Teaching of Business Communication

(ENG516)

VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY OF PAKISTAN

Table of Contents

Lesson 01

ESSENTIALS OF BUSINESS ENGLISH AND BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Topic– 001: What is Business Communication?

The communication which takes place at the workplace, in the educational setting, corporate office, or in a government job is called business communication and is basically carried out in the English language. It is taught under various names - Business English and Business Communication or Business Communication Workshop. We will be using the terms Business Communication and Business English interchangeably during the course of these lectures.

Communication takes an important place in the modern workplace. Business companies and government departments have to carry out internal communication and external communication. The globalized nature of modern businesses makes it imperative to communicate internationally with multinationals and TNCs, for various purposes – like selling, persuading, negotiating, informing and presenting. So a successful business today, depends for its success on individuals who are good and effective communicators. The teaching of business English has therefore attracted increasing interest and awareness in the last two or three decades. As the realization about its importance grows, business English course books and other teaching and learning materials are proliferating and almost all the undergraduates who study business, trade, finance, IT, commerce engineering, or medicine have to take some courses in business English communication. The term Business English/Communication is used to cover the English taught to a wide range of in-service, professional people, and pre-service students in full-time educational programs preparing for a business career.

Business communication has to be seen in the overall context of ESP. It is most definitely the current growth area in ESP which, in the two or three decades, has attracted increasing interest and awareness. Business English shares important elements with ESP - needs analysis, syllabus design, course design, material selection and development etc. Business English or business communication is a rapidly growing field within the area of English Language Teaching (ELT) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Business English appeared as a course program on the ELT scene in the late 70s. It has been shaped by ELT and non-ELT forces. Its course content and pedagogical practices combine English, business and teachings, and it has received contributions from ELT methodologies, management disciplines and communication studies.

The two components of a Business English course are language knowledge which reflect the formal aspects of grammar, vocabulary and sound system and communication skills in which we activate this knowledge to transmit messages through different channels, for example, oral channels like presentations, meetings, telephoning or in written documents such as letters and reports. Language knowledge reflects what we know of language and communication skills means how to use that knowledge.

The distinction between general and business English is not so clear. Although the objectives of both are the same, that is, developing the accuracy, fluency and effectiveness of the target language in the students; however, the context is different. In general English, one learns the basics, the mechanics of grammar, composition and vocabulary. In business English you build upon what you learned in general English, focusing on business situations, which require clarity, logic and presentation styles that are dominant in business communication. Business communication courses are also marked by professional content, management skills and cultural awareness. It is generally thought that having certain knowledge of general English is a prerequisite to start learning business English. This does not mean that one needs to be fluent in English to start studying business English. There are business English course books which are designed for different levels of knowledge of English learners. Business communication courses do focus on language skills; however, this focus may take place in specific teaching situations. Besides this, there is also a specific corpus, a particular context and a specific communication. Therefore, its methodology also differentiates it from general English.

Topic - 002: Origin of Business Communication

The teaching of business communication is not a coherent movement but grew out of the converging of a number of trends, which are as follows:

a. The post WW-II world has been dominated by two trends – the importance of commerce and technology, which generated the demand for a unifying language and because of various factors, one being the power of the USA, this role fell to English. As English became the accepted international language, non-native workers and students needed it for functional and academic purposes.

b. Oil crisis of 1970s resulted in a massive flow of funds and Western expertise into the oil-rich countries. English language became a big business and commercial pressures began to exert their influence, and demand on the English teaching profession for cost effective courses.

2. Revolution in Linguistics: At the same time, the traditional method of teaching formal aspect of language was replaced by tailored courses which covered how language was used in actual communication. Traditionally, the aim of linguistics was to describe the rules of English. However, new studies shifted attention away from formal aspects of language to how language is used in an actual life. This led to the awareness of the following:

- The differences in written and spoken language.
- The difference between the language of commerce and the language of engineering.
- The language needs of different groups are different.
- Also that if language varies from one situation of use to another, it should be possible to determine the features of specific situations and then make these the basis of learner's courses.

3. Developments in educational psychology also influenced the rise of ESP, by focusing on the learner, and by emphasizing the central importance of the learners and their attitude towards language. Learners were seen to have different needs and interests, which influenced their motivation and effectiveness of learning and the need to develop courses in which relevance to the needs and demands of the learners were kept paramount. The assumption underlying of this was that the clear relevance of the English course to their needs would improve the learners' motivation and thereby make learning better and faster.

Topic- 003: Scope of Business Communication

Business English and General English courses are based on imparting language knowledge and communication skills, but in the context of professional content, they move to specialist and professional communication. So the difference in business English trainers and general English trainers is partly related to language and partly to communication. The language to be produced and practiced in the business English class reflects the professional/specialist background of the learner(s) rather than knowledge of formal aspects of language. The channels of communication to be developed and practiced reflect the professional world of presentations, meetings and telephoning rather than general communication in social discussions and listening.

The professional content provides a theme or setting related to professional functions, such as marketing, or financial dealings. Business English teaching needs contexts to develop language knowledge and communication skills of learners. If the theme is marketing, then the purpose is to use the content to activate learning, not to teach about marketing which is the job of the management consultant not the language trainer.

Management Skills: Four areas have always stood out in management: planning, leading, organizing and controlling. Leadership and team building are essentials of management skills and they require effective communication skills.

Cultural Awareness: Culture defined as a set of shared values can be seen at the level of a company, department and a team. Shared values are an important factor in enhancing the togetherness of the members, thereby improving their performance. Effective communication is at the heart of creating cultural understanding within a company.

The legitimate scope of business English teachers is to design and deliver courses which aim to increase the language knowledge and communication skills, management skills, cultural awareness and professional context.

Topic- 004: Development of Business Communication

Communication has been influenced by a variety of disciplines – linguistics, general language, e - learning and teaching and management training. One area that has been important in the development of ESP is EST (English for Science and Technology). The development and growth of ESP started in 1960s and has undergone five main phases of development:

Phase 1: The Concept of Special Language: Register Analysis. In 1960s and early 1970s, the basic principle was that each field has its own particular register. Specific registers were to be analyzed to identify their grammatical and lexical features to be used in teaching materials. The aim was to make the syllabus as relevant as possible to learners' needs, giving high priority to language forms that students were likely to meet in Science studies. However, there was very little that was distinctive in the sentence grammar of Science English, except a tendency to favor certain grammatical forms, like the simple present tense, passive voice and nominal compounds. This meant that there was nothing which was not present in General English (Ewer and Latorre 1969).

Phase 2: Rhetorical or Discourse Analysis. In this phase, attention was given to language above the sentence level, how sentences were combined in discourse to produce meaning. The aim was to identify organizational patterns in texts, to specify the linguistic means by which these patterns were signaled, and used to make the ESP syllabus.

Phase 3: Target Situation Analysis/Needs Analysis. In this phase the aim was to take existing knowledge and to set it on a more scientific basis, by establishing procedures for relating language analyses to learner's need for learning, by analyzing the target situation and then identifying the linguistic features of that target situation.

Phase 4: Skills and Strategies. In this phase, the attempt was to look below the surface to consider the thinking process that underlies the language use. The principle idea behind the skills-centered approach is that underlying all language learning are common reasoning and interpreting.

Phase 5: Learner-centered Approaches. They emphasized the leaner and his needs at the center of a course design. The developments in educational psychology influenced the field of ESP, awareness about learners' needs and new ideas about language and learning through a language centered approach.

Topic- 005: Important Terms in Business Communication and ESP, EAP, EOP, EMP, ERPP

To appreciate the scope of BE, it is important to be familiar with some of the terms which are used in the field. For this, it will be useful to look at the relationship between different categories of English language teaching in the form of a tree, named the ESP tree (Hutchinson) which shows that ESP is an umbrella term used for various branches of ELT. The tree represents some of the common divisions made in ELT. The top most branches show the level at which individual ESP courses lie. So, we have English for Medical Studies, English for Technicians, English for Economics, English for Secretaries, English for Psychology, English for teaching, etc.

The lower level shows the two common branches of ELT, i.e. whether the learner wants English for Academic Purposes (EAP) or for Vocational Purposes (EVP), also called EOP or VESL (Vocational English as a Second Language). This is of course not a clear cut distinction as people who work and study simultaneously, might need English for vocational purposes as well as for academic purposes.

At the next level down, it is possible to distinguish ESP courses by the general nature of learner's specialisms. Three large categories are usually identified here: EST (English for Science and Technology), EBE (English for Business and Economics), and ESS (English for Social Sciences). This last one is not uncommon as it is generally thought to differ from the General English taught in humanities. Business Communication teaching would also lie at this level.

As we go down the tree, we see that ESP is just one branch of ESL and EFL, which are themselves the two main branches of English Teaching in general. ELT in turn is one variety of the many possible kinds of language teaching. The tree of course cannot survive without its roots and at the roots which nourish the ESP tree are communication and learning. Besides the terms shown in the ESP tree, it would be useful to be familiar with the following terms:

(ESBP) English for Specific Business Purpose

(EGBP) English for General Business Purposes: targets those learners who have lack of working experience (pre-experienced or low-experience)

EMP (English for Medical Purposes)

EST (English for Science and Technology)

EBE (English for Business and Economics)

ESS (English for Social Sciences)

ERPP (English for Research Publication Purposes)

EAP (English for Academic Purposes)

EGAP (English for General Academic Purposes)

EGP (English for General Purposes)

EAL (English as an Additional Language)

ESAP (English for Visual Arts Study)

EOP (English for Occupational Purposes)

EVP (English for Vocational Purposes)

VESL (Vocational English as a Second Language)

Topic- 006: Approach not Product

Having looked at all these branches of English language teaching in the ESP tree, how can we distinguish between Business Communication and other forms of language teaching? The analogy of the tree has helped to show us what Business Communication teaching is not:

1. Business Communication teaching is not a matter of teaching a 'specialized variety' of language. The fact that language is used for a specific purpose does not imply that it is a special form of language different from other forms. Although there are some distinctive features of Business Communication, like providing a context of use which the learner is likely to meet in a target situation, but these differences should not make us ignore the far larger area of common ground that underlies all English domains, in fact all language uses.

2. Business Communication is not just a matter of business words for business students or about business communication skills for business students. There is much more to communication than the surface features of a vocabulary which we read and hear. It is also about how to use that language in appropriate situations.

3. Business Communication teaching is not different in kind from any other form of language teaching. Though the content may be different, there is no reason to suppose that the processes of learning should be different for the BC learner than for the General English learner. In other words, there are no special

methodologies for the business communication class. The methodologies used are those which can easily be applied in any other language class.

Business Communication has to be seen as an approach not a product since business communication is not the teaching of a particular language nor does it consist of a particular type of methodology or material. It should be taken as an approach to language learning which is based on the learner's need.

As for learners' needs are concerned, the question to be asked by Business Communication teachers, as all ESP teachers is: Why does this learner need to learn a foreign language? Once the initial need is identified, other questions will follow from it, some of which will relate to the learners themselves, some to the context of learning and others to the nature of the language in which the learner will need to operate. But the whole analysis derives from the initial identified need on the part of the learner to learn a language.

Business communication teaching, like all ESP teaching, then is an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner's reason for learning. Dudley Evans and John's (2000), definition for English for specific Purposes, can be applied to Business Communication teaching as well. They say that it is related to specific disciplines, and is designed to meet specific needs of the learner. The tree of ELT has shown that all language teaching is primarily concerned with communication and learning. So, Business Communication should be seen not as a particular language product but as an approach to language teaching which is directed by specific and apparent reasons for learning.

Lesson 02

ESSENTIALS OF BUSINESS ENGLISH AND BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Topic- 007: The Business English Learner People interact and communicate with each other all over the world for various purposes, using English, the international lingua franca. Millions of people use English for their business activities. Business is about buying and selling or, more broadly, exchanging and exploiting resources and capabilities. It uses the language of commerce, finance and industry for providing goods and services. It is about cooperation, negotiation, and conflict. It is about persuading and understanding, power and control, explaining and finding solutions to problems. In short, Business English is communication with other people within a specific context. For some learning, English is a necessary part of their jobs, for others, it is investment which brings money, status and financial reward. Some have specific needs, and some just want to improve their English. Some would be at the end of their careers and others would be starting. Despite these differences, it is possible to group together learners according to the following categories:

1. According to Experience

a. A Pre-experienced learner, with no experience of the world, who is learning Business English to follow a business career; a university student, or even a secondary school student. Because of their lack of experience they would often need the teacher to provide a window on the business world.

b. Job experienced knows a lot about business and their own jobs, and often have very precise ideas about what they need from a Business English course. In contrast to the pre-experienced learner they do not need the help of the teacher to understand the business world.

c. The third category, the general business-experienced falls between the two categories, those who have a certain amount of job experience but who are learning English in order to move into a new job or for a specific purpose.

2. Level in the Organization's Hierarchy: Learners at different levels in a company often have different approaches to business English learning. Senior managers might wish to focus on specific skills like presenting or negotiating, or wish to have one to one lessons because of their status in the company, while junior might not have specific needs or might not be able to influence how their training is managed.

3. According to National Culture: Different cultures have different traditions and values regarding learning and education. Sometimes, students have to be split into groups and separate classes may be arranged, say for Chinese, Iranian, Arab students in language schools, e.g. the National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad, might arrange separate classes for its Arab or Chinese students, so that different styles of communication do not interfere with the learning process.

4. According to Need: Some learners have very specific needs for which they want help from the teacher. They may be about to join a multinational project or they may need help in answering a company telephone hotline, or they might want to describe their company's product to a new customer. Other learners might have a general aim to improve their English because it seems the right thing to do, and they

need a less focused course. Other learners might have particular roles, like secretaries, accountants, technicians.

5. According to Language Level: Sometimes learners might be grouped together because they have roughly the same language proficiency, “beginners’, ‘advanced’, or ‘level three’, depending on how well they can pass in a placement test or fit in with a predetermined criteria.

Topic- 008: The Teaching Context

Educational Institute: Young adults are typically taught Business Communication in an institutional education environment, such as a school, university, or apprenticeship scheme. If they are in a tertiary education environment, teaching is determined by preparations for written assignments for grading purposes and by the needs and assessment requirements of the educational establishment. In some cases, the students will also attend other (non-language) classes in English.

Learners in such institutions normally start with certain expectations or feelings about the class. They may expect the teacher to be an expert on the business world as well as a language expert and may feel that learning English is not as a high priority as other subjects. Classes are large with learners having widely disparate language levels and skills. Because such groups usually do not know exactly how they will be using their English in future, it can be difficult to focus on specific target needs. The great advantage, of course, is that it is often easier for teachers to cover areas which may not be possible in a more constrained in-company group.

Private Language School: It can be part of franchises or chains, and sometimes, they are small organizations run by one or two people. The teaching may take place in the school’s own premises, or the teacher may be expected to travel to the customer’s location. The customers may be anything from private individuals trying to improve their English in order to apply for a job, right up to large corporations with employees all over the world. In some countries, schools are required (or can volunteer) to submit to outside inspection; such schemes are designed to ensure that certain standards are maintained.

In-company: In-company teaching involves working at the client’s premises, and can vary from a couple of hours a week to a full-time job. It offers a very different experience from working in an educational establishment, for at least two reasons: the learners are not only operating in their workplace already, but they will often have a much better idea of why they need English.

Teachers who work full-time in a company will get to know the company’s needs very well. They will normally be using their own training materials, and will also have access to resources such as the company intranet. Sometimes the trainer will be invited to attend meetings, do work shadowing (accompanying an employee doing their normal job, and giving feedback as necessary), or help out with written documents. After a few years, the trainer can become indispensable.

1-to-1: 1-to-l (private lessons with one teacher and one student) is quite a common arrangement in business English teaching. It can involve preparing a learner for a specific project, coaching over a longer period, checking or helping with presentations, correspondence, reports, and so on. Sometimes, a person joins a company without sufficient language skills, and needs to be brought up to speed very fast. Sometimes a learner at a management level prefers the idea of 1-to-l. 1-to-l learners are normal highly motivated (they would not be prepared to find the time or pay the money otherwise).

Topic- 009: The Business English Teacher

In most other fields of teaching, the teacher knows more about the subject than the learner, but in Business English, the relationship can be more symbiotic - the teacher knows about language and communication, but the learner often knows more about the job and its content. Business English teachers need to be able to make informed decisions about language and language learning. They also need credibility, professionalism, and an awareness of the business world. Above all, they must be able to adapt to a particular teaching context and be willing, themselves, to learn. Within the field of Business English, many teachers call themselves trainers, coaches, or even consultants.

Teacher as a Trainer: A Business English teacher works in the world of business, where trainers are common. There is a fundamental difference in approach - a teacher is traditionally seen as someone whose task is to educate someone so that they can have more chance at succeeding in life (the exact objectives may be fairly loose). A trainer, on the other hand, is someone who is required to change a person's behavior or ability so that they can do a specific job. Training is job-oriented, while teaching is person-oriented.

Teacher as a Coach: A coach is someone who can help the learner take advantage of the learning opportunities in their own working environment. It involves helping the learner to better understand his or her own strengths and weaknesses, and plan accordingly. This is related to the concept of learner autonomy, where the learner takes full responsibility for his or her learning.

Teacher as a Consultant: A consultant is an expert who is brought in because his or her skills or know-how are not available in the organization. In Business English, this expertise can include the ability to analyze communication and communication needs or to recommend a training supplier. Many freelance teachers operate as consultants; they market themselves in order to gain access to a potential client, they discuss contracts, they carry out needs analysis, they interact not only with the learners, but also with those who make the decision to pay for language training services, and they evaluate training delivery and outcomes.

Topic- 10: Language in Context

The language of business English includes what some people might call everyday English. But if it is used by a business person within a business context, it becomes business English. So the exchanges might be a business person visiting a supplier's factory, and they might be between two colleagues discussing an important deadline.

But some groups of people use language in other ways too, ways that are not as familiar to outsiders. They use specialist words to make communication, within the group, easier and more efficient. Every profession does this (indeed, one defining feature of a profession is that it has its own linguistic identity). People use specific language to communicate in specific contexts. Business communities are not different. Accountants use the language of accounting (specific lexis) to talk about accounting matters (specific context). Sales engineers use specific language to discuss their product specifications with their customers. These are both business communities, but they probably wouldn't understand each other's specialist vocabulary. English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is a term often used to describe language that is inaccessible to people who are not members of a particular language community.

Business English is an umbrella term for a mixture of general everyday English, general Business English, and ESP. It is not limited to words or phrases that only appear in some special business world. For example, a quick glance at the language of advertising soon shows a wonderful variety of metaphorical language, such as, *health drink with more muscle*.

Yet there are some other things which make business English distinctive. Firstly, business people do a variety of things with language; they socialize, predict, analyze, negotiate, buy, write, persuade, compromise, telephone, compete, market, sell, produce, interview, train, travel, plan, investigate, deal, advertise, explain - the list is endless. These are done in a specific business context, and for business aims. But skill in using business English is not limited to the words and the language used. Presenters use certain techniques to get their message across as do negotiators and telephone operators. Business English users need to know the words, but they also need the skills in order to do their job. So business English is used together with business communication skills.

Secondly, the English used in international business is not necessarily the same English that native speakers use. It is a lingua franca. It may even be considered a new type of English which has developed and is developing to meet the needs of its users. People whose first language is English do not necessarily speak this language. There is much discussion among academics about what such a language might be like. No one really knows. The important thing to remember is that the language the learners need may share only certain characteristics with the teacher's own version of English.

Thirdly, although we know a lot about how people interact and the sorts of things they say to each other, there are many areas of Business English or ESP where there is not much reliable information on what people actually say. A good example of this relative lack of information is in the matter of small talk. Small talk is the simple throwaway line we might offer when we meet someone in the corridor, or the seemingly banal discussion about the weather. Such conventional polite exchanges might be vitally important to the business English learner who needs to build good business relationships, but not much is known about how they work.

Learners might need to learn everything from general English, to general business English, to a particular type of English (British English, US, International), to an ESP, or a mixture of all of these. And they need to be able to use this language successfully across a range of different cultures and alongside a range of different business skills, and in a wide variety of contexts, and with a wide variety of interactants. They need English to do business, not just to talk about business.

Topic- 11: Teaching Business English

Various reasons account for the growing awareness about the need for teaching Business Communication - increased trade/commerce activities, globalization, faster means of travel, growth of ICT, internationalization of education, social media, etc. This is accompanied by an acceptance of English as a lingua franca by almost all nations of the world. This was hastened by certain political events, like the Post WW II scenario, the Gulf War and the end of the Cold War. The teaching of English communication has been influenced by a variety of disciplines, including linguistics, general language learning and teaching, educational psychology and management training.

The teaching of English has focused more on the linguistic approaches, concentrating on the linguistic aspect of Business Communication, and on language centered approaches. However, with the realization that language teaching should fulfill the role of real communication in real life situations, the shift was towards a learner -centered approach. The ESP approach provides opportunities to the learners to acquire English naturally in context.

English Communication is about language use, the issue of communicative competence is important. Perhaps the most influential models have been based on work done by Hymes in the 1960s, Canale and Swain in the 70s, and Bachman and Palmer in the 80s. The basic argument, which arose out of dissatisfaction with earlier teaching approaches, is that there are various components which need to be considered when discussing language skills, of which knowing about language is only one. Language learners also need to be able to use the language in real-life situations. Various ways of dividing communicative competence into its component parts have been discussed over the years, with teachers being particularly interested in the teachability of such components. Business English teachers need to focus on three key components in particular: linguistic competence, discourse competence, and intercultural competence.

Topic- 12: Rationale of the Course

Business Communication courses are compulsory courses in most of the Pakistani universities. They are taught to students of engineering, IT, management, mathematics, science, accounts and finance, and medicine. Mostly, it is taught as General English in the first semester and then for two semesters under various names as Report Writing, BC Workshop and Business Communication focusing on the four language skills and some technical aspects of business writing. The emphasis in most of the cases is on the theoretical aspects and not on actual language use in real life situations. They are graded courses and affect students CGPA. However, teachers use a course book, usually a readymade material to teach them which is not relevant to local contexts. Classes are large with students from various disciplines and various academic backgrounds and abilities. Motivation is low as students do not see how and where they would use the content. This course aims to teach/train teacher how to teach Business Communication. Books that are usually used are Gerson and Gerson, Guffy and Babcock, and others authored and complied by Indian writers. They are not effective because the needs of the students are not met. Also sometimes students focus more on their core courses and consider the business communication course as not really relevant to their overall aims.

These undergraduates are young degree students who have no background knowledge or experience in the business world. The students view it as just another module in their Social Sciences which they just have to pass in order to get it out of the way of their core subjects, which are more important for them. Usually students cannot communicate in spoken as well as written English. As B.C. teachers, our purpose is to give them the language knowledge and communication skills through which they can achieve proficiency in different areas. It is mostly taught as general English which does not serve the purpose. Most universities have fixed General English modules and they are taught to all students with a view that "One fits all".

Lesson 03

TEACHING OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION-I

Topic- 013: Linguistic Competence

Teaching of Business Communication has been influenced by a variety of disciplines, including linguistics, general language learning and teaching and management skills. Because Business English is not only about language, but about language use, it is worth first considering the issue of communicative competence. Business English teachers need to focus on three key components in particular: linguistic competence, discourse competence, and intercultural competence.

Linguistic competence is shown in the use of the basic elements that go together to form a language, such as vocabulary, grammar, phonology. One of the key influences on business English teaching in recent years has been our deepening understanding of the role of lexis (words and patterns of words) and its relationship with grammar (the way the words and patterns follow rules). The traditional distinction between the two is becoming more and more blurred as we find out more about how the language system works.

Words can be divided into three types:

1. Lexical (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs)
2. Functional words (determiners, pronouns, modals, prepositions, coordinators)
3. Inserts (yeah, well, ouch)
4. Multi-words: sentence headers
5. Phrasal words: start off, bring up
6. Collocations: small print, black and white. They collocate with words as well as adjectives.
7. Idioms: ‘We’ve missed the boat’, ‘pulling someone’s leg’
8. Colligation: Words occur in particular grammatical patterns, e.g. letter of application, letter of complaint, but not market of Europe, or market of France, etc.

Another development was the realization that spoken and written language can be very different forms which are acceptable in one type of grammar might not be acceptable in another. Learners need to understand that when they use written grammar rules in conversational speech, their language may sound unnatural and stilted.

Spoken Grammar: Hesitations, repetitions, ellipses, tags, discourse markers, it is not only what is said, but how it is said that is of interest to business English learners. Phonology is about how we use our voices to make the sounds of utterances. We use stress, rhythm, and intonation (sometimes called prosody) to convey meaning. Chunking involves grouping words together, with a pause, or a change in pitch, or a lengthening of a syllable to signal the end of the chunk. Combined with stress, intonation, and rhythm, chunking can alter the way the listener understands the message.

Topic- 014: Discourse Competence

Linguistic competence deals with elements of language at a basic level, and tends to focus on language out of context, focusing on isolated chunks of language. Discourse competence, on the other hand, deals with language in use, although it is important to note that the word discourse can be used in a variety of ways by language professionals.

Discourse is used to describe how people interact with each other within context. This includes negotiations, correspondence, presentations, service encounters, and meetings. In this sense, business discourse refers to the spoken and written communication that is found within the world of business. The participants in the discourse have to communicate within different contexts. Different discourses require different strategies, registers, genres - spoken or written. There are many ways to analyze spoken discourse. One of these is conversation analysis, which is a sociological approach used to analyze the way people interact with each other in talk, for example, the concept of turn-taking. Conversations also have opening and closing sequences. The business communication learner needs to have an understanding of the discourse situations which he/she will face in the business world. This would involve the formal as well as the informal domain of officialdom and socializing. It is important to use appropriate written and spoken language here.

Topic- 015: Intercultural Competence

The Business Communication learner will have to be familiarized to the intercultural aspect of communication. In the globalized world of today where international education, business and tourism has been made easier through cheaper and faster means of communication, there is need for the business communicator to be culturally sensitive. Businesses are carried out with multinational companies and TNCs. At the computer interface as well, culturally sensitive language is required. Culture has to do with attitudes, behaviors, beliefs, and values. It is influenced by a multitude of factors including environment, society, gender, family, age, and ethics. It is learned, not inherited through genes. It manifests itself in interaction between people, and is continually changing. Some cultural differences are superficial, and are relatively simple to deal with. It is easy to see that people may dress or eat differently, for example cultural differences are not always so obvious. The iceberg model is often used to demonstrate how much of culture is hidden. Like an iceberg with most of its bulk unseen below the surface of the water, these hidden aspects can cause problems if we are not aware of them and don’t know how to deal with them.

There are different types of cultures. National culture takes as its reference point the concept of the politically bounded nation state. This is not the same as ethnicity, which is used to refer to groups having the same language, history, religion, or race. A nation may be composed of different ethnic groups, and ethnic groups do not always observe national borders. Organizational or corporate culture describes the specific behaviors and values found in organizations. So, for example, a young company with twenty employees which sells groceries via the internet is likely to have a very different way of doing things compared to an older, more traditional engineering company which has been in existence for over a hundred years, and which has more than 300,000 employees scattered in different parts of the world. Professions also have their own distinct cultures. We might expect doctors and musicians to behave in certain ways, even when they come from very different national cultures. Even members of the group of people who use English as a lingua franca share certain characteristics with each other, because they have something in common. People can belong to different cultures at the same time; for example, an engineer in an American company may share many of the values of other employees in the same company, but in some ways has more in common with an engineer in a German company than, say, a secretary in the American firm. Stereotypes are generalizations which are often used to simplify and categorize other cultures, and by extension of the people in those cultures. We often use them to try and understand a new situation or unfamiliar behavior (for example, it may be useful to know about the importance of ‘face’, i.e. people’s feelings about their own worth, self-respect, and dignity - in Asian countries), but there are limitations to their usefulness. One major problem is that stereotypes do not allow for exceptions to the norm. So we think that (and act as though) all members of a particular group behave in a certain way, and make no allowance for individuals in that group. Intercultural competence, then, includes the ability to deal with, and be sensitive to, differences in how other cultures do things. From a business point of view, the aim might even be to recognize and utilize those differences in order to create something which adds value for the business or its customers.

Topic- 016: Approaches to Teaching English

Through the years, various approaches have been used to teach foreign languages. Each one of them had a learning philosophy behind them. The grammar translation method was based on the teaching of the classic languages. Proponents held that languages are best learnt by focusing on the written texts, on the cultural aspect and the practice of grammatical phrases, vocabulary and writing. Listening and writing were emphasized and speaking and reading were ignored, the teacher was the center of the learning process and learners were passive recipients of knowledge. A reaction against this method was seen in the shape of the Behaviorist Philosophy which was of the view that learning was basically habit formation which depended on repetition, drill practices and followed the pattern of conditioned response which was stated as follows:

Stimulus - Response- Feedback (positive/negative)

Various other methods were also followed, like Suggestopedia, Total Body Response,

CBI (Content Based Learning)

Topic- 017: Communicative Language Teaching

Teachers have used models of real-world communication and perspectives on society to inform what happens in the classroom. The theorists’ emphasis on communication has led to a widespread enthusiasm for the approach known as communicative language teaching (CLT), which aims to develop learners’ ability to use language to communicate. CLT is not a precise term and can mean different things to different people. However, there are some underlying principles commonly shared. First of all, language is seen not just as a set of linguistic items to be learned, like words or grammar, but it also involves language in use via functions such as interrupting, or agreeing and disagreeing (functions are ways of describing what a speaker is trying to achieve at each stage in a communication activity). When considering functions, we are focusing on how we use a language, as opposed to what we know about a language. Another key aspect of CLT is that languages are learned while using them, with an emphasis on real-life situations. Meaning takes precedence over form. Fluency can take precedence over accuracy. It is often argued that there are two basic forms of CLT, a weak and a strong one; both forms are used in business English classrooms. The weak form of CLT focuses on what is to be learned. A typical approach here is PPP, where language is presented, practiced using a variety of different activities, and finally produced through some sort of communicative activity. A variation on this is the deep-end approach, where learners are asked to perform a task that makes demands on their competence in using language, and then their performance is diagnosed, leading to a focus on the specific language items. Another alternative suggested by Michael Lewis is to create a learning cycle which starts with observation, followed by hypothesis and experiment (OHE). Harmer’s ESA model suggests that a teaching sequence can be divided into three components where the learners engage emotionally with the situation, study the language, and then activate it. All these approaches focus on what is to be learned.

Topic- 018: Task based Learning

The task-based approach aims at providing opportunities for learners to experiment with and explore both spoken and written language through learning activities which are designed to engage learners in the authentic, practical and functional use of language for meaningful purposes. Learners are encouraged to activate and use whatever language they already have in the process of completing a task. The use of tasks will also give a clear and purposeful context for the teaching and learning of grammar and other language features as well as skills. Task-based learning stimulates a natural desire in learners to improve their language competence by challenging them to complete meaningful tasks.

A strong form of communicative language teaching focuses on how learning takes place; in other words, it argues that language is learned via the negotiation of meaning in real communication. People learn by using the language to achieve a specific outcome. The theory is that people do not learn in a neat, pre-ordained fashion, so deciding what language items to focus on is not an effective way to teach. It may be much better to provide the right input and atmosphere, which allow learning to take place at the individual’s own pace and in response to their needs.

In the Business English classroom, this is often done via tasks, which are activities where the focus is primarily on using language to do something. It is the outcome of the task which is important, just as in the business world; the language is a means to an end not an end in itself. Traditional language exercises focus on learning language rules. The theory is that language is learned via the interaction; the learners learn by doing the task. Many researchers claim that task-based learning, coupled with judicious feedback allows learners to pay some attention to form is the most productive way of learning a language.

The great advantage for the Business English learners is that the language produced while doing a task can be immediately relevant. The disadvantage is that it is often difficult to predict exactly what will happen during a task, which can make them difficult to plan or assess. For the less experienced teacher, there may also be a feeling of loss of control. In addition, some tasks can be completed with a minimum of language input from the participants, which makes them not necessarily the best way to provide maximum exposure to a useful language.

Yet even though CLT in one form or another is used worldwide, there are some problems with it. However the requirements to use the language in real communication may not work well with a very large group of learners or with learners whose own educational and cultural background presupposes that the teacher is the only one who speaks. Likewise, not all non-native English teachers feel comfortable with a method like CLT that can at times requires native speaker levels of competence. Classrooms and cultures across the world may have their own, more appropriate way of doing things which takes into account local expectations and needs. Teachers have to pick and choose the approach best suited to their own experience and teaching style, what resources they have available, and the particular learning needs.

Lesson 04

TEACHING OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION-II

Topic- 019: Dealing with Professional Content – the Contentious Issue/Organization in Business

A contentious issue in teaching of Business Communication is the amount of professional content in the course design. How much content should be language-focused and how much should be business-focused. Whereas the language teacher's focus is language teaching for which the business content provides a backdrop. Business is not their domain and professional activities are a just a back drop against which language knowledge is developed. However a contrary view is offered by training organizations and in-company training departments, who through experience of working with clients assume that knowledge of the company, can be acquired over time.

The language teacher has to fulfill the role of a business trainer of an area about which they have no knowledge. The Business Communication teacher will have to be familiar with the different types of organizations in the business world, management and management activities, the key functions in business, the main sectors in which businesses operate.

