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Research Article

English for occupational purposes (EOP): Public and environmental health employees' needs for English language

Abuelgasim Sabah Elsiad MOHAMMED[1*]

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ABSTRACT

English is in high demand across all sectors, including for professional purposes. This demand is driven by increased awareness of its role in both academic and occupational contexts. Employees who have a good command of English language can serve their area well, so it is necessary to cater for those employees' needs for English language regardless their area of specialization to raise their employability. This paper aimed at analyzing Public and Environmental Health (PEH) employees' needs for English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) to identify how they use English in their jobs, its usefulness to them, their current level of English proficiency, and the language skills they consider most important. This study employed a mixed-methods design, collecting data through a questionnaire and structured interviews with twenty-nine employees and two department heads from the Ministry of Health in Khartoum State, Sudan. Results showed that PEH employees frequently used English in their jobs, English language was useful to the participants in their jobs, their proficiency was good, and all language skills were considered important. The study recommends that the Ministry of Health, Khartoum State, should consider this need analysis results to prepare training courses in English for its employees.

Keywords: *EOP, Job needs, Needs analysis, Present situation analysis, Target situation analysis*

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[1] Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University, Alkharj, SAUDI ARABIA, ab.ibrahim@psau.edu.sa
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9791-0905

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INTRODUCTION

In the 1940s, English language became a global language for two reasons. The first was scientific, technological, and economic development worldwide. The second reason was the political and economic status of the USA. These reasons called for a lingua franca to facilitate communication (Anthony, 2018; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Consequently, learning English language tended to be deliberate. English language learners, therefore, have been conscious to why they learn it. Hence, English language learners may be grouped into those who want to learn it for the sake of their professions such as engineers and doctors. Another group involves students at tertiary level who need the language to cope with their academic fields (Brown, 2016; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Lynch & Hudson, 1991).

Learners of English language need to learn it to address immediate and future needs (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). The former, immediate needs is used for learners' needs to succeed in academic study. Future needs is associated with what learners' need to do with the language in their future profession. For example, engineers may need English language to read manuals written in English language and a physician who need to update his knowledge in his career.

"With the rapid growth of the work market, there is tough competition among employers to hire the best trained people to work for them."

With the rapid growth of the work market, there is tough competition among employers to hire the best trained people to work for them. One of the most important criteria required for employability is mastering English language in addition to academic qualification. Consequently, providing adequate training in English language is deemed necessary for universities to prepare graduates for future employment. To achieve this, universities must try to identify workplace English language needs. Unfortunately, this is ignored to some extent. There is a paucity in studies investigating employees' needs for EOP in general, and public and environmental health (PEH) employees, in particular. This study's purpose, therefore, is to assess PEH employees' needs for EOP through answering these research questions:

(1) How often do PEH employees use English in their jobs?
(2) How is English language knowledge helpful to PEH employees pertaining to their jobs?
(3) What is PEH employees' present situation (PS) in English language?
(4) What are the most essential skills to the employees?

LITERATURE REVIEW

English for Specific Purposes (ESP)

ESP is known as consisting of absolute characteristics (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998) comprising three characteristics. The first characteristic is that ESP is originated to take care of learners' particular needs. In addition, ESP employs the methods and tasks of the filed it works for. Finally, the concentration of ESP is on the linguistic aspects (grammar, syntax, and vocabulary), skills, language, and genres compatible with these activities. The latter are

four variable characteristics. First, ESP is associated with a specific specialization. Second, it might employ a method that is distinct from that of general English. Third, ESP is possibly targeting mature learners at tertiary level or employees in a specific occupation, but it may be offered to beginners. Finally, it targets learners with intermediate or advanced level of English language as it expects basic language knowledge (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998). Another feature of ESP, according to Trujeque-Moreno at al. (2021) is that it entails focusing on syllabus design due to the shift of its focus in the 1960s from grammar to an approach catering for addressing professional needs.

Two main classes of ESP exist the first of which is English for academic purposes (EAP) (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998). EAP is classified into other branches such as English for science and technology (EST) which is considered the basic branch. In addition, there are English for medical purposes (EMP) and English for legal purposes (ELP) which are among the traditional branches of ESP. Recently, English for management, finance, and economics was coined to be taught to business students. The second class of ESP is English for occupational purposes (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998).

