



Role Of English For Specific Purposes (Esp) In Business Communication

Dr. R. Ramesh Associate Professor, Dept. of English, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Thirunelveli-627 012, Tamil Nadu, India Email: rams_efl@yahoo.co.uk

Dr. J. Jenitha Assistant Professor, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli-627012, Tamil Nadu, India Email: jenithamail@yahoo.com**Introduction**

Introduction

English is a universal language and a language of intercontinental culture, which embraces world wide knowledge. It is an easy medium of communication in the international sphere of life. Being an international knowledge language, it has created better understanding among the nations of the world and their culture. It is one of the accepted medium for international business transactions. The advent of 21st century has accompanied globalization in scientific, technical and economical activities on an international scale, which has magnified as the role of English language in international communications. In order to achieve better and more effective results in an international trade, the relevant business people must be given adequate training in using Business English. To be involved in the world / national business, there is always a need for an internationally accepted language. Obviously, English language has attained that status.

The purpose of developing 'Specific Course' is to meet the needs of learners, in a special language concept. About the idea of a special language, Ellis and Johnson states: "special language is as a restricted repertoire of words and expressions selected from the whole language because that restricted repertoire covers every requirement within a well-defined context, task or vocation" (4).

Students of Business Administration need such a specific English language teaching to meet their future business needs and their improvements. For them, Business English plays a vital role and acts as a ladder in their career. Developing Specific English Course for MBA students – is a study, to make the students to develop the required skills in using English language. It is a course developed to build student's confidence in speaking, listening, reading and writing English in business contexts. This Business English course for Business Administration students will increase English language proficiency, excellent skills, and wider

vocabulary knowledge. It gives post dignity to the learners. In order to develop the above mention skills, Specific English course is necessary for MBA students.

Business English:

With the globalization of trade and economy and the continuing increase of international communication in various fields, the demand for English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is also expanded, especially in countries, where English has been taught as a foreign or second language. ESP is a separate branch of English language teaching. As for a broader definition of ESP, Hutchinson and Waters theorize, “ESP is an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner’s reason for learning” (29).

ESP syllabus is based on an analysis of learner’s need and their own personal distinct knowledge of using English for real communication. ESP materials will be designed on the topics and activities of specific purpose only. While designing an ESP course, grammatical functions, acquisition skills, terminology and specific functions of discipline are taken into consideration as crucial parts of the ESP course. The salient features of ESP are listed out as below:

- ESP is defined to meet specific needs of the learner.
- ESP makes use of the underlying methodology and activities of the discipline it serves.
- ESP is centered on the language, skills, discourse and genres appropriate to these activities.
- ESP is likely to be designed for adult learners, either at a territory level or in a professional work station.

Among the various types of ESP courses, Business English implies the definition of specific language corpus and emphasizes on the particular kind of communication in a specific context. There are a lot of definitions for Business English, which ELT specialists might follow: Chilver, an ELT professor defines, “Business English is designed to help learners to improve their Business English Communication Skills” (21). Stevense, a journalist in his words says, “Business English is a type of English for specific purposes that is meant to meet the needs / requirements / specific purposes or learners whose interest is business” (Mackenzie 67). According to Jones, define Business English is: “... highly communicative in nature. It provides a lovely atmosphere with the emphasis on the use of language in a business context and to learn more about the world of business from an English language perspective” (124). Hollett, in his work New Business Objectives define Business English:

Business English is a language development in a business setting. It is identical to general English in that it covers the same teaching / learning

progression for language. Grammar and lexis are deliberately presented in a work place setting. (5)

The major objectives of Business English are:

- Confidence and fluency in speaking, writing.
- Skills for organizing and structuring information.
- Strategies for following the main points of fast, complex and imperfect speech.
- Clear pronunciation and delivery.
- Sufficient language accuracy to be able to communicate ideas without ambiguity.
- Skill for presentations and explaining these views without stress for the listener.

Business English customizes the needs based on job specific language and vocabulary of the business students. It focuses broadly on the four basic language skills of Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking. Business English aims at qualifying its learners for employment and their future business needs.