Difference in Philosophy and Approach: Business English is not a clearly defined subject of instruction, rather an umbrella term for a range of program driven by learner's needs. What is clear though is that language teachers are not content specialists. They cannot be expected to provide management training within the guise of language training.

The Role of the Language Teacher in the Business Classroom: At one end of the continuum are courses which focus on language teaching (focusing on language development within a framework of business oriented vocabulary). On the other end, programs which combine content, language and communication to develop learners' language knowledge and communication skills. The BC teacher is not a management, financial expert but rather a knowledgeable generalist, able to tap into learner's expertise and use it as a resource in the development of the course. For a course for finance managers who need to develop their language knowledge and communication skills for handling communication and exchanges on professional matters, the content may include balance sheets and profit and loss statements. The course prepared for them, depending on their needs and the trainers' skill may include the following: Developing language knowledge (professional communication skills, specialist language knowledge, and professional language skills) within the context of general business and financial topics. Key issues for reflection are:

- Personal/professional targets along the cline
- Methods for achieving them
- Organization in Business
- Types of companies: public/private, etc.
- Management and management activities: The key functions in business organizations (departmental)
- The main sectors in which businesses operate

Topic- 020: Evolution of Management/Division of Labor

Management science is an evolving field. An understanding of underlying business principles will help the business communication teacher to better orientate their courses to meet the needs of their students. Notwithstanding hierarchical orders of individual organizations, all students will be involved in the management of resources –time, money, materials and people.

Definitions of management and three management approaches are as follows:

1. Scientific Management: (Taylor 1856-1915) is based on the following principles:

- Management as a science, best method
- Scientific selection of workers, so that each worker would be given responsibility for which he/she is best suited
- Scientific education and development of the worker
- Intimate, friendly relations between the worker and management

2. Classical Organization Theory (Henri Fayol 1841-1925) is based on the recognition of the human factor in management and on managerial behavior. He believed that management is not an inborn talent but a learnt skill. He divided business operations into six interdependent and related functional areas:

- Technical
- Commercial
- Financial
- Security
- Accounting
- Managerial

Superimposed on these was his view of what management was about and what skills are needed by the manager: These skills are:

- Planning
- Organizing
- Commanding
- Coordinating
- Controlling

3. Behavioral Movement: Managers get frustrated that people do not behave in predicted ways. The social sciences of psychology and sociology provide insights into human behavior in the workplace, resulting in the Human Relations Approach" - how to deal with people in organizations by addressing their social needs. Based on Maslow's hierarchy of man's needs, the behaviorists tried to establish a link between what motivates the 'social man' to work – his lower level needs are to be met before his upper level needs are addressed. Later researchers argue for the needs of the 'complex man'. The work of Behavioral scientists, together with Human Relation Theorists, has been very influential in forming the discipline of modern management.

The three schools of management, all continue to exert influence on management thought today, and coexist as management science continues to evolve. The findings have helped managers become more sensitive/ sophisticated in their dealing with colleagues and subordinates. They continue to offer insights into current management concerns such as leadership, team building, delegation and communication.

The Division of Labor: The Business English teacher needs to be familiar with how the companies are organized, besides knowing about their legal organization and their management practices. These practices are translated into company hierarchy, which gives insight into the organization of the business world. The organigram (company flowchart) is a top-down representation of power flowing through levels of management, from senior management to middle and junior/lower level management.

Topic - 021: Key issues in Management/Business Sectors

The structure of business organizations, the hierarchy, and working are areas about which the business English teacher should know. It is also useful for the business communication teacher to know something about the key issues which managers and their teams have to face, which depend on the functions which it has to perform. The following areas are helpful starting points to explore different management interests and concerns:

- General Management
- Administration
- Customer Service
- Distribution
- Finance
- Legal
- Personnel
- Production
- Marketing
- Purchasing
- Research and development
- Sales

The Business Communication teachers' knowledge about these would help them to know learners' needs and to design courses for them. Useful vocabulary needed in them is given in Nick Brieger. Other important areas are:

- Leadership
- Team Building
- Delegation

Topic - 022: Language of Business: Grammar, Vocabulary

The job of Business English teacher is to increase language knowledge and communication skills. So we will look at grammar and vocabulary needed for business communication in this section. Grammar is described as:

- The rules and conventions of a language shared by a group of native speakers
- The structures of the categories of language

Grammatical accuracy is in most cases given. Another dimension variation is the variety, e.g. Australian, British or American. There are no language categories specific to Business Communication which uses all the language forms, grammar, and vocabulary of General English.

Vocabulary represents the main building blocks of functional meaning in language.

Business English has its own vocabulary shown as the following:

- Specialist ----Specialist
- Specialist----non-specialist
- Non-specialist ----Specialist
- Generalist---- Generalist

Specialist ----Specialist: This presupposes a need for a range of vocabulary dealing with shared professional issues. The precise lexical items required will depend on the topic under consideration. However, it is possible to predict the range of vocabulary needed to treat topics within key management areas and depends on the topic under discussion.

Specialist----non-specialist/Non-specialist---Specialist: To be effective, today's multi-faceted manager needs to be able to operate in own team and multi-disciplinary workgroups and contexts, needs business vocabulary of own area but others as well.

Generalist---- Generalist: Wider context in which professionals communicate outside the strict confines of corporate offices and board rooms. Successful business depends on successful relationships. So the social side of business communication must not be ignored – the ability to converse about economic, social, environment and personal issues. This requires its own set of vocabulary. So besides context-driven and topic driven vocabulary, there is need for general purpose vocabulary. Long lists might be daunting for the learner, so should be served in reasonable chunks.

Topic - 023: Communication Skills in Business: Accuracy, Fluency and Effectiveness

Accuracy is black and white. In vocabulary, the use of a word is either right or wrong in a certain context, but in pronunciation it is more difficult to point out the flaw in terms of approximating a native-like pronunciation.

This does not apply to fluency and effectiveness. We are looking at a cline with zero competence at one level and native like competence on the other. In the middle are many levels of competence. The same is true of effectiveness, which in professional communication is different from fluency. So with accuracy, it is right/wrong and with fluency and effectiveness is more/less. Speed and effort of speaking are also factors which matter.

General English courses tend to develop the accuracy as well as effectiveness of communication in learners. Factors which influence effectiveness are: impact of delivery, variety of media, and conciseness of communication, but there are no absolute rules of effectiveness which can be measured. They include behavioral features, gestures, eye contact, use of local variety, etc.

So we have listed the objectives – accuracy, fluency and effectiveness of Business Communication and these require different knowledge and skills. We will look in more detail at the professional communication skills listed below. All learners will agree that these skills are central to the communication of today's business profession. And many trainees will see the usefulness of attending BC courses to improve these skills.

Topic 024: Communication Skills in Management: Leadership, Team Building, Delegation

It is important for the Business Communication teacher to know the basics of management skills involved in business and the role of language and communication in leadership, team building, and delegation.

Leadership: Leadership is not a new concept. What is new is the emerging interest in business leaders. With business assuming a more central role in society, there is more recognition of how business leaders contribute to the health and wealth of their nations. And with this what are the traits, managerial qualities and attributes of those who lead. The Early Trait Models look at personal characteristics of leaders, holding that leaders are born, not made. Behavioral approaches focused on what leaders do or do not do rather than who they were. Behavior can be taught, so leaders can be made. Context Based Models favor the view that context or situation plays an important role in the making of a leader, according to the following:

- Delegation
- Communication
- Motivation of subordinates
- Task completion

Leadership and Communication

Leadership is not a new concept. Business occupies a more central role in society as business leaders play an important role in the health and wealth of a society. For the purposes of business English teachers, it is useful to note the importance attributed to leadership in today's business circles; and understand the background to the debate about innate characteristics versus learned skills. However, it is important for the business communication teacher to think about the implications of language and communication in effective leadership.

Team Building and Communication

Team building involves the combining and integrating the talents, skills and energies of individual employees to solve problems and achieve goals and objectives which might be difficult or impossible to achieve by management and individual efforts alone.

For the purposes of business English teachers, it is useful to note the importance attributed to team-building and understand the procedures involved in effective team-building. It is also important for the business communication teachers to think about how language and communication are used in effective team-building. Effective communication is central to the processes involved in:

- Achieving the commitment of all team members.
- Defining the mission and vision of the business and then sharing those with the staff.
- Sharing the decision making process with the staff.
- Running and sharing participatory staff meetings.

Our role is to train English users in the appropriate language and communication tools to accomplish successfully the processes needed in effective team building.

Delegation: Delegating tasks involves appropriate communication to delegate tasks by explaining tasks, listening for reservations, concerns and feedback, getting their agreement and commitment, sharing feedback on delegated. Delegation is a contentious area. Some managers don't like to delegate their work to others thinking that it would reflect poorly on their own skills. On the contrary, a poor delegation often means poor managerial skills. For some delegation comes naturally, for others it is a skill which has to be learnt.

Factors in delegation include, policy, organization, procedures and techniques, technology and leadership, effectiveness and motivation. Delegation can result in the advantages of specialization, freedom from managers, a system of training and a defined pattern of responsibilities. To be effective, delegation demands full passing and acceptance of authority and responsibility, an accepted and workable system of control and freedom for the subordinate within the accepted terms of reference

Delegation and Communication: At the core of delegation are what to delegate and to whom. However the conceptual elements involved in what and who to delegate to need to be matched by communication skills if the delegation itself is to be effectively communicated. For the business English teacher, it is useful to note the importance attributed to delegation in large organizations, and to think about the skills required to communicate the delegation and to ensure the feedback system for information is well carried out. Effective communication is central to the process involved in explaining the tasks to the people to whom you are delegating, understanding their reservations and concerns, getting their agreement and commitment and sharing feedback on the progress of delegated tasks.

Lesson 05

NEEDS ANALYSIS-I

Topic- 025: What are Needs? What are Target Needs?

The difference between Business English (BE) and General English (GE) courses is basically that Business English aims to fulfill the needs of business and management students. What are these needs? The basic aim of a needs analysis is to collect and examine critically, information about the current situation (where the students are at present) and the target situation (where they would like to be at the end of the teaching).

Needs analysis, carried out to establish the "what" and the "how" of a course, is the first stage in Business Communication course development, followed by curriculum design, materials selection, methodology, assessment, and evaluation. However, these stages should not be seen as separate, but as proceeding in a linear fashion. They come at the pre-course stage. The teacher needs to know the needs of the learners so that the objectives of the course may be decided. Business English learners have more precisely defined needs than general English learners and these needs should be incorporated in the course objectives. It is useful to see the needs analysis stage as consisting of three separate but linked elements:

- The range of communication and language required in the learner's present of future profession.
- The current ability of the learner in terms of language and communication.
- The actual objective of the training program .

In order to find this we need to address the following questions:

- What type of information do we need to get?
- How can we get this information?
- How can we translate this information into course objectives?

The scope of Business English has been summarized as developing language knowledge and communication skills:

- General Language Knowledge
- Specialist Language Knowledge
- General Communication Skills
- Professional Communication Skills

Sometimes this needs analysis is minimal, and simply consists of a series of brief questions which give the teacher a rough idea of the needs of the group. But at other times a needs analysis can be a more substantial proposition. A large-scale needs analysis (sometimes called a language audit) can be designed to look at an organization and work out its strengths and weaknesses in terms of communication in English. All levels of the company will normally be involved, and the aim will be to build up a picture of the current situation, and balance that against strategic goals as well as short-term needs. The process may include gathering information about future markets, customers, suppliers, and even competitors. Clearly in any company, there will be major budgetary implications, in terms of the expense of data collection and analysis, and of interpreting it to decide the way forward. Issues to be addressed could include the level of language competence certain post-holders should have, how language competence might figure in recruitment policies, the evaluation of current language training providers. The language audit might be a key stage as an organization develops and maintains a language strategy, allowing it to deal effectively with language problems in various markets and supply chains is an important step in course design and a hall mark of BE courses as of all ESP courses. It directly influences all decisions regarding: syllabus, materials, methodology, and evaluation.

<u>Topic - 026: Current and Target Situation – The Gap</u>

The basic aim of a needs analysis is to collect and examine critically information about the current situation (where the students are at present) and the target situation (where they would like to be at the end of the teaching). This is the training gap. Understanding the difference (the training gap) between these two situations leads to the course design (syllabus, methods, constraints, learning strategies, and so on). First, we need to be clear whose needs we are talking about - the learner's, or those of the company or organization which is paying for the training. Sometimes the school, university, or training provider is also a factor. Also, there is often a difference between a learner's perceived needs and felt needs. The former represent the view of the other stakeholders in the equation, such as the teacher, the sponsor, and the co-workers. In a sense, these are the 'experts', who can identify needs based on their own experience and knowledge. The felt needs are those needs which represent the learner's perspective.

Another way of looking at needs is to think about them in terms of what and how we might teach. Can we translate needs into a list of products which we as teachers deliver to the learner? This could be a list of language items, for example, or a list of skills, such as giving presentations or asking questions in meetings, or should needs be seen in terms of the process of delivery, with the emphasis on how the learning takes place? Here we are talking about the training as seen from the individual learner's perspective:

- How does a particular learner learn?
- What affective factors need to be considered?
- What methods should I be using?

As ever in language teaching, the answer probably draws on both perspectives. There are several possible ways of looking at needs analysis, but what is important is to appreciate what a needs analysis does. It does not produce a sharply defined list of things to do in the classroom. Indeed, the more we find out about our learners' needs, as inevitably happens as a course progresses, the more difficult it can seem to meet those needs. What a needs analysis does is offering a chance to focus on those areas which are more relevant to the learner or the company. It provides a series of snapshots, none of which gives the complete 'truth', but all of which contribute to our understanding. The more snapshots we take, the better our understanding.

The needs analysis differentiates a general English course from a course for specific purposes. On certain courses, it can also be used as a justification for what happens. A needs analysis is unique to a specific training situation. There is no standard model of needs analysis, and there is no 'single best way' to do it. A needs analysis is not an objective exercise; it entails exercising judgment and finding compromises to make the best use of resources in a particular teaching context. It is about working with learners to decide on the best way forward. At the end of all this effort, it is still inevitably vague in parts. This vagueness can be a problem with a sponsor or learner who is paying for something well defined, and is getting something that looks a little bit rough around the edges. A teacher working with companies must be aware of this, and must be able to produce a needs analysis which is businesslike and efficient, while at the same time being realistic and not making promises that cannot be met, particularly regarding what language teaching is and what it can achieve.

Tied to this is the problem of using ELT jargon; part of our job as teachers is to make sure that we speak the same language as those who are paying for the training (sponsors). Learners and sponsors may have other views of what the teacher's 'role' is, for example, or what the word 'grammar' means. Conflict can be avoided by regular consultation, clarification, and negotiation.

During a needs analysis teachers gain access to some often quite private or sensitive information, which might need to be handled with care. Business English teachers are often required by their customers to sign some sort of confidentiality agreement, and teaching institutions may be subject to regulatory constraints on how they manage information (such as Data Protection Acts and privacy laws). There may also be ethical questions to consider. Is all the information gathered really necessary? Who has access to the information? What will the department head be told about their employee? Was the employee made aware of this at the time the data was collected? Is the teacher competent enough to use this information in order to make decisions which could affect people's careers?

Needs analysis, then, is rarely a clear-cut thing: a tidy needs analysis, the result of which prescribes course design, which in turn dictates materials design, is more likely to be encountered in textbooks than in real life. Real needs analysis is dynamic, and messy. It doesn't end until the course is over, and even then decisions have to be made about what to do with the information gathered. But it is also the best way we have to produce a focused course. A needs analysis in its most basic form is essentially a blend of information-gathering activities which use a variety of different perspectives. However, simply collecting data is not enough - it is in the interpretation and use of this data where the needs analysis really makes its power felt.

Topic - 027: Learning Needs

The Business Communication course designer has to consider the following question: 'What does the expert communicator need to know in order to function effectively in this situation'? The answer to this question may be recorded in terms of language skills, strategies, subject knowledge etc. But analysis does not show how the expert communicator learnt the language items, skills and strategies that he/she uses. So it is naïve to base a course design on the target objectives, because more important are the actual tools needed to acquire these skills. An example of this can be seen in the matter of choosing a text.

If preparing a course of Systems for engineers, we give them the usual texts which are long and boring in the Business Communication class, it would not be effective learning. The motivation which they have for their area might not be carried over to the Business Communication class. So this text does not serve their learning needs. It would be appropriate to look for texts which are interesting and humorous, in order to generate motivation to learn English, for example, James B. Herbolich's box kite project (1979), in which Engineering students at a Kuwaiti university had to make a box kite and then to write a manual for constructing it. It is interesting to consider how this activity reflects the target situation needs and how far the needs of the learning situation. The Herbolich's project reminds us that learners are people. They might be learning about machines but they are not word crunching machines which too many approaches to ESP seem to imply.

Topic- 028: Necessities, Lacks, Wants

A needs analysis has to see what learners need to use in practical life, e.g. Pedagogical needs, communication needs, and academic needs. Targeted needs are an important "umbrella term" used for a number of distinctions, in the target situation in terms of Necessities, Lacks and Wants.
a. Necessities: We call 'necessities' the type of need determined by the demands of the target situation. Necessities are needs determined by the target situation, what the learner has to know in order to function effectively in the target situation, e.g. a business person may need to understand business letters to communicate effectively at sales conferences, to get the necessary information from sales catalogues and so on. S/he will also need to know the linguistic features – discoursal, functional, structural, and lexical – which are commonly used in the situations identified. To get this information is easy, i.e., by observing these situations.

b. Lacks: You also need to know what the learner knows already, so that you can then decide which of the necessities the learner lacks. One target need would be to read texts in a particular subject area. Whether or not the learners need instruction in this will depend on how they can do it already. The target proficiency in other words needs to be matched against the existing proficiency of the learners. The gap between the two can be referred to as the learner's *lacks*.

c. Wants: So far we have looked at target needs objectively with no active role by the learners. But learners too have a view of what their needs are - their *wants.* We have stressed that it is the awareness of the need that characterizes the ESP situation. Awareness is a matter of individual perception. Leaners may have a clear idea about the 'necessities' of the target situation; they will certainly have a view as to what they *want*. It is quite possible that the learners' views will conflict with the perception of other interested parties: course designers, sponsors, and teachers.

So in any course the need is what Hutchinson says: to give what the learner lacks. One should also know what the learner knows already so that what he/she lacks can be determined. The gap between the target proficiency and existing proficiency is called the learners' "lack". A main part of a communication needs analysis is finding out how good the learners' language use is, what is their current communicative competence? Using of placement tests which have validity, face validity, authenticity, reliable, is important. Wants are learners own view of what they "want" from the course, which might be in conflict with the course and the instructor's perceptions of learners' necessities and lacks.

Topic- 029: Analyzing Learning Needs

Learning needs can be analyzed by using different tools to collect a series of snapshots which allow them to compare a target situation with the current situation, thus leading to a focused course. After gathering information through forms, questionnaires, interviews, observation tests etc. the teacher has to analyze learners' needs. The data acquired does not produce a sharply defined list of things to do, so it becomes more difficult as the course progresses. A needs analysis provides a series of snapshots which contribute to our understanding. It differentiates a General English course from ESP course and provides a justification for what happens during the course. It also provides provision for modifying the course as it progresses, and can be used for subsequent courses.

Analyzing learning needs includes looking at the learners' profile. Where will the Business English course take place and when will the course take place, are also part of analyzing needs. Analyzing learning needs includes looking into learners' purpose in taking this course. Is it to enter a job or for higher education? How do learners actually learn and what are the resources which are available to the teacher and learners to achieve success in the course?

Topic- 030: Uniqueness of Learning Situation

A needs analysis is unique to a specific training situation. There is no single best way to do it, no hard and fast rules. It entails exercising judgment and finding compromises to make the best use of resources in a particular teaching context. It is about working with learners to decide on the best way forward. At the end of all this effort, it is still inevitably vague in parts. This vagueness can be a problem with a sponsor or learner who is paying for something well defined, and is getting something that looks a little bit rough around the edges. A teacher working with companies must be aware of this, and must be able to produce a needs analysis which is businesslike and efficient, while at the same time being realistic and not making promises that cannot be met, particularly regarding what language teaching is and what it can achieve. Tied to this is the problem of using ELT jargon; part of our job as teachers is to make sure that we speak the same language as those paying for the training (sponsors). Learners and sponsors may have other views of what the teacher's 'role' is, for example, or what the word 'grammar' means. Conflict can be avoided by regular consultation, clarification, and negotiation.

Sometimes it is a problem for the teacher to satisfy the administration and company. So he/she has to make it business like and efficient, while at the same time remaining realistic and not making any promises that cannot be met, particularly what language teaching is and what it can achieve. Finding out the needs also depends on the class type. It might be an individual course, an open group (more or less homogeneous): or an open group (a public group, which draws its participants from a wide audience). Easier to find needs of the first two groups while more difficult with the third group.

Ethical questions include confidentiality, consent, and effect on careers. During a needs analysis teachers gain access to some often quite private or sensitive information, which might need to be handled with care. Indeed, business English teachers are often required by their customers to sign some sort of confidentiality agreement, and teaching institutions may be subject to regulatory constraints on how they manage information (such as Data Protection Acts and privacy laws). There may also be ethical questions to consider. Is all the information gathered really necessary? Who has access to the information? What will the department head be told about their employee? And was the employee made aware of this at the time the data was collected? Is the teacher competent enough to use this information in order to make decisions which could affect people's careers?

The needs analysis has to be flexible and ongoing. The components of the needs analysis can be seen as a cyclic fashion informing the whole. A needs analysis in its most basic form is essentially a blend of information-gathering activities which use a variety of different perspectives. However, simply collecting data is not enough - it is in the interpretation and use of this data where the needs analysis really makes its power felt.

Lesson 06

NEEDS ANALYSIS-II

Topic - 031: Communication Needs

Before we start teaching a course there is certain information which we need to have in the shape of needs analysis which includes communication needs, business needs and pedagogical needs of learners and teachers. Information is of two types. First: Target situation and types of discourse. Second: Current competence – to find the gap – on which depends the syllabus objectives.

Different types of communication situations give rise to different types of communication needs. A modern organization uses a range of communication channels - traditional like letters and reports and the telephone as well as modern like the internet, intranet, fax, instant messages etc.

To analyze communication needs of learners is to find out as much as possible about what the learners of the course will need to do in English. For example, learners working in a business organization may need to be able to use the telephone with English- speaking clients, or they may need to travel to other countries in order to sell their product. Students in a BE course would need to be able to write assignments in their core courses area. Students engaged in research would need writing skills to write their dissertation.

Needs analysis also aims to find out the different areas and styles of discourse that learners might engage in. This will not only give a better idea about the target situation, but will also address the teacher's own need to understand what the learners actually do with the language. Communicative competence has several layers, of which language is only one.

A variety of tools can be used, including questionnaires, interviews, and observation. Many schools provide teachers forms and charts to carry out needs analysis. Commercially available tests are also used to carry out needs analysis. Charts are useful because they allow teachers to compare their subjects' current communicative ability and target needs, and thus find the gap. They also help in placing learners in the most appropriate group. Advantages can be that such materials can be turned out from photocopier at a short notice and they give a useful insight into learners' communicative needs. They provide a snapshot which can build a composite picture of learners' current needs. However, a possible disadvantage is that they are in the target language, which is the target language they are intending to learn, so the teacher might not get an accurate or clear picture of learners' needs as might have been gathered if the chart/questionnaire were in their own language. However, such questionnaires can be translated and adapted to suit a specific teaching context.

Relatively brief, standardized forms such as those discussed might be useful to observe students' needs but they are not sufficient to give the whole picture about learners' needs. Further details and information is sought through observation and interviews during lessons. If the teacher can get direct access to the workplace or a class in progress, it is very useful to identify the gaps and needs. However, the observation is not very effective to administer which needs careful planning. However, it is not very useful as people do not talk, problem of coordination, lack of written materials, and issues of confidentiality exist. In face-to-face interaction or while observing a meeting, teachers can seek answers to previously thought out questions.

Topic - 032: Main Priorities

The other main part of a communication needs analysis is finding out the current communicative competence of learners. One common tool for this is a placement test, which is a test designed to provide a comparison with other learners (or with known standards or benchmarks) so that learners can be placed with others having similar needs and ability. Characteristics of a placement test are:

Validity: in that it should test what it is designed to test.

Face validity: Face validity is to be credible to the learner, if we give a grammar test to a learner who is interested to improve presentation skills, the prospective learner may start to question our judgment.

Authenticity: Tied with this is the question of authenticity, that the test should reflect the target language, and the way it is used (this is why a placement test should, ideally, follow the target situation analysis).

Reliability: It should be reliable so that if different testers do the same test, the result should be the same; likewise if the learner took the test two days later, they should get the same result.

Besides suiting the requirements of the learners' specific situation, other characteristics are that should be quick, and easy to administer. International tests are available for purchase and on the internet. Disadvantage is that they are tied to using particular course book or doing a particular course (they check the point at which the person can join the course). Others test with reference to guidelines and standards, such as the standards provided by the CEF (Common European Framework) or ACTFL (American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages). These tests are often adequate for assessing receptive language skills such as listening and reading, and can be used to get a rough idea of a level, but will not test people for specific job requirements. It is arguable how well they test productive skills. Most placement tests ignore intercultural competence completely.

Task-based assessment are useful in this regard, as use knowledge gained from the target needs analysis so that a task can be designed which reflects the real-life situation. For example, if business English learners are expected to give presentations at their job places, they can be asked to give one. It will normally be necessary to produce a list of points which need to be looked at during the assessment. Depending on the level and the language competence of the interviewer and interviewee, such an interview can be in English or another language, or a mixture of both.

Diagnostic tests are used where the intention is to diagnose any weaknesses. Sometimes, they may be specifically drawn up for the company or organization involved. The results can be checked against a list of proficiency or can-do statements, such as those used by the CEF or ACTFL. Such tests are available to test the proficient, independent and basic user. They allow teachers to compare their subjects' current communicative ability, target needs, and find the gap, to help in placing learners in the most appropriate group.

Topic- 033: Pedagogical Needs

Pedagogical needs, which exist as a result of the teaching situation based on three main aspects. These are teacher’s needs, needs of learning situation or the learning environment and learning needs or learning styles of learners.

Teacher’s Needs: What happens in the classroom is influenced to a very great extent by the trainer’s own style, experience, and needs. An important part of a needs analysis depends on teachers’ basic assumptions about teaching and learning. The BE teacher is basically a language expert, not a specialist in the core area, having experience in teaching general English. When teaching business English, the teacher has to adapt his/her learning style, and use strategies which can be passed on to learners. Being a reflective practitioner and having self-knowledge about own learning style is important. Teachers’ role can be of trainer, coach and consultant.

A means analysis is a description of the training environment: what is available in terms of equipment, materials, facilities, and time. Means analysis normally produces lists which have an important bearing on the cost of the course and distribution of responsibilities. It entails looking at matters of coordination, availability, timings and preparation. Means analysis involves reflecting on key issues and personal/professional targets along the cline and methods for achieving them. Needs analysis is about making ongoing evaluations.

Topic- 034: Language Styles

Learning success depends on a number of factors. There are a number of different ways to look at learning styles. One is based on the findings of research into brain function, that the right and left sides of the brain play different roles in how we process information. Depending on which side of their brain is dominant, there are the ‘left-brain’ learners who tend to analyze, and to be logical and objective. They may prefer traditional lectures, reading, and clearly structured classroom activities and ‘Right-brain’ learners tend to be more impulsive and informal, and may appreciate the use of graphics and role-play activities to enhance their learning.

Learning styles are related to NLP (Neuro-Linguistic Programming), which is a collection of techniques, models, and theories based on how the mind works and how people behave and communicate. NLP has been useful to some business English teachers because of the insight it gives into various communication skills such as building rapport, non-verbal communication, active listening, and so on, but it can also help our learners understand how they perceive the world, and what affects that perception.

Howard Gardner’s multiple intelligence theory provides another way to compare learners’ learning needs, suggesting eight different types of intelligence: Bodily-Kina-esthetic, Intrapersonal, Interpersonal, Verbal-Linguistic, Logical-Mathematical, Musical, Visual-Spatial, and Naturalist.

Teachers can look at their learners in terms of these intelligences, and draw conclusions as to what learning styles and strategies might be most suitable. Of course, trainers will develop their understanding as the course progresses. So, for example, a learner who appears to function well in intrapersonal intelligence might benefit from activities which allow time for quiet self-study, and a person who is strong in logical-mathematical intelligence might benefit from activities which analyze language structures. The trainer does need to be sensitive to the fact that learners have different needs, and that something can be done about it.

Learning styles are also influenced by the culture of the learners. In many Asian contexts, for example, the teacher is seen as an expert, whose job is to tell students what to do or what ‘the right answer’ is. This can cause problems when a teacher trained and experienced in Western learning environments sees his or her role as a facilitator, encouraging learners’ autonomy, whereas the learners expect something completely different.

Topic- 035: Business Needs

Understanding business needs is of critical importance for a BE teacher. A provider of language training must consider the needs of the sponsor, who may be a company, or a head of department, or the HR (Human Resources) manager. All of these have certain perspectives on what the learners will need to cover on a course. It is important to make it clear to sponsors and heads that their needs are recognized and will be addressed, while remaining realistic about what is promised. Businesses are interested in getting something worthwhile for their money. A company pays for training or an institution hires a teacher because it feels that the investment will lead to some sort of profit, be it more motivated workers, more effective negotiators, better presenters, managers, or high achieving students.

One way for the teacher is to understand business needs and learn about the company. This means doing some research. Ideally, this is done before starting to meet people. Corporate clients are favorably impressed if the trainer or language school they are dealing with knows something about the company’s product, the market, and its size. With the internet, this is relatively easy to do but there are also limitations. Reading an annual report will give one perspective, but such documents are designed to tempt investors. Websites which are open to the public may not have all the details a teacher needs. At this stage, some basic information is needed, so that when we enter the company and start talking to people, we can demonstrate our professionalism and ask the right questions.

Business English teachers needed to understand the various business functions of those involved. The perspective of the engineering department will be very different from that of people in the financial department. Product information is also important. The engineers who build mobile phones will have a very different perspective from the one we may have as a user. They will be interested in materials, technical specifications, and so on. The financial people will be more interested in the last auditors’ report, and next week’s balance sheet.

Company’s hierarchy is important to be understood and the level of learners in the company hierarchy is also relevant. A high-level manager in a multinational corporation will not have the same needs as a person on the shop floor, even if they both have the same marks in a language placement test. The high level manager needs would be perhaps to polish his presentation skills, and he/she might be in apposition to dictate their needs, while the shop-floor person might need to have sales needs. Stakeholders are the people who have some sort of stake or interest in the English training, and could include learners, the sponsors, the HR department, the head of departments whose employees the trainer will be working with. A key stakeholder will be the person who triggered the course in the first place. . The teacher will want to discuss reasons and possible outcomes for the innovation in as much depth as possible. These meetings are also a chance to fill in the gaps in knowledge about the company, and as pointers for further research. Teachers will also use these meetings to find out exactly what the company is expecting them to provide.

Understanding the business situation where the learner will be using the language is also important, i.e. the target situation. Gathering information is not always easy. There may be issues of confidentiality, and it might be that people simply do not want the teacher present when they are meeting customers. Work shadowing is one way to get around this problem, and is an excellent tool for getting to understand a company's and/or learner's needs. Here the teacher simply stays with a person for an agreed length of time, and observes everything that person does. A variation is to include teaching and feedback at opportune moments.

Topic- 036: Main Priorities

Main priorities in a practical needs analysis, showing how the various interrelated factors have been considering can be seen in some examples, which show that a target situation analysis was carried out, considering communication needs in terms of learners areas and discourse and a means analysis, taking into account facilities as well as placement of learners looking at the level of learners, class size and location.

Example 1 shows notes written, after an initial meetings, by a business English teacher who is about to start her first course with pre-experienced students in a university. This teacher has made an excellent start, but will probably prefer to wait until she meets the students before she can design the course in any great detail. During this first lesson, she will want to have activities which allow her to assess the students' spoken interaction, as well as some sort of questionnaire which will tell her more about the students' own perspectives. She will want to negotiate and alter the needs as the course progresses. She has used interviews with the dean, and students, covered the target situation analysis (where the students will be using the target language according to their core areas i.e. finance, production, sales, marketing) and the discourse they will face at the workplace (presentations, analyzing information, attending meetings etc.).

When the decision maker about the course design is the sponsor as well, he/she is very clear about needs of learners. For example, a copy of a report is submitted by a freelance teacher for a language school to a company. In this case, the sponsors already have firm ideas about what they want the course to look like. Unlike the previous two examples, this somewhat formal report has been written so that someone else can take over the running of the course. Some of the key course design decisions already appear to have been made, which partly reflect the priorities and conditions laid down by the sponsor, Mr Lambada. This report illustrates once again the difficulty of making a clear divide between information gathering, and course design: in practice, the two are often inextricably linked.

Needs analysis should not be seen as an entirely objective procedure, as Hyland reminds us, 'Needs analysis is like any other classroom practice in that it involves decisions based on teachers' interests, values, and beliefs about teaching, learning and language.' Sothe needs analysis is preparatory and ongoing. It is the foundation of any business English course. It considers different tools that teachers can use to collect a series of snapshots, which allow them to compare a target situation with a current situation, thus leading to a focused course.