English for Occupational Purposes (EOP)

The second branch of ESP is EOP is the use of English in various professional settings whose history is closely related to the history of ELT. It targets professional settings by training learners to use English in certain professions (Koester, 2020; Rico et al., 2019; and Kim, 2008). EOP development as a main branch of ESP is related to "the status of English as an international language, or lingua franca, of business and work" (Koester, 2020, p.430). Merine and Boulenouar (2019) regard EOP as a corresponding to EAP, but they differ in the nature of the group they serve; the former focuses on employees while the latter seeks to meet tertiary students' academic demands.

The base of EOP courses is NA whose purpose is to reveal the duties that professionals will perform using English language in the target situation (target needs) (Dudley-Evans and St. John, 1998). Kim (2008) points out that EOP seeks to equip trainees with the communicative or cultural proficiency associated with professional contexts. Thus, EOP major goal is to enhance the linguistic skills important to and required in trainees' occupations (Kim, 2008). Needs analysis (NA) is used to discover these linguistic skills and the tasks that employees perform in their professions.

Needs Analysis

Needs Analysis (NA) plays a pivotal role in both English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and General English (GE), as widely recognized in the literature. Ananta et al. (2025) highlight NA as a means to bridge the gap between academic instruction and professional demands. Similarly, Fareen (2024) identifies NA as the core feature that differentiates ESP, given its focus on learners' academic, communicative, and professional needs. Mohamed et al. (2024) emphasize that NA enhances ESP by aligning instruction with specific academic or workplace contexts. Anthony (2018) and Brown (2016) also affirm that NA is what fundamentally distinguishes ESP from GE. Foundational scholars such as Hutchinson and Waters (1987), along with Richards (2001), Long (2005), and others (e.g., Nunan, 1988; Robinson, 1991; Brown, 1995, 2009; Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998), consistently assert that

NA is the starting point for any ESP program, as it reveals learners' target needs, lacks, and necessities. The data generated through NA serves multiple functions—ranging from course planning and evaluation to material selection and test design (Richards, 2001; Trujeque-Moreno et al., 2021)

There are various approaches to be followed in assessing learners' needs. First, there is target situation analysis (TSA). TSA refers to the tasks needed in the future when they use the language. It covers *necessities* which is concerned with what learners must learn, *lacks* that involves the 'gap' between learners' present level of proficiency and the target situation (TS), and *wants* that is referred to as what learners feel they need to learn, which might contradict with the *necessities* and *lacks* (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).

Present situation analysis (PSA) is the second NA approach. It aims at discovering students' current level of proficiency in English before the start of any language training (Dudley-Evans & St Johns, 1998; Robinson, 1991). Third, there is learning needs analysis (LNA) that refers to the tasks which students should do to learn the language (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Therefore, an effective NA should pay attention to any obstacles confronting learners in language learning. These obstacles could affect achieving the objectives set in the TSA (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). LNA takes into consideration aspects related to language skills to be learnt, the process of language learning, learners' motives, and personal variations (Brown, 2016; Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998). All these NA approaches can be applied through various methods. These methods include surveys, interviews, observations, tests, document analysis (Basturkmen, 2010; Brown, 2009; 1995; Long, 2005; Hyland, 2006; Richards, 2001; Graves, 2000; Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998; and West, 1997).

Three methodological aspects of NA should be considered. The first aspect is sources of data. Several data sources could be identified as shown by Brown (1995), Dudley-Evans and St John (1998), and Richards (2001). Brown (1995) suggests four classes of these informants. The first group is target group that embraces learners, instructors, and managers. Another class is the "audience" that entails individuals who are expected to implement the outcomes of the NA. This group consists of course administrators, inspectors, or any authority responsible for the language programme. The Resources group is the third type of informant which refers to people who could contribute information suitable to the situation. The group embraces procreators, sponsors, recruiters, or field instructors. Group four is the analyzers of needs who could be counsellors who may be outsiders to the institution or staff members in the company (Robinson, 1991).

