
AS 10	With the role of the school, books and stories can help learn vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation but as an auxiliary worker			
AS 11	Using technology where technology can be used in different ways to improve English language skills where employees can use technology to access language resources and interact with their peers within the school. Personally, I think it's better than traditional ways of learning a language for a special purpose			
AS 14	Staff can learn independently by using the resources available online or in the library and under the supervision of the school I mean here English teachers or development unit officer			

AS 3	The school must evaluate the staff through internal tests that measure the level of linguistic progress and constantly identify their strengths and weaknesses with continuous direct and indirect support and then provide an appropriate way of studying the language in order to work through which staff can progress at the linguistic level and thus better serve the school community	Evaluate Staff Performance		
AS 4	Collaborative learning can be an effective way to improve English language skills. This type of learning provides the opportunity to practice the language with their peers in the sense of dividing the staff into study groups with the provision of scientific material so that it is studied in person with follow-up at intervals to achieve the required benefit whether it is done through the school or by providing the school with a way to learn English for specialized purposes even if it is by sending the staff to places to learn English beneficial to the working environment	Language Activities		
As 5	Participation in language activities outside and inside the school for the development and activation of positive participation and equality in any appropriate way to learn and produce the language in order to obtain the advantages of the language at work			
AS 9	Real workshops and real training during the school day is a very important aspect to study the specialized language			
AS 15	Summer tutorials where summer tutorials can be a great way to improve our skills as management staff in specialized English. These programs offer a variety of linguistic educational activities, I hope they are intensive			
AS 8	Online-paid courses are the shortest and best route for linguistic growth even if the school pays tuition fees as an incentive at first	Online Programs		
AS 16	Online learning programs many online educational institutions offer useful learning programs that serve employees who want to improve their English language skills, but it must be learning the language that benefits the working environment under the school's supervision			
AS 17	Educational applications where mobile applications can help employees practice English anytime and anywhere under school supervision			