Lesson 07

DESIGNING A COURSE-I

Topic- 037: Aims

Designing a Business English course is a matter of making a series of decisions based on information gathered during a needs analysis about learners' communication, business and pedagogical needs. The next step is to interpret that data, design a course program and choose appropriate materials. A needs analysis has a direct influence on course design – the development of syllabus, materials, methodology and evaluation. A useful place to start is to decide on the course aims and objectives: what we (and others) want out of the course.

Course design is the process through which the raw data about a learning need is interpreted in order to produce a series of teaching learning experiences, aiming to lead the students to a particular state of knowledge. Care is needed as there is no one-to-one transfer from needs analysis to course design as there is conflict between learner needs and learner wants. There are external constraints (like classroom facilities/time) that will restrict what is happening.

Aims for a Business English course are general statements about why the course is happening. What are the overall aims which the course aims to achieve? A certain degree of specificity is required in designing a BE course, therefore pedagogically it comes under the umbrella of ESP. Related to this specificity is the choice of the content, the language to be used and taught, and the training style. Content, (which has to be related to the area) Language (discourse used in the area), communication (effective as per requirement of workplace) as well as the training style will depend on the initial needs analysis Aims of a course depend on a large degree to the approach which is taken for a course design. Various approaches have been used to design courses. The language centered course design (most familiar to teachers, simplest) draws a direct connection between needs analysis of the target situation and course contents. The learner is used as a means to identify the target situation. Instead of teaching the whole area as in a general English course, only the restricted area is taught and the learner has no further role to play. It seems logical as it aims to start with the learner's needs, proceeds through various stages of analysis to syllabus, to materials and then evaluation.

However, it covers only a restricted area of language to be taught to learners unlike in GE. Learners' needs are not catered at all. It seems learner–centered but actually after using the learner to identify the target area, it ignores the learner. It fails to recognize that learners are people and that learning is not a systematic process, causing the belief that learning itself is systematic. Learning is internally-generated and not an externally–imposed system. Analysis and presentation of language data items in a systematic manner will not result in a systematic learning. It takes a rigid and inflexible view of the procedure of a course design and doesn't allow any reconsidering along the course and the teacher is locked into a relentless process. Any procedure should have flexibility, feedback channels and error tolerance. Another thing which is important in teaching is that material should be interesting, something which is not always met in a language centered course design. Thus language centered needs analysis is only at the surface level - it is in fact a learner-restricted approach.

Skills centered course design aims to help learners to develop skills and strategies which will continue to develop after the course (the basic hypothesis is that underlying any language behavior are certain skills and strategies which the learner uses to produce or comprehend certain behavior), to make learners better processors of linguistic information, not to provide a corpus of linguistic knowledge. It views language in terms of how the learners' mind processes it, rather than an entity in itself. It sees the learner as a 'user' of language rather than a 'learner' of the language, and states its 'objectives' in general terms so that learners learn at least something.

The Learner Centered approach sees learning as totally dependent on the learner. Learning is seen as an internal process, with learners' previous knowledge and motivation playing a dominant role. Learning should be seen in the context in which it takes place. This approach sees learning as totally determined by the learner. However, instead of learner centered approach, a "Learning centered approach" is more useful as it seeks to maximize the potential of the learning situation. The learner is not the only factor in the learning situation. It holds the nature of the target situation, will determine the course design.

Topic- 038: Setting Objectives

Objectives are more specific than aims, break up the aim into smaller elements of learning so that the outcomes are better understood, are written in precise terms. Stakeholders, sponsor of a course, will want to look at these objectives too, and may assist in writing them. There are various ways in which objectives can be made. Objectives can be made for individuals/groups, for low/high level learners as: for different areas like, 'effective professional communication for managers'.

Setting objectives for an individual course is an ideal situation for a tailor-made course. Individual's needs provide the trainee the opportunity to have a customized program and allow the teacher to go at his/her own pace, time, content and approach.

For 'Business Communication in English' for open group course or a *public group*, participants come from a wide audience and from a wide range of areas. In such a general BE course or executive English course participants will come from perhaps, geographical, corporate and professional areas. The trainer needs to be careful to fulfill the diverse objectives of such a group and have them agree on the objectives.

Close group course should be more or less a homogenous group of learners. Learners may be from same company, same professional function, same department, easiest in terms of objectives. Objectives can be made for meeting skills/ negotiation skills, presentation skills, writing skills, telephoning etc.

Objectives are not written in stone to be slavishly followed. It is an ongoing, interactive process. A learning centered approach will allow the designer to add and amend the course at any stage. Reflective practice is particularly important. The teacher and trainer keeps on thinking about ways of improving practice and incorporating these into future objectives. To be negotiated in beginning and during the course, regular feedback sessions will bring out trainees' strengths and weaknesses.

Topic- 039: Smart Objectives

Many organizations are increasingly using the SMART and SMARTER acronym within goal setting and performance appraisal in management environments. The use of SMART objective is not limited to business and performance management, indeed SMART possibly started in the world of personal development. SMARTER is an acronym to help in the writing of objectives, which can be for managing performance or for developmental purposes. Objectives should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound, to specify what they need to achieve, answering six questions: Who? What? Where? When? Which? Why?

A specific objective has a much greater chance of being accomplished than a general goal. To set a specific objective you need to answer the six “W” questions: Who: Who is involved? What: What do I want to accomplish? Where: Identify a location. When: Establish a time frame. Which: Identify requirements and constraints. Why: Specific reasons, purpose or benefits of accomplishing the goal. Instead of saying: “Awareness of …” it should be “Learners will be able to speak about the ...” Rules of conciseness and correctness should be applied.

Measureable objectives measure whether objectives are met or not. They establish concrete criteria for measuring progress toward the attainment of each objective you set. When you measure your progress, you stay on track, reach your target dates, and experience the feeling of achievement that drives you on to continued effort required to reach your objective. To determine if your objective is measurable, ask questions such *how much? How many? How will I know when it is accomplished?* If the objective is measurable, it means that the measurement source is identified and we are able to track the actions as we progress towards the objective. Measurement is the standard used for comparison. Measurements (and the visible progress) go a long way to help us to know when we have achieved our objective.

Achievable objectives see whether set objectives are achievable and attainable in terms of abilities, realistic facilities and logistics. When you identify objectives that are most important to you, you begin to figure out ways you can make them come true. The objective needs to be attainable by you based on the skills you have and the constraints imposed.

Relevant objectives in terms of leading to the desired results and relate to needs analysis, what is their current communicative proficiency and what they should be at the end of the course. This means two things; that the goal or target being set with the individual is something they can actually impact upon or change and secondly it is also important to the organization, and is relevant to what the organization is trying to achieve. The manager has to decide these objectives by considering the wider picture.

Time-bound Objectives are concerned with timely completion: When do you want to achieve the set objectives? When will we accomplish/ complete this objective? In the objective somewhere, there has to be a date (Day/Month/Year) for when the task has to be started (if it’s ongoing) and/or completed (if it’s short term or project related). Time-bound means setting deadlines for the achievement of the objective. Deadlines need to be both achievable and realistic. If you don’t set a time, you will reduce the motivation and urgency required to execute the tasks. Agreed time frames create the necessary urgency and prompts action.

Topic- 040: Teaching and Business Objectives

Teaching or training objectives, unlike performance objectives, do not normally specify what the learner will be able to do at the end of the course. They are designed to give the teacher useful guidelines, and they may use technical words which learners may not be familiar with. Students writing their own objectives can be discussed with teachers in terms of how relevant and achievable they are.

In practical terms, it is often difficult to describe objectives for language or business communication skills with the desired precision, and sometimes such skills are hard to quantify and measure. It is also important to remember that the business objective may be quite different. For negotiation training, for example, the real business objective may be to negotiate successfully, in order to maximize the company's profits in a new market (the aim). The outcome of the course can be seen in terms of:

- What has been learned (focusing on the learner)?
- Changes in the workplace or business results, resulting from the training (focusing on the business).

Practical constraints in making these objectives need to see whether they are achievable, as well as to keep in mind that people might have different objectives and how lack of attendance will affect the objectives.

Topic- 041: Performance (Behavioral) Objectives

There are different ways to express objectives, depending on the context. Most business English courses use performance (behavioral) objectives in terms of what the learner is expected to do, under what conditions, and to what level or standard. Such objectives use words like:

Will learn…

Will be able to…

Making objectives has to consider such questions as what learners would be able to do, how they would be able to perform, and at what level. It is important to know the current performance of learners. Assessing entry levels are important for two reasons. First it is the mostly, widely asked question by learners - How is my English? Secondly assessing a trainee's entry level is a prerequisite for course design. In other words, course objectives minus current ability should indicate/be equal to the course outline. It helps in designing the course, as course objectives minus current ability means course outline.

However, it is difficult to find a satisfactory assessment method to assess competence, as assessment is an area fraught with difficulties. There are no agreed criteria to scientifically assess what we teach. Our aim is to assess competence based around accuracy of language knowledge, fluency and effectiveness of communication). Accuracy can be tested objectively, whereas in fluency and effectiveness assessment, we rely on our subjective judgment. All evaluation must keep a balance between objectivity and subjectivity. Assessment at the entry level can be done through formal tests. Correct use of language, through listening and reading comprehension, writing skills, controlled or semi-controlled speaking can be used.

Topic- 042: Program Outline and Trainee Briefing

Just as the data gathered at the stage of needs analysis provides an input for setting the course objectives, the course objectives are the starting point for agreeing on the course outline. There is need to agree on the length of time to be allocated for each element, the type of input and output for each element as identified in the objectives, ways of working with the group, including the type of approach to be used by the teacher. All of these are not fixed and can be reconsidered or negotiated as the course proceeds and the teacher becomes more aware of learner's needs and styles of learning.

Length of time for each objective depends on individual courses where the trainer can adapt according to the wishes of the learner. For group courses, some kind of consensus has to be reached between the participants. Also the trainer has to keep in mind how much time is to be devoted to each element. Input and Output: Input refers to the materials to be used in the class. These can be raw materials, such as print, video, audio not developed for the course or published material specifically developed for the BE classroom. Output refers to the themes and activities used in the class for communication practice.

Provision of Materials: Trainees may have been asked to bring material from their own areas which can be used for lesson development and practice. On the other hand, they may rely on the trainer to provide material form the organization's resources whether raw or published.

Ways of working: Refers to the role of trainer and trainees, how will they work together to achieve their objectives. This includes trainees' expectations from the course and the trainer's expectation of the trainees, in terms of who will be responsible for what in the classroom, for preparing inputs/outputs, what type of preparation is expected outside the class, preparation/homework.

Trainee briefing: Developing competence in a foreign language requires effort, commitment and discipline. All language learners want to improve their competence in the foreign language – in terms of accuracy, fluency and appropriacy or a combination of them. However, many would have been out of the language learning environment and despite having clear objectives, would not have reflected on the procedures needed to achieve them. It is useful to allocate some time to stress the importance of study and practice to achieve competence.

Lesson 08

DESIGNING A COURSE-II

Topic- 043: Syllabus Design

Once the aims and objectives are established, the next step is to define a learning plan or a course syllabus. A syllabus is a document which says what should and will be learnt. Once we know what we want the course to achieve, we can move on to thinking about the syllabus. Why do we need a syllabus? One view says that the disadvantage of a syllabus is that it curbs the creativity of teachers and students. The disadvantages outweigh the advantages: some important content might be left, may result in significant gaps, let alone the prohibitive amount of work for the teacher.

Language is complex, we need to break it down into manageable units. In deciding the constituent parts of language, a syllabus provides a practical division of language, assessment, and activities. Having a syllabus gives confidence to teachers and learners by making the language learning task appear manageable. It also has a cosmetic role (students/sponsors want some reassurance that their investment of time and money will be worthwhile), showing that some effort has gone into its making. This is especially true of commercial sponsors.

A syllabus provides a criterion for material selection, defining the kinds of texts to look for and the type of materials to develop. Success or failure to achieve the state of knowledge can be tested. A syllabus provides a visible basis for testing. It gives a road map to the teachers and students - a visible goal and the means to achieve it. Uniformity is an essential condition for any institutionalized activity such as education and a syllabus is one way in which this standardization is achieved or at least attempted.

It is a list which specifies all the things that are to be taught in the course, for which the course was designed, e.g. whether it is designed for beginner levels, for 2nd semester students, for IT students and so on. It is comprehensive, covering these points, aims, objectives, texts, activities, evaluation methods. The actual contents may be content items (words, structures) or process items (methods, tasks).

It is an ordered document, having items that are easier and essential in the beginning and difficult and less important later, or according to need. It has explicit objectives stated usually at the beginning, on the basis of which the components are selected and ordered.

Another characteristic is that it is a public document, and is available for scrutiny to teachers, administration, parents, and other stakeholders. The composers of the document are answerable to the target audience for the quality of the document.

Teachers should be aware that adult learners want their learning to be relevant to them, pay attention to things that will benefit them, learn best when they know why they should learn, and find it easier to learn when you start with what they know before moving to the unknown and when you move from simple to complex. As a result, the syllabus is usually negotiated with the students and the organization. By discussing these issues with them, the main priorities can be decided together, you can identify what activities could be done to foster learner autonomy, you can agree on how progress will be assessed and how you will be giving feedback. The syllabus states the actions to be taken in order to achieve the aims and objectives. It lists what is to be covered during the course and states an order.

The syllabus can be re-negotiated at any time. Sometimes, in the middle of a course, a student asks for help because he/she needs to prepare a presentation for an unexpected trip. It usually is a very dynamic syllabus and you need to be flexible enough to adapt to new and changeable circumstances.

Topic- 044: Syllabus Components

Business English students need to communicate within a certain context, so the syllabus must reflect the discourse they are confronted within their workplace. For efficiency, teachers must ensure that the exposure to useful language is not random. So, the course designer's job includes finding the most common language forms that will help the learner to communicate and planning when and how the learner will encounter them. Students in the corporate finance field and usually have to present figures and results in English, so including the following components in the syllabus, are important:

- Dealing with numbers and figures
- Describing trends
- Corporate finance vocabulary
- Understanding and producing financial reports
- Giving presentations

Content items are words, structures, topics and process items like tasks, methods. Syllabus components should reflect topics, themes, situations and define types of assessments, and design learning activities and tasks. The syllabus should provide contact information to the instructor, list office hours (virtual office hours if possible, which includes tome spend in marking), and state the current academic term. It should include the authors and titles of prescribed books, list all assignments, quizzes exams, include course schedule, departmental requirements. The learning activities and tasks which help learners develop their communicative competence – linguistic, socio-cultural and pragmatic.

Those language items are selected which the learner needs to know and concentrate on the content and the meaning of the interactions. A syllabus can be organized in various ways: According to topic, task or around activities, such as presentations, negotiations and telephoning.

Topic- 045: What is to be Covered and in what Order

The course objectives point to what we want the course to achieve. Once we know what we want to achieve, we can move on to thinking about the syllabus. A syllabus is, essentially, a list of what is to be covered and in what order. The course should focus on the language needed. In Business English teaching the focus should be on using language to perform tasks, not just to talk about it. Most Business English learners needed to be able to communicate within a certain context, so the syllabus must reflect the discourse that the learner will face in the workplace.

The language needs to be learnable, and according to the level of the learners. Learning must be achievable in the time provided, e.g. it is unrealistic to suggest that a complete beginner will be able to take part in complex negotiations after a week's teaching.

The syllabus provides an ordered structure for what is to be covered. It places the selected language into orderly, manageable chunks, with both the content and the order matched to the learners and their situation.

Topic- 046: Using a Grid

A useful technique is to use a grid or framework in making a syllabus. A grid or framework sets out the aims and objectives, followed by all the elements that we believe are necessary for someone to be able to meet those objectives. The main components of this framework are based on the competencies identified as: Linguistic competence (Language based)**,** Discourse competence (identification of possible discourse learners will encounter, specialist knowledge) and Intercultural competence (communication needs in international business/educational environment).

The syllabus will take into account not only what is to be learnt but how it is to be learnt and how it will be assessed in terms of achieving course objectives, using the guidelines offered by communicative language teaching and the insights gained through the needs analysis. Grids normally consist of a combination of the following components, sometimes called threads, because they weave through the course and could be seen as holding it together:

- Grammar (e.g. tenses, word order, verb patterns, relative clauses)
- Lexis (e.g. vocabulary, idioms, expressions, collocations)
- Pronunciation (e.g. intonation, rhythm, stress, chunking)
- Functions (e.g. complaining, agreeing, persuading, explaining)
- Business skills (e.g. presenting, negotiating, telephoning, socializing)
- Topics (e.g. finance, marketing, production, management)
- Learning strategies (e.g. learning styles, recording vocabulary, preparing for a test)
- Situations (e.g. assisting visitors, checking into a hotel, running a meeting)
- Texts (e.g. examples of spoken or written discourse)
- Language skills (e.g. reading, writing, listening, speaking)
- Intercultural skills (defining, comparing culture)
- Storyline approach (materials have characters for the storyline)
- Tasks (learners use language to do something and achieve an outcome

At the end, there is a column for methodology and timings.

Topic- 047: Organizing the Syllabus, Familiarity and Need

Syllabus components can be organized in various ways, from simpler to more complex, grammar tense, simpler starter sentences, sign and sign posting in presentations.

Determining the order of the syllabus can be done in different ways. A common way is to put the simple things first. For example, a grammar tense which appears straightforward (e.g. present simple) may be taught before a concept that appears to be more complex (e.g. modal verbs). Standard phrases for starting a telephone conversation are taught and practiced before moving on to more complicated role-plays involving their use in a real phone call. Signposting language in presentations is taught before asking learners to put an introduction together. Further practice on introductions might be done before asking learners to give a presentation.

Familiarity might also be a guideline. It might make sense for learners to cover familiar situations or topics before unfamiliar ones. For example, it is probably easier for a learner to give a presentation on his or her own job than on something which might be less familiar (or perhaps conceptually more challenging), such as business ethics or politics

The syllabus can be organized according to learners' needs. If the course is going to take several months, it might be wise to cover areas of a higher priority first, e.g. receptionists might benefit from telephone training-before letter-writing skills because this need is perceived to be more immediate.

Another reason for organizing syllabuses in a certain way is that sometimes certain language items seem to hang naturally with specific topics or functions - so conditionals are often coupled with negotiations, or talking about the future is coupled with making arrangements. The need for variety and balance in teaching might also influence what activities are chosen.

Finally, it is useful if the syllabus can be divided into teaching blocks which have their own aims or objectives, and which can fit logically into the time available. Often such blocks have a standard format and incorporate different types of activities which allow flexibility and change of pace in order to meet the needs of a particular group.

The syllabus can also be organized into units. In course books, the syllabus is organized into blocks often called units, each of which has a logical or thematic coherence, even if the unit is not necessary to be completed in one lesson. One unit may lead on to the next, or there may be flexibility with the order in which they are used, but there is normally some continuity between units. Modules, in contrast, are normally independent blocks which can be put together in various ways to create a course; many schools and teachers have ready-to-go modules on specific communication skills. The teacher simply has to select the relevant modules for a particular group.

Topic- 048: Sample Course Outlines

Course outlines depend on the type of courses and organization of the course. Register analysis can be carried out to find language forms which students would meet. Corpora of relevant vocabulary can also be used. Types of syllabi could be grammatical, lexical, grammatical/lexical, situational, topic based, functional/notional, and mixed or multi strand, procedural, process. Organization is by:

- Topic: (texts would be taken from the learners' specialist area – Biology texts for Biology students)
- Related area: (discourse related to that professional and business area)
- Vocabulary: (particular idioms, registers, specialist terms
- Grammatical structures: (some structures are used more in some fields e.g. (Scientific texts use compound nouns, passives, conditionals, modal verbs, etc.
- Activities

Structural organization:

- Scenario
- Typical interactions (structures used in them)
- Grammatical structure

Organized around skills and strategies:

- To improve skills and activate learners' preferred strategies
- Performance (Using job ads, examining job needs, personal evaluation)

Sample course outline is based on a class from a commercially available book called: "In-company Intermediate" by Mark Powell. Students will use English at present and in future. The focus is on texts (spoken and written) which provide ample opportunity for learners to focus on the types of discourses and communication skills they will need. Topics are meeting skills, negotiation, socializing networking in conferences. The course gives learners a chance to focus on specific language items, in this case grammar and lexis. The more authentic material would be needed for this.

Steps for designing a course of Business English helps your students bridge the English skills gap.

- Identify students' needs.
- Define program goals and objectives of the instruction.
- Syllabus design.
- Identify topics, themes, situations.
- Design learning activities and tasks.
- Define types of assessments.
- Select suitable material.
- Course delivery.
- Program evaluation.

Lesson 09

DESIGNING A COURSE-III

<u>Topic- 049: Negotiating the Syllabus</u>

The syllabus can be changed during the course. With most classes, often the best way to identify what should be included in a course is for the teacher to sit down with the learners (and other stakeholders) and negotiate the syllabus. This has the major advantage that the learners are usually much more motivated because they have helped design what is to be done. The syllabus can be negotiated at any time - indeed, the teacher and learners can re-negotiate as the course progresses. Sometimes, there are practical issues which influence what actually happens, such as availability of video equipment, or the teacher's own expertise and experience. Sometimes, it may be necessary for the teacher to guide the discussions so that the end result is achievable, or meets a sponsor's aims.

Generating the Syllabus through Learners: Many activities can be devised for negotiating the syllabus can be used on day one of a course, for example the following: What the group wants - the teacher gives learners a sheet. They fill in the first two questions on their own, and then pass the sheets round so that everyone can see what their colleagues want and do not want and can understand that different people want different things. The sheets are then used as a basis for the third question, the answer to which is, in effect, the syllabus and which will have to be some amalgam of the differing priorities that have surfaced. The learners come to know that what happens is actually a compromise. Getting them to sign at the bottom of the page is a useful way to remind them that they are part of the success of the course. These sheets can be used to review the course later:

- What I want from this course
- What I don't want from this course
- What the group wants from this course
- Name:..................
- Date:.....................
- Signature:...........................

Negotiating priorities - this time, the aim is to guide learners towards a possible syllabus by suggesting possible options. A variation on this is to give learners different options during the course: do they want to do this or that next week? Teachers might allow learners to develop their own tasks and activities. For example, if the course is covering presentation skills, the learners could make decisions about the topics of their own presentations, or the length, or the criteria for success. Such an approach emphasizes the need for consensus and compromise, which are important elements in group work.

<u>Topic- 050: Using Learner's Input</u>

Since the learners are the main stakeholders in the process, their input is crucial. It gives insight to the teacher about the pace of the course and course content. The teacher can give the class a questionnaire to fill questions about their own preferences, and then pass the sheets around so that everyone can see what their colleagues want and do not want and can understand that different people have different needs. This information is then used as the basis for a third question, the answer to which is in effect, the syllabus as generated by the group. It will be an amalgam of the different priorities that have surfaced. Generating the syllabus in this way brings home to the learners that what may happen is actually a compromise. Getting them to sign at the bottom of the page is a useful way to remind them that they are part of the success of the course. These sheets can be used to review the course later. Learners' priorities can change as the course progresses, especially in longer courses. They may come to know their strengths and weaknesses and needs. An in-service student can request to be given presentation practice as he might have to give one at his workplace. Similarly a student of the seventh or eighth semester who needs to write his final project would want a special space given to report writing skills. They are specialists in their area, though the teacher is the language specialist.

Topic- 051: Negotiating Priorities

Questionnaires can be used by the teacher to get suggestions of students to refine objectives. This time, the aim is to guide learners towards a possible syllabus by suggesting possible options. The teacher can ask what they want to do this week and the next week, what they want to do in the given week, how much time they want to spend on each module, or the criteria for success. Tasks and activities can also be chosen, e.g. the topics for their presentations. Such an approach emphasizes compromise and consensus which are important in group work.

Another way to negotiate the syllabus is to work on the existing objectives and refine them to suit the needs of a particular class. Content items can be changed, added or removed. A sample objectives document, based on pre-course discussions between employees of two companies, can be shared with students. They can look at the list which is a mixture of communication skills and specific content relevant only to the people concerned. The teacher can then raise questions to reconfirm this particular learner group's priorities, their needs of professional content and whether they want to add, remove or change any item.

Topic- 052: Using the Syllabus

The use of syllabus varies according to teaching context, country and institution. The human factor and individual characteristics are also factors as are resources, human and material, and the teaching approach. Where there are ample materials and resources to draw up a detailed syllabus, teachers may find it useful to work mainly from it as the basis of their teaching, using specific materials. In affluent settings, teachers may be allowed to complete freedom in designing their course program; in such cases the syllabus may be ignored or be non-existent. And teachers would have the freedom to draw their own new, independent program, based on their preferences and needs. With an experienced, competent and creative teacher and mature learners, such a program could be an exciting unique teaching/learning experience.

However, the disadvantages in most contexts outweigh the advantages. It means a prohibitive amount of work for the teacher. There might be some gaps in content. In a situation where the target language is not the second language (spoken outside the classroom) it may seriously impair learning. There is a lack of clear structure. Teachers and students both do not get a sense of progress, and evaluation of learning outcomes is difficult. Where only one book can be afforded by the students, it can act as the syllabus (particularly if recommended by the same authority which drew up the syllabus). In some contexts, even one book per student is an unknown luxury, then the teacher can base the course on the course-book or syllabus or a combination of the two. Here the syllabus is a source of information as well as reassurance for teachers who are not confident of their own experience and knowledge of the target language and situation.

Topic- 053: Managing the Logistics: Practical Considerations

Logistics of the learning environment also has a critical role to play, in that, learners and teachers all need to be aware of where they need to be, what they are to do, and have access to the resources they need in order to do it. Course design is not only about deciding what to include in the syllabus. There are many practical considerations which can influence what happens. A means analysis is a description of the training environment - what is available in terms of equipment, facilities and time, and perhaps more importantly, what is not? One significant aspect is what materials are available. Means analysis normally produces lists which have an important bearing on the cost of the course. For example, let us assume that the teacher has been asked to run a course on presentation skills for a company. The training is to take place in a hotel. Questions such as who is going to provide the camera and multimedia projectors, what materials to use, whose photocopying facilities to use, and so on, have a direct impact. Points that should be thought about during the means analysis are as follows:

- What facilities are available (e.g. rooms, seating, location, refreshments)?
- What equipment is available (e.g. board, flipchart, cameras, and projectors)?
- How much time is available to design the course and prepare materials?
- How much time is available for training?
- What is the availability of suitable materials?
- What time of the day will learners be available?

For most teachers in schools, such issues will probably be coordinated by administrative staff, but some teachers, particularly freelancers, will often be heavily involved in administration. Simple things like a broken monitor or shoddy materials, an electric socket which doesn’t work can easily ruin a course, however well the syllabus has been thought out. Similarly, issues such as costs and budgets may have a significant influence on the course design; using an expensive 5-star hotel provides a very different learning experience to using a small classroom in the depths of a private language school or a spare conference room in company offices. Business English learners expect a high level of professionalism in the way a course is run, and such professionalism can and should be designed into the course.

One decision which needs to be made is whether the teaching is to be intensive or extensive. In practice, in the world of business English teaching, the terms seem to be used differently by different organizations. Intensive training can be anything from a few hours a day, for a few weeks, to ten days in a hotel, working all day. Intensive training is often used where time is short and where there are specific performance objectives to achieve. It tends to be much more focused than extensive training, and is often more efficient in its use of time (no need to warm learners up every 90 minutes, for example). For many learners, intensive training leads to noticeable improvement. Often intensive training goes under the name of workshops or seminars, which aim to focus on specific topics. The other key advantage is that attendance is not normally a problem. Once the learner is committed to the course, he or she tends to stay.

Extensive training normally refers to regular but short sessions, such as two 90-minute sessions per week. This is typical of some in-company training, but also for pre-experienced groups such as business studies students who are doing English as one part of a course of study. The advantage is that such classes cater for those learners who cannot find time to take an intensive course. The disadvantage is that attendance and motivation can be a problem. Many courses combine the two types, for example, learners may attend 90-minute extensive classes once a week throughout the year, but also have a three-day intensive session every three months.

A third variation is to have part, or the entire course delivered at a distance. This mixture of face-to-face (F2F) and distance learning is sometimes known as blended learning; particularly where one of the media used is electronic. Distance learning brings an additional facet to the already complex business of course design. For all courses there are practical, logistical issues which need to be addressed beforehand. In some schools and organizations these are not the teacher's responsibility, but in many business English teaching contexts the teacher is the only representative of the training provider on site, be it in-company, in a hotel, or in some other hired venue. Even in a school classroom, the teacher needs to be well prepared and it would be wise to check practical aspects of course delivery beforehand. Business English learners can be critical and demanding customers.

Topic- 054: Instructions: Course Title, Venue and Duration

Another issue involved in syllabus design is pre-course instructions. Good instructions serve the purpose of providing relevant information, but also help to ensure that the learner arrives in the class motivated and eager. It also reflects the effort spend in planning the course which shows the professionalism of the course designer and planner. Checklists can be shared with learners, showing the following:

1. 'Code of conduct'- should be discussed with learners, perhaps in the first contact class. Rules made by students have a greater chance to be observed. These should be negotiated with learners on first contact. It breaks the ice putting the students on a comfortable footing with the teacher and other participants.

2. The Training Room - Arranged optimally as teacher/students will be spending their time here. The teacher should check the layout beforehand, furniture in rows, U-shaped Small groups? To set up and test equipment: e.g. video camera, Slide projector, Whiteboard pens. Shoddy equipment, a broken monitor can easily ruin the success of the course. Environment matters a lot for the success of a course - heating, ventilation, light, noise. A course conducted in a posh hotel will provide a different kind of experience than one conducted in the depth of a private school or the spare conference room of an organization. For group work, e.g. negotiations, the availability of other areas, lounge area, foyer is another aspect for course success.

3. The Venue - although the training room is key, it is not the only place where teachers and learners will spend their time. The teacher should sure that appropriate care is taken with planning for free time (social event for newcomers to build group rapport and get relaxed). Finally the teacher should know who the relevant people of the organization are and where to find them in case of a problem

4. Contingency plans - should be thought of in case anything goes wrong, e.g. interruptions, distractions, materials, or guest speakers who fail to arrive, venue problems (double booked, dirty, inappropriate food), illness.

Lesson 10

SELECTING AND DEVELOPING MATERIALS-I

Topic- 055: Scope of Materials and Equipment

After analyzing and determining the needs of learners, setting the objectives of the course and developing the syllabus, the next step is to select and develop appropriate materials to teach. There is a wide range of materials available to teach business English. Its scope includes all the stimuli used to develop knowledge of Business and Management skills, language forms and skills in communication. The scope of the materials is wide, they can include inputs which stimulate the learners, facilitate the learning process, e.g. audio, video and written material on business topics, reference material to be studied and learnt, such as notes on language forms and communication techniques and practice material to check on the assimilation of new language knowledge or communication skills. Most of these materials will be stored by the trainee/student and rarely if ever looked at, once the course finishes. It is only the accumulated knowledge and skills which is the true legacy of the course. These materials are only a means to extend knowledge and skills.

Equipment is the techniques by which they can be activated. Two types of materials can be used - raw materials or authentic, e.g. newspapers, reports and published materials, e.g. course-books.

However, no materials are ideally suited for a learner group, so the teacher has to customize and modify. When using published materials, if they are part of a unit, then activities can be created according to learners' needs. Raw materials are challenging, need effort to check suitability to be usable for the class. Adaptation and customization is needed. In designing tasks, especially for lower level students, attention to language level' is required so as not to 'turn off' the students. The teacher has to balance suitability of raw and published materials in terms of:

- Relevance to learners' objectives
- Quality of materials as learning tools
- The time needs for customization and adaptation
- Cost (customization versus purchase of published material)

Features of Materials - suitability remains criteria, other factors like features of materials play a role in teachers selection. As related to the Syllabus, e.g. in grammatical syllabus, its linguistic units and choose materials for it. Similarly a Business English syllabus can be based on:

- Identification of the elements that constitute the scope of Business English
- Selection of materials that fit the syllabus template

Another approach sees classroom activities as the basis of material selection. The Approach driven syllabus tries to base material selection according to the specific learning objectives of learners. The medium of materials could be: print materials - newspapers, reports, audio/video materials and multi medium materials.

Equipment: The medium of materials could be audio which satisfies the above criteria, offers a wide range of choice in Business English courses and is cheap. Videos are also catching up with audio in popularity as they combine sound and picture, however are considered expensive ELT materials. The personal computer has revolutionized the way work is done. The telephone line has traditionally been used for distance learning. Video conferencing, email for feedback, Internet offers unlimited sources of topical and authentic material.

The teacher has to balance suitability of these for particular learning aims. Materials are only a means to extend knowledge and skills, and equipment are the technical means by which training materials can be activated. So the teacher has to balance their use according to their relevance, the time available, learners' needs, the cost involved and the teaching purpose.

Topic- 056: Ready-made Materials

The most common ready-made material is course books, which are popular all over the world. Course books are textbooks, of which the teacher and the students have copies, which are to be followed systematically as the basis for course design. Advantages of using course books are that they save teacher's work, the teacher doesn't have to choose the lesson, and the activities, the lesson plan can be followed as given in the particular unit. Course books provide a solid framework, which is particularly useful for less experienced teachers and those who are under pressure of time. Pedagogical decisions, such as course content and methodology, have been made. They look professional, which is important for BE learners. Many course books include comprehensive teacher's guides and resources, supplementary materials for the students, self-study materials, audio and video resources. They provide a window to the business world, particularly those for pre-experienced groups.