The second methodological aspect is triangulation, which is associated with utilizing multiple data collection methods and informants (West, 1997; Richards, 2001; Nugraha 2002; Long, 2005; and Brown, 2016; 2009). Long (2005) proposes that this promotes "credibility of…interpretations of data" (p.28). Richards (2001) explains that employment of numerous informants results in that each one enhances the other since each data collection method has its own advantages and disadvantages. For example, questionnaires suffer from a small rate of retrocede, and after they are distributed, it is difficult to change the questions. In addition,

surveys do not have the ability to deeply reveal respondents' emotions. Nevertheless, interviews can compensate for this disadvantage by offering comprehensive profound coverage of inquiries since the interviewer is present, and he can interact with the interviewees.

The third element involves the types of questions included in needs analysis (NA). According to Rossett (1982) and Brown (1995), there is a variety of queries which should be posed during NA encompassing issues, prime concerns, capabilities, beliefs, and resolutions. Brown (2016; 1995) further explains these type questions, stating that when addressing problems, needs analysts aim to identify the challenges faced by the group being studied in their language learning. Priority questions emphasis topics, language usage, and skills that learners consider necessary to study. Such queries include the core skills reading, writing, listening, and speaking, as well as grammar. Additionally, we can ask questions seeking to reveal the main or sub-skills that are regarded as the most essential to learn.

Moreover, we may focus on the capacities to assess the present proficiency in the language skills before commencing the programme. Answers to this question are crucial as they establish the content of the course and show the learners' present proficiency level. These two factors are vital for establishing the course beginning, scope, and sequence. Attitude-related questions seek to understand the target group's sentiments and beliefs regarding the course contents. Queries about resolutions aim at collecting opinions on addressing the identified issues.

Basturkmen (2010) states that the NA is a process focusing on five key areas. Firstly, it focuses on the target situation to decide on the exercises, and language aspects that for which they will use English. Secondly, it incorporates language analysis for describing the discourse employed in the TS. Thirdly, NA investigates what learners presently are able or are not able to do in association with the TS. Fourthly, it analyzes the student factor, seeking to uncover data about their motivation, learning methods, and how they perceive their needs. Finally, NA includes context analysis, which involves evaluating elements connected to the environment where the course will be taught.

Previous Studies

Several studies have investigated employees' occupational needs in various professions. These studies have revealed several aspects encompassing importance of English, skills priority, gaps in proficiency, and demand for training. First, research has revealed the importance of English language in the workplace. For example, Al-Malki et al. (2022), Chamorro et al. (2012) and Humaira (2021) found that English is always used in tourism sector. Mohammadzadeh et al. (2015) concluded that Iranian bank employees considered English language as important in their profession. Moroccan hotel managers stated that English is necessary for receptionists, secretaries, and tour guides and it was used for tasks such as phone calls, reservations, and excursions.

Second, previous research has focused on language skills priority. It is plausible that speaking skill has consistently dominated research findings as the most essential skill with writing appearing second for tourism students (Humaira, 2021). Al-Malki et al. (2022) stated

that speaking and listening were the most important kills. Masyhud and Khoiriyah (2021) revealed that speaking was the most important skills for tour guides in Malang followed by listening, reading, and writing. Aldohon (2014) and Bouzidi (2009) concluded that speaking and listening were the most important skills for tourism police in Jordan and hospitality employees in Morocco, respectively. Bank employees in Iran ranked speaking as the most important skill (Mohammadzadeh et al., 2015). In Malysia, HR staff highlighted speaking in meeting as their priority despite their struggle in it. Writing skills appeared with varying importance, but they were highly regarded as important as shown by Kaur and Clarke (2009) and Mohammadzadeh et al. (2015). In contrast, writing was noted to be less important by Al-Malki et al. (2022), Masyhud and Khoiriyah (2021), Aldohon (2014), and Bouzidi (2009).