Business Communication:

The term 'communication' is a process in which people occupy differing environments and exchange messages in a specific context via one or more channels and often respond to each others' messages through verbal and non-verbal feedback. In business, communication is both a frequent and critically important process. It occupies a specific place than any other activity and often makes the difference between success and failure for the organization as a whole and for its individual person. It is an inevitable and irreversible process. Lawrence Baron, comments on communication as:

Communication is the corner stone of any successful business – not only does it span between customers, but within company as well. Many companies find they lose productivity and money due to a lack of communication and it will affect a company's performance. (Kapoor 64)

Communication is a major and essential part of the work of business. Business needs the people with good communication skills. Improving communication skills improves paves way to success in business. It could enable human beings to work together. In business, it is the vehicle through which management performs its basic functions. Managers administrate through communication, coordinate through communication, plan and control through communication. Thus, all organized efforts, including the work of business, require communication.

Mark Federighi, National Manager of Business Development, says about the significance of Business Communication as follows:

Communication is essential to building trust and team work among employees. To become a successful leader, you must have a great team. Just look at Michelangelo. He did it paint the Sistine chapel by himself, but with the help of his team. It is considered one of the best works in History. It's all about the good communication between the team. (Lesikar 4)

There are two broad categories of communication in Business namely; internal operational and external operational communications. Communicating process done in conducting work within a business is called internal operational communication. Works such as giving orders, supervise the workers, assembling reports and writing e-mails are considered as internal operational communication.

External operational communication is the process that the work related communication with people outside the business (i.e.) publics like suppliers, service companies, customers and the general public works such as personal selling, telephoning and advertising are considered as external operational communication.

These both internal and external communications are vital for business success. While examining the process of communication, the five steps are followed. They are: idea formation, message encoding, message transmission, message decoding and feed back. The common definition of communication is the transmission of information and meaning from one individual or group to another. This process of communication is successfully activated only when the receivers understand an idea as sender intended it.

Effective communication is the key to success in business environment. Guffey defines function of Business Communication, "Business communication is communication used to promote a product, service or organization; relay information within the business" (13). Business Communication message is conveyed to the various audience or organizations through various channels of communication, including email, voice mail, intranets, websites, video-transmission and video-conference, etc.

Business communication is important for business students, those who need to learner to convey their ideas accurately, effectively and convincingly. The important aspects of Business Communication skills are presentations, meetings, memo writings, telephonic conversations, etc.

Practicing communication skill in a wide range of business settings, is needed for learners those who learn Business English. Business English is

designed to help the learners to improve their Business communication skills. In Business, communication problems are caused only by means of lack of language equivalency. No matter, how good business man's selling techniques is, or how good his marketing proposal is. But poor language skills inevitably destroy all his efforts. Thus Business English is an essential element for Business Communication.

Significance of English Language in Business:

English is the international language of business and used to do business across international boundaries. It is the fact that it will be impossible to operate in the world of commerce without strong command of English language. Business executives from different countries should have a common language among them. For an example, the members of the European Free Trade Association conduct all their business in English, even though not one of them is a native English speaker. In the words of one international authority says, "English has emerged as the lingua franca of world commerce in much the same way that Greek did in the ancient world of the west and China did in the East" (Varghese 17).

In the world wide business, communication plays vital role in today's global challenge. Among the other frequent mediums of communication, English language serves as a pivotal force in barriers in communication which can make or break international relations and state affairs. For business transactions around the world English dominates the front lines. For an example, a senior manager from Canada instructs business partners in Korea. An office manager from the United Kingdom drops a phone call to his contact in Japan. In both examples, English primarily acts as a common language, in the formation of global awareness and progress. According to Lesikar, "Learning how to speak English can allow the learners to travel to western country ... opened up a large number of doors, doors that would normally be closed" (23).

With this in mind, many countries should also take steps to improve the linguistic skills of their students, primarily in English language. Penrose, an efficient professor of Business Communication state:

Today, we are living in a global community. People correspond with others from around the globe on regular basis ... The English language has inarguably achieved a major role in this globalization and it has become the prime language of choice for communication by many different nationalities. (137)

English language is the primary language of business. In India, there was a survey recently conducted on more than 25,000 employers of global corporations. A notable percentage of respondents have said that English was neither critical nor important to be successful on their current positions. Huge majority reported

that English language proficiency was insufficient to be successful in their current jobs. In sum, only 9 percent said their proficiency was sufficient to do their current job. Therefore, sufficient English skills are considered to be important for business. People who are unable to understand and process the information accurately and quickly can adversely failed on business.

