

Teaching and learning ESP courses: The perceptions of teachers and students

Tribhuwan Kumar¹, Triyo Supriyatno² and Cyril Musaddad Abbud El-Aribi³

¹Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University, Saudi Arabia

²State Islamic University of Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, Indonesia

³Open University Malang, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Language is a perennial human activity and its usefulness is best demonstrated and placed in real-life situations. This is true when it comes to language that is learned and taught for specific purposes. Those who work in the professional fields, they understand the expectations and problems that graduates confront in their English competence in the real world. This study shows the perceived usefulness of various ESP courses taught for management students at two Indian universities by university students and ESP teachers. The researcher gathered data from 80 students and 20 teachers from different private universities of Delhi-NCR in the first phase of the research. A total of eight students were interviewed in the second round. The result shows that most professors were satisfied with the ESP courses they taught however students had a different viewpoint. According to the students, there was no focus on strengthening oral communication skills, which resulted in communication anxiety when the students entered practical domains. They also stated that the courses focused on out-dated professional writing styles that were no longer in trend. During the interview, the students suggested that instead of taking traditional courses, teachers could provide content that helps students acquire practical speaking and presentation skills.

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Corresponding Author:

Dr. Tribhuwan Kumar

Assistant Professor of English,

College of Science and Humanities at Sulail,

Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University, Al Kharj, Saudi Arabia.

Email: t.kumar@psau.edu.sa

ORCID: 0000-0001-7259-9364

1. INTRODUCTION

English is the language of wisdom, business, science, and technology, and every nation, especially developing countries, places a high importance on English education in educational institutions. Globalisation, international trade, international networks, economic integration, as well as science and technology, have all contributed to the rise of English as the lingua franca on the globe (Jiajing, 2007; Mauranen, 2009; Kumar, 2020a; Ajmal & Kumar, 2020). This has led to an increase in the need for ESP language learning and now students, professors and professionals in a range of fields are expected to learn English (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998; García Mayo, 2000; Johns, 2013). However, because this is a specialized age, emphasis has been placed on specializations in the teaching and learning of English. English for Specific Purposes (ESP) was introduced in the latter half of the twentieth century to meet the needs of

students. It portrayed English as a global language in terms of reach but also as a specialized language in terms of function (Johns & Evans, 1991).

English was taught in India prior to 1947, when the country gained independence from the British. ESP, on the other hand, is a comparatively recent concept. Most universities, until recently, offered only academic English courses and did not see the necessity to offer Functional English or ESP courses. However, things have evolved over time, and ESP courses are now offered by a number of universities.

1.1 Research Objectives

(i) To evaluate how well management institutions in the National Capital Region (NCR) of India's capital city are addressing the communication demands of their students by implementing an existing ESP curriculum.

(ii) To ascertain the academic and professional requirements of management students enrolled in a variety of Indian business institutions.

1.2 Research Questions

(i) Which components of an existing ESP course at a specific Management institution must be changed to meet the communication needs of Management students and enable them to use it in real-world situations?

(ii) Is the ESP curriculum at the specified Management institutions adequate to suit students' academic and professional needs?

2. LITERATURE REVIEWS

2.1 Previous researches into ESP in India

In the last several decades, several investigations were carried out into various ESP elements and aspects in India. Venkateswara and John (2021) conducted a study on perceptions of students about the Speaking Components of an ESP Course at Anna University in Chennai, India. In ESP courses, the importance of writing over speaking has been emphasised. Inadequate language skills, a lack of subject knowledge, grammatical errors, and social anxiety, which causes students to fear, being perceived as inefficient or weak in public speaking by their peers, were also common difficulties among students learning the language. In addition, friends demoralise weak learners because they don't want to speak in a language, they don't fluently use. In India, the success of a management student's on-campus recruitment is strongly influenced by his or her ability to communicate effectively. Former president of NASSCOM, Kiran Karnik, stated that, because of their poor communication in English, only 25% of engineers are skilled for work in the outsourcing industry (Karnik, 2007 as cited in P'Rayan 2008).