Third, researchers have identified gaps and challenges facing their participants in using English language. In terms of gaps between ESP training and workplace needs, on one hand, Chamorro et al. (2021) found that ESP courses were not effective in preparing students for their future jobs nor they meet employers' needs. On the other hand, some challenges facing professionals in using EOP. For example, Nampti (2022) revealed shortages in listening and speaking. Aldohon (2014) revealed difficulties in coping with fast speech, inappropriate language use, shortage in vocabulary, and incorrect grammar. Bouzidi (2009) found that his participants faced problems with expressing themselves and understanding native speakers. Kaur and Clarke (2009) concluded that employees did not perform well in speaking, reading, and writing. Mohammadzadeh et al. (2015) concluded that bank employees had problems with all language skills and training was requested. Badri (2000) revealed employees' dissatisfaction with their language proficiency. Al-Khatib's (2005) participants wished to improve listening, speaking, and writing. Finally, concerning demand for training, Namtapi (2022), Mohammadzadeh et al. (2015) and Al-Khatib (2005) showed that there was a demand for training among their participants.

METHOD

Research Design and Context

This study employed a mixed method design. Particularly, it used the fully integrated variant, which is a sub-type of the convergent approach (Creswell & Plano Clarck, 2017). In this type of mixed method design, quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis interact with each other throughout the study instead of separating them (Creswell & Plano Clarck, 2017). This approach is appropriate since it allows a researcher to collect both quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously. Consequently, this permits comparability of results. In addition. Integration occurs across several stages in the study allowing for richer more delicate insights, stronger validation of findings through comparing trends with lived experiences. Accordingly, this provides outcomes triangulation.

The study was conducted with the employees of the Ministry of Health, Khartoum State, Sudan. This Ministry supervises all health services in Khartoum State as Sudan at that time was under Federal system. The Ministry has several departments (Table 2) and it employs graduates form faculties of Public and Environmental Health, Medicine, Pharmacy,

and Dentistry. Those employees work at departments relevant to their major. All the employees are Sudanese, but their origin is from various parts of Sudan reflecting the country's cultural and ethnical diversity in one professional setting, so this provides an opportunity for variations in ways of thinking and tasks implementation.

Participants

Convenience sampling technique was used in this study and two samples were used. The first sample consisted of 29 PEH employees, 17 (58%) of whom were males and 12 (42%) were females, Table 1. All of them were PEH graduates who were employees at the Ministry of Health, Khartoum State, Sudan. They graduated from different Sudanese universities such as University of Khartoum, Gezira University and Shendi University. They worked in various positions in different departments including school health, vaccination, and water health and safety departments, Table 2. One of the participants worked for the World Health Organization (WHO), Khartoum office in Polio Eradication Programme.

Table 1
PEH Employees' Gender & job Title

	Gender			Job Title				
	M	F	Total	Consultant	Health Officer	Health Inspector	Director	Total
No	17	12	29	1	19	8	1	29
%	58.6	41.4	100.0	3.4	65.6	27.6	3.4	100.0

Table 2
PEH Employees Departments

Department	**No**	%
School Health	3	10.4
Vaccination	7	24.1
Organizations	1	3.4
Water Health and Safety	2	6.9
Food Hygiene and Safety	1	3.4
Preventive Medicine	3	10.4
Health Support	3	10.4
Occupational Health	3	10.4
Epidemiology	1	3.4
Environmental Health	3	10.4
Childhood Diseases	1	3.4
Polio Eradication (WHO)	1	3.4
Total	29	100.0

The second sample included two heads of departments at the Ministry of Health, Khartoum State, the Departments of Epidemiology and Vaccination. It is worth noting that the participants' consent was granted before the data collection process commenced. The

participants were told that it voluntary to take part in this study. All those who were met agreed to participate in the study.

Data Collection

The current research adopted a questionnaire for the employees and an interview for two heads of the departments. The questionnaire design resulted from reviewing several studies such as Alastal (2012), Alqahtani (2011), Ali (2011), and Richards (2001). The questionnaire contains close-ended and open-ended questions distributed into five sections covering background information, how often the employees use English in the job, the usefulness of English language to the participants, the respondents' self-rating in English language, and the most important skills for the employees. It used Five - Likert scale that ranged from *strongly agree to strongly disagree* in two sections. In section 4 (items 15 and 4.1), I required the participants to rate their level of proficiency using the options very good, good, average, weak, and very weak. The second data collection tool was a structured interview that contained 3 questions.