Disadvantages are that course books can get outdated easily. The culturally content might be inappropriate in certain contexts. They might be based on different assumptions about language learning. It is worth thinking about the different perspectives of those connected with course books, material produced in-company or indeed any mass-produced material.

Important factors for learners could include learners' specific requirements: Clear layout and structure, relevance, regular progress checks, revision opportunities, entertainment, self-study sections, reference sections, up-to-date content, and authenticity. Price can also be a factor.

Teachers' priorities could be the amount of guidance provided in a particular book, the extra activities, flexibility and ease of use. Other factors in selection of the course book could be that the units and modules are according to time needed/ available and fits in with their own understanding of language learning, that it is not too technically demanding in terms of the business world and that it has a comprehensive glossary explaining the terminology.

Publishers' priorities are to satisfy teachers and students and catering for the needs of a wide clientele. Innovative teachers might feel using a course book is too conservative to go with new methodologies. Companies might not want too daring approaches and will prefer safe, traditional methods.

Topic- 057: Authenticity: Real World/Teaching Purpose

A key issue when considering the choice of course book (or indeed any materials) is authenticity. Does the language in the course book come from the real world, or has it been specially generated or adapted for language teaching purposes? Were the materials designed specifically for teaching purposes or do they serve the communicative purpose in real life?

There are many advantages of using authentic materials – it brings the real world into the class and provides motivation to learners by making the task realistic and useful for their future workplace. Authenticity could be of content and activities. However, there is some controversy regarding authenticity is that how much of it is related to the profession? How much to language?

Authenticity of activities is related to professional work. A newspaper reading activity can be seen as not authentic as students normally don't read the newspaper for Business Studies, nevertheless this does have value. Similarly an activity based on answering a letter can be different from a real life task. When writing an answering letter as an activity how would students write it? Would it be the same way as they would in real life? Teachers' reaction to authentic activities: would they apply the same criteria as for artificial task?

Presentation or negotiation is the main criterion for business success. This should be treated in the same way as when doing linguistic activities. Would they be evaluated according to the use of appropriate linguistic use or for effective business communication, achieving the linguistic goal or the business goal?

Topic- 058: Tailor-made Material – Generating/Adapting

Sometimes institutions and teachers find it important to produce tailor-made material, designed to supplement the course book or the regular course. This could be done by the training department or the individual teacher. Experienced teachers can have a huge amount of material which they can adapt to suit learning needs/contexts. Some of this adaptation can be merely cosmetic to make it look custom-made. At other times it could be using the same material in another context.

Material used for an in-company course for a group of engineers in a multinational electrical engineering company based in France, of the production department. A KD router (a piece of electrical equipment) is a best-selling product can be used a group of property consultants based in Rome. Vocabulary, dates and place names can be adapted for learners of two different contexts.

Generating Materials: Even if the teacher can get hold of genuine documents, the chances are they will need adapting, either because they may not be at an appropriate level, or they may only contain one or two 'usable' items, or because they are only relevant to a few people in the class. Ploughing through an irrelevant document can be extremely tedious, and may alienate learners. Even though authentic materials have distinct advantages, the aim is to teach people how to communicate in English, and that aim is paramount.

The advantage to teachers of making their own materials is that these can be much more specific. Disadvantages are that it could be very time-consuming to prepare and special skills and experience are needed in materials writing, word-processing, graphic design, and the like. Materials are sometimes are so context-specific that they cannot be reused.

Preparatory Stage: Material adaptation at this stage has to focus on:

- Assessment of the learners' needs
- Deciding on priorities
- Identifying and analyzing language items
- Working out pedagogical approaches
- Deciding what sorts of activities to use
- Making decisions about layout
- Evaluating or piloting early or draft versions

In practice, teachers do not create something completely new (there is no need to), but adapt ideas and resources to suit particular situations. Adaptation of existing materials takes advantage of work that someone has already done (including selection of general language items, writing base text, structuring and formatting a document, testing activities). Generating new material usually takes more time and effort, not only in designing but also because new components have to be collected and assembled. Fortunately, teachers/material developers have many resources available to them, including information and ideas on the Internet and Business media or in the public documents of companies, as well as what the learners themselves can bring to the class.

Topic- 059: Using Corpora

Corpora (collections of real language data) can be an important source of material. It is authentic, as it is drawn from real language in use. A concordance is a list of phrases, each showing the same word or language feature taken from a corpus, which allows users to focus on a particular lexical, grammatical, or discourse issue (concordances are generated electronically, so they may be accessed via the Internet). A typical concordance program can allow the user to isolate a particular language feature and analyze it in detail. Teachers may do this themselves, or may ask learners. Simply by typing a word, e.g. *market*, the learner can access its use as a noun, as an adjective or a verb.

Teachers can extract a few items and then use them in class for activities, how words are used, to create gap-fills for their colleagues, complete the sentences and write similar ones themselves. Open ended activities are helpful in allowing students to internalize language and professional content more than controlled exercises which focus on testing accuracy.

Using corpora has the advantage of making us aware of the real usefulness of teaching a certain language item. Corpus studies can give information on the most frequently used business terms - single words as well as multi-word items such as compounds, collocations, noun phrases, and acronyms. If these items are identified in corpus studies, included in a language course and treated as priority items, it can considerably speed up the teaching process and contribute to increased effectiveness of language courses.

The corpus evidence can serve as a powerful database that will make it possible to intensify the language acquisition process by focusing on the words and phrases that occur most frequently in professional business communication. Corpora allow us to move away from intuition to objectivity in our efforts to develop appropriate and useful materials.

Topic- 060: Learner as Resource

Sometimes teachers of Business English do not find prepackaged materials to suit a particular context. This is problematic as our credibility depends on how relevant we can make our lessons. The BE learners want to know where their studies are taking them, and why they are doing or what they are doing. That is why tailor-made materials are worth considering. A useful method is to involve learners. The learners know a lot about their business and jobs, as compared to the teacher, and have precise notions about what they need and want to learn.

The aim of using the learner themselves as a resource is to get content from the learner; the teacher remains the language expert. With a job-experienced learner this benefit is obvious – who knows more about the job and its requirements than the people who are doing it? One way of getting useful content is to chat to the learners which should be purposeful and focusing on particular utterances, to develop content and language.

Role-play can use real situations from learners' workplace, meetings, telephone calls, and the like. Basic procedure to follow is to discuss the background of the activity, followed by role plays where teachers and students take specific roles. These can be recorded and formulated until everyone is satisfied that the language being produced is appropriate. Learners note key language points which can then be used for future reference. Learners can bring materials, e.g. letters, emails, meeting points. Teachers and learners collaborate to generate language points. This is desirable as the learner has a stake in the lesson and is motivated by the fact.

Lesson 11

SELECTING AND DEVELOPING MATERIALS-II

Topic- 061: Framework Materials

Frameworks are explicitly structured contexts designed to help teachers and learners. They can be used to generate language and to focus on the language produced in the classroom. Frameworks create a situation where the learner is pushed towards using specific language in order to complete the task assigned. If the task is difficult for the learner, the teacher and other learners can be helped in various ways. The teacher or other learners can help by making suggestions reformulating what has been said or by making suggestions.

Activities can be given to practice a grammatical form, e.g. when negotiating activity, the framework entails using the conditional, when talking about your continuing habit you are forced to use “I am used to having tea at breakfast”, as contrasted to saying, “I used to go for a morning walk” a past activity which is no longer done.

A framework usually consists of a diagram or a simple outline, or a list of key words which can be used as a prompt. Some can be produced before the lesson and some in conjunction with learners. Several techniques can be used to elicit the desired response:

- Ask the learners to bring in their diary (or calendar) for next week, and take you through their plans.
- Ask learners to draw a time plan of a project they were involved with and talk about it.

Using frameworks in teaching Business English has several advantages. First of all they are easy to produce, they can generate relevant language, the learner can focus on meaning rather than form, and they can be used with all levels of learners. It is possible to run an entire course of Business English using just framework materials.

Topic- 062: Course Books

Course books are the major source of framework material which can be used extensively. The teachers use their own program but supplemented with other material. The advantages of frameworks are that they provide a sense of structure and progress to all involved. They also serve as a syllabus. Other benefits are:

- Ready-made texts and tasks: Available for appropriate level
- Economy: Cheapest material available
- Convenience: To use, easy to carry, pack, and stack.
- Guidance: For inexperienced teachers.
- Autonomy: Learners can learn, monitor, and review with autonomy.

Disadvantages are that they might be inadequate, i.e. cannot supply needs of diverse learners, topics might not interest everyone, and may inhibit teacher’s creativity. Some frameworks work in homogenous classes and cannot cater to diverse learning styles. They have their own rationale and approach. The using of too many framework materials results in making the teaching process overly easy for teachers whose role might be reduced as just mediators of content.

Topic- 063: Criteria for Course Books

The criterion for course book selection is generally applicable to all; however, for a certain course or learner population it can be specific. General requirements are that it has a clear layout and is reviewed periodically. A more specific selection for a certain course or learner population could have for example colorful and attractive illustrations for younger learners, and vocabulary and text relevant to topic for science and technology students. One of the most important points to note is that a course book has clear stated objectives. Other points are:

- Coverage: Systematic
- Authentic texts language
- Topics: relevant
- Focus on communication
- Specialist Vocabulary
- Needs: Relevant

Teaching philosophy spells out the:

- Cultural content.
- Can be used as a self-study material, reference book.
- Need of any special equipment.
- Provides guidance for exam preparation.

Course books can be evaluated by applying this criterion. However course books rarely cater for the needs of all learners. A certain degree of adaptation and tailoring is required as well as the use of supplementary materials. Another way is to involve learners in the selection of course book. This results in more commitment to make the course a success.

Topic- 064: Using a Course Book

Using a course book entails that the teacher knows the good and bad points about it, what a single unit or chapter covers in terms of coverage, texts, tasks and administration. Coverage can be seen as follows:

- Covers theoretical concepts
- Language forms
- Communication skills
- Professional content

Texts can be seen according to their:

- Difficulty level
- Genre
- Interesting/Boring

- Varied

Tasks: (Activities)

- Opportunities for using target language and communication?
- Relevant, useful
- Balance fluency and accuracy
- Heterogeneous
- Cover language items and skills

Administration:

- Specific components
- Administered effectively by teacher? Or learners to tackle individually?
- Provides guidance?
- Important: Activate learners for maximum benefit

Course book guidance:

- Activate learners
- Teacher-led questions? In pairs/groups, individually
- Work in pairs?
- Classroom interaction

Using a course book is the teacher's choice and learners' need. Teachers should select according to these criteria and keep in mind the need for supplementing.

Topic- 065: Supplementary Materials

Most teachers teaching course books need supplementary materials to some extent, even if they have to tailor them to the needs of a particular class /offer richer options. Besides course book, the teacher can use computers which have a huge potential in retrieving and storing information. Using computers is motivating and attractive for students, who, however, need to be computer literate. The Need of practice and availability remains a concern. As a teacher's resource in making materials, computers are invaluable, as research can be accessed.

Books are all-time materials which are user-friendly, light, and easy to store and pack. Having a collection of reference books, extra textbooks, teacher's handbooks and regular reading of professional journals can inject new ideas and update teachers on current thinking. Overhead projectors are useful for presenting visual/written materials for classes. They are invaluable in terms of presenting vivid and eye catching information. They save lesson time, but entail more work for the teacher. However, they are vulnerable to malfunction, breakdowns and electricity failures.

Audio equipment, for example, cassette recorders are relatively cheap, easy to use, the main source of spoken language texts in most classrooms, and however they lack visual content. Video equipment is an excellent source of authentic materials. It is attractive, motivating, and flexible – in terms of options to start, stop, run forward, back and pause. Programs are available in videos catering for different levels and areas of learners. The disadvantage is their lack of mobility and occasional breakdowns.

Posters, pictures and games can be home made. Use of glossy magazines is also useful. The Internet is an unlimited source of topical and authentic materials. Emails can be used for providing feedback, reviewing assignments, etc. The humble telephone remains an important resource for learning.

Topic- 066: Teacher-made Supplementary Materials

Traditional class teacher, armed with chalk and talk, was the sole imparted of wisdom. Now sources of knowledge have diversified and expanded in non-traditional ways, so the classroom has also become a place where multiple sources are used to bring the outside world into the class. The sophisticated BE learner expects to be given the latest trends, methodologies and equipment in classes. Even with an excellent course book and a wide variety of other materials, there comes a point when the teacher needs to make their own supplementary materials. This should be:

- Relevant
- Personalized
- Work sheets: Easy to make, MCQs, True/false tests, excellent for end of unit quizzes, easy to administer and check.
- Work cards:

The following guidelines can be used for preparing above:

Stage 1: Preparation of teacher made work sheets: Choosing language point or communication item, composing through word processor or by hand.

Stage 2: First Draft: Make a sample

Stage 3: Feedback: If working in a group, get feedback from others

Stage 4: Second Draft: Remake or make a new one according to ideas received from peers.

Getting students to read the latest researches of their relevant areas is a useful activity. For students of Economics, reading *The Economist*, where the content tends to work in consistent areas of language, so, after a while, students who practice reading this journal, will become experts in reading English language business publications, and get acquainted with the latest trends and happenings as well. Emails can be used for feedback and assignment checking. Supplementary materials should be based on learners' needs. Today's sophisticated learner is aware of, and needs the latest trends and equipment in teaching. Teachers of BE should draw on the wide range of materials offered by the ELT and the non ELT world to give their learners a varied experience, yet keeping in mind the suitability of materials in terms of learners' needs and aims of the learners.

Lesson 12

SELECTING AND DEVELOPING MATERIALS-III

Topic- 067: Authentic Materials: Definition and Use

Within the world of English teaching, authentic materials are texts which have not been produced specifically for classroom use. One of the key characteristics of ESP is that teachers and course developers value the use of authentic texts and tasks. The term 'authentic' denotes that the texts were written for purposes other than language teaching and learning. If we be developing a course for financial accountants, we would probably try to include real texts written by accountants and those in related financial sectors, such as, the financial section of a company annual report if they were written for the purposes of communicating financial or economic ideas and information. Texts written by journalists could possibly be used for class of journalists.

Authentic materials could be real commercial documents, newspaper articles, recordings of meetings and conversations used in the workplace, newspaper clippings, excerpts from case studies, reports. Using such materials is a fundamental part of teaching people who are working in companies, and even course books designed for pre-experienced people who often use authentic materials in their content for practice of reading, vocabulary, grammar, comprehension, etc.

Advantages are that they bring in real world (in terms of concepts, language, and practice). Learners can relate and understand the point of the training as it is relevant to their subject area, in terms of application of concepts and language items. Hence it leads to motivation /interest. It helps the teacher understand the needs of learners.

Some authentic texts are commercially or legally sensitive - we cannot talk about the working of a company by using its annual report, commercial products and practices cannot be named. Sometimes there is non-availability of materials on learners' part. We can arrive to teach a lesson expecting our learners to have brought materials in (as they promised in the last lesson) and then be disappointed when none are offered. Sometimes learners may lack the confidence to bring in their own work and show it to other learners. Confidentiality can be cited as a reason for failing to bring documents into class, although some companies are prepared to invest a significant degree of trust in their trainers and make them privy to sensitive information.

Sometimes there is the nonexistence of suitable materials. Perhaps the class is of MBA students who have not yet worked in an international company, or perhaps the in-house course is for a company that has only just moved into an international marketplace, and its employees have never had to do anything in English before.

Authentic texts play an important role in demonstrating 'real' language use. If we aim to demonstrate to our class of nursing students the forms and features of nursing care plans, we would generally wish to show the class samples of authentic care plans.

Following points can be noted while using authentic materials:

- Use contexts, texts and situations from the students' subject area. Whether they are real or simulated, they will naturally involve the language the students need.
- Exploit authentic materials that students use in their specialism or vocation – and don't be put off by the fact that it may not look like 'normal English'.
- Make the tasks authentic as well as the texts. Get the students to do things with the material that they actually need to do in their work.

Topic- 068: Types and Sources

Finding suitable authentic texts is not always easy. Audio materials, cassettes and tapes are relatively easy to get and are cheap. They provide a source of spoken language besides the teacher. Mobiles are easier to use, however, they lack visual content, but make a desired entry-point.

In discussing materials development in EAP, Swales (2009) describes a problem that can arise. Most EAP practitioners, when preparing materials for classes or workshops, can't find the perfect text for what they want to do in class. Textbooks, manuals, journal articles or websites have failed to produce a solution to the material writer's problem. The language exemplification requires editing. One text may have the looked-for rhetorical structure and linguistic exemplification, but the content is too obscure or unmanageable; another is attractive and has utilizable content, but the structure is wrong, or the treatment is too journalistic (Myers, 1990), and a third looks promising but it is too cluttered with intertextual links, asides and references to be useable 'as it is'. Authentic material can be accessed from the following:

- Minutes, Memos
- Emails, Contracts
- Reports, Company advertising brochures
- Presentations (PowerPoint™ slideshows, overhead acetates)
- Voicemail messages
- Audio and video recordings of real interactions, e.g. TV adverts
- Company sales videos, Internet and intranet websites

Today's sophisticated learner wants more teaching media to bring in more dynamic and authentic models of language, communication and content into the classroom. However the teacher needs to balance suitability of material as shown in the figure below. BE learners wanted to be given an exposure to all the latest materials and equipment. However, the teacher has to balance reliability, ease of use, accessibility, utility for selection and adaptation of authentic materials.

Topic- 069: Selection and Adaptation of Authentic Materials

The modern class has moved beyond" Chalk and Talk" style of the traditional class where the teacher imparted his/her unique knowledge to students. As the world has become more complex the sources of knowledge have diversified, no single teacher can be the font of all wisdom. However, we are not alone and have means to bring the outside world into the class. There is a wide range of materials and different media which can be exploited to turn the class into a varied teaching/learning environment. Teaching media allows dynamic and authentic models of language, content and communication. These include letters, minutes, memos, emails, contracts, reports of company for today's sophisticated learner and more relevant ones like company advertisements and brochures. Activities are based around giving presentations, voicemail messages, audio and video recordings of real interactions, TV adverts, company sales videos, Internet and intranet websites.

ELT and non-ELT world provides a wide range of audio and video content. The main aim is to impart knowledge and learning to the class, to bring the real life context in the class ensuring the suitability of materials. Suitability of authentic material is problematic. Availability of suitable materials poses problems as they are difficult to obtain in practice. Our credibility as teachers depends on providing relevant materials, as a high degree of relevance is expected.

Modification/customization is required with both published and authentic materials. Most EAP practitioners, when preparing materials for classes or workshops, face the familiar problem of not finding the perfect text they need in the class. Most textbooks, manuals, journal articles or websites have failed to produce a solution to the material writer's problem. One text may have the required rhetorical structure and linguistic exemplification, but the content is too obscure or unmanageable, another has attractive and utilizable content, but the structure is wrong, or the treatment is too journalistic, and a third looks promising but it is too cluttered with intertextual links, asides and references. The need for adaptation is always there. Editing is an option as is a certain amount of 'skeletonization', where ellipsis or some other 'placeholder' device is used to eliminate dense content chunks of language. The occasional use of 'instructor-written' materials is required sometimes.

Just as materials are the "software" of teaching, equipment can be called "hardware" of teaching. Equipment can be video and audio. Audiovisual materials are easily available and cheap and BE teaching material is available in them. It includes business news reports, company training or promotional videos can provide excellent opportunities to focus on the specific language used to discuss products. Video providing sound and picture both can provide excellent opportunities to focus on the specific language, used to discuss products, are useful for language teacher as well as learners.

Topic- 070: Using Authentic Materials for Developing Various Skills

The aim of using authenticity of texts and tasks is to bring the real world into the class. The task should mirror the real world task. The ideal activity is to interact with the authentic material in the same way that the learners might have to in real life. For example, with a letter, the teacher could play the part of a customer who has received it and has some questions to ask. With a presentation, the teacher (and other learners) could watch it and then role-play contributing questions from the audience. The authentic spoken material may also be very useful, although it can prove difficult to obtain in practice. Sometimes teachers are allowed to attend and record meetings and phone conversations. We can record colleagues carrying out role-plays of tasks similar to those faced by our learners, or we can make recordings of telephone calls we have with our learners. If we do have authentic spoken material, there are various ways to exploit it.

Audiovisual materials, can be used to develop various skills, such as business news reports or company promotional or training videos, can provide excellent opportunities to focus on the specific language used to discuss products (useful for the language teacher, as well as the learners). A typical activity would be to ask learners to watch three recent news reports, and then fill in a table responding to *Who*, *What*, and *Why* questions, as a basis for discussion.

It is convenient if authentic documents can be provided in electronic form; not only are poor quality photocopies frustrating, but more importantly, having materials in electronic form allows teachers to adapt and reproduce them more easily for classroom use, and to adapt them for other classes if this is appropriate and acceptable to the original producer of the document. Possible activities that can be done with authentic materials, either adapted or in their original form are:

- Reading (skim, scan, summarize, answer comprehension questions).
- Create gap-fill exercise (remove the words and replace with gaps).
- Ask students to predict content by just giving them section headings.
- Scramble the text and ask learners to rearrange it into the correct order.
- In the case of correspondence, ask learners to compose a reply.
- Get learners to select ten useful phrases or words from the document, and discuss their choice with other learners.
- Discuss possible improvements in the material.
- Use pictures and diagrams to prompt discussion.
- Ask learners to explain and clarify the issues in the document.
- If the authentic material includes notes or slides for a presentation, ask learners to deliver that presentation, or discuss content, or layout of slides.
- Select sections of a report for learners to read and present orally.
- Get learners to explain figures, calculations, graphs, tables, etc.
- Use customs or shipping documents to get learners to explain the process of moving goods from suppliers to customers.
- Redesign logos or letterheads, discussing the rationale behind the design.

One way might be to get our learners to focus on and notice particular aspects of the text, or particular communication issues. These might be vocabulary, useful phrases, grammatical points, or even non-verbal aspects of communication. We may ask the learners to transcribe what they hear, or compare their understanding to a transcription we have prepared earlier or listening to presentations and asking relevant questions after it. Authentic materials like newspapers can be used to develop letter writing and vocabulary, by picking up similar genre, legal, business, and medical words from the various news items e.g. business sections and using them in own writing.

Topic- 071: Using Role-Plays and Simulations

Role-plays are activities where the learners take on a role, they do not play themselves. Learner's behavior or opinions are limited to instructions card and the language used is pre-taught. Mostly the participants do not have all the relevant information. Role plays are good for pre-experienced learners, as most of the information is given to them. They may have no personal experience to use in the role they are playing. Role-plays are not practical if learners do not have enough time to memorize the information and have to look at their cards to remind themselves of what to say.

A simulation is quite different from a role-play. It refers to an activity where the learner is playing him or her, and (ideally) simulates what he or she might do in real life. The aim is to create a particular kind of situation in the safety of the classroom. He/she meets a similar situation in real life; he or she feels confident of doing it before. It gives a realistic reason for doing the activity in English. The aim is to create suspension of disbelief, so that the learners become fully involved in the activity, and are not distracted by the fact that it is taking place in a classroom. Indeed, one sign of a successful simulation is where the participants carry on discussing the issues outside the classroom.

Simulations are particularly useful for in-company groups where people have real jobs to focus on. As a simulated activity takes place in a safe environment, so there is no fear of making mistakes. To involve a good speaker of English, enormous benefit can be derived by communicating with a stranger who knows their subject but isn't the teacher. Sometimes a simulation would involve a learner simply discussing work-related issues with the teacher, in the same way that this might be done with a new boss, a customer, or a partner. The main point is that it stimulates the type of discourse the learner would have in real life.

Topic- 072: Using Case Studies

A case study is a description of a problem or decision faced by a company business. It describes a specific business problem and creates a jumping off point for analysis and discussion. It enables learners to look at a particular business problem from various perspectives. Using case studies is suitable for all types of business English learner (except low level of English language competence). For pre-experienced groups, some additional information might be needed. In an in-company training situation, case studies may mirror the real requirements of the job, can introduce interesting material not directly relevant and provides variety and useful language practice. Teachers can write their own case studies or can tailor situations to their learners' specific needs if do not wish to invest time and effort in preparation of each case.

Case studies require learners to use a variety of different skills in order to complete the tasks set. This may include writing, speaking, listening, researching and presenting their findings. A case study method teaches through focusing on relevant content rather than grammatical/lexical exercises. This content –material is business related. Authentic texts are used to analyze and solve particular issues, by using previous cases.

Lesson 13

TUTORING A COURSE-I

Topic- 073: Lesson Planning

A lesson is a type of social activity, which exists in every culture. It may vary in different aspects - the participants and teachers. However, it is always limited and pre-scheduled as regards time, place and membership. The transactional aspect of a lesson entails that it is a purposeful give and take. The interactional feature of a lesson is that it involves participants. It is goal oriented in that it has an objective. It is a satisfying experience if it provides motivation to learners and teachers.

A lesson would vary according to culture. In a role-based culture where roles are accepted, a lesson follows a conventional construct. It can be an event where events in the same way and sequence every time, or it could be a series of free choices: where learners can choose and decide. Lessons require preparation, which can range from weeks before it is to be delivered or a day or two before. For some teachers it could be writing a few brief notes, short headings and abbreviations, to look at occasionally. Such notes can be used later on or to reflect on.

There are varying components of a lesson. A ‘packaging’, or selection and organization of course contents can be done in various ways. A useful guideline could be to put the harder tasks first, or the quieter activities before lively ones as learners might get too stimulated to carry on the reflective ones. Teachers can think about transitions, how to go from one activity to the other smoothly, putting the class together at the beginning/end of an activity which involves group work, and ending on a positive note.

Practical lesson management involves preparing more than you need, and then seeing which part can be sacrificed, as well as time management, e.g. not distributing papers oneself, giving clear instructions for group work.

Topic- 074: Stages One

Lessons are there in every culture and have variety. There are many aspects of teaching. Here we will cover pedagogical on-course aspects of teaching. Teaching covers a wide range of disciplines, we will concentrate on the following as being of special interest to the BE teacher:

- Lesson Planning
- Learning styles and Training Styles
- Giving Feedback
- One-to-One Teaching or Group Teaching

The basic model of learning is: Practice – Feedback - Competence. In this basic model feedback is of central importance and with practice helps in developing competence. The practice and feedback model can be translated into a lesson plan. A lesson is a series of interrelated steps which aim to develop a certain aspect of language knowledge or communication skills according to the aim of the course. Each lesson should have its own unique aims, coherence and outputs. Business English teaching combines influences from other fields like management and communication, but we should not lose sight of the basic, essential model of learning which is warming-up, presenting, practicing, producing, evaluation, and feedback. Some consider reviewing the past lesson, or teachers own preparation for the lesson as a step.

The Business English lesson can be seen as having six flexible stages, focusing on the content, with the objectives of giving language as well as communication training, through tasks as well as texts. For example, in a lesson focusing on a presentation, the following six step model can be used:

1. Input: text and a task, information about a business or professional area.

2. Presentation: Language points: Related to the above, e.g. for presentations what should be appropriate linguistic item should be taught.

3. Practice: Practice of the above language form.

4. Communication points: Related to communication tasks, i.e. the presentation

5. Practice: Practice of the above.

6. Output Task: Production of the language and communication task.

Stage one gives the input text, focusing on the content. This stage provides informational content for a business or professional area. What we call presenting the objectives of the lesson, it is an introduction to build up learners' previous knowledge as well as warming them up. It gives a text, a task and a model. Information content can be taken from a listening or reading text taken for its informational content. It also provides a model for the output task. In order to provide a focus for the task (the reason for listening or speaking), the input text should be accompanied by an appropriate task. The input text used as a model, may be a listening or reading text. If the objective of the lesson is to develop communication skills then the input text should provide a model for the output task (Stage 6). In other words, a presentation provides a suitable input model for developing presentation skills and a meeting for developing meeting skills.

Topic- 075: Stage Two and Three

Stage Two: It focuses on language and presentation of language points, e.g. grammar, vocabulary, functions, pronunciation etc. Stage two focuses on language content. This may be grammatical area, a functional area, key vocabulary or pronunciation patterns. One text can lend itself to various language foci and the teacher needs to decide which focus best meets the students' needs. The trainers' role at this stage is to present, usually on the board the key features of the language forms.

Stage Three: This stage focuses on language practice. While stage two focused on presentation of language forms, at the third stage practice of these forms is carried out through controlled activities, e.g. Gap fill, sentence manipulation and practice on word families. At Stage 3 students get a chance to practice these forms and patterns through controlled exercises. The aim is to focus the trainee's attention on the forms and provide an exercise to check the ability to manipulate the forms correctly.

Topic- 076: Stage Four and Five

In Stage Four and Five the focus is on communication, e.g. presentation and delivery through controlled practice. Stage Four focuses on presentation of communication features like presentation structure, presentation delivery, controlling meetings and letter organization. While stages 2 and 3 focus on language forms presented in the input text, a parallel operation may be carried out for communication skills, e.g. presentations, meetings, interviewing, letter writing, report writing, etc. In this way the fourth stage would look at models for a particular mode of communication in order to raise awareness of:

- Procedures
- Behaviors
- Associated language

Stage Five carries out communication practice through tasks such as mini presentation, meeting excerpts, controlled letter writing. The models can be presented by the trainer himself or where impractical, videos can be shown. Just as Stage 2 and 3 focuses on the forms and functions of language, stage four analyses the techniques and strategies of communication as well as associated language. Examples are:

Presentations:

- Opening a presentation
- Linking ideas in presentations
- Summarizing and concluding a presentation
- Delivering effectively to an international audience, in terms of tempo, volume, visual aids, etc.

Meetings:

- Chairing a meeting
- Controlling a meeting
- Inviting contributions to a meeting

Topic- 077: Stage Six

Stage six provides opportunity for free practice for using forms and communication patterns presented and practiced in stages 2 -5. Building blocks of language and communication are practiced.

Where the focus is on language - grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and functions of language will be taught and practiced. Where focus is communication – structure of presentations and delivery, controlling meetings and letter organization may be taught. Context for communication - correspond to the model presented in stage one.

Stage six involves putting the various stages of the lesson together. A speaking or writing task based will be based around a communicative activity to develop fluency and a communicative activity to develop effectiveness. The context of each activity will be drawn from the materials/context and/or the trainees own or professional experience. Stage six presents a flexible lesson plan. It can be varied according to:

- Teachers’ teaching style
- Learners’ learning style
- Resources

Topic- 078: Lesson Evaluation

It is important for the teacher to reflect at the end of a lesson about whether the objectives were achieved or not. Was the lesson effective? What went wrong? Was it good? Certain criteria can be used for evaluating the lesson - Were your students active and attentive all the time to enjoy themselves? If they are enjoying the lesson they would be motivated, and hence they would learn better. However, in contrast, they could be activated but would be learning nothing.

Another point to ponder upon is whether the lesson went as planned –again it could be effective but the question remains whether it was a good plan. A reflective teacher is flexible, and would modify the plan during the class.

Another point for evaluating a Business Communication lesson would be to see whether the language was used communicatively throughout the lesson. To reinforce language use, other activities/tasks are also required. Sometimes the class seems to be learning the material well, but it is difficult for the teacher to judge whether learning is actually taking place. The criteria to evaluate a lesson will vary. Learning is the main aim and engaging with content shows whether the lesson plan was effective or not. Learners’ attention, their enjoyment and motivation would ensure active learning. Teachers’ job is to plan well, be flexible to change the original plan and have some contingency plan as well.

Lesson 14

TUTORING A COURSE-II

Topic- 079: Learning Styles

How can we apply the learning model suggested earlier? It has been observed that success in learning depends to a great extent on the learning style of learners. Each learner has a unique learning style and approaches a task according to this style. So given a task such as a presentation or learning twenty new words of the target language, each learner will bring his her own way of learning to achieve the task. Some learn by repeating after the teacher, others by writing down. Still others repeat the task and internalize it. As we know some learners will be more successful than others.

Oxford (2003) says: “The term learning style refers to the general approach preferred by the student when learning a subject, acquiring a language, or dealing with a difficult problem. Learning style is an overall pattern that provides broad direction to learning and makes the same instructional method beloved by some students and hated by others”.

Dunn and Dunn (1979) define learning styles as “A term that describes the variations among learners in using one or more senses to understand, organize, and retain experience”

As business English teachers, we need to adapt our teaching style, we can go some way to help learners achieve their learning objectives more effectively. This approach involves:

- Identifying and being aware of our trainees’ learning styles
- Providing classroom tasks adapted to their styles

Topic- 080: Classification of Learning Styles

As educators we are familiar with categorization of learners according to the following categories of perceptual learners:

- Auditory Learners
- Visual Learners
- Tactile Learners
- Kinesthetic Learners

It is important to see them as connected as learners will have many different styles. Learning styles are also influenced by the culture of the learners. In Asian cultures, the teacher is seen as having the right answer, whereas in Western cultures the teacher is seen as a facilitator, which means learner have more autonomy. Styles are culturally motivated, can lead to conflict in L2 classes made up of students from different cultures. As the four learner types are spread evenly in population, so a business English class can be planned according to the stages defined in lesson planning. However, teachers have to adapt their lessons according to learning styles of learners.