Students reported that the English programme before completion of their practical job training was insufficient to prepare the students for job writing tasks, according to a study conducted by Stapa and Jais (2005). Organizations are making a strong emphasis on effective communication skills in today's global market. This aspect focuses on the humanistic facet of soft skills as these skills influence an individual's whole being. In order to be more efficient and easily integrated into a team, an individual must communicate effectively. This leads to increased productivity and efficiency (Mohanty, 2009)

Venkatraman and Prema (2007) conducted a need analysis of the students of the B. Tech. courses at SASTRA University, Thanjavur, India. They researched on the need on the language skills. The study reveals that reveal that communication skills are among their top priorities. They focused on the language skills as part of their research. According to the findings of the study, communication skills are of the utmost importance. The questionnaire was created and administered by the researcher in order to determine their English language needs.

Management students, in today's globalised world, require a unique blend of language abilities for academic and professional success. Industries have expressed concern about the current educational gap between management students and industry expectations, which necessitates the development of improved communication skills. Thus, in order to comply with the evolving requirements of the curriculum, English for science and technology, management, and other programmes should be redesigned.

Traditional ELT methods, according to Gaur (2008), are inappropriate for teaching communication skills. They must be supplemented with a distinct body of knowledge. Consequently, Behavioural sciences and management theories need to be integrated in ELT. This constructive approach to English language teaching is vital because English is required not only for personal communication, but also for persuasive strategies

and scientific communication. In the process of teaching and learning, analyses of the receiver's personality and factors that affect decisions before the communication process should be incorporated.

2.1 The role and significance of ESP courses in Management courses

The researchers including Donna (2008), Ciortescu (2012), Strapasson (2015), Rao (2017), found that over the years, as in every other discipline, there has been a growing emphasis on the importance of incorporating communication skills into management programs. Some studies have highlighted the need of teaching English to future Managers. Adnan (2019), for example, advocates for combining Vygotsky's social constructivism theory with ESL courses for professionals. However, the majority of these researches have focused on using demand analysis to advice syllabus design for these management programs.

Meanwhile, a few studies have been conducted on teaching approaches and strategies. Parks and Raymond (2004) used a mixed method study to determine the value of teaching literary circles to boost English speaking skills among future professionals. They discovered that using literature circles greatly improved the students' speaking ability. Strapasson (2015) emphasized on the teacher's engagement with the students in a year-long case study on communication issues in management student assignments. The study was qualitative in nature and required students to complete a variety of tasks, including oral presentations, design reports, formal reports, and poster summaries. Strapasson in his research concluded that interactions with instructors have a significant impact on students' transferable communication abilities.

Taghizadeh & Namayandeh (2019) proposed offering strategic instruction as part of a study to determine professional levels of listening comprehension tasks using the CEFRL.

According to Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998), business English courses should concentrate on speech communities, corporate form, significant communicative processes, purposes, syntax, and lexis, as well as learners' expectations and techniques, among other things. To achieve the aim of developing global business communicative competence, students' job and industry background, as well as vital discussion and communicative activities, as well as learning strategies and expectations should be taken account of by MBA business English course designers.

According to Zhao (2016), MBA business English teaching should be problem-based and encourage students to collaborate. MBA business English teachers should develop models that include "project-based learning, case teaching and create a learning atmosphere." As a result, the evaluation of MBA business English teachers should not be limited to written assessments. "project report, short drama performance and oral report" should all be included (p. 117).

There are also conceptual literature reviews in which many experts proposed various techniques and syllabi for management students. Li (2010), for example, recommends using role play to assist management students in improving their English skills. Indeed, role play and dramatics have been shown to be extremely beneficial for the development of both oral and written communication skills. In the meantime, Jones et al. (2017) has proposed to use seminars to support students with arguments, judgements, information digestion, and problems when analysing ESP texts and teaching methods for ESP teaching to students of management. Additionally, he suggests utilizing a variety of strategies to accommodate aspiring management professionals' diverse learning styles.