To validate the questionnaire, content validity was used. The first version of the questionnaire was sent to some experts in language teaching to check its language, wording, and suitability to the research objectives. They suggested some modifications which were incorporated to finalize the questionnaire. Regarding the questionnaire reliability, Cronbach Alpha was used to measure the questionnaire reliability, and the value was revealed to be (0.96) which was sufficient to administer the questionnaire.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using both quantitative and qualitative approaches. To analyse the questionnaire, SPSS 20 was used through finding frequencies and percentages. Qualitatively, content analysis was adopted to analyse the interview data. I approached the analysis in a structured and thoughtful way, using descriptive statistical techniques. The process was unfolded in three main stages. The first stage was data cleaning and preparation. Here, I carefully reviewed the raw data to spot and correct any errors or inconsistencies. I also handled any missing data to maintain the reliability and integrity of the dataset. The next step was coding and categorization. At this stage, I coded the data, particularly the categorical variables, to make them easier to analyse and interpret. The final stage was the descriptive analysis itself. Here, I focused on calculating frequencies and percentages to summarize the data. This approach allowed for to clearly show how the responses were distributed across different categories. The analysis was guided by the principles of descriptive statistical analysis, which is well-suited for identifying and presenting patterns, trends, and proportions in the data. By following these steps, I ensured the analysis was both transparent and scientifically rigorous.

FINDINGS

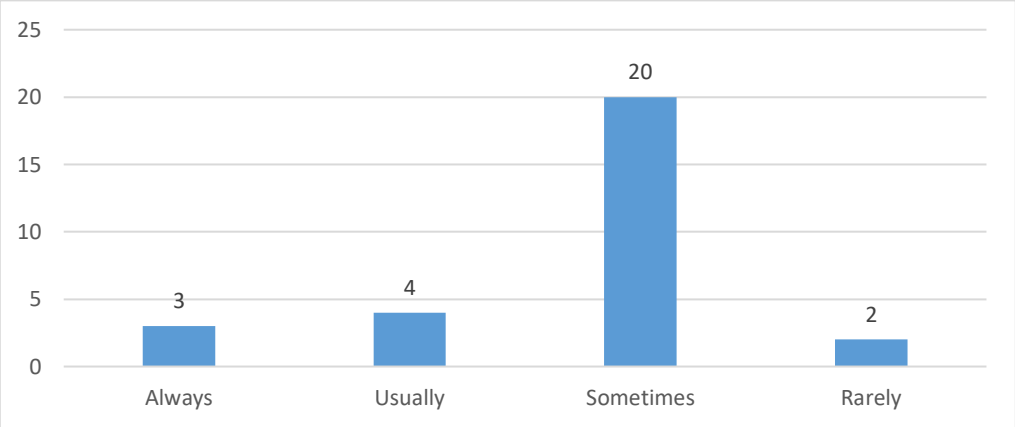
The current study seeks to reveal how often PEH employees use English in their jobs, how English language knowledge helpful to them in their jobs, there PS in English language, and the most important skills to these employees. This section presents the results of the study based on data analysis and their discussion.

RQ1. How often do PEH Employees Use English in their Jobs?

The questionnaire asked the employees about how often they use English in their work. The results are shown in Figure 1 below. Most of the employees 27 (93%) stated that they use English in their job as can be seen from Figure 1. These results are an indication that English plays an important part in PHE area. This result implies that English language is important to equip PEH students with the desired level of proficiency in English not only to address their needs, but also to prepare them for their future career.

Figure 1

Employees Use of English in Their Job



The first question in the interview asked about how often English language is used by PEH professionals in their job. The two head of departments agreed that English language is usually used in the job. This is because these departments had to deal with foreign delegates. Thus, the employees and the head of the departments agreed that English language is used in their jobs.

RQ2. How is English Language Knowledge Helpful to PEH Employees Pertaining to their Jobs?

The respondents were also required to pass their opinions regarding the usefulness of English language in their jobs. As shown in Table 3, all the respondents 29 (100%) *strongly agreed* that English is helpful in increasing knowledge about one's job. Performing one's job

effectively and giving chances for travelling abroad were *strongly agreed* on by 28 (96.6%) of the participants. Out of 29, 26 (89.7%) of the participants stated that English language provides chances for training, 22 (759%) and 21 (72.4%) agreed that English is useful in increasing job responsibilities and promoting them for higher jobs, respectively. One subject added, in response to the open- ended question, that it was helpful in attending conferences inside and outside Sudan.

