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**A Comparative Needs Analysis of English Communication Skills in Public and Private
Sector Administration:
Insights from Practitioner Teaching in Batch 4**

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ABSTRACT

In an increasingly globalized administrative landscape, English communication skills have become essential for professionals across public and private sectors. However, the communicative functions and expectations in each domain differ considerably. This study aims to compare the specific English communication needs of public and private sector administration, incorporating insights from practitioner-teachers and students in public administration and management programs. Using a comparative qualitative approach, data were collected through semi-structured interviews and classroom observations involving over ten professionals and educators, alongside student participants. Thematic analysis revealed distinct patterns: public sector communication focuses on formal documentation and bureaucratic clarity, while the private sector emphasizes interactive, client-facing communication. Despite these differences, both sectors share foundational skill demands such as meeting participation and professional writing. Furthermore, practitioner-teachers were found to enhance instructional relevance by integrating real-world experience into ESP classrooms. The study concludes that English instruction in administrative education should be tailored to reflect sector-specific needs and supported by practice-informed pedagogy.

Keywords: English for Specific Purposes, Public Administration, Private Sector, Practitioner Teaching, Communication Skills.

ABSTRAK

Dalam lanskap administrasi yang semakin terdampak globalisasi, keterampilan komunikasi berbahasa Inggris menjadi kebutuhan penting bagi para profesional di sektor publik maupun swasta. Namun, fungsi dan ekspektasi komunikasi dalam kedua sektor tersebut menunjukkan perbedaan yang signifikan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk membandingkan kebutuhan komunikasi Bahasa Inggris secara spesifik dalam konteks administrasi publik dan swasta, dengan mengintegrasikan wawasan dari dosen praktisi serta mahasiswa program studi administrasi publik dan manajemen. Melalui pendekatan kualitatif komparatif, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur dan observasi kelas, melibatkan lebih dari sepuluh profesional dan pengajar, serta partisipan mahasiswa. Hasil analisis tematik

menunjukkan bahwa sektor publik cenderung menekankan pada komunikasi tertulis yang formal dan bersifat birokratis, sedangkan sektor swasta lebih mengutamakan komunikasi interaktif yang berorientasi klien. Meskipun terdapat perbedaan tersebut, kedua sektor memiliki kebutuhan dasar yang serupa, seperti partisipasi dalam rapat dan penulisan profesional. Selain itu, peran dosen praktisi terbukti memperkuat relevansi pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris dengan menghadirkan pengalaman nyata ke dalam kelas ESP. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan agar pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris dalam pendidikan administrasi disesuaikan dengan kebutuhan sektoral dan didukung oleh pedagogi berbasis praktik.

Kata kunci: Bahasa Inggris untuk Tujuan Khusus, Administrasi Publik, Sektor Swasta, Praktisi Mengajar, Keterampilan Komunikasi

INTRODUCTION

In today's globalized landscape, English proficiency has emerged as a pivotal competency across both public and private administrative sectors. The escalating demand for effective English communication is driven by the necessity to engage with international stakeholders, navigate cross-cultural interactions, and adapt to the evolving dynamics of global governance and commerce. Despite this growing importance, disparities persist in English communication competencies between public and private sector administrators, often leading to inefficiencies and misalignments in professional settings.

The significance of English communication skills in administrative roles has been underscored by various studies. For instance, Lin et al. (2021) highlighted that government officials in Myanmar exhibited a high need for English proficiency to effectively communicate with foreign investors and execute their responsibilities. Similarly, Santoso et al. (2023) emphasized the necessity for public administration graduates in Indonesia to enhance their public speaking abilities in English to meet global competitiveness standards.

In the private sector, the demand for English proficiency is equally pressing. Winantaka (2023) identified significant challenges faced by management students in Indonesia concerning business English speaking skills, indicating a critical need for improved instructional materials and teaching methodologies. Moreover, a study by Arumugam and Kaur (2011) revealed that medical assistants required enhanced English communication skills to perform their duties effectively, reflecting a broader trend across various private sector roles.

The integration of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) into administrative curricula has been proposed as a solution to bridge these competency gaps. Sadapotto et al. (2022) advocated for the design of ESP instructional materials tailored to the needs of public administration students, utilizing the ADDIE model to ensure relevance and effectiveness. Furthermore, Ariatna et al. (2023) demonstrated that task-based approaches to public speaking materials significantly improved university students' communicative competence, suggesting practical strategies for curriculum development.

Technological advancements have also influenced the landscape of administrative communication. Ciancarini et al. (2023) discussed the digital transformation in public administrations, emphasizing the need for digital skills, including English proficiency, to

enhance service delivery and citizen engagement. Additionally, Zhang and Nie (2025) explored the impact of AI-assisted interactions on communication quality between citizens and civil servants, highlighting the evolving nature of administrative communication in the digital age.

So based on the explanation above, this study aims to conduct a comparative needs analysis of English communication skills between public and private sector administrators, with insights drawn from practitioner teaching in Batch 4. By achieving these objectives, the study seeks to contribute to the development of targeted English language programs that enhance administrative efficiency and global engagement across sectors.