Numerous studies by researchers such as Ciortescu (2012), Zhao (2016), Rao (2017), Inozemtseva and Troufanova (2018), Ishak (2019), and Mousavi et al. (2019), have been conducted recently in throughout the world to compare and contrast teachers' and management students' perspectives on ESP courses taught to them. Whilst, there have been studies that have taken into account the perspectives of employers (Poedjiastutie & Oliver, 2017). However, only a few studies took the perspectives of working professionals into consideration (Rohmah, 2017).

2.2 ESP courses for Management programs

In Indian institutions, courses in communication skills cover a broad range of topics. A description of the contents ESP course of in most of the universities (Here, the researchers mean that almost all the universities in India have similar topics) is provided in Table 1.

These contents are widely used in different parts of the world. It is necessary, however, to determine whether these contents are relevant to the requirements of prospective management professionals. Additionally, it is necessary to focus on the goals and objectives, materials, methodology, and assessment methods to ascertain the effectiveness of these courses in achieving the desired outcomes.

Table 1: Description of the contents ESP course

No	Topics
1	Business English Basics Fundamental of Business English; Difference between Business English and general English; Business English and context; Role and importance of Business English; Need analysis
2	Basic Communication Skills LSRW; Comprehension; English grammar skills; Basic writing; Communication skills and etiquettes for the workplace
3	Effective Business Reading Successful listening and reading strategies; Describe things and events in the context of Business English; Making requests; Support arguments; Understanding and using of tone, style and knowledge of communication methods; Analyze and summarize business data
4	Effective Business Speaking Socializing; Small talk; Telephone English for Professionals; Presentations; Meetings and negotiations; Effective job interviews
5	Business English Writing Writing business emails; Correspondence; CVs; Writing executive summary and reports; agendas and meeting
6	Business English Vocabulary ESP; English idioms, Phrasal Verbs and Collocations; Register and business vocabulary and glossary of terms
7	Cross-cultural communications Business practices in a globalized world; Cross-cultural business setting; Cross-cultural theories; Cross-cultural issues and misunderstandings in communication; Strategies to overcome possible cross-cultural issues
8	Effective Business Skills Business concept; Major components for business: marketing and international, accounting and finance, Management function and human resources; Business Skills: leadership styles & skills, problem solving skills & decision making, rationality & logical-cum-reasoning skills
9	Effective Computational Skills Business and technology; Business Computer systems; Organizing information: Microsoft office; Office information system: data storage and management, computer viruses and security; Virtual reality: internet and e-learning in practice
10	Business Case Study Analysis Initial case analysis: brain storming, thinking skills, pitching your idea analysis; Writing an informal situational analysis; Business situation case studies

3. RESEARCH METHODS

The researchers employed a mixed approach to data collection and analysis in order to gather and analyze information. The researchers collected data from 80 MBA students and 20 faculty members at the selected universities during the first phase of the investigation. The researchers have opinion that final year students are the most experienced students. Moreover, these students are at the verge of job placement. So, they can provide the most authentic result. That is the reason, to ensure data validity, the researchers involved final semester students. Both teachers and students responded to the same questionnaire. Four sections were included in the questionnaire: course objectives, course materials, course contents, and teaching methods.

The questionnaire contained twenty-seven items. The data from the questionnaire were analyzed using percentages. Eight students were interviewed in the second phase. The interview was conducted in the selected school premises for 30 minutes individually. The questions were related to the effectiveness of ESP courses in the job placement of the students and their adaptability at work place. The same themes addressed in the questionnaire were discussed in a semi-structured interview. Data triangulation was used to support the verification, augmentation, and interpretation of questionnaire responses.