Types of adaptation are:

Selecting lesson stages according to preferred learning styles
Modifying time allocated so that the less popular but important areas are covered.
Prioritizing and order lesson stages according to preferred learning styles.

Topic- 081: The Four Learning Styles

Honey and Mumford suggest four preferred learning styles that a learner brings to a task. Based on these learning styles we can classify learners into four types, and identify their learning characteristics: The Activist, the theorist, the Pragmatist, the Reflector.

The Activist: Learns by doing the task. In the language classroom, they are the ones who enjoy language tasks and communication practice, enjoy using and experimenting with the language.

The Theorist: Learns the language by understanding the underlying theory. These are the learners who want to know why a particular language form is more appropriate in a certain situation or why a particular communication technique is more appropriate in a given setting.

The Pragmatist: Learns by practicing in a controlled environment. They enjoy the security of closed environment and feel that this way gives them confidence to use the language forms in actual situations.

The Reflector: Learns by watching others do the task. They are likely to feel insecure about their own ability to perform in the language. However, in a secure environment they become willing to perform communicative tasks and participate in language activities.

Every language learner and language teacher has one or other learning style and preference of specific learning environment and methods and dislike others. Any of the learning styles is not opposites of the other at any stage as many of us think, but work as in a continuum. None of the learning styles have any better value over others, although some of the learning styles function well with some of the students than the others and vice versa. In order to get full advantage from any learning tasks and activities the students must think out of the box and stretch their language learning styles. Questionnaires can be used to identify learners' dominant learning style, and match the lesson stages with learner types:

Stage 1: Present the input text, the task and the model output (administer questionnaire).

Stages 2 & 4: The focus on language forms and communication patterns should appeal to the theorist who wants to fit the new knowledge into existing schema.

Stage 3 & 5: This controlled practice should appeal to the pragmatist who likes to test out the practical application of the forms and techniques presented.

Stage 6: This stage appeals to both activist and reflector who will benefit from and develop confidence from seeing the activist in action.

Perceptive teachers would identify the learning style of learners and would match it up with the lesson stages. Learning strategies are directly connected to the learning styles of the learners.

Topic- 082: Learning Strategies

Learning strategies and styles are linked to each other but are different. Strategies are "…characteristics we want to stimulate in students to enable them to become more proficient language learners" (Oxford, 1990). Style is natural, but strategies can be purposively taught, e.g. writing the main idea is a strategy which can be taught explicitly. It is a cognitive strategy known as summarizing. The following strategies are specific means which learners use to learn or improve learning:

Metacognitive Strategies:

- Planning: Previewing paying attention main ideas, seeking
- Monitoring: Self-checking one's comprehension
- Evaluating: Developing ability to evaluating own task

Cognitive Strategies:

- Summarizing: Main idea
- Induction: Figuring out rules samples
- Imagery: Visualize
- Auditory representation: Repeating words
- Making inferences: Guess meaning
- Using resources: Ability to use reference material
- Grouping: Classifying words, concepts
- Note-taking: Writing key words, concepts
- Elaborating prior knowledge: Relating

Social/Affective Strategies:

- Cooperating: Learning how to work with peers
- Clarifying: Asking questions
- Self-talk: Reducing anxiety by talking positively to oneself

The goal is to create a teaching environment that assists learners to learn efficiently and effectively. Learning strategies are useful in addressing the needs of diverse learners and preparing them for a better learning experience.

Topic- 083: Learning Styles and Strategies

Language learning style has a significant influence on second language learners hence on their achievements and progress in the learning. Many researchers have tried to prove the hypothesis that language learning styles force learners to use certain strategies more often than others. Ehramn and Oxford (1989) carried a research on the relationship between LLS and language learning styles shows the following: Extroverts use effective and social strategies more than introverts, while introvert use independent and self-management strategies more.

Sensing types use mnemonic devices and visualization strategies more and "intuitors search for and communicate meaning and use formal model more frequently" (Ehramn & Oxford, 1989

"Thinkers use a formal model building more frequently, while feelers employ authentic language use, searching for and communicating meaning, social strategies, and affective strategies" (Ehramn & Oxford, 1989, p. 259). "Judgers use general strategies, independent strategies, and self-management, while perceivers employ strategies concerned with searching for and communicating meaning" (Ehramn & Oxford, 1989, p. 259).

The style of the individual learner forces him/her to use certain strategies more frequently than others. Actually, their style helps them in learning language and this unconscious use of different strategies assists them in this process.

Topic- 084: Teaching of Strategies

Language learning strategies are directly connected to the learning styles of the learners. The learning model suggested above has to take into account the learning styles of the learners and adapt the teaching style accordingly. This approach involves identifying and being aware of our trainees' learning styles and needs. Classroom tasks can be adapted to their learners' styles, instead of trying to change their style. The Business English class is composed of four learner types. Lesson planning has to be according to the stages defined above and adapted according to learning styles of learners. The types of adaptations can include selecting lesson stages according to preferred learning style of class and modifying the time, so that the less popular styles but important areas are covered. The principles for teaching include varying activities and materials, making all learning styles value neutral, as well as continuously auditing our teaching. Learners should be encouraged to stretch their learning styles by linking learning styles/ strategies and varying techniques and tasks. Lesson organization should prioritize and order lesson stages according to preferred learning style of the class. Honey and Mumfield's (1992) questionnaire is useful to identify learners' dominant learning style. It gives the following stages of the process:

Stage 01: Identifying dominant style of learners

Stage 2 & 4: These stages focus on language forms and communication patterns which should appeal to the theorists who want to fit the new knowledge into existing schema.

Stage 3 & 5: This controlled practice should appeal to the pragmatists who like to test out the practical application of the forms and techniques presented.

Stage 6: Appeals to both activist and reflector who will benefit from and develop confidence from seeing the activist in action, Rossi-Le's study (1989) found a significant correlation between perceptual learning styles: visual, auditory, tactile, and kinesthetic and strategy use for 7 out of 10 strategy categories. Auditory learners preferred memory strategies, cognitive strategies for authentic language use, and metacognitive strategies such as planning and evaluating their own learning. However, tactile learners revealed a strong preference for using strategies for communicating meaning and for self-management (Nian-nian, 2012).

Lesson 15

TUTORING A COURSE-III

Topic- 085: Giving Feedback

Feedback is information given to the learner about his/her performance with the objective of improving performance. It has two components - *Assessment*, in which you simply inform how well or bad the learner has performed, and gives a grade like 70% or a comment like “good”, fair”. In correction, more specific information on learner’s performance is given through explanation, of provision of alternatives or eliciting from learners. It tells of what the learners did right and what was wrong. Different teaching methodologies e.g. audiolingualism, humanistic methodologies, and skills approach, etc. offer different approaches to assessment. Training can be seen as a close-looped system, consisting of the following stages:

1. Identifying needs
2. Designing training
3. Delivering training
4. Evaluating training

Stage 04 feeds back into stage 01 so that subsequent courses can be modified, and stage 04 also feeds back into the other stages so that the current course can be modified and learning can be maximized.

There are different types of evaluation:

- Trainer evaluation: in which the teacher decides how effective your training has been.
- Trainee evaluation: The trainees evaluate how effective the training has been.

Testing and feedback which is the process of determining to what extent the learning objectives have been achieved. In teaching a business English course, our aim is to evaluate: accuracy, fluency, and effectiveness through practice and feedback leading to developing competence. Feedback highlights the strengths and weaknesses of the course, of learning and teaching and provides a basis for remedial work.

Topic- 086: The Evaluators

The evaluators who decide how effective the training is are the trainer, the trainees, the participants and the audience. The targets for a BE course are to develop accuracy, fluency and effectiveness of communication around business related contexts, through the appropriate type of activity. For accuracy-based tasks the teacher with his/her superior knowledge of language forms is the evaluator.

Fluency has to do with the flow and effort of speaking. Flow can be observed, although not measured, and improvement can be seen in fluency in a foreign language user with practice over regular contact and use of the target language. Practice is the key to achieve fluency in intensive as well as extensive courses. Fluency improves confidence and hence competence. So it is important to give encouragement. All can give evaluation, as smooth flow is apparent to a teacher and co-trainees, although it will be subjective.

Effort of speaking is in the head of the speaker not with the listeners. Only the speaker knows the effort needed to speak, so it is only the trainee himself who can tell how much effort is needed. Therefore, the trainees themselves, the trainer and fellow trainees all have to evaluate.

Effectiveness in Business Communication depends on practice, but it should be focused around the building blocks of the communication. These building blocks are performance criteria and evaluation criteria. The most valid evaluation comes with the involvement of all participants -listeners, speakers, presenters, audience and participants who should provide feedback to evaluate the course. The trainer is in the best position to comment on language performance.

Topic- 087: Trainee Evaluation

There are three aspects to trainee evaluation - accuracy, fluency and effectiveness in communication. Practice and feedback are essential elements in developing communication competence. Traditional feedback methods have focused on the accuracy of language forms. However, professional business English training has grown to encompass other areas of communication - fluency of general communication and effectiveness of professional communication. Measuring accuracy is relatively easy, as the use of language forms are usually right or wrong. However, fluency presents problems and is more difficulty to evaluate, as depends on flow and effort of speaking. Flow is seen in terms of speed of speaking and entails that there are no hesitations and pauses. Effectiveness in communication has to be evaluated through the features of professional effectiveness, which include building blocks (procedural, linguistic, behavioral) for teaching professional communication, like presentations, etc.

If we view training as a closed loop system, then these building blocks are both the basis for course design as well as the basis for evaluation.

Topic- 088: Evaluating the Course

Testing learners' language skills is one of the main ways to find out how successful a course is and usually gives results which are qualitative, making the data easy to record, manipulate and compare. However, there are other ways as well. Checking learners' reaction is a standard form of evaluation of a course. Plenary discussions, involving the whole group where impartial members of the team sit together in circle and discuss the pros and cons of the course, can be conducted for evaluation. This sort of evaluations gives qualitative data. Quantitative data can be acquired through written feedback. Questionnaires can be used to get students' responses about various aspects of the course and the teacher. Variations on this could be to send this forms direct to learners from administration and for teacher to leave the class while learners are responding either on the white board or in writing. Such feedback can be used to evaluate teacher performance and base decisions for future hiring as well. More experienced peers are sometimes included in such appraisals of trainers.

Program evaluation is an ongoing process. It is an important source for improvement and monitoring the course. Trainer gets feedback from participants and integrates it back into other phases of the course, the materials and implementation.

Topic- 089: Guidelines for Giving Feedback

To be effective, feedback needs to be constructive, balanced, transparent and reasonable. A common sense approach can help satisfy these requirements. Practice is more important than feedback; more time should be devoted to practice than to feedback, whatever techniques are being used. All participants should participate in giving feedback. Team feedback is better than feedback provided by one person. Both negative and positive aspects of learners' performance should be reflected in feedback. It increases confidence if both strengths and weaknesses are highlighted.

Both oral/written feedbacks should be given according to appropriacy. Some learners have better memory of spoken word while others have more retention of the written word. Oral feedback on discussion of communication techniques is better, while written correction on the white board on language mistakes is more effective.

Immediate feedback is more effective than delayed feedback, giving it while the communication activity is still fresh in the learners' mind. Language feedback can be provided later for follow-up studies and language forms. Focus on feedback should be according to target or lesson objective, whether it was for effectiveness, accuracy or fluency. Feedback should only be as much as learners can assimilate. Better to give feedback of a few points which can be retained rather than too many points which they will forget.

Topic- 090: The Timing for Giving Feedback

The timings for giving feedback are of crucial importance. It can be given during or after an activity but depends on the type of activity and its objective of the activity. In accuracy based activities, some trainees demand instant feedback. However, this is not very effective. Ingrained errors are likely to be repeated again, and immediate attention to them is forgotten in the flow of communication. They have to be dealt with in the learners' basic language system and eliminated through controlled practice. On-the-spot correction may give learners a sense of learning, but actually more serious focus on mistakes after the activity is more effective. The feedback gets integrated into the learning process, becoming needs in the four-stage closed-loop learning system.

Giving feedback in accuracy is often impressionistic and subjective. However, the practice itself, the ability to participate in a fluency based activity is in itself a kind of feedback on trainee's ability to perform that task. Task fulfillment is an indication of ability. Feedback of fluency should be given after the task is over. Interruptions for correction will hinder flow of information and ideas and will curb confidence which is a must for fluency. Gentle correction is desirable when the student is floundering. The role of the trainer as orchestrator and the facilitator should not be underestimated.

For effectiveness through training, activities like presentations, negotiations, feedback can normally be given after the activity. Only if the learner transgresses the basic rules of communication and a breakdown in communication seems to happen, should the trainer intervene to remedy through feedback. After the activity, the notes taken down by participants can be used to generate discussion about its successes or failures.

Lesson 16

MANAGING ACTIVITIES IN THE CLASSROOM-I

Topic- 091: One to One or Group Training

One to One training/teaching is one of the unique characteristic of a Business English course. No other teaching situation offers program customization. Since the trainee is the sole focus of the trainer, everything in terms of objectives, program design, materials and methodology can be adapted for the learner's wish and need. The main difference in individual learner and group learners is the context itself. One to one is personalized and customized, while in group teaching learners share the trainer.

Individualized training is ideally suited to ESP as it offers program customization. The focus is a single learner with objectives, program design, materials, methodology suited to his needs. The basic difference is in the context. Groups and individuals both have high expectations for the course to deliver, however the difference is that:

- The individual learner expects personalized approach.
- Groups expect team work. If one learner in a group wants extra attention, the course atmosphere suffers.

As far as trainee involvement and contribution is concerned, it is easy to satisfy one person as he is involved in all stages of the course from design to delivery. The trainer can easily vary the design, tempo, focus, activity. With a group this is not possible, oral time e.g. has to be shared among the group. Individual differences need to be subordinated to the group's wishes.

The trainee's level needs consideration. In individual courses a certain level of competence which is required can be achieved. In group teaching learners, with lower levels of linguistic resources and less practice of operating in English will tire easily. Care should be given as experience might become a grueling survival test for them.

Trainee objectives are different in the two types of courses. Fluency and accuracy practice is limited in individual courses, are limited for learners who want to develop group interaction skills, there are limited chances of practice. Interaction can be simulated but limitations to what can credibly be done by two people to recreate a group meeting, negotiation skills, and meetings.

Trainer approaches need to be considered in the two types of courses. At the heart of contrast is the nature of relationship which leads to difference in training style. Both require an organization but in individualized courses, style depends on a trainer's sensitivity to shifts in a trainee's moods and responding to personal and professional needs. He/she has to be organized but sensitive to trainee's mood and attention. In group courses individuals change in mood and interest is not well received. The teacher can't throw out the planned lesson because of it.

Certain characteristics are needed for trainers undertaking individual courses. They require expertise as well as flexibility in course design, needs, materials and delivery of course content. The trainer has to spend a lot of time alone with trainee which is not suited to all situations. A house trainer who has a healthy curiosity of what makes people and companies tick, is likely to get satisfaction out of one-to-one courses. Pacing the lesson is important. At times, the learner is too keen. Learners immerse themselves too much one day and are exhausted the next day. If the trainer gets too enthusiastic, he/she might experience burn out.

Topic- 092: Dealing with Individuals

The concept of individualization is quite a common arrangement in business English teaching. It can involve preparing a learner for a specific project, coaching over a long period of time, helping with reports, presentations, etc. The concept of individualization is linked to the idea of provision of training like self-access centers, where learners can be entirely autonomous in their learning.

In individualized training there is more learner autonomy within the class. There is more learner autonomy to select materials, where teacher/learner can choose materials, and where a learner can choose to work alone or in groups. This is opposite to the lockstep arrangement, where everyone in the class, in principle has to do the same thing, at the same time, in the same way.

In individualized teaching the teacher focuses entirely on the learner's needs. The teacher's task is to reformulate learner's language, working towards an improved version, either orally or in written form, not merely focusing on grammatical or lexical errors. The case of the learner can be taken, who wants help in giving a presentation, and starts with the introduction, as an initial attempt. The teacher/learner can work to reformulate it, going over and improving it. It might mean correcting some mistakes but also to start from a scratch.

Within the class, individualization also means catering for the needs of learners and to provide for differing learners' needs within that context. This is not the case with self-instruction and self-access centers where learners work on their own. Effective procedures for individualization teaching include using readers for different levels of learners, varying responses to listening activities, using a variety of textbook exercises for homework, varied tasks for different levels of learners, using textbook questions of various difficulty levels in class.

Topic- 093: Teaching and Training

The terms *teaching* and *training* are used interchangeably. Teaching implies lessons and training implies professional development. The dictionary meaning of teaching is, as in school lessons, to impart knowledge or skills, to impart knowledge of a subject, to cause to learn by example or experience. Training implies professional training to coach in or accustom to a mode of behavior or to make proficient with specialized instruction and practice.

The scope of Business English is therefore both wide and narrow, so both terms can be used for it. It includes aspects of education in terms of language and specialist content knowledge and training in Business skills which includes negotiations, meetings etc.

Business English teaching is influenced by a wide range of disciplines, including ELT and management training. At the heart of Business English, is a needs driven approach, which requires trainers' responsiveness in terms of content and methodology. Therefore, it is not surprising that the BE teachers' repertoire of different training styles may draw on a range of different approaches from different areas. Teaching Business Englishis characterized by a diversity of content, therefore teaching it is complex. Teaching and training approaches focus on the following:

- Classroom as bridge
- Sharing control
- Training style

Topic- 094: The Classroom as a Bridge

In this approach, the classroom is seen as a kind of bridge, but there are different ways of perceiving and constructing this bridge. By its nature, the classroom is a very different place from the real world which most professionals inhabit. Trainers too because of their training/philosophy remain quite remote from the concerns of the real business community. Learners need to understand something of the business environment which they will encounter in real life through activities which prepare learners for the real world. How to integrate the real issues of business environment, communication skills, and management skills in the business English class? In order to achieve these objectives, the class should:

- Replicate the real world.
- Develop skills that can be transferred to the real world.
- Provide an environment from which these skills can grow naturally.
- The classroom should help students to acquire a good foundation of language which they can use in real life.

The real world approach tries to recreate the real world in the class. Activities like simulating real roles are effective. Learners will not only work on their communication skills, but the context in which they do this simulates the professional reality. This will facilitate the development of appropriate skills to be used outside the class.

For developing skill for later transfer, the use of case studies to practice around real cases, not the learners' own reality is effective. They allow the learner to look at the problem from various perspectives. Cases mirror the real job issues and requirements and require learners to use a variety of skills. Another approach sees the class as an environment where skills are acquired naturally in a stress- free environment which caters for certain learning styles. Beyond the world of the classroom is another world and the trainer's job is to train learners for this world without getting too close to it.

A final approach sees the class as separate and divorced from the professional world. Here the bridge is less obvious. The aim for the trainer is to give a secure base of language to learners. A good educational base and sound knowledge of the language will help them in their future professions. These viewpoints are not mutually exclusive. A lot depends on the learners, their objectives and their preferred learning style.

Topic- 095: Training Styles

As trainers/teachers, we have our own teaching styles just as learners have individual learning styles. The need is to modify our teaching style to suit the learning style of our learners. In our role as providers we may need to subordinate our preferred teaching styles to the needs of our learners and their learning styles. Four distinct teaching styles have been identified by Marshall and Wheeler:

The Listener

- Prefers trainee talks more than the trainer.
- Wants trainee to be self-directed and autonomous.
- Appears relaxed and unhurried.

The Director:

- Takes charge, gives directions, and appears self-confident.
- Is well organized, tells students what to do.
- Is final judge of everything

The Interpreter:

- Separates self from learners and observes.
- Uses theory as a foundation.
- Presents well-constructed interpretations.

The Coach:

- Allows learners to evaluate their own progress.
- Involves trainees in discussions.
- Draws on the strengths of the group.
- Uses trainees as a resource.

The Consultant:

- Is an expert.
- Is bought in to give advice, analyze, and carry out assessment of courses.
- See whether objectives are met are not.

Topic- 096: Sharing Control

The program of instruction can be divided into stages or units which are linked, like modules or lessons. Each larger unit can be divided into smaller moves, e.g. presentations and role-plays. Each unit is characterized by a lesson and an activity or task, which can be either trainer controlled or trainee controlled. The notion of control in the classroom is related to who controls the proceedings. Classroom control is seen as the exercise of directions over the proceedings. The trainer exercises control over the content and tempo of the lesson stages, seeing to it that there is no digression. As the program progresses towards a more central position the trainer allows more trainee involvement. The trainees exercise their control over the class proceeding initially with the trainer and later with a greater degree of independence. Control over classroom proceedings can be seen as two polarities. There are also possibilities of many intermediate teaching positions.

Classroom activities and lesson stages can also be adapted to different roles. Presentation stage of a lesson is best done through trainer-controlled mode. Later on, the transfer or practice stages are best done through trainee-controlled mode. Language controlled activities are conducted through trainer-control while communication activities through trainee-control. Communication activities in trainer-controlled mode can also be carried out but they cannot bring about the desired objectives of increased fluency and effectiveness.

The bridge to the real world is best build by creating a free classroom environment in which learners are allowed and encouraged to devise and use own techniques and strategies to achieve and bring out real world objectives.

Lesson 17

LANGUAGE FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION-II

Topic- 097: Clarity

The communication process involves the sending and receiving of messages between sender and receiver. Today's business is a communication based economy. Latest trends in technology, international competition and participatory management have increased the importance of sharing accurate, clear and ethical communication. The ultimate aim of good communication is clarity. If a piece of communication, a letter, email, text message are unclear, problems can occur, the costs of which can run into millions. To achieve clarity following guidelines are useful:

One way to achieve clarity is to provide specific, quantified information. Vague, abstract adjectives and adverbs should be avoided as readers will interpret them differently. "*Recently*" would be interpreted differently by people, unless the time is specified. Similarly the word, "*Some*" is abstract. If the term "*Annual Report*" is used, it remains unclear unless the time/year of the report is specified.

Passive constructions are often unclear, because there is no agency to the action. They can cause wordiness and lack of clarity. They require helping verbs and preposition (such as *has been*), so should be avoided. The second way to write clearly is by answering the reporter's questions. By anticipating and giving answers of the *Who, What, Where, When* and *How* related questions, clarity is added to the communication whether this communication is related to a presentation or a report.

Another key to clarity is to use easily understandable words. This can be achieved by avoiding obscure words. The purpose to write is to communicate, not to confuse; to express, not to impress. Abbreviations, acronyms, jargon: e.g. UNO, FBI, WAPDA, can create problems of understanding, so they should be defined, either in parenthesis or given in the glossary. Unclear technical communication can lead to missed deadlines, damaged equipment, inaccurate procedure, incorrectly filled forms and damage to an end user.

Topic- 098: Conciseness

Conciseness is a major goal of effective communication. There are three main benefits of conciseness in technical writing. Conciseness saves time. Business people spend 30% of their time in communicating whether written or oral. Conciseness saves them much time and effort.

Conciseness aids clarity. If you dump an enormous amount of words on your readers, they might not read what you wrote, or skip, skim to miss a key concept, or give it up. On the other hand, conciseness makes your writing appealing to the reader. If they can read it easily, they will read it with more interest and involvement. This will aid comprehension and readability.

Technology is impacting the way messages are written. Because the size of the screen is getting smaller and there are character limitations of Twitter and text messaging, so texts have to be concise. Communication must fix into a box, which forces one to use less words. Limiting word and sentence length adds to conciseness as does omitting shun words and redundancies. Paragraph length is also to be limited.

Topic- 099: Accuracy

Accuracy in technical communication refers to grammatical and contextual correctness. If your communication is clear and concise, but incorrect, it will mislead the audience and destroy your credibility. To be effective it must be accurate. If it contains errors, it will make the writer look incompetent. The most effective way to achieve accuracy is to proofread your writing. The following guidelines are useful:

- Get someone else to read the text
- Use gestation approach
- Read backwards
- Read one line at a time, or print it out
- Use dictionary Guidelines:
- Read long words syllable by syllable
- Use technology
- Check figures, scientific and technical abbreviations,
- Read aloud
- Try scattershot proofreading

If the writing not accurate, a negative impression is conveyed to the reader. Either the writer is thought of as unprofessional, or that he/she is lazy and casual. Either way the consequences are disastrous for company and individual.

Topic- 100: Ethics

Ethics are a final objective in technical writing. Ethical communication entails being honest about the product and services, in terms of considering the needs of the consumer and the business. You have an ethical responsibility to convey correct and true information. Your customers expect it and in the long run it is of benefit to the company. A sentence like, "*Our product has been tested for defects and safety by experts*", seems to be true, but is misleading. Readers assume that it has been thoroughly tested by technicians who are thoroughly trained. If this is not the case, it deceives the readers and becomes actionable by law.

When faced with a legal dilemma, like doing something which benefits the company but deceives the customer, who might happen to be your neighbor, it is best to trust your instincts and the law. Such dilemmas exist in the corporate world. One way to solve this dilemma is to check your actions against three concerns: legal, practical, ethical.

Being ethical in technical communication is practical. A very important goal of a business communicator is honesty. Withholding information is not practical as in the long run as it is not good business. The aim in business is not only to make a profit but to make it honestly and continuously. The importance of practicality can be seen in the example of resume writing. If you state something in your resume which is not true, you will ultimately lose the job, harm the company and the client. Following ethics in business communication is important for customer benefit and to avoid deceiving the end user. Defining ethics is as problematic as people have different perspectives and viewpoints. The "Code for Communicators" to achieve ethical standards given by the Society for Technical Communication states:

- Use language and visuals with precision
- Prefer simple, direct expression of ideas
- Satisfy the audience need for expression
- Strive to improve professionally
- Respect colleagues: Electronic communication, confidentiality, courtesy
- Respecting intellectual property.

Ethical principles for technical communicators include legality, honesty, confidentiality, quality, fairness and professionalism.

Topic- 101: Organization

Successful technical communication must be well organized. If the text rambles the reader will not be able to follow the meaning of the text. Organization can be done in various ways. Spatial organization is used to describe something as it appears. It helps the reader to visualize, envision a place or a piece of equipment. It might describe something from left to right, top to bottom, inside out or by giving directions (east, west, north, and south) to understand the physical qualities of the subject matter.

Chronological organization is used in the giving instructions, to document time, to tell about steps in a process analysis.

Text might be organized by placement of important information. The location of information is important. Important information will be missed if it is buried in a long text. It should be preferably in the first 1/3 of page, which is at eye level. The same holds for bullet points which are used to organize information. Only the first few would get the attention of the reader. Placing of important points first helps the reader to retrieve crucial information.

Proposals, sales letters are often problem/solution oriented. Writing can be organized around presenting an existing problem and offering a solution for that problem. The customer will only be convinced to purchase something if the existing alternative is a failure.

Organizing communication by comparing and contrasting different things provides options to clients. So similarities and differences can be compared and contrasted to help the reader arrive at a decision. The choice of how to organize communication will depend on a number of factors, including the channel, the medium of communication and the audience.

Topic- 102: Avoiding Biased Language

In the business world when you communicate, whether write or speak, you are always addressing some audience. Recognizing your audience is an important skill in business communication. Your audience could be high tech, low tech, laymen, multiple or multicultural. Audience recognition incudes knowing diversity which exists in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, age as well as departmental diversity. Understanding the audience helps you to tailor your communication accordingly and use appropriate language.

Use of language which refers to age, physical limitations, and gender should be avoided. Every culture has own words which show derogation for old age. Ageist language using words like ‘Old people’ and ‘Old folks’ can be substituted by ‘retired’, ‘over seventy’. Language for disability or handicap, any euphemism referring to it can be offensive, and should be avoided.

Sexism in technical communication creates problems through omission, unequal treatment, stereotyping or the choice of words. Women are part of the modern workforce, so ignoring women in your texts amounts to treating them as secondary, and expressing sexist sentiments. If you imply that certain jobs are done by men and certain by women, e.g. management posts held by men or secretarial jobs held by women, you are indulging in sexist stereotyping. Gender tagged pronouns and nouns like, ‘his’, ‘him’, ‘mankind’, ‘manpower’, ‘chairman’ should be avoided.

Lesson 18

BUSINESS ENGLISH AND LANGUAGE SKILLS

Topic- 103: Speaking Skills

Speaking is a productive skill which happens in real time. You cannot edit or revise as you can do with writing. Some people have a phobia of public speaking. What you say negatively or positively is affected by how you say it. The pace of speaking might be too fast or slow and the modulation of voice, pitch and tone all effect how your speech is perceived by the listener. While written communication is visual, permanent, and has delayed reception, speaking is auditory and temporary. In writing a lot depends on punctuation, delayed or no feedback; in speaking prosody and immediate feedback play an important role. Unlimited planning, editing and revision are possible in writing, in speaking, planning and editing is limited by the channel being used.

Oral communication is crucial to the success of any organization. Spoken skills are required for various business related functions, like video conferences, telephone, formal and informal presentations, voicemails and meetings. Verbal and non-verbal skills are as important as verbal skills, conscious or unconscious movement of any part of the body can communicate an emotional message. Cues to convey a message can be eye contact, facial expression, posture, proximity. In teaching speaking skills to business English learners, teachers should be aware of difference in the context of second language learning and foreign language learning as well as multicultural concerns.

Practice should be given to develop fluency and accuracy. Accuracy is seen in that speech matches what people say in a target language and fluency in using language confidently, and quickly. Teachers should avoid interrupting speaking skills practice and give feedback about errors after the activity. They should also limit teacher talk. Students should be given enough practice through pair and group work. Speaking tasks involving negotiation of meaning, trying to understand others and making oneself understood, involving clarifying, confirming, and checking information. Practice in transactional speaking in which using language for getting something done, a service, etc. In interactional speaking, language is used for social purposes.

Speaking is a productive oral skill as contrasted with writing. Speaking a foreign language is difficult. Using different levels of language sounds, words, syntax and discourse are part of Business English training.

Topic- 104: Listening Skills

Listening effectively is crucial to communication. No communication can take place if messages are not heard. Listening is a receptive skill which is as important as speaking. Listening is a conscious selective process, unlike hearing which is involuntary, depends on non-verbal signals. It is a taught behavior. Untrained people hear only 25% time. Listening effectively is crucial to communication. No communication can take place if messages are not heard. Collaboration demands that all voices be heard. There are various barriers to listening, which the Business English teacher should be aware of:

- Physical barriers

- Psychological barriers
- Language problems
- Non-verbal distractions
- Multitasking
- Focusing on your own response
- Preconceived notions
- Interrupting the speaker
- Noise
- Unfamiliar words

Keys to effective listening:

- Stop what you are doing.
- Do not talk
- Make eye contact
- Take notes
- Be objective
- Ask questions
- Control your reactions

Principles for teaching listening are as follows:

- Expose students to different ways of processing information
- “Bottom-up versus top-down”
- Expose students to different types of listening
- What they listen for
- Specific information
- Global of gist: main ideas
- Inference: implied meaning

Teach a variety of tasks:

- Tasks which can be done as they listen
- Task should not be too demanding
- Avoiding tasks which demand too much production

<u>Topic- 105: Reading Skills</u>

Reading is a process in which readers combine information from a text with their background knowledge to build meaning. Teaching objectives focus on strategic reading and fluent reading. Various principles of teaching reading skills can be used. Exploiting learners’ background knowledge includes all experiences learner brings to understand the text. These include life experiences, education, knowledge of how texts work, knowledge of first language and second language working and culture.

Building a strong vocabulary base is crucial in business communication. Basic vocabulary is taught explicitly while learners guess meaning of unfamiliar words used in the text through the context. It is easier for reader of academic texts to acquire specialist vocabulary as compared to general vocabulary. Teaching for comprehension is another principle of teaching reading, in which learners are tested and monitored. Students themselves can be trained to monitor their learning through metacognition. Asking questions in order to make sense of what is being said during reading to comprehend. What is the author trying to say? What is his/her message, does he/she convey it clearly?

Work on increasing reading rate is another goal for teachers. A fluent reader reads 200 words per-minute. The focus should be on fluent reader not speed reader, skills such as scanning, skimming, predicting, identifying main ideas. Analyzing and synthesizing the content of the reading and not focusing on one word at a time is required to increase comprehension.

Teaching reading strategies entails that learners not only know what strategy to use, but also know how to use and integrate a range of strategies. They can verbalize their thought process as they read, and be aware of other learners' strategies. Learners should be encouraged to transforming strategies and skills. Strategies are conscious actions that learners take. A skill is a strategy that becomes automatic through practice. The learner plays an active role – as they consciously learn to practice a strategy, the strategy moves from conscious to unconscious, becoming a skill from a strategy.

Assessment and evaluation should be built in teaching. Assessing growth and development in reading requires time and training. Both qualitative (reading comprehension tests, reading rate) and quantitative (journal responses, reading interest surveys and responses to reading strategy use) assessment should be built into the reading class.

Topic- 106: Writing Skills

Writing can be said to be a series of the following contrasts:

It is a physical as well as mental act - the physical act of committing words to some medium as well as a mental act of inventing ideas, thinking about how to express them, and organizing them into statements and paragraphs. Purpose to express and impress - In writing, we serve two masters, themselves and their own desire to express themselves and readers also called the audience.