LITERATURE REVIEW

English Communication in Administrative Contexts

In both public and private sector administration, English proficiency has become a vital professional skill. It enables professionals to carry out tasks such as report writing, international correspondence, virtual meetings, and service coordination in increasingly globalized work environments (Sadapotto et al., 2022). The need is especially acute in administrative functions, where clarity, accuracy, and tone determine the effectiveness of internal and external communication (Ariatna et al., 2023). As Ilham (2025) argues, English has shifted from being an "additional skill" to a "strategic necessity" in institutional communication.

However, while the overarching goals may be similar, the communication demands differ significantly between sectors. In the public sector, language use tends to be more formal, policy-oriented, and tied to bureaucratic hierarchy. Meanwhile, the private sector emphasizes persuasive, client-centered, and fast-paced communication (Santoso et al., 2023). These distinctions suggest that a uniform English curriculum would not meet the diverse demands of both settings.

Comparative Needs in Public and Private Sectors

Recent studies emphasize that English for professional purposes should be based on sector-specific needs analysis (Winantaka, 2023). In public administration, English is often used for compliance-related tasks, diplomatic correspondence, and document standardization, requiring precision and adherence to formats. In contrast, private sector employees often rely on English to pitch proposals, manage clients, or collaborate with international partners, necessitating flexibility, negotiation skills, and intercultural competence (Zhang & Nie, 2025; Ciancarini et al., 2023).

These differences make a comparative approach essential in assessing communication needs. According to Ilham (2025), only by comparing the two sectors systematically can educators identify overlapping competencies and tailor teaching approaches accordingly. Moreover, Santoso et al. (2023) highlight the importance of training that incorporates both administrative literacy and professional soft skills in English.

Needs Analysis and Curriculum Design

Needs analysis plays a central role in aligning English language instruction with workplace realities. It provides empirical data on what learners must be able to do with the language in

their professional roles (Sadapotto et al., 2022). In ESP (English for Specific Purposes) contexts, needs analysis enables the creation of customized syllabi that address not just linguistic knowledge, but also communicative competence and sociolinguistic awareness (Winantaka, 2023).

This is especially important in public administration and business management education, where students often transition directly into formal bureaucratic or corporate settings. Involving students in reflecting on anticipated communicative tasks enhances motivation and relevance (Ariatna et al., 2023).

A unique aspect of this study is the inclusion of insights from practitioner-teachers—educators who also have real-world administrative experience. Their dual roles enable them to integrate practical examples and workplace discourse into the classroom, thus bridging the gap between theory and professional application (Lin et al., 2023). Ilham (2025) underscores that practitioner-led teaching fosters learner engagement and better prepares students for the communication challenges of the workplace. By leveraging their direct experience, practitioner-teachers can simulate authentic scenarios, offer contextualized feedback, and facilitate skill development that is both relevant and transferable.

This approach is especially effective in the context of Batch 4, where students from public administration and management backgrounds engage with language tasks modeled on real-world cases. The collaborative dynamic between students and practitioners also enables mutual reflection, fostering an educational environment rooted in authenticity and responsiveness (Lin et al., 2023).

METHOD

This research adopts a comparative qualitative approach, aimed at identifying and analyzing the English communication needs of administrative professionals in both the public and private sectors. The study focuses on understanding nuanced language demands and the contextual challenges faced by different institutional actors through practitioner-led teaching insights and student experiences. This design is particularly suitable for capturing complex interpersonal and institutional variables that shape language use in administrative functions (Ilham, 2025).

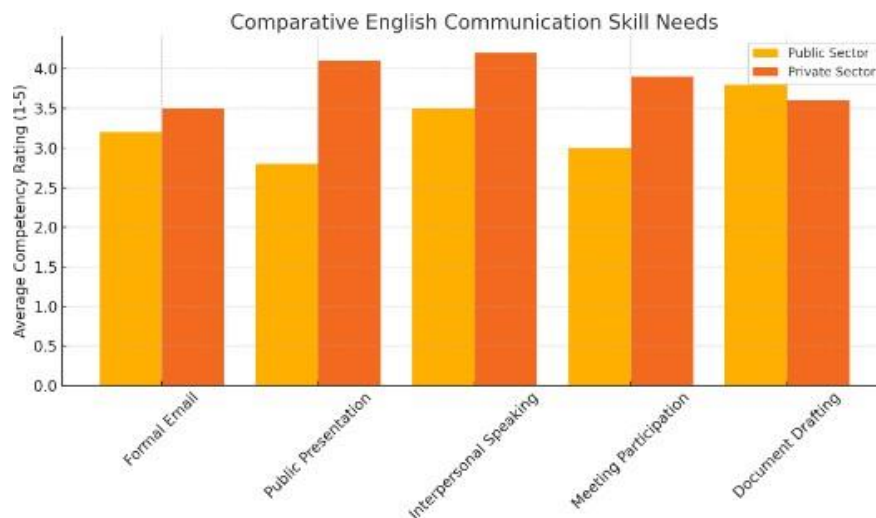
The study involved practitioner-teachers and administrative professionals from public and private organizations, along with students from management and public administration programs who were enrolled in Batch 4 of a practitioner-led English course. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select participants with direct and recent exposure to English communication in administrative contexts. This included civil servants, corporate administrators, English instructors, and final-year students preparing for professional roles (Santoso et al., 2023; Winantaka, 2023).