Researchers from all over the world have concentrated on many aspects of ESP courses, including course objectives, course outlines, course material, teaching methodologies, delivery methods, evaluation and assessment methodologies, and student and teacher motivation. As previously said, they were all based mostly on instructor and student opinions. As a result, the research tools for this study were designed in a similar manner.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The data collected through the questionnaire have been compiled for the results (see Table 2 to Table 5). Semi-structured interviews amongst students also yielded the following categories.

4.1 Data collection process through questionnaire

For this research, the questionnaire data were organized and discussed in this study into four sections: course objectives, course materials, course content, and teaching methodology.

4.1.1 Course objectives

Teachers and students have nearly identical attitudes when it comes to introducing and accomplishing goals. The objectives were agreed to be well-defined and stated. Nonetheless, there is a significant difference in the two groups' assessments of the course objectives' relevance to the workplace. While the majority of teachers believe they are necessary, the overwhelming majority of students who are now employed in the sector disagree. This demonstrates that teachers are unaware of the communication abilities required in the practical realm. Similarly, unlike professors who believe that course objectives are practical and are met in class, students believe that course objectives are neither realistic nor met in class. The knowledge of the teachers appears to be limited to the classroom. They appear to be completely unaware of the realities faced by aspiring managers. As a result, there is a significant gap in perceptions between teachers and students.

Table 2: Statistical analysis of teachers' and students' responses regarding to the course objectives

S. N.	Statement	Respondents	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	Upon completing the first lecture, the students came to an understanding of the material that they would cover in the course.	Teachers students	1% 15%	30% 21%	15% 51%	54% 13%
2	The objectives of the course were detailed and defined.	Teachers students	0% 6%	15% 20%	17% 70%	68% 8%
3	The course objectives were focused on helping students get jobs.	Teachers students	2% 24%	38% 40%	12% 24%	48% 12%
4	The goal of the course was realistic and achievable.	Teachers students	6% 24%	20% 46%	70% 24%	8% 6%
5	During the course, the course objectives have been achieved.	Teachers students	2% 26%	18% 46%	18% 24%	62% 4%

N= 100 (80 students, 20 teachers)

It is worth noticing that students are no longer dependant on their teachers. They are fearless in their expression. Due to their professional background and practical experience, they are more likely than academics to report on the demands of the profession. This helps to explain the perception gap between instructors and students. These results are consistent with Nawaz's claim (2019) that students in applied science prefer courses focusing on the professional requirements of students.

ESP classes should concentrate on the specific language used in their discipline. Their goals and objectives should be consistent with the requirements of their profession. If this is not the case, no analysis appears to have been required prior to the course's start. If the course objectives are irrelevant to the field, the learning outcomes will not be achieved. As a result, time and resources are wasted.

4.1.2 The course materials

The students clearly did not agree with the teachers that materials were constantly updated, provided appropriate activities, and produced from a wide range of sources. Rather, they argued that the material was primarily anonymous and did not help students build communicative skills. However, they agreed that the courses were consistent with methods of teaching. It's also worth noting that teachers have a traditional approach that focuses on teachers. Once again, the two groups disagreed that the course material would encourage students to acquire communication skills. However, they agreed that the course did not contain vocabulary or professional jargon, that there were audiovisual aids to courses and that the teacher gave connections to other movies.

The preceding results demonstrated the teachers' lack of inventiveness and creativeness. Additionally, it emphasizes the critical nature of performing a requirements analysis prior to designing an ESP course

Table 3: Statistical analysis of teachers' and students' responses regarding the course materials

S. N.	Statement	Respondents	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	The course materials provided a variety of activities to help students acquire various abilities.	Teachers	4%	32%	54%	10%
		students	24%	52%	18%	6%
2	The course materials helped students to develop communication skills.	Teachers	12%	14%	60%	14%
		students	12%	74%	10%	4%
3	The course materials incorporated terminology that would be useful in the workplace.	Teachers	16%	44%	30%	10%
		students	32%	54%	10%	4%
4	The course materials were in accordance with the teaching methodology.	Teachers	12%	24%	50%	14%
		students	12%	24%	50%	14%
5	The course materials included visual aids as well.	Teachers	2%	20%	60%	18%
		students	10%	30%	50%	10%
6	The course materials were continuously updated.	Teachers	18%	20%	30%	32%
		students	24%	64%	12%	0%