Both a process and a product -The writer imagines, writes, rewrites, organizes, drafts and so on. The process of writing is cyclic. Ultimately, what the audience sees whether it is the teacher, the instructor or a wider audience is the product – a letter, a report, a dissertation.

Principles for teaching writing:

1. Understand your students' reasons for writing.
2. Provide opportunities for students to write.
3. Make feedback helpful and meaningful.
4. Clarify evaluation criteria.

Techniques for teaching writing skills are process writing, invention techniques, brainstorming, word mapping, and quick writing. Writing stages include drafting, feedback, and revising, proofreading and editing.

Topic- 107: Vocabulary

Vocabulary presents the main building block of functional meaning in language. There are over half a million English words, but the average native speaker is able to get by with around 5000 words. Words are bound together by grammar but without words normal communication fails. Business English has its own specialist vocabulary. How do we differentiate this vocabulary from that of General English? One way is to identify the types of, and contexts of communication. These can be summarized as:

Specialist ----Specialist

Specialist----non-specialist

Non-specialist ----Specialist

Generalist---- Generalist

Specialist----Specialist: This presupposes a need for a range of vocabulary dealing with shared professional issues. The precise lexical items required will depend on the topic under consideration. However, it is possible to predict the range of vocabulary needed to treat topics within key management areas. This shared professional vocabulary depends on the topic under discussion.

Specialist----non-specialist/Non-specialist----Specialist: To be effective, today's multi-faceted manager needs to be able to operate in their own team and multi-disciplinary workgroups and contexts, so one needs business vocabulary of own area but of others as well.

Generalist----Generalist: It includes wider context in which professionals communicate outside the strict confines of corporate offices and board rooms. Successful business depends on successful relationship. So the social side of business communication must not be ignored – the ability to converse about economic, social, environment and personal issues. This requires its own set of vocabulary. So, besides context-driven and topic driven vocabulary, there is a need for general purpose vocabulary. Long lists might be daunting for the learner, so they should be served in reasonable chunks. Checklists exist in various areas and can be helpful for the Business English teacher and learner.

Topic- 108: Grammar

Grammar is the set of rules and conventions of language shared by a group of native speakers (whereby we decide whether a particular language form is right or wrong). It gives out the structure of the categories of language (whereby learners study the A – Z of grammatical structures). Grammatical accuracy is in most cases black and white, making it clear whether a sentence or an utterance is right or wrong. However, there are grey areas which are related to specific varieties of a language. The question to be asked is, is there a need for a separate grammar for business English? Actually, there is no need for any language category specific to business communication, all the forms which exist in general English - nouns, verbs, prepositions, adverbs can be utilized.

However, it does seem that some grammatical forms are more prevalent than others. Language is neutral. A genre analysis of a business text would reveal the types of communicative acts which are used for particular communicative purposes. In business communication, this could include activities such as presentations, briefings, memos, promotional letters all recognized and classified according to communicative purpose. However, as a wide ranging area it encompasses all communication activities and has no limits as far as grammar is concerned..

Principles for teaching grammar to business English learners should integrate inductive and deductive methods. In deductive teaching of grammar, rules of grammar are presented, followed by exercises to clarify grammatical point. In inductive grammar teaching, language samples are presented and learners are guided to let them discover the rule. Both methods can be used by looking at learning styles of the class. Inductive method, however, demand more mental effort and results in more effective learning, retaining more language in the long term, although takes more time for learner to understand the grammatical point in question.

Tasks related to target grammatical form and communicative function can be given for practice, to teach why a certain grammatical form is being used. Most grammar – based courses are relatively ineffective because they teach grammar in an abstract way, present grammar as isolated sentences, and fail to give a context. Typically for teaching passive voice, a list of sentences is given in passive voice, "The boy hit the window, the dog bit the man', and then a structure of how to change it into the passive voice, 'The window was broken'. There is no insight into the communicative contexts. Grammar should be presented in a context that makes clear the grammatical form and the communication function.

Focus on development of communicative ability of learners. Often declarative knowledge, i.e. knowing language rules is emphasized in language classes, to the neglect of procedural knowledge which is being able to use knowledge for communication. We know that learners can give a standard textbook explanation of a grammatical rule, but violate the rule when using language communicatively. Students will tell you that you have to put's' after the verb in making a 3rd person declarative statement. However, they will often ignore this rule, showing that they have declarative knowledge but not procedural knowledge. By using target language items in communicative contexts, business English learners can develop their communicative competence.

Lesson 19

TEACHING BUSINESS SPEAKING SKILLS-I

Topic- 109: Socializing

Socializing skills are important for the BE learner - how to meet and greet people in various contexts before and in between meetings, at the airports, in the car parks or just passing each other in the corridor.

Business English learners often need to have certain skills in order to do their job properly, no matter what language is being used. Socializing is one such skill, and is relevant because such a lot of business-related interaction is done in places like restaurants, airports, before and after meetings, or standing chatting at trade fair stands. Most experienced business people would agree that first impressions are important when meeting someone, and this often happens in a social environment. Socializing may be vital in establishing rapport with a business partner, and good rapport is often considered essential to good business.

So, what language might be taught here? Meeting and greeting people is certainly part of this skill, and business English learners need to be taught the necessary language and social conventions. Similarly, many business people need to know the language of dining out, or what to say when visiting people's homes. Another part of socializing involves being able to keep a conversation going, and to encourage other participants in a conversation to speak. Our learners use social interactions for business, as well as pleasure, and it may be important to find out as much as possible about their conversation partners. The skill is to do this unobtrusively, so that fellow conversationalists are happy to pass on information. Related to this is storytelling, or at least the ability to tell a good anecdote. As always, the language must fit the context. Excellent use of language will be insufficient unless accompanied by an awareness of cultural factors. The businesswoman who misjudges when and where it is acceptable to make a joke, and the businessman who does not understand that alcohol plays a very different part in business socializing in Saudi Arabia, France, and Japan, will not get very far.

Simple participative activities, like role-plays and simulations, can easily be designed which enable learners to practice skills used for socializing in a safe environment. For example, at a lower level of language competence, using real restaurant menus will allow learners to practice useful lexical items, and also to role-play typical conversations about food and drink. At higher levels, learners will need to know what phrases are useful when they want to tell a story and recount a particular experience. They also need to be given the opportunity to discuss what can and cannot be said in social situations, and to develop techniques for managing conversations. In what context is it considered acceptable to talk about how much one earns, for example? When is it safe to discuss politics? What point can an overtly social conversation move on to discussing a business contract? How does the learner get out of answering difficult questions? Many of these questions have no firm right or wrong answers, but classroom discussion, the teacher's and learner's experience, and some careful research, often help.

Instructions for activities will have to be adjusted to suit the group. For example, if the group consists of pre-experienced learners, they will need to be given information about their supposed job and company, and their reasons for being in the country. If the group consists of a group of learners from the same company, the teacher can give everyone roles, including names and company details. If the group consists of learners who come from different companies, the setting might be changed, so that they are in the country they are currently in. Each person then plays themselves and their own companies. The teacher's role in such activities is to circulate and make notes of weak language, with suggestions for possible improvements. Good examples should also be recorded and referred to in the follow-up discussion.

Topic- 110: Story Telling/Meet the Guest

Story telling is an engaging or amusing way which is often a key part of effective socializing. Story telling can be practiced by encouraging learners to tell anecdotes about their own personal experiences, or by using pictures, or prompts to guide them through a story. Perhaps one of the most useful resources in the classroom is the teacher. The teacher can tell a personal anecdote, record it, and for the learners then to listen again, focusing on useful language. Here are some possible approaches to using the text:

- Learners listen to the original recording and then repeat the story.
- Learners read the text and then repeat the story.
- The teacher turns the text into a gap-fill exercise by removing some words.

The teacher divides the story up into three or four parts, and asks learners to put the parts in the right order (a scrambled text task). Learners identify phrases or expressions in the text which they might find useful when they tell the story themselves. Learners mark places in the text where they think pauses should be, and underline the words which they feel need to be emphasized. They then read the story aloud to the class.

Topic- 111: Small Talk, in Pairs, Small Groups

When people are engaged in a business situation, they are not talking business all the time. There are times when they have to talk about normal, everyday matters, like discussing the weather, exchanging pleasantries, asking after each other's health, etc. Such talk is called '*small talk'* and is part of normal human interaction. Business English learners will have to carry out small talk in-between meetings, at airports, in the corridors and car parks, over food, and other contexts of socializing. Practice should therefore be part of their Business Communication training.

Small talk requires learners to engage in polite discussion on, often banal subjects, using appropriate language.

Topic- 112: Telephoning: Standard Lexical Phrases, Survival Strategies

Answering the telephone strikes terror in the heart of any language learner. As it happens in real time, so choosing the right response and having a number of standard phrases to use is important. Usually a telephone call catches you when you are in the middle of something else. Then there is no body language to help the learner understand what the caller is trying to say. However, it is a skill that can be learnt.

A lot of business is done over the phone, so communication skills to use the phone are an important part of BE learners' training. In a telephone call both interlocutors contribute in the conversation and since the aim is to achieve success as far as the business objective is concerned, it should not fail just because one person does not have effective telephone skills. Some telephone calls are quite easy to manage. For example a call made by the secretary to put the call through or the call to say that someone is going to be late for the meeting. Phrases for both kinds of calls are easy to learn and use.

Telephone training falls into two main parts. First, there are standard lexical phrases which are learned, and which are useful in many contexts, e.g. "*I'm calling about …",* or "*I'll put you through*". The second type is survival strategies, which allow the learner to control the conversation and deal with the situation ("*I didn't quite catch it"*, "*Could you spell that?"*, "*Could you confirm that in writing*?". The teacher can teach by using typical functions like getting through, taking and leaving messages, clarifying information or can use a task based approach, using role plays to find learners weaknesses in which learners learn through performing.

An effective way is to use learners' mother tongue to discuss telephone skills as it is difficult to separate language from communication skills. The choice depends on a teacher's style, learners' needs and the context.

<u>Topic- 113: Structure of the Telephone Conversation</u>

The structure of the telephone call can be seen as two parallel building blocks, i.e. the caller and the called, which follow a pattern. These building blocks provide a framework in which the various steps or routines fit. Giving feedback to our learners is also important, so evaluation which should be based on Preparation, Structure, Manner, and Language, which are important skills for an effective phone call.

Preparation for a telephone call refers to be mentally prepared for it, in terms of giving, confirming and requesting information, making arrangements, persuading the called party, negotiating and complaining to the called party. Evaluation should be whether the learner has made necessary preparation for the phone call? Is learner prepared for the foreseeable range of scenarios? Structure refers to the stages of the call. Is the caller aware of the steps to be taken to manage the call effectively, according to his/her purpose? Does the caller have appropriate linguistic and organizational skills to advance the call according to its purpose, through the call stages?

Manner refers to the techniques used for effective calls. It relies on voice, as there is no eye contact between the parties. Care should be taken to speak in a clear and comprehensible voice, give regular and appropriate feedback: e.g. *I see, I understand*, maintain an appropriate vocal tone which is polite, helpful, and persuasive. Acting appropriately during the call is important - not leaving caller/called hanging for more than 10 seconds and ending with offer of appropriate follow up action where necessary. Language refers to linguistic resources like correct use grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation. The key to improved performance is to agree on the elements of effective phone calls, carry out practice phone calls to integrate elements and share feedback on strengths and weaknesses.

<u>Topic- 114: Speaking on the Phone</u>

Various activities can be used for practicing speaking on the phone. Practicing phone calls require both a bank of short phone exercises to be used for developing techniques and language, and longer activities requiring more detailed interaction between the parties. Long activities involve detailed interaction. Published materials provide activities for practicing both. Where learners share same professional background, it requires little effort to draw up a list of typical calls they need to make and receive. The teacher can set up contexts of communication through practice calls drawn from published materials or the learners' own needs and experience.

The advantage of using role play activities at lower level is that key lexis is repeated and allows learners to concentrate on the caller's concerns when they need to use the phone in a real situation using cards and tape recorder. Similarly, leaving a message using cards is useful. Each learner is given five minutes to record their message, the class listens to recorded messages and finally the original message is displayed for learners to check. Practice of simple conversations can be done in which learners read numbered cards and clarify words and carry out role-play pairing with someone with same number card. Learners pair with other learners and repeat the conversation. Using an authentic document like a contract can be used. Each learner gets a card of the contract copy. Once familiar with the material, learner A calls learner B. The teacher records a conversation and gives feedback.

Guidelines for improved performance: The teacher should ensure that there is no eye contact when role-playing telephone calls. The teacher can ring up learners at their workplace and record conversation and give practice of listening to speech without visual cues. With learners of the same professional BG (business group), it is easy to draw up typical calls to make and receive. At higher level of training, complex role plays can be created, taking into account intercultural elements.

Lesson 20

TEACHING BUSINESS SPEAKING SKILLS-II

Topic- 115: Presentations

Presentations are communication situations in business where one person is speaking, while others listen. In this sense, nearly every time a person speaks, he or she could be said to be giving a presentation. But, even if we exclude this most general sense of the word, there is still a huge range of situations in which presentations are given. A small, informal meeting over a cup of coffee can include small, informal presentations (one person standing at the flipchart, speaking, while the others listen). Giving a talk to an audience of 300 is also a presentation. On occasion, verbal skills might be essential, but in some presentations the focus is almost completely on the visual aids being used (technical presentations are typical of this), rather than on the language spoken. The presenter's role here is different, because most of the content may actually be in the visual information, not in what the presenter has to say.

Presentation skills are particularly interesting to teach because once again the line between language and other skills is blurred. Most business English teachers have listened to learners giving perfect presentations (from a linguistic point of view), but who were so monotonous and boring that they would have lost the audience immediately. Likewise, good speakers with the right personal style, who can entertain and inform their audience, can get away with a lot in terms of linguistic (in) competence. The aim of a presentation is to get through to the audience - anything else is secondary. Of course, in many situations the audience is primarily interested in the content (rather than the presenter), which is good news for many of our learners. The audience may be willing to forgive language problems, if the message or the content, is clear or valuable. If the presenter is good, it is so much the better. Teachers who concentrate on language alone are doing their learners a disservice if they are not pointing out other aspects. These may include delivery, content, use of visual aids, and even body language.

Topic- 116: Structure – Opening

When we talk about the organization of the presentation, we mean looking at the component /parts it is made up of, and how they relate to each other. Most audiences, particularly non-native speakers, appreciate a structure which is easy to follow. Many successful presentations consist simply of three parts: an introduction (opening), a middle section (which usually contains the main substance), and a conclusion. A sales presentation, for example, might be divided into the following stages:

1. Arousal of interest.
2. A description of the problem that needs solving.
3. A solution.
4. Advantages.

As ever, the first thing we need to do is to make sure we understand the context in which our learners have to give presentations. Here is a checklist of possible questions to ask:

- Who is the audience? What might be their expectations?

- What experience does the learner have?
- What is the theme of the presentation?
- What does the presenter want the audience to get from the presentation?
- What facilities are available?
- What aids is the presenter planning to use?

In the introduction you welcome your audience, tell your aim and provide a road map, capture their attention/interest, address them politely, and set the table. Tell your name and your companions' names, welcome them and thank them for inviting you. Next tell them the road map or the thesis statement. Word picture or a variety of openings can be used to capture their attention and interest, telling anecdote, giving names, dates, times, places, etc. Asking questions is a useful technique to involve the audience. Most presenters would agree that the opening part of a presentation is particularly important because it sets the tone for what is to come. The importance of a clear opening cannot be overstated. The audience will not understand stilted jargon and complex construction, so communication that is easy to understand should be used, assuming that your audience is laymen.

Topic- 117: Structure – The Main Body and Conclusion

After having aroused audience interest and stated your goals, you have to prove your assertions. The body provides an opportunity to prove your thesis statement. Various organization techniques can be used for the information you are giving:

Comparison/Contrast: Compare different employees, office equipment, site for new office.

Problem/Solution: A problem-to-solution analysis while explaining why your department needs downsizing.

Argument/Persuasion: All presentations have an element of persuasion in them, like all good common writing. You will be persuading your audience regarding some information; you have shared with them in your presentation.

Importance: Prioritizing your information from most important to least important or vice versa will help your audience to understand your reasoning more easily. Chronology: A chronological presentation can outline for your audience the plan of action they have to follow.

Maintaining Coherence: To maintain coherence guide your listeners through your speech by using signposting and reference to previous knowledge. It is hard to get far in business without having to give some kind of presentation, so part of the business English teacher's task is to help learners prepare their presentations.

Topic- 118: Language for Presentations

Using the voice, intonation, chunking correctly is an important skill in presenting. There is certain language, often called signposting, which is used in each of the sections of a structure, to help guide a listener through the presentation. Typical signposts are: *So, Right then, let's start, to conclude, I'd just like to go back to...*. One way to focus on such items is to get learners to listen to professional presenters, and to listen out for how these signposts are used to manage the presentation. Teachers should note that many commercial materials available on the market also include recordings which allow the practice of such language. At higher levels, it is often possible to teach rhetorical language, such as tripling (Our computers are fast, reliable, and inexpensive), emphasizing (e.g. use of lexis like really, absolutely, extremely), rhetorical questions (What does this mean? Let me tell you ...), and so on. Metaphors and anecdotes may help to make a presentation easier to understand or a particular point more memorable. It is always useful to practice language and techniques for dealing with questions.

The key to any presentation is not the vocabulary, or the structure, or the wonderful slides. The key is the voice. It's not what the presenters say; it is how they say it, which often determines the success of a presentation. So, many teachers spend a significant amount of time working on delivery techniques such as intonation, stress, and chunking.

Intonation is about how the voice rises and falls in pitch during speech. It is related to culture, so that a German speaker, say, might sound monotonous to an English listener, but quite lively to Japanese. One way to explore this aspect is to ask learners to read short texts in strange ways - too fast, too slow, and too loud. They should be encouraged to experiment. The idea is to make them more aware of their own voices. You will not be able to highlight important points. So your body language, pitch, gestures, and enunciation will highlight what you want to emphasize. The stress has to do with where speakers put the emphasis on particular words, or on specific syllables within the words. Learners need to understand how altering the stress patterns change the meaning of the sentences.

Chunking is how words are characteristically grouped together in spoken utterances (see page 9). Training in this involves teaching learners how to identify such 'chunks' and insert pauses at the appropriate places. An excellent way to bring this message across is to get learners to listen to a well-known politician or business leader giving a speech (if the teacher can provide a transcript, so it's much better). Learners could be asked to predict where the pauses (and stress, and rises and falls in intonation) will be, and then to compare their predictions to the real conversation. Pausing at appropriate points is also important.

<u>Topic- 119: Preparing for Presentations</u>

Preparing for presentations involves using/thinking about the wide range of technology available ranging from the PowerPoint, the OHP (Overhead Projector) to the use of audio and video equipment as well as preparing learners for it. Training should include body language, using prompt cards, referring to vocal techniques and printed notes to be used to help recall. There are enormous benefits of the PowerPoint. It offers a perfect hybrid, fusing the benefits of oral with written communication. Use of PPTs has become the standard in oral presentation. You have the power of oral communication enhanced by the power of written communication.

Most professional presenters rehearse their presentations as a matter of course, although rehearsals are not always relevant to business context, which might demand an impromptu performance. Using a video camera to record learners' performance is invaluable, although the teacher or a co-learner should be adept at using it. Another technique is to use other learners to use a checklist which includes the following points:

- Aids

- Rapport
- Delivery
- Language

As business English learners expect a lot of professionalism from their teachers, a valuable strategy for teachers is to give some formal presentations themselves to enhance this key business skill. A teacher could try to practice presentation skills by giving a presentation to peers at a conference. This would turn out to be quite a different experience than teaching a class. The teacher should try to include using the technology and resources which that particular teacher's learners are expected to use. For example, if the learners use PowerPoint™, the teacher should become familiar with what it can do. Such a strategy will probably result in teachers learning more about giving presentations than any book will teach them, and they can use this experience and transfer it to students who are preparing for presentations of their own.

Topic- 120: Practice of Presentations

The classroom is seen as the arena practicing and getting feedback about their performance. Practice of presentations should be based on the course objectives and building blocks of the presentation. The four areas to focus on for practice and evaluation are: Content, Structure, Delivery, and Language.

Practice Stage 1: Each participant gives two minutes presentation in which he/she greets the audience, gives an introduction of him/her and the talk, and gives an outline of the presentation. This is followed by a roundtable feedback, both negative and positive, regarding content, structure, delivery, language. A participant may be asked to repeat his activity.

Practice Stage 2: At this stage each participant gives ten-minute presentation of the main part. Each practice is followed by a feedback discussion: Content, delivery, language, and structure. This part is videoed so that participants can see their performance. Good or bad visual aids are discussed as well as overhead transparencies.

Practice Stage 3: Each participant presents a transparency, for 2 to 3 minutes, practicing appropriate language and appropriate techniques, followed by discussion on delivery and techniques. Discussion is on the importance of strong and memorable ending.

Practice Stage 4: Each participant summarizes and concludes the presentation. Discussion is as before.

Practice Stage 5: Each participant gives a complete presentation. Feedback is as before. Discussion is on question handling both easy and difficult questions.

Practice Stage 6: Each participant gives part of their prepared talk, while the audience interrupts with questions. Feedback is given as before.

Practice Stage 7: If time permits, further practice of prepared presentations is done and feedback is given as before.

Training and practice can help learners improve their presentation skills. Practice improves communication skills and confidence. Constructive feedback combined with practice in class is invaluable for improving presentation skills.

Lesson 21

TEACHING BUSINESS SPEAKING SKILLS-III

Topic- 121: Business Meetings

In business, people have meetings all the time. There are many types of meetings - large formal meetings, with a chairperson, and someone responsible for taking the minutes, and there are informal meetings over a cup of tea. Meetings with customers will not be the same as meetings with partners, which will in turn not be the same as internal departmental meetings.

The very notion of a meeting can mean something different in different cultures. In some countries, a meeting is used to lay down the basis for consultation and discussion. In others, meetings are used primarily to present the boss's opinion or transmit corporate directives. In some cultures, meetings will follow a carefully organized plan, while in others the way they develop will depend on the issues raised or the people involved. Sometimes people will focus entirely on the business of the meeting, whereas at other times the meeting may be one of several things happening at that time (e.g. phone calls, private conversations, interruptions).

Meetings are a normal part of business routine. There are briefing meetings with the aim to inform participants, brainstorming meetings, decision-making and problem-solving meetings, committee meetings. Usually there are two or more interested groups, a chair is elected, and decisions are reached. Companies have different types of meetings. The AGM is a requirement for all companies, with fixed procedures, including reports, the company's accounts and resolutions.

Constituents of effective meetings are:

- People: Refers to people involved and their being aware of their role in it.
- Procedure: Steps and stages and their management.
- Results: Outcome of meetings. Meetings fail because the participants don't know the purpose of the meeting.

Meeting success depends on:

- Communicating the purpose effectively
- Satisfying expectations
- Clarifying the outcomes in terms of action recommended

Objectives for Business English Learners:

- To develop meeting skills in terms of procedures
- To improve techniques for improving, controlling and participating in meetings
- To practice presenting information in meetings
- To learn appropriate expressions to do above
- To practice meeting and get feedback from on strengths and weaknesses

So the main concerns of business English learners are:

- The procedural elements
- The linguistic elements
- Practice
- Feedback

Procedures for the chairperson (opening, welcoming, apologizing, stating objectives, closing, summarizing, setting next meeting), the participants (giving oral presentations, giving an opinion, agreeing, disagreeing, advising, suggesting, asking for information, asking for clarification), for the secretary, (to record names of participants, absentees, the points discussed, details of discussion, argument, decisions taken, voting details, actions taken, next meeting). Effective management of meetings means that first the trainees are made aware of the process of meetings and then given the tools to carry them out. The tools which are needed to carry out the procedures are linguistic, oral and written skills. There are lists of phrases which can be shared with learners.

Topic- 122: Language in Meetings

Meetings are communication situations in which the main part is played by language, including traditional grammatical forms like vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation. Procedures for the chairperson, participants and secretaries are accompanied by appropriate and usual linguistic forms. In order to utilize classroom time, activities should focus on practice and feedback, through a series of mini practices in an observable way in which feedback is given in one or more of these areas. Some linguistic elements are mechanical, e.g. greeting, but others like summarizing require higher skills and need practice to achieve.

Language of meetings requires both link and control phrases. Beyond the control language is the content of the meeting, the agenda points for discussion. With students of same professional background this is easy but with students of disparate professional backgrounds, it poses a problem and is more challenging. Universal topics involving social and ethical issues, which can be shared by all, can be drawn up by the teacher to involve active participation of all. The language of meetings can be equally varied. In formal meetings, there are certain lexical items which are quite common, such as *"Has everyone got a copy of the minutes?"* Or *"Moving on to item, three on the agenda...."*

Unfortunately, many business English course books have presented language that can seem stilted or unnatural. A course book of language for interrupting may include rather labored phrases. It is probably not worth spending too much time on convoluted phrases which might appear, and far more useful to practice the language and skills that actually occur in meetings. Normally people in meetings are doing things like passing on information, persuading, justifying, defending their position, or arguing. So the language teacher's focus should reflect this. Other common functions include clarifying and summarizing.

Role-plays and simulations which come close to what the learners do in real life will obviously be the most useful, so one of the first things to do is decide how to approach the topic in the classroom, and which type of meeting to focus on. For example, with a large group of pre-experience learners it might be worth spending some time exploring role-play scenarios set by the teacher.

Meeting role-play - the teacher gives each learner a copy of an agenda and some background information, together with a role-card which gives specific information which the learner will need during the meeting, including opinions about the issues being discussed. This information is not available to other learners in the group, which makes the whole role-play more realistic.

Meeting simulation - another option is to present the learners with background information, and then allow them to play themselves, thus creating a simulation rather than a role-play. For example, they could be asked to organize a conference in a hotel, and then be given access to the hotel websites in order to gather relevant information before coming together to find the best solution.

With a small group of experienced managers, on the other hand, it might make more sense to design the meeting simulations around the types of meetings the managers actually participate in (in an ideal situation the teacher might get permission to observe such events). Points to consider when designing meeting simulations include:

- Who is to chair the meeting, if it is to be chaired at all?
- What is the chair's role?
- What contributions are to be made by participants in the meeting?
- What is the function of the meeting (e.g. to discuss issues, brainstorm, find solutions to problems, give out tasks, make decisions, pass on information, and so on)?
- How formal will it be (e.g. strict rules of procedure)?
- Will there be a tight structure (e.g. agenda, timings)?
- Will minutes be produced? If so, who is responsible?

In large formal meetings, with a chairperson, and someone responsible for taking the minutes, and there are informal meetings over a cup of tea.

Topic- 123: Activities: Role-play, Simulations

Role-plays and simulations which come close to what the learners do in real life will obviously be the most useful, so one of the first things to do is decide how to approach the topic in the classroom, and which type of meeting to focus on. For example, with a large group of pre-experience learners it might be worth spending some time explaining different types of meeting before going on to form small groups who role-play scenarios set by the teacher. There are several activities which are available in course books, supplementary material provided by the publisher and on the Internet to set up such exercises on role-plays and simulations.

Topic- 124: Teaching Negotiations

A negotiation is a special meeting in which parties need each other's agreement in order to achieve an effective result. In business, we have to bargain to get something we want. This might be regarding delivery dates, costs or price. In daily life we negotiate all the time and have to compromise, and give in to mutual interest. Various types of negotiation outcomes/objectives are seen in business:

- Distributive.
- Competitive
- Win-lose

- Directly opposite goals
- Conflict: Price, resources
- Long-term relationship, A’s gain would be B’s lose

In integrative and win-win situations, the goals are not mutually exclusive, so the focus is to achieve consensus on common goals, solutions, concentrate on needs and interests, not positions, and generally seeking outcomes for both sides to gain. Integrative negotiators explore mutual needs and interests, find a way forward. Negotiators are neither wholly distributive nor integrative, and have the ability to move from win-lose position to win-win.

Constituents of an effective negotiation are:

- People: refers to everyone involved in the negotiation and their roles.
- Planning/procedures: Steps and stages of the meeting in which they meet face-to-face.
- The results: outcome of the negotiation is important. All parties are committed to the agreement reached, terms of agreement clear, and are capable of being implemented.
- Language: refers to traditional categories of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation (Key to improving performance is to agree what constitutes an effective negotiation).

Learning objectives for developing negotiating skills involve teaching business techniques and tactics, presenting information using appropriate expressions. In short, we can say that there are procedural and tactical elements, linguistic elements, and feedback which should be elements of the course design. The problem for Business English teachers is that the tactical aspects and procedural aspects are largely related to management training and learners might have gone through them in various approaches. To avoid clash, it is better to focus on the traditional areas of language teaching.

The teacher’s job is to provide a framework for practicing procedures of negotiation and leaving learners to use their own tactical repertoire and tools. These tools would be linguistic tools and checklists of language item to improve performance.

Topic- 125: Stages in Negotiation

Following are the stages in a business negotiation:

1. Preparation includes the following points:

- Assessing power
- Establishing specific needs/objectives
- Sorting out options
- Defining issues
- Setting positions
- Finding out the bottom-line need of the other party

2. Relationship building: Getting to know the other party, looking at the similarities and differences, achieving a mutually beneficial set of outcomes

3. Information gathering: Learning about the issue, the other party and their needs, about the feasibility of possible settlements and the outcome in case of failure to reach agreement with the other side

Each of these stages can be seen as a communicative situation, requiring its own set of linguistic items. Understanding these stages is useful in trying to work out potentially useful language.

Topic- 126: Language and other Negotiating Skills

Identifying the key language for use in negotiations can be quite difficult. Classroom activities to focus on negotiation practice, feedback, to derive greatest benefit from short classes. Course books usually emphasis on functional areas:

- Summarizing
- Clarifying
- Asking questions
- Proposing/agreeing/disagreeing

However, the real pressures on learners have nothing to do with language – a boss-wants results, a promotion depends on your negotiation. An added problem is that no negotiator ever knows the real motivations/desires of the other side. Negotiators are people who can be influenced by people and personalities. Perhaps the best way is to adopt a task based approach, i.e. to do role-plays and simulations in class, provide opportunities for non-linguistic negotiating skills and practice relevant language. Using a camera and observers to watch and give feedback to learners about their performance is useful.

Ideally a role-play activity should give background information; learners understand the situation and their roles and are given enough preparation time. Students would be motivated if the scenario is from the area business situation. Reverse role simulations enable learners and teachers to maximally contribute their knowledge and expertise to the task. After elements of effective negotiations are agreed, a series of mini practice sessions with the aim to improve learners' performance in an observable way.

Context for negotiation can be generated by students or teacher according to professional background. With students of diverse backgrounds, it can be based around a problem – easily understood and quickly prepared. Contexts for negotiation could be as the following:

- Buyer-seller: price, discount
- Employer-employee: salary, leaves
- Budget allocation: Allocation of funds for company/department, for marketing, research, administration.

As with all communication skills, the key is to give practice on relevant scenarios from learners' work place, constant feedback for improvement according to trainee's needs.

Lesson 22

TEACHING BUSINESS WRITING SKILLS-I

Topic- 127: Business Writing: The Process

Business writing is a key part of the day-to-day activities of most businesses and like speaking, is used in a vast range of different situations. It allows communication across time and space, and provides an invaluable medium for storing records and other information. Written communication offers different challenges from spoken interaction. In one way, writing is easier than speaking, in that it is not usually spontaneous and near-instantaneous. There is time to think about what the sender has sent and what the reply should contain, so it is more contrived. On the other hand, speaking is more natural, and is a skill that needs to be learned. Writing requires planning and organizational skills, as well as skills in linking paragraphs and sentences together, skills in spelling, punctuation, word order, word choice, and overall evaluation of the end result.

The approaches to teaching writing are the process approach which is based on the three steps of: prewriting, writing and rewriting.

The genre approach is an alternative approach to the teaching of writing. The underlying theory here is that texts of a certain type, e.g. letters have the same kind of purpose as each other and show similar language and features. Letters are different, in these terms, from reports, which in turn are different from agendas. A genre like letters can be divided into sub-genres like letters of persuasion, letters of enquiry, letters of confirmation, and so on. Some teachers argue against a genre approach, saying that the notion of genre is too vague to be of practical use to the student. After all, every letter is unique and has its own specific characteristics. Others argue that the theory of genre is useful for teachers and learners alike because it gives learners something concrete to aim for. In a genre approach, learners are given the chance to study model texts and to base their own writing on what they have noticed in the texts.

The goals in writing are accuracy, conciseness, effectiveness, organization and ethics.

Topic- 128: Prewriting

Most good writers use a process to write. Prewriting is the first step in the process approach to teach writing. It is like plotting a route before a trip. Prewriting involves planning your communication and the objectives are to:

- Examining the purpose
- Determining goals
- Considering audience: Internal, external
- Deciding what action you want from your audience
- Generating information/collecting data
- Choosing channel, according to audience, purpose

Examining your Purpose: First thing is to determine one's goals - Why are you writing? The writer has to decide whether he/she is writing to persuade the reader to accept their point of view. Is instruction the purpose of writing - to direct action, to follow procedures? Is it to inform co-workers, staff about change, plan or procedure? Or whether is it to build trust, rapport, and positivity within the organization or with external readers? This will help in determining your motivation, whether it is extrinsic or intrinsic.