English is the ideal language for the administrators around the world and it's also prominent in business education, world news and communication. If proficiency level in English increases, the opportunities are also increases for business people. When business person learn how to speak English, the opportunities are limitless to them. At any cost, to whom one who wishes to be a successful in business world, learning English is incredibly important.

Scope of the Topic:

The specific course of Business English is orientated towards learning subject matter as well as language. Business students are in need to standardize their language skills before their academic study. The English course for MBA students has been designed to meet the following needs of the students, such as:

- To improve the listening, reading, writing and critical thinking skills needed for academic success.
- To help perform-discipline-appropriate exercise and activities to develop the interpersonal, academic and language skills necessary to succeed in a University / business environment.
- To provide a basic information on economics and business to prepare for further business studies.
- To help them understand the vocabulary and structure of the English language as it is used in business writing.
- To give practice in learning strategies that will enable them to become an independent, confidence and successful learner of business studies and business writings.
- To provide with the skills to deal with large quantities of academic reading and writing.
- To develop critical skills of self evaluation.

Among these needs, the general scope for introducing specific course for business students to work successfully and effectively in a cross – cultural environment. The most important scope of developing such a Specific English Course for MBA students is to improve the overall performance of the Business students.

Methodology of Research:

Observation, interaction with the students and with their teachers of Management Department can be used as methodological research. For this research, the researcher met learners thrice in a week and conducted classes for two hours per day. Students were actively engaged in communication activities that can be easily transferred to their real work situations. For instance brainstorming, discussion and role-play are to be quite conducive to the class room settings.

Methodological Tools:

In order to conduct this study the researcher applied the following tools such as Black board, projector, slide projector, video clippings, powerpoint presentations and visual aids, etc. In this study, demonstration of language was used in context through prescribed text books.

Brief History of English Language Teaching in India:

In India, the Indian languages have a rich cultural heritage. The country was invaded and ruled by different colonizers' and British rule lasted for nearly 300 years. So, when India became independent in 1947, it had become the home of various religious and linguistic groups. There are 18 official languages and 350 other languages that are recognized as major languages. English is not classified as one of the 18 national languages in India. Although Hindi is the official language of the union; English enjoys the status of associate official language in India. The central and state recruitment boards conduct examinations in Indian languages as well as in English.

Indian history shows that English was subjected to many pressures. It had its roots in bitterness stemming from the long period of domination by European countries by means of establishing East India Companies. Thus Vasco da Gama, the sea voyager who first visited India in 1498, stated India is a land of spices and of marvels to European people. During 1818, English trade became more profitable, the British Empire became the British Empire of India, instead of British Empire in India.

Unofficial Britain was already teaching English in India. William Carey, a Yorkshire shoe maker turned Evangelist, had established his college in the Danish Colony of Seranpore in the last quarter of 18th century. David Hare, a Watch maker, provided his big mansion and land in Calcutta in 1801 for a college, which was called the Hindu College. In the introductory period of English in India consists three important phases. The first missionary phase was initiated around 1614 by Christian Missionaries.

The second phase was the demand from local, as some scholars were of the opinion, that the spread of English was the result of the demand and willingness

of local people to learn language. The two prominent reformers who used to speak in English were Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Navakaur. They both strived to develop English since they supposed it would open a way for the people to find developments of the West. In his letter to Lord Aurherst (1773 – 1857) Roy embraced that English was provided Indian with “the key to all knowledge ... all the really useful knowledge which the world contains as an evidence of local demand English” (Krishnaswamy and Sriraman 23). With the third phase, the government policy began in 1765 and English was established as the medium of Instruction and administration.

In the early 19th century, during the period of Governor Lord William Benetick, English became the language of record of government and high courts and other official works. English education came here not because of the British but in spite of them through cooperation between non-official British and liberal Indians. In 1776, English became the language of Supreme Court at Calcutta and finally as the medium of instruction and administration by the British raj. Krishnaswamy and Sriraman states that:

Macaulay’s proposal was a success and Lord Benetick declared that administered on public instruction should be henceforth employed in the imparting to the native population knowledge of English literature and science, through the medium of English language. This resolution formed the corner stone of the implementation of the language policy in India and ultimately resulted in the diffusion of bilingualism. (48)

In Indian education, English language rooted in the alien linguistic, cultured administrative and educational settings. The most important land mark of the establishment of English Education in colonial India was the report of Sir Charles Woods – Woods dispatch in 1854. This report emphasized the need for using both vernaculars the diffusion of European knowledge and promotion of the general education of people of India. Kapoor comments on English in Indian education as a “road to the light” and “a tool of civilization” (75).