N= 100 (80 students, 20 teachers)

4.1.3 Course contents

Teachers appeared to agree with students on their listening and speaking abilities, but they appeared to disagree on whether the content was appropriate for developing necessary reading and writing skills. Teachers and students agreed that the content was aimed at improving grammatical competence; however, students' assessments of other aspects of communicative ability disagreed from teachers' claims that the

program improved discourse competence. Meanwhile, both teachers and students agreed that the contents needed to be improved.

The dissatisfaction of students with the content of the course was a result of the previous conclusions. It is clear that the course materials did not promote communication skills development. According to the students, the materials did not address any of the language skills. These findings corroborate Low's (2018) assertion that determining course content necessitates a requirements analysis.

Table 4: Statistical analysis of teachers' and students' responses regarding the course contents

S. N.	Statement	Respondents	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	The contents of the course were extremely helpful to future managers.	Teachers	18%	40%	20%	8%
		students	28%	50%	16%	2%
2	The course content was centred on the students' listening demands.	Teachers	10%	20%	50%	20%
		students	28%	42%	28%	2%
3	The course content was centred on the students' speaking demands.	Teachers	18%	40%	20%	8%
		students	28%	50%	16%	2%
4	The course content was centred on the students' reading demands.	Teachers	12%	10%	56%	22%
		students	28%	32%	40%	0%
5	The course content was centred on the students' writing demands.	Teachers	10%	12%	60%	18%
		students	28%	32%	40%	0%
6	The course contents helped students improve their grammatical skills.	Teachers	12%	10%	56%	22%
		students	28%	32%	40%	0%
7	The course contents expanded students' subject knowledge.	Teachers	12%	10%	58%	20%
		students	32%	28%	38%	2%

N= 100 (80 students, 20 teachers)

4.1.4. Teaching methods

Teachers claimed to use a variety of methods and instructional materials, whereas students claimed their teachers did not. Teachers and students agreed that teachers would switch between English and Hindi during their lectures. Additionally, there was general agreement that traditional teaching methods, such as whiteboards, were the most frequently used in the classroom. On the other hand, teachers stated that their instructional approach was determined by the type of students they had. Students, on the other hand, stated that regardless of the type of students, the teachers maintained a consistent approach. The teachers asserted that they asked several questions during class, but the students disputed this. On the other hand, students and teachers reported that the teacher spoke for the majority of class time. In a learning environment developing motivation is a difficult task for the teacher considering that every student learns differently and every

student is diverse in their own ways. But students expect the teacher to guide and encourage them in a constructive manner (Shadlyn, 2004; Kumar, 2020 b; Kumar, 2021a).

Table 5: Statistical analysis of teachers' and students' responses regarding teaching methods

S. N.	Statement	Respondents	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	The teacher used various teaching methods in class.	Teachers	0%	8%	62%	30%
		Students	10%	64%	22%	4%
2	The teacher employed effective instructional tools.	Teachers	4%	6%	84%	6%
		Students	86%	4%	2%	8%
3	The teacher regularly distributed handouts to the students.	Teachers	0%	6%	68	26%
		Students	10%	0%	16%	72%
4	The teacher depended most of the time on traditional teaching methods.	Teachers	18%	27%	40%	10%
		Students	0%	22%	63	15
5	The teacher spoke most of the time in English in the classroom.	Teachers	0%	8%	62%	30%
		Students	4%	14%	60%	22%
6	The teacher used bilingual in class most of the time.	Teachers	10%	22%	50%	18%
		Students	12%	24%	44%	20%
8	The teacher asked various questions throughout the class.	Teachers	2%	8%	86%	4%
		Students	16%	52%	30%	2%
9	The teacher encouraged the students to ask more questions.	Teachers	1%	19%	44%	36%
		Students	22%	34%	40%	4%