Table 3
English Language Knowledge Advantages to Employees in Their Job

Item	Strongly Agree		Don't know		Strongly Disagree	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Performing my job efficiently.	28	96.6	-	-	1	3.4
Increasing my knowledge in my field.	29	100	-	-	-	-
Increasing my job responsibilities.	22	75.9	2	6.9	5	17.2
Promoting me to a higher job.	21	72.4	-	-	8	27.6
Giving chances for training.	26	89.7	1	3.4	2	6.9
Giving chances for travelling abroad.	28	96.6	-	-	1	3.4

In response to question two about the usefulness of English, the interviewees agreed that English language is useful to their employees. The two interviewees agreed with their employees on the usefulness of English language to the job. The head of the Epidemiology department said that knowledge of English allowed the employees to perform their job efficiently, increased their knowledge about their field, and provided them opportunities for outside training. The head of Vaccination department added that it paved the way for traveling outside for work and increased job responsibilities.

RQ3. What is the Employees' Present Situation (PS) in English Language?

Table 4 below presents the employees' responses to self-rating in the four skills, grammar, and vocabulary. Out of 29, 21 (75.8%) of the participants considered their level as good at reading skills, 21 (72.4%) of them reported that they are good at scientific vocabulary. Eighteen (66.7%) of them stated that the were goo at writing skills, 17 (58.6) were good at listening skills, and 17 (60.7%) regarded themselves as good at general vocabulary and 15 (51.7) found themselves as good at correct pronunciation. Table 5 also shows that the participants are not satisfied with their level in speaking skills, grammar, pronunciation, and listening skills as 11 – 15 (39.3 – 53.6%) of the participants ranked themselves as average and weak in these.

Table 4
PEH Employees' Self –Rating of Their Level of the Four Skills and other Areas

Language skill/areas	Good		Average		Weak		Did not Answer	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Reading skills	21	75.8	7	24.2	-		1	3.4
Writing skills	18	66.7	9	33.3	-		2	6.9
Speaking skills	13	46.4	11	39.3	4	14.3	1	3.4
Listening skills	17	58.6	7	24.1	5	17.2	-	
General vocabulary	17	60.7	11	39.3	-		1	3.4

Scientific vocabulary	21	72.4	7	24.1	1	3.4	-	
Grammar	13	46.4	11	39.3	4	14.3	1	3.4
Correct pronunciation	15	51.7	10	34.5	4	1.3	-	

In terms of rating employees, the two interviewees agreed that their employees' proficiency in English language was average, which contradicts with what the employees stated. This was clear when some employees were asked to perform any task in English language, added one of the interviewees. The employees were requested to show the difficulties they faced when learning English and using it in their job. The results are presented in tables 6 below.

Table 5
PEH Employees' Difficulties in Using English in Their Jobs

Problem	Yes		No.		Do not know		Did not Answer	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
Limited vocabulary	19	67.9	9	32.1	-		1	3.4
Grammar	17	63.0	10	37	-		2	6.9
Reading comprehension skills	11	40.7	15	55.6	1	3.7	2	6.9
Writing skills	14	51.9	13	48.1	-		2	6.9
Speaking skills	18	64.3	9	32.1	1	3.6	1	3.4
Listening skills	11	42.3	15	57.7	-		3	10.3
Correct pronunciation	14	51.9	13	48.1	-		2	6.9

As seen in Table 5, the employees show that they had difficulties in vocabulary 19 (67.9%), speaking skills 18 (64.3%), grammar 17 (63.0%), writing, and correct pronunciation 14 (51.9%), respectively. It seems that the employees and the interviewees were of contradicting point of views. Unlike the interviewees, the employees were satisfied with their level of English. It is plausible that the employees stated that they are *good to average* in the skills; however, they confronted difficulty to learn them.

RQ4. What are the most Essential Skills to the Employees?

As for skills importance, all the employees 29 (100%) *strongly agreed* that speaking skill was the most important one, Table 6. Speaking is followed by reading and writing since 28 (96.5%) of the participants *strongly agreed* on their importance to their job. These were followed by correct pronunciation 27 (96.4%) and listening skills 26 (92.9%).