English in Independent India:

India, after becoming independent in 1947, Hindi was designed by the constitution as the language of National and English as the language of administration. It acted as a language of India’s freedom struggle. For an example, Mahatma Gandhi published his ‘Young India’ in English. Nehru also published a daily, ‘Indian Herald’ in English.

Realizing the importance of English in the development of the modern India, both the Radhakrishnan Commission of Education (1952) and Kothari Commission (1964) observed that English plays a vital role in higher education and that no student should be allowed to take a degree unless he gains a

reasonable proficiency in English. The National Policy on Education (1986) too emphasized the facilities for the study of English language. In reality, in India, English is still the language that examines the students in the Universities, conducts foreign affairs and transacts business with the world. English gradually acquired, socially and administratively, the most dominant roles in Indian Multilingual setting. According to Allam, "English serves two purposes namely, it provides a linguistic tool for the administrative cohesiveness of a country and secondly it serves as a language of wider communication" (112). English plays a dominant role in the media and initiated serious journalism in the Indian press. It has been used as the medium for inter-state communication that the pan-Indian press and broadcasting are both before and since India's Independence.

Indian English Language Teaching has a history and also been the testing ground for ELT innovations. During 1915 and 1955, several methods were designed first and then used in India. The bi-lingual and the grammar translation method of non-native language teaching and learning became popular in India. Alexander Duff's 'Direct method' and Michael West's 'Reading Method' were also used in India first in the mid 19th century.

In 1966, Kothari Commission submitted its reports which contain two major recommendations with regard to the study of English. they are (a) English should be the medium of Instruction in all major universities, and (b) special units should be set up for teaching English as a language skill distinct from teaching it as literature .With the collaboration of the British council, the first English Language Teaching Institute (ELTI) was established in Allahabad in 1954. By the initiative move of Nehru, The Central Institute of English and Foreign Language was also established (CIEFL) in Hyderabad in 1958. Krishnaswamy and Sriraman in his work English Teaching in India ranges the three specific goals of teaching English in contemporary India are,

1. Mobility (i.e.) the utilitarian function of English as the language of opportunity.
2. Modernization (i.e.) the interactive function of English as the window of the world.
3. The projection principle (i.e.) the interpretive function of English as an international language.(63)

These are some significant goals of teaching English in post-colonial India. But now-a-days, in India there are a mad rush for English medium schools. Chaudhary states,

Nearly 99% respondents said in a ford foundation funded services in India in 1983 that English was their best for a good career. If their children had to learn only are languages, all respondents said, then they would like them to learn English. English has replaced everything. (Varghese 54)

English has become an international commodity like oil and electronic things and more than a quarter of the people in the world use it as the same. It is the language of India's national and international business, and the opening up of the economy to multinational companies in the 1990's has increased the demand for English Education in India.

Importance of Learning Business English:

In this age of global communication, many business and professionals are being let down by the simplest of tools – the language they speak English has become the Universal language of business and as a result, many companies, like the large multinational corporations, are now fully aware of the need for their employers to have a good command of English. The specific needs of Business students for their future career are:

- Dealing with providers and customers
- Negotiation of deals
- Holding discussions
- Answering the telephone
- Writing messages and
- Reading tests from different sources

All these needs which are provided to them can be performed only by means of learning Business English. It is most important for students to learn Business English during their academic studies.

Students have acquired specific content based knowledge. From their school and college level they take compulsory general English. But this Business English course, serves as the bridge between their professional knowledge and their English proficiency, further to develop their English competency in the real business context. While pointing out the significance of learning Business English, Guffey states:

Communication problems in business results in deals being lost, unsuccessful meetings and negotiations ... These disadvantages can easily be over come by having the confidence and ability to perform these tasks in Business English. (231)

On a personal level, having competent in English language skills is a definite way of giving a hope at an interview, opening up more interesting career prospects and increasing learning potential. Another important point relates to the fact is that the English language learning is essential to business world and particularly business education. Mastering specific terminology, therefore, becomes important in order to make easy understanding and makes sense of the mass of English business information including company reports, research papers and economic

journals – presented in English language. Ellis and Johnson in his work Teaching Business English states:

This special English focus is a direct result of professional needing the English language to meet the function of their daily work tasks. Thus the ideal BE learning environment has a balanced aim of combining language and business skill. (117)

People from different language background work together in corporate office and use English as their common means of communication. Most of the companies and organizations around the world spend a great deal of money and time to help their employees to learn Business English. The importance of learning Business English is to raise the English proficiency in business settings of learners as well as to prepare them for successful communication in their future profession.