N= 100 (80 students, 20 teachers)

4.2. Analysis of interviews with students

4.2.1 Course materials

Students are provided notes from their seniors and are able to quickly complete the topic without having to learn anything new. The course materials should be revised to reflect market trends and requirements. One of the students reported, "Even the reports that were practiced during our course were different from those we have seen in practical world. Their language is different. It is like a conversation". According to Sofa and Dewi (2020), Benyo and Kumar (2020), and Kumar (2021b), effective course materials assist learners in developing their confidence and skills.

4.2.2 Course contents

During the last few years, the same content and materials have been used. The course's content should come from a variety of places. Teachers appeared to favor texts published a few decades ago. They should instead focus on the most up-to-date products and information. It's difficult to get by even with the books. Learners should not be required to purchase a large number of books. Teachers should instead give activities and handouts that focus on the course's practical aspects. These materials should be used in classes that help students acquire their desired communication abilities. They are unable to write summaries and reports or convey their thoughts coherently and powerfully due to a lack of proper writing and speaking practice. One

of the students stated that “he was scared to speak English as I don’t have a classroom practice.” Many studies in India and other Asian countries have shown similar findings.

4.2.3 Teaching methods

Teachers follow the traditional methods of teaching. One of the respondents during interviews said, “most of the time, the lectures are boring”. Teachers should also receive ESP professional development. They should be deployed into the workplace to observe and analyze the language used in offices and other settings. Only then will they be able to comprehend the demands of the students. Teachers do not employ a variety of approaches or assessment approaches, according to the results of the survey.

These findings support the findings of Sultan et al. (2019), who found that teachers were not appropriately trained before instructing students. Pham and Ta (2016) lament the lack of attention given to ESP teacher training. Despite the fact that China has excellent pre-service ESP teacher training, Similarly, Luo and Garner (2017) concur that it is not currently incorporated into the system. Teachers do not receive any orientation to these classes because there are no ESP teacher preparation programmes, and as a result, they are unaware of the differences between these courses and regular English courses. On the basis of their findings in regard to pedagogical methods in technical-vocational education, Carmen-Pamittan and Malenab-Temporal (2018) based on their findings in regard to pedagogical methods in technical-vocational education, note that, “Teachers should adopt a teaching style that would match students’ learning styles in order to enhance the latter’s learning” (p. 62).

5. CONCLUSION

The importance of English in science and technology is widely recognized in today's world. No professional can survive in the global marketplace without the necessary English skills. English proficiency entails more than a working knowledge of the alphabet. In today's society, listening and speaking abilities are equally important; without them, a professional would be unable to communicate globally. However, this study discovered that Communication Skills courses in Indian management institutes did not devote sufficient time to the development of listening and speaking abilities.

A noteworthy point about this research was the substantial discrepancy in attitudes of teachers and students. This is due to the fact that teachers' perceptions of ESP courses differ significantly from those of students. Students will now enter the workforce. Although they have not worked in industry, they have a strong understanding of the Communication Skills courses requirements for future managers.

There was an inconsistency between the courses taught and the requirements of the students. It is necessary to carry out a needs analysis before offering and developing the course. Moreover, no general or specialized English education is worth it except if it promotes communication skills among students. On the other hand, these courses were not aimed at developing communication skills, which should constitute a key component of any courses in Communication Skill for management students in India. Within the context of ESP, we could define communication capacity, for a specific purpose and at any given time, as the ability to express specific concepts to a particular audience. If students do not develop different forms of communication skills, the communication skill training falls short of its objective. Professors therefore need to develop methodology, course content and resources, which will support future managers in gaining communication skills.

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