Considering Audience: What you say and how you say it depends on who are your audience are. They might be seniors or subordinates. They may be high, low or lay audience as far as the concerned area of communication is concerned, so the writer has to select appropriate content and language. Multicultural audience is normal in today's business as well as ethnic and gender diversity. Considering the audience helps to decide how many details, definition, examples, you have to give.

Gathering Data: What the writer says in the body of the text has to be based on valid facts and figures. This information can be gathered by a number of quantitative and qualitative methods and primary and secondary sources. This might be related to personnel, dates, actions, procedures, locations, resources, costs, etc. Ways to gather data are:

- Answering reporters' questions
- Mind mapping
- Brain storming
- Story boarding
- Outlining
- Creating organizational charts
- Researching

Determining the communication channel is also an important feature of writing. The choice can be a letter, memo, blog entry, text massage, email proposal. Also, whether the letter is meant for single sourcing or designed to be recombined, reused for future projects.

Principles of writing effectively are:

- Accuracy: Refers to the correct use of language forms: grammar vocabulary spelling).
- Fluency: Fluency refers to the mechanics required speed of writing, effort, flow of writing).
- Effectiveness: Refers to the impact it has on the reader in terms of layout, conciseness, coherence, cohesion, appropriacy of style, use of a variety of features, tables, highlighting etc.
- Conciseness
- Ethics

Objectives in teaching writing:

- To improve writing skills for reports and correspondence (This will vary according to the needs of the particular group e.g. for secretaries, managers).
- To develop appropriate style.
- To improve knowledge of standard structures and phrases used for reports, documents.
- To practice writing, get feedback on strengths/weaknesses, especially with a view to check accuracy and effectiveness.

Topic- 129: Writing

After prewriting the next stage is writing, in which you package your ideas which are gathered in the pre-writing stage, draft document, organize the content, add the visual aids and format the body of the document. Organization of text can be:

- Spatial
- Chronological
- Importance
- Comparison/ contrast
- Problem /Solution

Teaching the elements of structure - how paragraphs and sentences work together. Two principle ways to ensure this:

Coherence: It involves creating a logical argument or a sequence which makes sense to the reader. Activities can include jumbled up paragraphs and sentences

Cohesion: It is about how sentences connect with each other to form a sense of unity. Various grammatical devices, such as conjunctions, pronouns, lexical items work for cohesion.

Formatting allows the reader ease of access to the text - how it looks on the screen. Various techniques can be used to make the text reader friendly. Highlighting the key points catch the reader's attention. Breaking paragraphs into manageable chunks is another technique to make a long text less formidable. Teaching writing can use an eclectic approach, focusing on the structure, and on teaching cohesion/coherence. Activities should be based on models of good writing.

Topic- 130: Rewriting

The final step in the writing process is rewriting. To perfect your writing, the text has to be revised for:

- Retrievab ility
- Readability
- Accuracy
- Usability Rewriting for perfecting
- Test for usability

At the rewriting stage, the documents are revised for:

- Adding details
- Deleting wordiness
- Simplifying words
- Enhancing tone
- Reformatting
- Proofreading correcting errors

Usability means that the audience can understand the text. Various revision techniques can be used to achieve usability in a text. Rewriting is the most important stage in writing. It helps the writer to understand what should be kept in the draft and what should be discarded. It looks at what would confuse the readers. If the reader cannot understand the text it destroys the credibility of the writer.

Process Approach to writing is a dynamic process. The three parts can occur simultaneously. They give a generic approach which gives a methodology which can help Business Communication learners to write effective written communication in every situation.

Topic- 131: The Context of Writing

Writing happens in a context. It has to relate to the setting. This means that a BE writer has to take into account/consider the audience, the purpose of the document and the expected response. This also explains why BE teachers integrate writing with other skills activities such as role-plays and simulations.

It is important to recognize your audience /readers. Your choice of vocabulary ,style and tone will depend on who is going to read the report. Is it for in-company or outside the organization, is it for an international audience? Is it a favorite client or new one? The audience can be high-tech, i.e. experts, or low-tech, i.e. those who have some knowledge, or lay, i.e. those who don't know anything, necessitating keeping it simple as proficiency might not be like yours. They may be customers, students, and a diverse audience. They could be multicultural, and have different ways of understanding. What works in one culture may not work in another.

The practical intent of the writing is of key interest. Grammatical niceties rarely matter in the business world. What matters is whether the document can be used. Business people would not notice writing errors of an email, but say, "*great, we got the contract*"! Rather than saying. "*This email is full of mistakes, it is unacceptable".* This might be anathema for English teachers, but the fact is that some companies have policy for internal emails: speed and efficiency rather than correctness. In teaching too much red-inking in practice letter will undermine confidence of a learner. The purpose is to achieve accuracy, in contracts and minutes, as they are referred to again and again. Vagueness in amounts, dates and costs has to be avoided. While responding to letter various things have to be considered:

- If the writer is angry, it might not be appropriate to respond at instantaneously in the same vein.
- What is the relationship between me and my reader, or between the companies we work for? Is it long term, short term, customer, partnership?
- What are the main issues at stake? - Loss of business, profits, details on a project, loss of trust, etc.
- Is there enough information? Will my reader know what I need or want them to do.

Topic- 132: Activities for Practice

Practical models of business language should be used as teaching examples for learners to familiarize them with style, layout and organization of letters to develop competence. These are best taught through controlled activities. Free activities aim to integrate into relevant documents.

A Paired Crossword Approach combines the different threads of the course design – the lexical, functional, situational and structural thread. In activities too we can combine one or two, e.g. the same text can be used for punctuation and for focusing on lexis. There can be a combination of lexis and grammar in the same text. Information is divided in the two participants and given in the form of cards. Neither knows what the other has on his/her card. Other activities are:

- Gap Fill
- Mixed Jumbled texts/phrases
- Dividing sentences into two halves and learners to find the matching sentence halves.
- Change style from formal to informal.

Examining models of good writing can become a good starting point. The idea is not for learners to replicate them but to examine their layout and style, in order to develop their own style. Activities and practice of writing through controlled activities aim to develop competence in techniques, formats and language forms. Free activities are undertaken to allow learners to integrate them into documents relevant to their workplace and adapt them to their own style. The published material is available to provide for the former, whereas learners can provide materials from their workplace for free activities.

Lesson 23

TEACHING WRITING SKILLS-II

Topic- 133: Letters

Routine correspondence in offices entails that employees use different channels. Letters are basically used for external communication. Like memos they can leave your desk, but unlike memos/reports, they are replied or responded to. They are written for a variety of purposes, which determines their tone and the format.

Modern businesses have a wide variety of channels to choose from - letters, memos, emails, text messages. Selecting the appropriate channel depends on destination, audience, security, format, and the topic. The channel also depends on the number of attachments and enclosures which are part of the communication. So why are letters a choice?

Letters allow a certain complexity and length of communication. The length can range from one page of text to more than three pages. If longer, then one can use another format like a report. The delivery time of a letter is determined by the date, distance and destination of letters. Courier services can deliver quickly, within the city and out of the city.

Letters need to be proofread, and have to follow three steps of writing. Conciseness is another principle to be kept in mind, as well as fulfilling the requirements of information of the audience. They convey the professional image of the writer and his/her company, so perfection is important.

Topic- 134: Reasons for Writing Letters

The characteristics of letters which make them different from others communication modes make them ideal for external communication, with another company, customers, stakeholders and vendors.

There are several reasons which make letters a better choice in certain situation, as compared to emails. Emails are often short, speedy, written hurriedly, without thought. They therefore lack the impact which is required for serious issues. Their casual tone makes them unsuitable for formal communication, like contracts, where a certain degree of formality is required. Emails are almost always deleted as soon as read, as inbox fills quickly, so emails which are considered not important are deleted. Letters allow a better "paper trail" as compared to emails and for a better record of documentation.

There are security concerns as well, so letters are a better choice. Emails can be tampered with, read by others, forwarded and resend to others. They remain with the company's backup system and are company's property so emails are not private. If you want more significance for your correspondence, write letters. Letters can be written for a variety of purposes, e.g. for inquiries, cover letters, complaints, conveying bad news, confirmation and recommendations.

Topic- 135: Components of Letters

There are some essential components of letters. The paper should be '8.5' by '11' with '1' to '1.5' margin on all sides, as well as the font and style which would depend on the company's policy. The inside address and the heading, i.e. the readers' address, the complimentary close and signatures are essentials of all letters.

Writer's address includes either the writer's address or the company's address. If it is writer's address, it will give the house address, the street, the city, state and zip code. If the heading consists of the company's address, it should include the name of company, street address, city, state, country and zip code. The date should document the date, month, and year in which the letter is being written.

The reader's address should be placed two spaces below the date and should include the reader's name. In case that is not known, the department or the reader's job title should be given. The reader's title (optional) and the company's name are given, followed by street address, the city, state and zip code.

Salutation starts with '*dear'* with your reader's last name followed by a colon. You can also use his/her first name if you are on first name basis with your reader. If marital status of a woman is unknown '*Ms'* should be used, and if known then '*Miss'* or '*Mrs.'*.

Letter body starts two places below the salutation and includes your introductory paragraph, the discussion paragraph(s) and the concluding paragraph. The letter body is single spaced with double spacing between paragraphs. Indentation depends on the format being used.

Complimentary close is placed two spaces below the letter body and includes, "*Sincerely*", "*Sincerely yours*", "*Yours truly*" followed by the writer's signed and typed names, four spaces below the complimentary close.

<u>Topic- 136:</u> <u>Optional Components</u>

Besides the eight essential components of letters, there are optional components including the subject line, new page notation, writers and typist's initials and enclosure notation. Optional components will depend on who you are writing to, the length of the letter, whether it is for external or internal communication, and how many readers will read it.

The subject line is placed two spaces below reader's name and two spaces above the salutation. It conveys the letter's intent. It is used when the writer is uncertain about readers' name and to avoid using "*To whom it may Concern".*

A new page notation is used if the letter is longer than one page. You have to write your name, page number and date on each page, flush with left margin or across the top margin of the page and you have at least two lines for new page.

Writer's and typist's initials are another optional feature. If the letter is typed by someone else, then both initials are placed two spaces below a typed signature. The writer's initials are in caps, while the typists in small case, separated by a colon. This should be omitted if the writer and typist is the same person

Enclosure notation is used when there is additional information like an invoice or report attached to the letter. Mention of this in the letter. Type an enclosure notation is typed two spaces below signature, e.g. like "*Enc*" or "*Enclosures*" (2)'or "*Enclosure: January invoice*"

A copy notation is used if a copy is being sent to other readers. If it is a complimentary copy, then 'cc', is used followed by the names of those included. This is placed two spaces below signed or typed name and enclosure.

Topic- 137: Types of Letters

There are various business purposes for which letters have to be written, in a modern business establishment, institution or department, e.g. inquiry letter, bad news letter, recommendation letter, transmittal letter, and so on have to be written regularly.

Letter of inquiry is written to give information about degree, requirements, costs, deadlines. The writer has to be specific and concise and has to clarify intent, rationale in the introduction. The main text should satisfy the specific needs of the reader. The conclusion should again specify what action or response is expected by the writer from the reader. A transmittal letter gives information to clients, vendors and tells upfront what they are receiving, helping to focus readers' attention on important things. It is a reader friendly gesture to readers on the part of the writer.

In a cover letter you have to specify why and what you are writing about in the introduction, and if the information was requested. In the discussion, it says what you are enclosing and its value. Lists important points and in the conclusion say what will happen next and when and why the date is important.

A recommendation letter is written to recommend an employee, a project or a service. Perhaps an employee deserves a promotion or has to be nominated for an award. Another needs a reference for an educational scholarship or the government wants a reference of someone. In the introduction you state your position, relationship, the applicant's position, the duration you have known him/her, mention the applicant's skills and say why you think he/she deserves consideration for job/award/ scholarship. Contact information is also shared.

The bad news letter also starts with an introduction which is a buffer. It avoids telling why you are writing. In discussion after giving the bad news, quantifiable evidence is given as background to the situation. The conclusion gives future hope, while sounding upbeat and positive. A confirmation letter in business is written after a contract, a meeting or negotiation which verifies details of an agreement, confirming points regarding costs, dates and other details. It states the context, the topic and why the letter is being written in the introduction. In the discussion, as a legal binding document, it specifies details using highlighting techniques for content accessibility. In conclusion, it tells the reader what to do next. It includes signatures, dates when payments are due and the mode and method of payment.

Topic- 138: Formats of Letters

There are three types of formats which are usually used in business letters:

- Full Block
- Full block with subject line
- Simplified

In Full Block all the information is to the left side of the paper without indenting of paragraphs. The date and the complimentary close/ signature are also flush with the left margin.

In the Full Block format with the Subject - line is taken as more popular and professional; the only difference is that a subject-line is included. All text is typed on left margin, with no indentations, so is the date, complimentary close and the signatures. The Simplified format omits the salutation and complimentary close e.g. *sincerely*

Checklists of letter essentials and optional components can help learners to improve their letter writing, systematically. The three step writing process and rules of conciseness, clarity, correctness and ethics should be applied.

Lesson 24

TEACHING WRITING SKILLS-III

Topic- 139: Memos and Emails

Memos are one of the three most used forms of communication, others being letters and emails. On day to day basis employees use emails, memos, text messages and reports as a means of communication. The use of email is part of the modern corporate culture. Companies are geared towards using email. A survey carried out in the USA says that companies report using emails for routine communication. Its use is ubiquitous in business. With the growth in mobile technology, text and instant messages are also used routinely in business.

The three most used forms of communication are letters, emails, memos and reports. The question is which to choose? The choice of channel depends on the purpose of the communication, the audience, the security, and accessibility.

Writing criteria for memos is as follows:

- Identification line
- Introduction
- Discussion
- Conclusion
- Appropriate style and tone

The identification line summarizes the memo's content and gives the date, to, from, subject. A one-word subject line does not communicate the full information of what? When? Where?

The introduction states in one or two introductory sentences about why and what you are writing about so that the reader can get to the point/topic.

In discussion the content is developed specifically. For reader friendliness the text is itemized and graphics are inserted. The use of boldfacing and headings also helps the content to become more accessible for readers. In the conclusion the writer thanks the reader and adds a directive close also tells your plans and provides information and requirements of dated actions.

Topic- 140: Reasons for Writing Memos

Important and routine means of communication in business is the memorandum, memo in short. It is for communication within the company and addresses a wider audience, who might be receiving complimentary copies. Memos are flexible and are written for a wide range of purposes. They serve the purposes of vertically communication, addressing individuals up in the management and down to subordinates, as well as laterally, to co-workers. Although emails are overtaking memos but memos are still important for the following reasons:

- Can access those are working in the field.
- Not all companies have access to email. They have to rely on hard documentation.

- Some unions demand hard copies, pasted on offices, tea rooms, etc. Even employees' initials are required so to ensure that the information has been read.
- Some information cannot be sent electronically, e.g. cancelled checks.
- Easy to disregard emails, as we get so many spams that we delete without seeing them.

Besides these, the following business functions are best conveyed through memos:

- Documentation: Memos are an excellent way to document expenses, incidents, accidents, problems, hiring and firing, etc.
- Confirmation: For confirmation of dates, times, location, decisions to buy and sell memos are useful.
- Topics for discussion, agenda points can be communicated through memos.
- Procedures: of how to set up accounts, search on company intranet, and operate new machinery and software are recorded and communicated through memos.
- Recommendations: purchase material, hire/fire personnel, mergers, new contract.
- Feasibility: regarding changes in workplace, practices, staffing, procedures, locations are documented and conveyed through memos.
- Status: Memos can be used to communicate daily, weekly, quarterly, yearly statement about where you and the company are, regarding different topics.
- Directive: As directives, memos can be used for informing about duties, responsibilities.
- Inquiry: Memos can ask questions about processes and procedures.
- Cover: Memos can be used for prefacing an internal proposal, long report, attachment.

The following criteria need to be followed in memos:

- Subject line
- Discussion
- Audience Recognition
- Style and Tone
- Format

Topic- 141: Why Is Email Important?

Email has become a predominant means of communication all over the world. An email culture prevails in companies which are geared towards using email, allowing speed and efficient communication and quick decisions to be made.

The primary benefit in using emails is that it saves time. Messages are conveyed quickly, almost instantaneously. Besides this, it is convenient to use. With advancement in technology emails can be sent with handhelds. It combines voice phone, personal assistant and email package and can be accessed anywhere anytime. It allows one to communicate with internal as well as external audience, vendors, sales reps, whereas traditional means of communication have limitations.

Cost is another important factor. There are no expenses of paper and other writing postage items. Unlimited attachments can be sent and shipping costs can be avoided. The use of email has additional value of documentation, establishing an 'Email trail', through the threads or string of emails which can be retrieved easily. Information can be archived in files for future reference.

However, the negative side of using emails is that security can pose a problem. Emails can be tampered with, read and send to many people. Emails stay in a company's backup system and are the company's property. Therefore, they are not secure. Delays in communication can be caused by lack of internet facilities, problems of resolutions, breakdown of electricity and where large amount of attachments are to be sent. Furthermore, the message has to be limited to one computer screen, so where large amounts of information have to be communicated emails are not that effective.

Topic- 142: Criteria for Writing Emails

There are various components of an email message, knowledge of which will help to write effective emails. The Subject Line summarizes the email's content. A one-word subject line, like 'Meeting', does not communicate the full information. It has to convey the '*What*?' of the meeting, the '*When*?' and the '*Where*?' An effective subject-line would be '*Accounts Meeting on Friday'*. Introduction, Discussion and Conclusion are the other components of emails.

Audience recognition is important while writing emails as it is for all types of communication. Mostly in-company emails would be addressed to both High-Tech and Low-Tech audience so can use acronyms and technical words. The use of parenthetical definitions, e.g. CIA (Cash in Advance) is used for lay and Low-Tech audience. Usually an email is addressed to many readers through "cc".

Style and tone are determined by the audience. The use of simple words and short sentences makes for better reception by the audience. Specific detail and concise information should be provided as with other modes of business communication, keeping the tone informal and friendly tone. Formats for emails vary. Microsoft Word offers many templates from which to choose which suits your purpose and audience.

Topic- 143: Reasons for Writing Emails

Emails can be used for a number of external as well as internal purposes in business and industry. Any of the following reasons: Used for many purposes in industry and business. They can be used for the following purposes/reasons:

Directives: To tell employees to do something or give instructions.

Emails are a good way to document information, to report on expenses, incidents, accidents, problems encountered, projected costs, findings of research, reallocation of staff, etc.

Confirmation: To inform a member about a meeting agenda, date, time, location; decision to buy or sell; topics for discussion and upcoming teleconferences; expenditure, fees, costs, etc.

Procedure: How to set up accounts; research on the company's intranet; operate new machinery, use new software; apply online for jobs opportunity on the company's intranet or solve a problem.

Recommendations: Provide reasons to purchase new equipment, hire new personnel, contract with new providers, renew contracts or revise current procedures.

Feasibility: Emails can be used to study the feasibility of changes in the workplace regarding practices, procedures, location and staffing.

Inquiry: To ask questions about upcoming procedures, tasks, equipment.

Status: Emails provide a platform for a daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, biannually or yearly report on where you, the department or the company is regarding staffing, procedures, sales, projects, finances, etc.

Cover/Transmittal: To inform the reader that you have attached a document and cover the points in that document.

Emails can be used as well as misused so it is important to recognize your audience, identify yourself, use effective subject-line, exercise brevity, and organize the text, using highlighting sparingly, making hard copies, proof reading and exercising netiquettes.

<u>Topic- 144: Techniques for Writing Effective Emails</u>

The first thing to keep in mind while writing emails is recognizing audience – whether lay, low, high tech or multicultural, where one has to be careful in the use of abbreviations, acronyms and culturally specific terms. One has to consider dates, times, monetary figures.

Identifying one's self is important - writing name, affiliation, title in the '*From'* line of email or by creating signature file, like a business card, so that readers can open the email without fear of corrupting their files. An effective Subject Line also helps in this regard - unsolicited or unknown emails are not opened. Avoid writing informal salutations like, "*Hi*", or "*What's New*". An effective subject line is, "*Subject: Meeting Dates for Tech. Prep. Conferenc."*

E-readers tend to skim and scan an email, so help them access information by applying the 'Top Screen Test' by putting the most important information at eye level. Most readers only read one screen of email", so emails should be concise and to the point of one screen page.

Organize your email to include an introduction, discussion and a concluding paragraph telling what is next, giving a follow-up date and the significance of the date. Highlighting should be used sparingly, although many options are available on soft wares. But some email platforms distort colors, visuals so they should be avoided. Asterisks, numbers, double spacing and headings can be used. Hard copies of emails should be kept in company's archive, e.g. copies of awards, compliments for annual job review, etc. as well as information about flights, hotel bookings, car rentals, conference arrangements. Emails should be proof read for errors before sending. Incorrect emails undermine writer's professionalism and the company's credibility, therefore facts, dates, numbers should be rechecked. Sending attachments should be mentioned in the text. Information should be given to the reader about the software being used (HTML, PowerPoint, PDF, RTF, zipped files if large attachment, practicing etiquettes is important as they tend to alienate the audience. Courtesy, professionalism should be reflected in the email. One should avoid using lowercase, ellipsis, emoticons and angry emails /flaming which use CAPS.

Lesson 25

TEACHING WRITING SKILLS-IV

Topic- 145: Writing Reports

Reports are a major means of business and academic communication, therefore teaching report writing to learner of business English as an important job of the teacher. In most courses of business Communication taught in Pakistan, it is part of the course. Students engaged in projects and dissertation in their core area, have to produce some kind of report and need training in report writing. Besides academics, reports are a major means of communication in business and can be of different types according to:

- Purposes
- Length
- Formality
- Audience
- Channels

Purposes: The purpose of writing a report could be to supply a record of work accomplished, record and clarify work for future references, present information to a large number of people, record problems which were confronted in the work place.

Length and scope: Reports vary as short reports, comprising of 1-5 pages, scope on single topic, limited time frame, with fewer audience or long reports which can be of more than 5 pages, can have momentous impact, address a larger audience and cost more.

Formality: The tone in short reports is informal when written about routine messages, written as letters, memos, emails while long reports are formal, and have standardized components like contents, abstracts, illustrations and titles

Audience: Audience could be internal (High-Tech or Low-Tech), colleagues, supervisors, or subordinates. So reports can be written as memos or emails. For external audience (multiple audience levels) - vendors, companies, clients, letters and emails are usually used.

Purposes: Reports serve a number of functions, such as:

- Informational: Give factual information
- Analytical: Analyze causes behind the information
- Persuasive: Give information and draw conclusions

There is a wide choice of communication channels in which reports are written, i.e. email, memo, letters and electronic online technology. Each company writes different types of reports using, and can choose channels according to the purpose, formats along with certain shared characteristics. They may be written for experts or laypersons. Reports tend to have a standard format in most institutions, so the first thing the teacher should do is to discover the local policy, and get examples of authentic reports of the type required.

Topic- 146: Criteria for Writing Reports

There are certain basic traits or essentials of writing reports. These are format, development of concepts, recognition of audience and considering the style appropriate according to these. Organization of a report consists of the following units:

- Identification lines
- Headings and talking headings
- Introduction
- Discussion
- Conclusion/Recommendations

Identification Line: Consists of a *date*, *to whom*, *by whom* and a *Subject*. It has to have a *topic* and a *focus*.

Headings and Talking Headings: These are used to improve page layout, make the text accessible, give information and talking headings explain more about the heading. A one word heading can be 'Introduction', while talking headings give more information, as in '*Human Resources Committee Reviews Salary Packages for 2016'*

Introductions provide an overview of the report. The subdivisions can be purpose which includes the topic sentence, the rationale and the subject matter, personal or the others who are involved and the dates, the time period covered by it.

An introduction satisfies multiple and future readers. Reports are filed because they provide a document for future reference as people tend to forget things. Also it provides information to those who are not familiar with the subject matter. The discussion is the largest part of the report and it requires development of the concepts of the summarized topics, activities, problems encountered, cost of equipment, warranty information, etc.

The conclusion/recommendations sum up the report and relate what was learnt, what decisions have been made, suggest actions, make recommendations for future action. The length depends on the channel being used, the audience. Not all reports require a recommendation.

Topic- 147: Types of Reports

In business many different kinds of reports are a requirement and are written routinely. Feasibility, recommendation, research, proposals trip/lab/minutes of meetings, incident, progress, investigation reports are the most common ones.

An incident report documents an unexpected happening, e.g. equipment malfunction, accident, employee misconduct, change of plan, fire, or a robbery. Incident reports are fact finding, analyzing (study, review), give solutions, e.g. an accident with sales rep. and the boss wants a report to document the incident. Such reports usually consist of an introduction (Purpose, what, where), the personal (who was involved, their roles), the discussion (body, findings, agenda, work accomplished) and the conclusions/recommendations.

Investigation report looks at the causes behind an incident. It is not just document about why something happened but why it happened, e.g. someone lost a credit card at a party, and you have to write a report about how and why this happened. The components are an introduction, giving background and an overview, the purpose: Date, objective rationale, location, personnel, and authorization. In a discussion which is the body of the report, the data, findings and the agenda is given. In conclusion, what learnt, discovered, accomplished is written and in recommendations, suggestions are given.

Progress report gives the status of an activity, accomplished and remaining. Customers want to know progress whether a project is on schedule, plans for next reporting period, difficulties, e.g. work on a language laboratory is in progress and the director would want to know the current state of the work. Progress Report could be daily, weekly, monthly reports, project, status, completion date, etc. It is also called an activity or a status report. The introduction includes the objectives, the rationale, the personnel who are involved, and any previous activity. In discussion the text is itemized according to the work being accomplished, remaining work and the problems which have been encountered. In conclusion, you state the work that has been accomplished and the target completion date.

Different approaches, channels and formats can be used for reports. For progress reports, a letter format or a memo format can be used depending on the requirement of the company and the audience.

Topic- 148: Development

Development of the main ideas is what makes the report effective. Answering the reporter's question: who, when, why, where, what, helps in generating and directing the writer to include all relevant information, e.g. *who* did you meet? *Who* were the partners? *Who* was the liaison? *What* was technical team? In developing the content the time of the occurrence of an activity is given, including dates of travel, milestones, and travel. Justifications, rationale and objectives for writing are also included, e.g. why did certain chemicals act the way they did? Where did the activity take place? The location? The directions? What were the steps to the procedure? What conclusions have you reached, or what are your recommendations? What were the steps in the procedure? What conclusions have you reached? What recommendations do you make?

Answering these questions will generate the development of materials for a report. It is important to quantify information, to be precise, give exact information and direct action about date and why the date is important.

Topic- 149: Audience

Determining audience is important. The writer's tone, choice of terminology and organization of content depend on who the reader is. Knowing your audience is important because the success of your communication depends on how well you are able to impress and convince that audience.

Reports are used for external and internal communication. For in-house communication, you could be communicating vertically and horizontally, to the high-tech audience, your colleagues, seniors and other people of the same area as well as with the low-tech audience, your colleagues from other departments and areas, director. Reports addressed to the external audience might again be addressed to competitors, partners, vendors, customers, which could be high-tech, low-tech and lay audience as well as to multiple and multicultural audience.

For a lay audience you will have to be careful not to use specialist terminology and use of parenthetical definitions for any which you use. Your audience determines the report’s organization. If you know that your friendly audiences are favorably inclined towards what you are saying in the report, you can state your intentions clearly, and say upfront what the objective of your report is, and then give reasons for what you are suggesting. If you perceive your audience to be less friendly, you will have to gradually bring them to your point of view. So, you start with first giving your arguments and then lead up to your main premise.

For an intercultural audience, it is good to be oblique and indirect when giving information which might be interpreted differently by different cultural groups. The audience determines the tone. Since communication is carried out at all levels, it is important that rules of politeness are followed, and to avoid dictatorial style with subordinates.

Topic- 150: Style

Style is the tone, and the degree of formality in writing. It includes cohesion, coherence and conciseness. Instead of saying: ‘*Overview*’, say ‘*IT Conference Dates set for May 2017*’. Instead of saying, ‘*Employees are directed to go to conference room*,’ say, ‘*Employees to go to Conference Room’.*

To aid access and understanding, the use of headings, itemization, graphics and color is useful. Headings and subheadings help to direct readers’ attention and make text accessible. Talking headings give more information, e.g. instead of ‘*Conference’*, the talking heading, ‘*May Conference Agenda for Managers’*, gives more information. Questions can be used as talking headings. Graphics help clarify content, sustain readers’ interest help to present information in a small space. Trends can be shown through line charts, percentages through pie charts, comparisons through grouped bar charts and facts and figures through tables.

Besides this, Microsoft offers endless possibilities like line drawings, schematics, drawings, clip art, photographs, exploded views, and labeled call-outs to enhance the content of the reports. Style of writing can be taught to business English learners by having them look at sample texts of reports and writing exercises which require using conciseness and elimination of wordy phrases.

Lesson 26

TEACHING WRITING SKILLS-V

Topic- 151: CVs and Resumes

Business English teachers are often asked for help with the writing of a learner's curriculum vitae (called a resume in the US). Not only are these vital documents for the learner concerned, but they can be difficult to get right.

One reason for this is the style and therefore effectiveness of a CV depends on who is going to read it. This can be especially problematic in an international setting. No hard and fast rules exist, and yet decisions have to be made about length, type (most CVs are chronological or functional), what personal information to include, and so on. Secondly, there is often conflicting advice from so-called 'experts', so what the teacher advises may be in direct conflict with advice that the learner has just downloaded from the Internet. Thirdly, CV writing is influenced by level within a company.

High-level executives have CVs that look different (not only with respect to content) from workers on the shop floor. With CVs, it is important to recognize that no one size fits all. Yet there is a glimmer of hope. Sometimes it is possible to find out what a particular company actually wants in a CV. They may even have a standard format that they can provide. Institutions like the European Commission have created a standard document for use in Europe. Again, Microsoft Word comes complete with standard template formats which are commonly used.

CVs are normally sent together with a covering letter. This is the applicant's chance to highlight what they have to offer, and how they might benefit the company they are applying to. Such letters can be practiced quite successfully using a genre approach.

Topic- 152: Components of Resumes

Whether you are writing a reverse chronological or a functional resume, you have to include the following basic components:

- Identification
- Career Objectives
- Summary of Qualifications
- Employment
- Education
- Professional Skills
- Professional Affiliations
- Military Experience
- Optional Components
- Portfolios
- References
- Personal Data

Topic- 153: Functional and Chronological Resume

Both types of resumes provide same content information regarding personal details, education, experience, references. However the structure is different.

Usually you write a reverse chronological resume if you are a traditional job seeker, a recent high school or college graduate, aged 18-25, and you hope to enter the profession in which you have received your college training or certification. In the resume you list your education and experience in reverse chronological order. If you are already working, then you list your current job using present tense verbs, and for past jobs you use the past tense, telling where and when you worked there, what your responsibilities were, what steady progress in your profession - in terms of promotions and salary increases, and how you hope to stay in it.

You write a functional resume when you are a non-traditional job applicant, returning to work after a gap and are not fresh graduate. . You have not received education for a job and have changed jobs frequently or you plan to join a new profession. A non-traditional job applicant has to emphasize his skills as related to the job he/she is seeking and quantify his/her accomplishments. Education and experience should be given in reverse chronological order. Both provide the same content, it is only in how the organization of the content varies.

Topic- 154: Ethical Considerations

Ethics is an important part of communication. Your CV should give accurate information about your education, experience, skills and references. Inaccurate information can be found out, people can easily be contacted and checked, and information can be verified. Internet background checks can be employed and also through social networks.

It is a must to present qualifications honestly. e .g. including a degree that you have not earned, inflating your job title, achievements, and experience or responsibilities amounts to giving misleading information as does claiming technical knowledge which you do not have.

A resume has to be honest and ethical. Any type of misinformation can backfire, news travel fast in small professional communities and inaccurate information can damage one for life. Failing to give correct information and being completely honest can result in your not being offered a job. It looks unprofessional and destroys your reputation.

Topic- 155: Effective Resume Style

Effectiveness of CV depends on how well it conveys the content and information. The style depends on who is going to read it. The page layout and the format should be appropriate. The writer should choose an appropriate font sizes and style. Usually Times New Roman, Calibri, and Aerial are used in technical writing. One should avoid cursive styles. The font size should be between10-12, with headings in 14-16 size. Avoid using full sentences as three problems are associated with them. First, sentences beginning with the first person pronoun, 'I… which seems egocentric and become repetitious after sometimes. Furthermore, with full sentences, there are a variety of risks of grammatical errors which might occur. Lastly, sentences take a lot of space, making your C.V. longer than necessary.

Formatting of resumes should focus on reader-friendliness. By using bullets to set apart information the text becomes easily accessible. Capitalization and using boldface highlights important information. Indenting subheadings to create white spaces and italicizing subheadings bring home to reader important information about your achievements. Lists should begin with verbs. Use present tense to give a positive, assertive tone and past tense to quantify your achievements. Don't just tell your readers how great you are, but tell them in precise terms how the company can benefit from your achievements; quantify figures, and names of awards. Proof read and revision ensure accuracy, conciseness and desired impact.