Table 6
Skills Importance as Perceived by Employees

Lang. area	Strongly Agree		Do not know		Strongly Disagree		Did not Answer	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No	%
Reading skills	28	96.5	-		1	3.5	-	
Writing skills	28	96.5	-		1	3.5	-	
Speaking skills	29	100	-		-		-	
Listening skills	26	92.9	1	3.6	1	3.6	1	3.4
General vocabulary	25	92.6	1	3.7	1	3.7	2	6.9
Scientific vocabulary	23	85.2	2	7.4	2	7.4	2	6.9
Grammar	23	85.2	2	7.4	2	7.4	2	6.9
Correct pronunciation	27	96.4	-		1	3.6	1	3.4

Discussion

This study aims at revealing how often PEH employees use English in their jobs, how English language knowledge is helpful to PEH employees pertaining to their jobs, PEH employees' present situation (PS) in English language, and the most essential skills to the employees. For the first research question regarding the frequency of English language use in participants' work, data analysis showed that most employees used English in their work. These results are an indication that English plays an important part in PHE area. This result implies that English language is important to equip PEH students with the desired level of proficiency in English not only to address their needs, but also to prepare them for their future career. The two head of departments agreed that English language is usually used in the job. This is because these departments had to deal with foreign delegates. Thus, the employees and the head of the departments agreed that English language is used in their jobs. These findings imply that the professional employment of English language necessitates design of university English courses that prepare students for their future jobs. The results accord with what was revealed by Al-Malki et al (2022), Chamorro et al. (2021), Humaira (2021), Bouzidi (2009), Kaur and Clarke (2009), Al-khatib (2005), and Bedri (2000). They found that their subjects frequently use English language in their work.

Regarding usefulness of English language knowledge to the employees in their profession, performing one's job effectively and providing chances for travelling abroad were *strongly agreed* on by 28 (96.6%) of the participants. These results indicate that employees have experienced using English in their work and they have found it useful. The results also imply that a thorough study of the job situation is required to meet employees' job needs. The analysis of job situations may reveal the linguistic features of communication, activities, and tasks which could inform syllabus content. This finding matches what was revealed by Bouzidi (2009) and Bedri (2000). They concluded that English language was helpful in assigning certain jobs to employees.

Both interviewees acknowledged the importance of English for their employees' job performance. The head of the Epidemiology Department noted that English proficiency enabled employees to work more efficiently, expand their knowledge in the field, and access external training opportunities. Similarly, the head of the Vaccination Department emphasized that English opened doors for international travel and increased professional responsibilities. These findings align with those of Bouzidi (2009) and Bedri (2000), who reported that participants recognized the usefulness of English in their work. Regarding the employees' current English proficiency, the participants rated themselves as good in reading skills, scientific vocabulary, writing, and listening. However, both interviewees assessed their employees' English proficiency as only average, suggesting a gap between employees' self-perceptions and their supervisors' expectations. This indicates that the department heads were not fully satisfied with their employees' language competence.

Regarding the difficulties participants faced when learning English and using it in their job, the employees showed that they had difficulties in vocabulary, speaking skills, grammar, writing, and correct pronunciation. It seems that the employees and the

interviewees were of contradicting point of views. Unlike the interviewees, the employees were satisfied with their level of English. It is plausible that the employees stated that they are *good to average* in the skills; however, they confronted difficulty to learn them. These difficulties in learning English may be attributed to lack of sufficient practice. In addition, these findings imply existence of some problems in general education and university English language. This problem could be either in the syllabus and/or the teaching of English in these two levels. These results are in accord with what was found by Namtapi (2022), Mohammadzadeh et al. (2015), Aldohon (2014), Bouzidi (2009), and Kaur and Clarke (2009). They concluded that their subjects had problems in almost all the skills with various order. The results contradict with Bedri's (2000) who concluded that the employees she surveyed were not glad about their level of English language.