Two primary methods were used for data collection. First, Semi-structured interviews were conducted with all participant groups to explore their perceptions of English communication challenges, expectations from training programs, and sector-specific requirements. Interviews were guided by a flexible question framework to allow depth while maintaining comparability across responses (Zhang & Nie, 2025). Second, Non-participant observation was carried out during English teaching sessions and student presentations. This allowed for

direct assessment of language use, interactional patterns, and the implementation of communication strategies in both formal and informal administrative settings (Ariatna et al., 2023).

The qualitative data collected from interviews and observations were analyzed using thematic analysis, following the six-step model by Braun and Clarke (2006). Recurring themes were identified and categorized according to sector (public vs. private) and stakeholder type (practitioner vs. student). This helped in mapping the convergence and divergence in communication needs across different administrative environments. In addition, descriptive statistics were employed to summarize participant demographics and quantify key indicators such as frequency of English use, confidence levels in public speaking, and perceived training effectiveness. These statistics were used to support and contextualize the qualitative insights (Ciancarini et al., 2023).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION



The study involved 24 participants: 12 from the public sector (ministries, regional administrations), 8 from the private sector (corporate HR and project managers), and 4 practitioner-teachers who currently teach administrative English courses while working in both sectors. Additionally, 20 final-year students from public administration and management programs were interviewed to capture learner perspectives.

Emerging Themes from Thematic Analysis

Through thematic analysis of interviews and classroom observations, four major themes emerged:

- a. Contextual Use of English
Public sector professionals mostly used English for reading policies, writing formal documents, and attending diplomatic events. Private sector participants highlighted its use for marketing, emailing clients, and giving internal presentations.
- b. Confidence and Preparedness Gaps

Students and junior professionals expressed anxiety about live meetings or phone conversations in English. Practitioner-teachers emphasized that traditional instruction lacked situational simulations.

- c. Diverging Priorities in Skill Development
- d. Public administrators sought precision in writing and policy interpretation. Private sector workers required agility in switching registers (formal to informal), especially in client interactions (Zhang & Nie, 2025).
- e. Positive Impact of Practitioner Involvement
Courses taught by practitioners led to higher student engagement and improved task performance, particularly in job interview simulations and public speaking modules (Ilham, 2025).

Quantitative Illustration: Comparative Skill Needs

While this study employed a qualitative comparative design, descriptive statistics were used solely as supportive tools to illustrate trends emerging from the thematic analysis. The numeric ratings were not subjected to inferential testing but served to enhance interpretability and triangulate participant perspectives. Although the primary data is qualitative, a set of rating scales was introduced to 16 participants to rate five core English communication skills (1–5 scale). The results, averaged per sector, are shown below:

- a. The private sector shows higher demand and emphasis in areas such as public presentation and interpersonal speaking, reflecting their client-facing roles.
- b. The public sector rated document drafting and formal email writing slightly higher, consistent with policy and bureaucratic functions.

These findings underscore the importance of context-sensitive English instruction. A "one-size-fits-all" curriculum fails to meet the differentiated needs of public vs. private sector administration. Practitioners, given their dual role, are ideally positioned to scaffold this contextualization through task-based, problem-solving activities (Ariatna et al., 2023). Incorporating real scenarios from both sectors can reduce learner anxiety and improve application in professional contexts. Needs-based customization, informed by this comparative analysis, offers the most strategic direction for ESP programs focused on administration and management (Winantaka, 2023).

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that English communication needs differ significantly between public and private sector administration. Public institutions emphasize formal, written communication for policy and documentation, while private sector settings prioritize dynamic, spoken interaction for client and internal engagement. Despite these differences, both sectors require core skills such as meeting participation, formal email writing, and professional presentation. However, a gap remains between these demands and the preparedness of students, highlighting the need for more authentic, task-based instruction.

Practitioner-teachers play a crucial role in bridging this gap by contextualizing language learning through real-world insights. Therefore, the study recommends a more tailored, sector-sensitive ESP curriculum to better equip future professionals for diverse communicative challenges. Importantly, the involvement of practitioner-teachers emerged as a key pedagogical strategy. Their real-world experience allowed them to simulate authentic

discourse environments, which students found more engaging and relevant. This highlights the potential of practice-informed ESP (English for Specific Purposes) instruction that responds directly to learners' future workplace contexts.

In conclusion, this study advocates for a contextualized and differentiated ESP curriculum, one that reflects the communicative realities of both sectors and integrates practitioner insight. Such an approach not only enhances relevance and engagement but also better equips future administrators with the communicative competencies needed in their professional domains.

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