Use of Authentic Materials in Business English:

Ellis in his Teaching Business English defines authentic material as “It is any kind of material taken from the real world and not specifically created for the purpose of language teaching” (157). The authentic material can be a text, visuals, or audio materials. It can be realia such as tickets, menus, maps and time tables or it can be objects such as products, equipment, components or models. By Cutting, selecting, simplifying or transferring from one medium of communication to another, it immediately ceases to be authentic.

The different types and sources of authentic material that for teaching Business English are (i) Books, (ii) The media, (iii) The company-specific materials and public information materials. Compiling these materials, the authentic materials are classified into two broad categories, respectively

- Text materials
- Audio and video materials

Text materials consist of model of authentic written language. But the audio and video materials provide a model of spoken language.

Text materials are used for language activities, which focus on vocabulary, structures or functions it contains. The use of text materials and their exploitation, therefore, needs to be analyzed with regard to the needs of learners. A large proportion of Business English learners need speaking and listening skills and also they require providing such kind of practice.

Audio and video recording can be used simply as background information for the future learners or for listening practice, for language work, or as a stimulus for the variety of oral activities. Videos of a manufacturing process can be played

without sound for learners to create their own commentary, and opportunity to guess the next. Information-transfer activities can be devised, role plays are set up, learners can be asked to summarize, to write reports, to act out scenes using their own words and so on. Audio and video materials are Television and Radio news, documentaries, company videos, and public information videos, etc.

The uses of authentic material by the learners in Business English have several remarkable reasons. First, the authentic text will have a number of features that are often lacked in text and dialogues created for learning English. Secondly, it provides information about real-life situations or events. The conveyed information is more accurate, high credibility and more up-to-date. It provides the core of the specialized course, if the course objective is to develop skills for reading manuals, instructions, contracts or report writing skills etc. Usage of authentic materials other than reading and testing exercise are provide realistic context for a role play, stimulate debate, practice the skill of describing, explaining, instructing and changing information, etc.

Utility of Business English Course:

The students of Business Administration need specific practical language knowledge and written knowledge in order to complete their performance in the Business world. In spoken English courses, teaching takes place in ordinary level using skills and students could understand only about the language in general and its basic structures. But for MBA students, they must have specific language knowledge, so they have to learn English in a specific channelization called Business English. This specific Business English course will provide business students with

- More confidence in their ability to conduct business in English.
- Greater verbal fluency for face to face business situations.
- More professional approach and interaction with clients.
- Greater confidence to effectively represent their organization.
- Improved communication with colleges and clients
- Enhanced comprehension skills and clear pronunciation.

According to Crowther, “Business English is an indispensable tool to complete in both local and international markets. This can only add to the students’ sense of confidence and self-esteem as business professionals” (102).

This is the course that enables the student to become competitive and competent enough in their future career. It also offers a chance to the business people to visit far-flung places and experience new culture and ways of life of 21st century globalised world.

Necessity to Introduce Specific English Course for MBA Students:

In our curriculum design, the post graduate courses haven't any English program in their syllabus. The requirement of English language is less for other P.G. students when compared to management students, because, students for PG courses such as, Physics, Chemistry, Bio-Technology, Maths, etc. come from same discipline, which they studied in their UG programme. But for management students it is necessary to introduce specific course during their academic year for bright future in their career, because the eligibility requirement for MBA degree is Bachelor Degree with a minimum of 60% of marks in any disciplines. So, the students of MBA course have a background of different qualification, different majors and from different kinds of learning situations. In order to complete their business sector, the students must have adequate language skills such as fluency enhancement, speaking skill through telephones, listening skills while at meetings, negotiations, written skill and specific vocabulary usage skill. These language skills are needed for their success in the fast moving globe economy.

Introducing English curriculum for MBA students through the medium speech, language, reading offers an insight into a world far beyond the physical boundaries of student's perceptions current trends in business field required more proficiency in English language because of advancement of information technology. So, it is high time to introduce a Specific English course for MBA students.

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