The findings indicate that speaking, reading, and writing are considered the most important English language skills for employees in Public and Environmental Health (PEH) professions. This suggests that all language areas play a significant role in their work, likely due to the integrated nature of communication, whether written or spoken, where these skills are interdependent and inseparable. Employees, drawing from their experiences, emphasized the importance of speaking, which reflects the practical demands of their job requiring verbal communication in English. While all four skills are valued, the primary emphasis lies on speaking, reading, and writing. In contrast, previous studies have highlighted varying skill priorities. For instance, Al-Malki et al. (2022), Nametape (2022), Masyhud and Koiriyah (2021), Aldohon (2014), and Bouzidi (2009) found speaking and listening to be most important. Kaur and Clarke (2009) and Alkhatib (2005) identified speaking and writing as key skills, while Humaira (2021) and Alkhatib (2005) highlighted the significance of writing. Mohammadzadeh et al. (2015), meanwhile, reported that speaking was the single most critical skill for their participants.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, English language is frequently used by PEH employees in their job. Furthermore, knowledge of English language is useful to PEH employees in their profession. Participants' Level of proficiency was good to average as they perceived it. All skills and language areas included in the questionnaire were important to PEH employees with varying order. These results call for some recommendations as shown below. This research recommends that the outcomes of this NA should be considered in devising an EOP syllabus for the students of PEH. Moreover, English language syllabuses at tertiary level must meet students' job needs for English. Additionally, the Ministry of Health, Khartoum State, needs to organise English language training courses to promote employees' level of language. Finally, PEH employees should be autonomous to develop their linguistic ability. This study was limited only to PEH employees; studies investigating other occupational areas are needed. Additionally, the sample size is relatively small. Studies recruiting larger number of participants are required to provide rich results. Depending only on a questionnaire to determine the participants' level of proficiency in English language limits this study. Future research may adopt a proficiency test to reveal participants' actual language competence.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Author's Biography			
Name	Abuelgasim Sabah Elsaid Mohammed		
Affiliation	Department of English language, College of Science & Humanities, Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University, Aljharj, Saudi Arabia		
Email	ab.ibrahim@psau.edu.sa	Scopus ID	57200329568
Google Scholar	https://scholar.google.com/citations?hl=en&user=o6Iza2QAAAAJ	WoS ID	GQZ-5740-2022
Research Interest	ELT, SLA, ESP, Corpus Linguistics, CALL.		

Appendix

Public & Environmental Health Employees Questionnaire

Section 1: Background information

1. Gender: Male ( ) Female ( )
2. Job title:…….
3. Institution:……
4. Department:……
5. Qualification: Tick (√) the suitable one(s) for you.

No	Degree		University	Year
1	Bachelor			
2	Master			
3	Ph.D.			

6. Work experience: 1- 5 ( ) 6- 10 ( ) 11- 15 ( ) 16+ ( )

Section2: Needs for English language in the job: Please (√) your answer.

7. How often do you use English language in your job?
   Always ( ) Usually ( ) Sometimes ( ) Rarely ( ) Never ( )

Section 3. English language usefulness in the job

English language knowledge helps me in:						
No	**Item**	**Strongly agree**	**Agree**	**Don't know**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
8	Performing my job efficiently.					
9	Increasing my knowledge in my field.					
10	Increasing my job responsibilities.					
11	Promoting me to a higher job.					
12	Giving chances for training.					
13	Giving chances for travelling abroad.					
14	Others (Please specify)					

Section 4. Present situation in English language

15 Your English language standard is:

Very good ( ) Good ( ) Average ( ) Weak ( ) Very weak ( )

4.1. How do you rate yourself in these language areas?						
No	**Lang. area**	**Very good**	**Good**	**Average**	**Weak**	**Very weak**
16	Reading skills					
17	Writing skills					
18	Speaking skills					
19	Listening skills					
20	General vocabulary					
21	Scientific vocabulary					
22	Grammar					
23	Correct pronunciation					
4.2. Each of the following is a problem for you in using English in your job:						
No	**Problem**	**Yes**		**No**		**Do not know**
24	Limited vocabulary					
25	Grammar					
26	Reading comprehension skills					
27	Writing skills					
28	Speaking skills					
29	Listening skills					
30	Correct pronunciation					

Section 5. Skills importance

In your job, each of these language areas is important.						
No	**Lang. area**	**Strongly agree**	**Agree**	**Do not know**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
31	Reading skills					
32	Writing skills					
33	Speaking skills					
34	Listening skills					
35	General vocabulary					
36	Scientific vocabulary					
37	Grammar					
38	Correct pronunciation					