Topic- 156: Methods of Delivery

There are three ways in which you can deliver your resume – by mail version or the traditional style, the email version and the scan-able resume. Since the traditional CV is in hard copy, so it can be highly designed using bullets, boldface, highlighting and fonts. However, decorative fonts, clip art, and colored backgrounds should be avoided.

In the mail version, technology provides many tips which can help the CV. writer. It keeps reminding the writer about resume` essentials. In this the font and page size are mandated, although uniqueness is limited. It can ask you to write your interests and hobbies, which might not be appropriate with all types of job applications. References can take a lot of space so a printed copy can be taken to the interview.

For the email resume, the quickest way is too send it as an attachment. Many human resource professionals prefer hiring via email. A brief cover email has to be sent along with the resume attachment. It is important to clarify which software is used, e.g. Microsoft Word, WordPerfect, RTF.

Scan able Resumes: Most companies use computers to screen resumes. They use a technique called electronic applicant tracking, which scans the resume for key words. The company's computers scan the resume as raster or 'bitmap' image. Then it uses an artificial intelligence scanner to read the text, looking for key words, so that it can be forwarded to the concerned department. This is its most important feature, which tells about job titles, skills, responsibilities, corporate buzzwords, acronyms, abbreviations related to hardware.

There are several tips to write an effective resume. Use high quality paper and the font Helvetica Courier. Your name should be on top of the paper. White spaces can be created using a space bar. Text should not be centered. Create horizontal rules and bullets using asterisks and hyphens. Using key words is an important feature. OCR scans for job titles, skills, responsibilities, corporate buzzwords, acronyms, and abbreviations related to hardware as well as career related blogs.

Another option available is delivering resumes through social media. YouTube resumes score high on search engine results. They differentiate you from other job applicants, show you in action where you can explain your value and contribution to a company like a story.

Several tips can be given for creating an effective 'Resume'. The video and sound quality and the resolution should be clear. How you look and what and how you say it helps the interviewer to have a full impression of you. Your content should focus on objectives, education, experience and skills.

Lesson 27

TEACHING WRITING SKILLS-V

Topic- 157: Proposals

Writing proposals is an important area in business communication. Proposals are basically long reports, whose purpose is to persuade someone or a company to carry out what you propose. When you write a proposal, you are aiming to sell your idea or convince or persuade someone to accept your idea.

Internal proposals are aimed for an audience within the company. They relate to issues which are addressed by –company management. When topics are large, then a longer report or proposal is needed to cover such diverse topics as extensive financial budgeting, time for planning and a commitment to new staffing.

External proposals are aimed for an external audience. They are written to sell a service or a product outside your company. If your company has developed new software, it will need a proposal to market the new item as well as the services which go towards its installation. It will cover such issues as marketing, purchases, contractors and trainers.

Request for Proposals: Often companies have to procure services from other corporations. To receive bids and analyses of services, the company writes an RFP specifying its needs. Competing companies respond with their proposals. Such proposals aim to persuade someone or a company to carry out what is being proposed. Significant commitment regarding employees, schedules, equipment, training, facilities and finances is sought from readers. Only a proposal, complete with research, will convey your content sufficiently and successfully. There are various types of reports and templates are available for formatting them.

Topic- 158: Criteria for Proposals

The components of proposal can be divided roughly into three main parts:

- Title page, Cover letter, Table of contents, List of Illustrations
- Abstract, Introduction, Discussion, Conclusion/Recommendation
- Glossary, Works Cited, Appendices

The title page for an external proposal is the first page of the proposal. It gives:

- The Title
- Proposal Audience
- Proposal Author
- Date of submission, Time it covers

The title page for an internal proposal includes the following:

- Titles
- Names: positions, company, department, etc.

- Dates of submission

The cover letter prefaces the reports and provides the reader with an overview. It tells the reader what and why you are writing about, what is important in the report, what you plan to do next and when that action will take place and why the date is important.

The table of contents includes the headings, subheadings and page numbers. It allows readers to get information and navigate the text. The list of illustrations covers Tables, Figures and their page numbers, which must be clear and informative. Unclear lists are only waste of time and confuse the reader. The preliminary pages are part of what is called the front matter. Since proposals are longer documents, these pages facilitate the reader to find areas of his/her interest.

Topic- 159: Abstracts, Introductions

The diverse audience of proposals has two basic needs. One is of getting quick information and this in easy terminology. These needs should be satisfied by abstracts or executive summaries. In 3-10 sentences, the abstract presents the problems leading to your proposals, suggests solutions, and tells about what benefits your audience should derive. It summarizes the main topics so that readers can get an overview to take the place of a longer report. It saves readers' time, conveying only the most important points. It has two primary sections: the purpose (Purpose Statement) and the problem (Needs Analysis)

The introduction includes a purpose statement – why you are writing and what you hope to achieve in a few sentences or a short paragraph. It repeats abstract information, but is not redundant – a reiteration and elaboration of the problem. It clarifies to the audience why this proposal is important, and explains the problem leading to the suggestions. It is a sort of needs analysis - why something is needed and developing it in the content. Use of highlighting techniques headings and subheadings make the text accessible. It shows you understand readers' needs and to highlight the proposal's importance.

Topic- 160: Discussion

The discussion is the longest part of the proposal, containing most of the information. It is important to organize your content, use graphics, and be ethical in order to persuade the reader to your point of view. Developing the content means that you develop your ideas persuasively, observe ethical technical writing norms, organize your content using graphics and communicate persuasively.

Well written proposal will make your audience act, which is especially important in unsolicited proposals, as the audience has not asked for information or solutions. A solicited proposal – is written in response to an RFP, requesting a need or your help that will benefit the reader and arouse audience involvement. You can develop your content through research – primary as well as secondary, using interviewing, creating surveys, visiting sites, using Internet and reading related journals.

Communicating ethically for proposals is crucial as your audience will make important decisions based on the information they get from the proposal. There is a need to be accurate and honest and cite accurate resources/information and give references of what you are citing.

If the material is long and complex, organizational techniques have to be used for organizing your content. Key components for discussion include analysis of existing situation, offered solutions and the benefits to readers. The discussion text becomes more accessible with the use of graphics, line drawings, photographs, flow and organizational charts.

Topic- 161: Conclusions and Recommendations

Summing up provides closure to the proposal. It restates the problem, the solutions, benefits and the recommendation suggest the next course of action giving a date for it, and stating why date is important. The use of headings provides a focus in the conclusion.

In the recommendations section the key points are summarized, and the follow up action is suggested. It gives the readers' benefits.

Checklists can be used to ascertain important points regarding content and formatting can be used to ensure that all basics have been achieved. Checklists are important when teaching proposal writing. Activities to teach proposal writing can be devised around writing different parts of the proposal and learners can be asked to give presentations of their written proposals.

Topic- 162: Glossary, Works Cited and Appendices

The third and last part of the proposal, also called 'Back Matter' consists of the glossaries, the works cited and the appendices.

A glossary provides clarity for the less specialized audience. Alphabetized glossaries serve the purpose of defining jargon, high-tech terms, abbreviations and acronyms. The purpose is not to burden the text or to slow down the reader by using unfamiliar terms and technical jargon. The provision of glossary helps the reader to look up definitions of such items and those who are familiar with them can continue to read without interference.

Works cited or references are also part of the back matter. Since proposals are the mouthpiece of the company, they need to convey honest and ethical information. Ethical considerations have to be kept in mind when using documents like previous research, Internet sources, books, surveys, interviews, computer software, by acknowledging them in the references. Documenting your sources, justifies your point of view, keeps you honest in terms of not taking credit for others' work, and helps the reader to find more information about the referred work.

Any additional material you want to attach with your proposal goes into the appendices which are attached at the end of your proposal. These might be older proposals, questionnaires and survey results. The contents of these are not of primary importance but you have to mention in the text which appendix is relevant for which part of the proposal and be careful about correct numbering and sequencing.

Lesson 28

TEACHING WRITING SKILLS-VIII

Topic- 163: Long, Formal Reports

When a topic is too large and complex, a longer report and more formality are required. Research is required about the personnel/employee, the expenditure, schedules, equipment or training. Long reports are not simply extensions of short reports. They require more time, money, resources and research. They have more scope and impact, for example, if there is a proposed company merger or the global expansion of a company, a longer report needs to be written. Reports can do the following:

- Inform
- Analyze
- Recommend

In the global expansion of a company, an information report will tell that a WAN (wide area network) is needed. It will tell the management that it needs to store and transmit strategic information to connect with global partners. It will analyze ways which are fast, reliable, and helpful and recommend the best designs for providing secure communication to partners, vendors and clients. Finally, it will persuade your audience that your design, software design, hardware specifications and estimated budget will satisfy internal and external needs.

Information Reports: They focus on facts. This helps the reader to understand the context, the situation and the topic. The costs, the time, and availability of resources should be conveyed. The data can be conveyed through bullets, by asking questions and giving answers and presenting facts and figures in paragraphs.

Analytical Reports: In analytical reports, you analyze through factual information. Then you expand on it to interpret, to analyze and to draw conclusions. After a more in-depth analysis for other options, pros and cons, you then draw conclusion.

Recommendation Reports: After providing and analyzing information, you can recommend action based on findings. The recommendations allow you to tell your audience about why they should purchase, or consider something. Long reports cover information, analysis and recommendations separately; usually these three goals will overlap in the long, formal report.

Topic- 164: Components: Front Matter

Long reports are complex and contain more data and place a greater demand on readers. This length and complexity require more from the reader. They need more headings to make the text accessible to the reader. The long report is composed of the following components:

- Front matter
- Text
- Back matter

Front matter or the preliminary pages are the Title page, the Cover letter, the Table of contents, the List of Illustrations and the Abstract or the Executive summary.

The title page gives the title of the report, name of the company, writer/s submitting the report, and date of submission. The cover letter prefaces the reports, provides the reader with an overview and tells the reader what the report holds. The table of contents indicates the position of the contents by giving their location in page numbers. The long report has many different readers, e.g. managers and technicians with own interests, so the whole contents are not read by all. The table of contents helps readers find their relevant area of interest. The list of illustrations covers the tables and figures. It must be clear and informative. Unclear lists are only waste of time and confuse the reader. The preliminary pages facilitate the reader to find areas of his/her interest.

Topic- 165: Components: Abstract and Introduction

An abstract gives an overview of the report covering the key points, in low tech terms in one or two pages. Brevity is an important feature of the abstract. It presents the problems, solutions and the benefits. Another approach sees the abstract as summarizing the contents of the report, highlighting the main points, omitting examples, tables and illustrations. The aim should be to avoid high-tech terms. The readers want the bottom line and want it quickly. Abstract content will differ according to topic.

An executive summary is similar to an abstract, although longer. It is at the beginning of a long, formal report, summarizing the contents. It might focus on the problem, the suggested solutions and show the benefits if its suggestions are implemented. It should be an effective and concise piece of technical writing which summarizes the main points, including only the important details, statistics, and information, to avoid confusing the reader. It includes the purpose statement which overviews the key points, informs the reader about any problem that will affect the outcome of the report.

The introduction has two crucial parts, the Purpose and the Problem and its background. In a few sentences tell your readers the purpose - why you are writing and what about. The problem is much more detailed than the purpose statement of two to three pages. It is important for two reasons. It highlights the importance of your report and establishes a context for the reader. It emphasizes the report’s priority that a problem truly exists which needs a solution. Through it you reveal your knowledge and expertise, so that the audience recognizes the issue and trusts you to solve it.

Topic- 166: Component: Discussion

The discussion constitutes the main body and develops the content. Since every report is written for different purposes and contexts, so the content can be wide ranging. It may contain an analysis of any of the following:

- Existing situation
- Solutions
- Benefits
- Product specifications
- Comparisons/contrast of products
- Features of products

- Optional approaches for solving problems
- Needs assessment

Corporate and employee credentials:

- Years in business
- Satisfied clients
- Certifications
- Previous accomplishments

Schedules:

- Implementations
- Reporting intervals
- Maintenance schedules
- Delivery schedules
- Completion dates
- Payment schedules
- Projected milestones

Cost analysis:

- Profit and Loss
- Survey results
- Lab report results
- Warranties
- Maintenance
- Online help
- Training
- Impact on the organization (time, personnel, finances).

Audience recognition: It is important that the mass of the huge content be organized according to the audience for whom it is intended. The use of headings and subheadings for organizing information makes it accessible to the reader. Use of subheadings in the table of contents makes the complex text more reader friendly. For a readable style use short sentences and paragraphs and use highlighting techniques, itemizing points, and using bullets. The use of tables and figures adds clarity, conciseness and cosmetic appeal to the text.

Topic- 167: Component: Back Matter

The long reports contain documents attached at the back which are the glossaries, the works cited and the appendices. Glossaries are used to define high-tech terms, abbreviations and acronyms. Although some readers will understand these terms, others wouldn't. However, if you describe these each time you use them, two problems might occur. You might insult high-tech readers or you will delay your audience as they read the text. To avoid these, glossaries are used. A glossary is invaluable. Readers can look up unfamiliar terminology by turning to it and reading the definitions. Those who understand the usage of terms can go on reading without stopping for unneeded information.

Works Cited: Long reports which are based on research need to have a reference or work cited section. In this, ethical considerations are important. This section tells about page(s) documents and the sources (Internet, books, surveys, interviews, computer software). Correct documentation and citation of sources is important as they reflect your credibility and demonstrate your ethical behavior. However, the boilerplate content and templates of the company do not need documentation. However, material taken from the Internet and published sources needs to be acknowledged in the references. Teaching of report writing to business communication students can be carried out by using the Genre Approach for writing students' assignments and presentations.

Topic-168: Research for Long Reports

To support and develop the content of a long report, researched material, quotes and paraphrases are used. Research is a main component of long, formal reports. The question arises that how much writing should be the writers' own and how much should be from already researched material? The answer is that you should lead into and out of each quotation with own writing. Your own sentence should be supported by a generalization (from other material). You should provide a follow-up explanation of referenced material with your own writing. As comments drawn from your own experience often lack detail and authority, you need to support these with research already done in the area. In order to strengthen your argument, you need to get support from others' relevant work. You need to research for the following reasons: To create content, to support commentary and contents with details, prove points, emphasize and enhance the reliability and importance of an idea/opinion. Research shows the importance of the idea to the larger business community and fulfills the audience need for references and documentation.

Secondary research consists of using published material, or the company's boilerplate, which need not be documented.

Primary research is the original research created through survey/questionnaires, networking, visiting job sites, performing lab experiments which may need to interview people, e.g. relocating company, new security and surveys. Using the following survey guidelines help to make your data collection easier and ethical:

- Come prepared - research subject matter
- Prepare survey questions with quantifiable answers
- Thank respondents
- Ask permission to use their responses
- Helps to substantiate your long report and gives support to your recommendations

Using and presenting these survey steps that you have taken for data collection makes your report look professional.

Lesson 29

TECHNOLOGY AND BUSINESS ENGLISH TEACHING

Topic- 169: Using Technology

The use of technology in language learning has impacted learning in ways which are not possible in traditional types of learning. A space has been creating for new types of communication. All areas of ESP, including Business English teaching have been impacted. Open access sites and virtual worlds can make materials available across many disciplines and areas of interest. Teachers' can use the free audacity for podcasting. Learning contexts include oral, aural, visual and literate modes. These modes of communication are synchronous, e.g. the chat, as well as asynchronous e.g. email, twitter, blogging and Facebook.

The choice of using a particular mode depends on the learning needs which are linked to curriculum. From the introduction of the stand-alone computers into the classrooms to local networks (LAN), wide area networks (WAN), the Internet, World Wide Web, to new mobile technologies, there is an unlimited variety of options to choose from for the ESP teachers. English teachers can now exploit, share, and produce materials from outside the classroom. There is a breadth of content and ease of delivery which is offered by technology. As Belcher (2004) points out, technology has often been used in ESP teaching as a tool for bringing language experiences from outside the classroom that are relevant for the teaching of English for a variety of purposes.

One of the greatest changes that the internet has brought has been in the ability to create new materials and to share materials across the web. Multimodal writing allows incorporating written, image, aural, to form new texts - podcasts, images, videos to share experiences, or ideas through various media to teach language. Concordance is another technology which enables the experiences of the outside world to be brought inside the class. Concordance sites are available for accessing authentic language. These provide specific, lexical/syntactic samples, which are needed for teaching business communication. Teachers can develop their own corpus. The internet allows corpora to be easily accessible.

There is an information overload on the Internet. Sometimes teachers are overwhelmed by this sheer amount of information. In such situations, Personal Learning Environments (PLE) can be created which filter information. Tagging to mark a site according to one's own interest helps to limit the load. The internet offers the availability of both written and oral texts. Copies of syllabi, newspapers, magazines, scientific journals, news broadcasts and lectures are accessible for everyone.

Open access university courses are offered through the Internet - lectures, class notes, readings, audio/video materials are "Open Access" and available to all. Most of these technologies are not developed specifically for language learning and teaching, so teachers have had to develop methodologies for implementing them into the classroom, by choosing the appropriate form. Each new technology, such as Facebook or Twitter, poses its own challenges and opportunities for English teachers, who therefore need to be flexible in deciding the kinds of tools they would like to use.

Topic- 170: Technology as Communicative Space

The greatest change brought about by the Internet is that anyone can be an author. It allows opportunities to share and create new materials and new forms of multimodal writing. Technologies can be used for language learning, by students to create and share their texts. The digital media is a form of text to teach English communication skills e.g. Digital story telling. Technology not only helps in teaching but also fulfills learners' need to participate in learning communities, through email, chat, twitter, blogs, and Facebook which have roles outside the class, in social networking.

The value of immersion in disciplinary discourse has been acknowledged in ESP pedagogy in both academic and workplace environments. Teachers use field trips as ways of immersing students in their disciplinary discourse. Belcher (2004) says that technology has made the internet a vast field trip that allows students, both to gather information and sometimes interact with people all over the world. The various forms of online discourse can allow students to interact with others in their field, both in real time and at each other's convenience.

The tremendous expansion of technology, open access sites and virtual worlds, poses a dilemma for teachers and learners because the information overload sometimes, becomes overwhelming. Choosing the appropriate text and form of language becomes a challenge **-** What do you need/want from the course?

The increased use of technology has raised concerns about intellectual property rights and the attitude towards plagiarism. There is a difference in commercial and educational use of intellectual property. The Internet has been blamed for the "plagiarism epidemic". For the ESP teacher the Internet is a rich source of authentic material, but there is a need to have an awareness of the rights as well as the constraints involved in the use of this material. There is an increase in number of plagiarism cases because of the ease with which 'cut and paste' option can be used. So teaching has to integrate learning with rules.

The issue of access to Internet material is another concern, referred to as the 'digital divide'. The speed and quality of access, and the right to uncensored material as well as the right to participate in the production of material on the Internet, is a serious concern. There are issues of disparities of access, which depend on political and economic factors. One response to this is to use open access materials, e.g. the website Language Learning Technology (llt.msu.edu), or Journal of Writing Research (http://jowr.org/ current.html).

Another concern is how to encourage a balanced use sites like Wikipedia/Facebook for information and for connecting with students, where privacy becomes an issue. Facebook sometimes contains embarrassing content which might influence future employers' decisions regarding hiring.

Topic- 171: Using the Internet to Teach Business English

Besides general business information, the Internet is a rich source of learning for Business English teacher and learner. This is not exclusive to distance learning, because the ease of delivery and breadth of content offers unlimited resources. Several search engines provide information of businesses at *business.com.* Interactive business activities are available at *www.bized@edu.uk.* There are sections which provide company's facts and specific company information, which can be adapted for English learners. Students are particularly interested in the competitors' company and large companies have own websites which might run into hundreds of pages. Authentic professional materials can be utilized from these to use in the business class.

Specific company information: In-company teachers can have access to company's Intranet. This can be a good source of authentic materials which can be used to develop activities. Teachers' access to intranet provides access to reports, in-house journals, and company's policy documents and projects' information. This information can be used to develop activities. Speeches can be downloaded to examine the issues raised in them. Reading press releases helps to find what was included and what was omitted. News broadcasters like CNN, BBC can be accessed by anyone; they offer endless sources for audio, video and written activities. The traditional media with its news of stocks, companies and sports can be exploited to teach. Using Internet offers a lot of potential for teaching as a source of general business information and specific company information.

Topic- 172: Language Learning /Publisher's Resources

Many publishers offer online resources for language learning, some of which have to be paid for while others are free. These can be used without the teacher being present. The Longman's Business English offers a special feature on a particular company in each month. Longman's Web Dictionary also provides the Longman's Web Dictionary for learners, who have just to click on a word to find its meaning.

There is a huge variety of such materials and caters for all levels of learners' needs. It inculcates autonomy and self-learning in learners. Most of these focus on discrete language items. The following are some websites which offer online language help:

- PEAK English (www.peak-english.com)
- Dave's ESL Café on the Web

Additional web-based resources are online dictionaries, thesauruses, concordances and pronunciation guides which can easily be accessed. Words and terms can be accessed on such websites clicking on a word, i.e. employment in the screenshot, and it can be studied in the pop-up window. Business words can be accessed on the website: www.visualthesaurus.com

Some publishers give online support to course books. This helps the teacher to vary the material for particular learners' needs. This is an ideal way for teachers to supplement the materials they are using. Like all materials, they tend to appeal to some types of learners more than others. Online supplementary material for a range of business English titles can be found on the OUP website (www.oup.com).

Topic- 173: Web Quests

Web quests are activities designed for learners to look/use internet information to enhance knowledge of language forms and of Business English. They do not just focus on the content, but involve the learners to play an active role in finding, evaluating, and analyzing the required information. Activities can be designed for various levels of learners. At the lower level, it could be based on asking questions which would lead learners to a particular website. This is usually supplemented by exercises to pre-teach vocabulary. At another level, background information can be given along with the tasks. A list of useful sites can be given.

An example of a web quests could be a '*Business trip web quest'* – where the teacher provides the learner(s) with introductory and task instructions and provides a list of website resources. This can be adapted to suit particular learners' needs. At the next level, less overt guidance will be given. In a *Project trip web quest*, learners may also be required to analyze and use the information to do something specific, e.g. give a presentation.

The following activity work in practice:

- Integrated into a case study or simulation
- Research information, discuss in the meeting, evaluate
- Decision as a written report

Web quests are effective ways of replicating real-life in the distance learning context. Other typical 'real life' activities might require learners to integrate information into a spreadsheet, prepare PowerPoint™ presentations, or produce written recommendation.

Topic- 174: E-learning in Practice

E-learning methods and technologies have been used in practice. Although not all can be applicable for all learning situations, however, they can be adapted to suit different contexts.

Modules and electronic records via an intranet learning platform can be used to improve the standard of English within the company. Learners can be given placement tests and divided into groups. Each group is assigned a teacher who can meet them once a month. Learners are given access to a learning platform which offers them a number of modules at different levels, ranging from vocabulary and grammar exercises, to comprehension exercises involving both spoken and written texts. These modules are supplemented by purpose-written materials based on authentic documents provided by the company. The software provides the teacher with a record of what each learner is doing a particular task, and how long it takes. This allows the teacher to recommend specific modules for different learners, according to their needs.

Online testing and self-directed access to resources can be used to find out the standard of English within the company as fast as possible, and to start a training program which would bring everyone up to speed. A company can decide to carry out an online computer-based testing program because it is faster and cheaper than face-to-face oral testing. Based on the results, employees are assigned to various groups for learning. F2F learning is supplemented by the creation of a self-access resource center containing PCs with Internet access, a collection of CD-ROMs, and a library of DVD films.

Web-based research projects in small groups can be used for learners who want to obtain credits in business English. Unfortunately, learners can came from a large number of different specializations (law, economics, business studies, engineering), and classes are large (40+). The teacher can divide the group into small groups (3 or 4 students in each) according to language level and each group is assigned a term project. The project involves the group working independently to carry out web-based research on topics from different specialized fields, culminating in one coherent F2F presentation from each group

Teachers use electronic tools to analyze real language and improve her teaching, e.g. of report writing skills. Copies of relevant reports can be obtained which had been written in the last five years, and scanned into lexical analysis software (Oxford Wordsmith Tools is one example). The corpus thus created would contain examples of real language which the learners could analyze for patterns (for example, typical collocations, and noun + verb patterns) and compare to their own work.

Web conferencing can be used where there are widely dispersed office locations, attendance is low, and learners are often late for classes. The solution is to invest in web conferencing software (an example of such software is *CU-SeeMe* which allows the whole class to meet and interact online). Web conferencing allows people to interact via their own PCs, whereas videoconferencing normally entails going to a purpose-built room complete with cameras and other special equipment. The class website allows the learners in the group to develop projects in which everyone in the class contributes, with photos, lists of likes and dislikes, useful links, and examples of written work. The teacher adds additional worksheets and revision material. The website can create much discussion both inside and outside the classroom, and is particularly motivating for the learners, as will be reflected in their end-of- course feedback sheets.

Lesson 30

AREAS IN BUSINESS COMMUNICATION-I

Topic -175: Areas in Business Communication

Management is a crucial and necessary part of all organizations, and communication skills are needed for efficient and smooth functioning within the organization and for external matters. Besides management students, business communication has to be taught to the learners from the following areas:

- Administration
- Customer service
- Distribution
- Marketing
- Finance

The role of professional content in teaching business English is controversial. Business English is an umbrella term which covers a wide range of specific and specialized forms of language, according to customers' needs. This specificity is what ESP courses aim for. The role of language teacher is to focus on language development within the range of a business oriented vocabulary.

Business English teachers are not content specialists. The business English teacher is not a subject specialist but a knowledgeable generalist, who uses learners' expertise to develop the BE course. In a course for financial managers, the business English teacher will have to get knowledge about the content within which to teach language development along with professional targets along the cline and the methods needed for achieving them.

For this familiarity with organization, its working and its hierarchy are important to know as the teacher will need to train participants from a wide range of professional areas, so one has to understand the corporate world and its workforce. Evolution in management sciences has changed the working of the modern organization in recent times. Now all business English students will be involved in in some way with the management of resources – time, money, people and materials.

It is important to understand the three schools of thought which have exerted an influence on management science. These are:

- Scientific Theory
- Classical Management
- Behavioral movements

Division of Labor: There is a functional hierarchy in every organization. Every company needs a close ended and transparent system and a discrete number of areas devoted to a function. It is important to understand the following:

- The structure of the business organization
- Functions and activities

Topic- 176: Business English for Management

The business communication teacher has to be familiar with management areas. Managers communicate for carrying out the following functions:

- Leadership
- Team building
- Delegation

For these good communication skills are required. A management issues are usually concerned with general type (management function according to the nature of job) and local factors which affect that company (financial, geographical). The management requires a number of skills - to define duties and responsibilities clearly, set deliverables, policies and estimates, to allocate resources and for communicating with all stakeholders. A good manager has to deal with a broad range of stake holders – employees, clients, subcontractors, competitors and vendors and has to communicate clearly, concisely, and effectively. He/she will also have to sign off on major decisions, such as “change orders” and choose the best possible team for day-to-day decisions.

The five areas where the future manger will have to communicate are as follows:

Planning: It includes establishing goals and standards, developing plans, and rules and procedures and forecasting future.

Organizing: Delegating/assigning tasks, establishing channels of authority, coordinating work of management teams

Staffing: Deciding what type of people should be hired, setting performance standards, evaluating performance

Leading: Getting others to get the job done, motivating

Controlling: Setting standards, checking actual performance against standards, taking corrective action as needed

Teaching business skills includes teaching four basic skills of language with vocabulary related to management. Introduced and practiced through cloze exercises, role plays and simulations. The aim of teaching business communication is to develop fluency and effectiveness of communication through practice and feedback, using topics and activities based on real workplace requirements.

Topic-177: Business English for Administration

The administration department has a vital role to play in the working of any organization. It presents the public image of the organization and is responsible for liaison with internal audience and external audience, which could be customers, competitors, clients and vendors. The administration department provides ways of checking on, watching over and supporting operations, coordinating the working of the organization. The data processing section is located in the administration department. The administration needs to have good communication skills to perform effectively the following functions:

- Reading: Reports, procedures, policies
- Speaking: Meetings, negotiating, presentations
- Writing: Administrative communications involve writing business correspondence -Reports, orders, transfers, memos, notices, reports and letters
- Listening: Partners complaints, to all levels of employees

The administration has to liaison with all departments in vertical and horizontal communication:

- Administrative Staff
- Information organization
- Equipment
- Human resource
- Standards

Teaching business communication for all these areas involves teaching the lexis and registers of specialist areas. Practice of these in activities can be done through role-plays and simulations. Vocabulary to be taught includes:

- Specialist to Specialist
- Specialist to Non-specialist
- Generalist to Generalist

The aim of teaching business communication to administration is to develop effectiveness and fluency of language skills of learners with focus on communication in specialist vocabulary. The quality of communication influences business in many areas, including working relationships, sales effectiveness and perceptions of leadership.

<u>Topic – 178: Business English for Customer Services and Distribution</u>

Customer services require interaction with clients, stakeholders and multicultural audience to listen to inform, instruct, share, listen to complaints, and suggestions. When communicating with such diverse audience/readers, clarity is the main objective. This can be achieved by using simple words, and eliminating jargon. The use of numbers, not bullets, and bolding of important points within the text adds to the emphasis. In journalism, the “lead” is the very first part of a news story, so it should not be buried between relatively unimportant texts. Eliminating extra words can increase reading comprehension by 20%. Use the customer’s name adds a positive and friendly touch to the communication. Longer paragraphs should be split into shorter ones, which can increase reading comprehension by 20%. Whenever one is in doubt, it is better not to assume, but to ask for clarification.

The use of images enhances the meaning and appeal of the text, especially when you’re trying to facilitate your customer through a process, images and screenshots can get your point across more easily than words. Lines should be broken up to create white spaces. Proofreading is of vital importance so scanning your text, whether email or written is important before hitting the click “send.”

Vocabulary teaching for customer services and distribution should again focus on the following:

- Specialist to specialist

- Specialist to non-specialist
- Generalist to Generalist

Distribution is the movement of goods and services to user, customer and consumers. Like other areas of communication, it involves addressing internal as well as external audience/readers, in both written and spoken texts. Vocabulary for distribution will again cover specialist as well as generalist items for the diverse audience. It would have special registers for transport, supply chain, channels and so on. The aim is to teach so that learners can achieve fluency effectiveness in communication through practice and feedback.

Topic -179: Business English for Marketing

Good business communication skills are needed in marketing as there is maximum interaction with customers and consumers. Marketing concepts are:

- Marketing
- Advertising
- Brand
- Launch
- Consumer
- Marketing research
- Brand identity
- Public relations
- Campaign
- Positioning

The marketing mix, which is made up of the four Ps of marketing:

- Product: Product refers to item that satisfies consumers' needs or wants.
- Price: Price is the amount a customer pays for a product.
- Place: Placement is about a product's market coverage and how it gets to market through logistics through company's distribution channels.
- Promotion: Promotion or advertising which may involve public relations and marketing campaigns, including in-store promotions.

In marketing communication, use can be made of marketing corpora. By simply typing the word 'market' in a concordance program, the different uses of the word show up. Vocabulary, from general to that related with customers, products and advertising, needs to be as follows:

- Specialist to specialist
- Specialist to non-specialist
- Generalist to generalist

Activities can be based around practice and expanding vocabulary and phrases associated with fundamental marketing concepts and activities. Comprehension exercises are useful to teach vocabulary. Speaking activities involving role plays and simulations creating scenarios from work related areas.

Teaching business communication for marketing aims to develop fluency and effective language skills in topics related to the marketing area.

Topic -180: Business English for Finance

Teaching business communication is needed for students of finance and accounting. The aim is to develop language knowledge and communication skills for handling general as well as specialist communication and language issues related to professional matters. Accounting is collecting the record of a company's financial activities, including:

- Costs
- Annual financial reports
- Income statement
- Balance sheet
- Statement of changes in equity

Basic principles of accounts and finance are based on keeping track of all the transactions of the company, including credits and debits, flows of funds in and out and book keeping. Managers and investors depend on accountants to give them objective and reliable information about the companies they deal with. The accounting profession is crucial for businesses and accountants and financial managers need to have excellent communication skills.

Finance and accounting vocabulary with which learners have to be familiar are:

- Balance sheet
- Assets
- Liability
- Profit/Debt
- Loss
- Gross
- Net
- Profit margin
- Pretax

Vocabulary items should be a combination of specialist, non-specialist and generalist. Some common collocations, e.g. *run at a loss*, *profit and loss* are statements which are frequently used. Using financial corpora is also useful. Teaching has to be related to topics, related to area of finance. Activities can be role plays, presentations, simulations taught through practice and feedback.

Lesson 31

AREAS IN BUSINESS COMMUNICATION-II

Topic- 181: Legal English

English is the language of commercial and legal international transactions. The term ‘Legal English’ has a variable meaning. The familiar term is ‘Legal English’, although ‘Legalese’ or ‘Anglo-American Law’ is used, as the following:

- ELP: English for Legal Purposes
- EALP: English for Academic and Legal Purposes
- EGLP: English for General Legal Purposes
- EOLP : English for Legal Occupations Purposes

Teaching of legal English for students of law and non-Anglophone law students is an important area within ESP. The purpose of teaching legal English is to enable L2 legal professionals and students to operate in professional and academic situations where English is required. However, there are various problems in teaching. Statutes, which are general legal laws, are compiled as codes, the acts of parliaments, and reasoning of decisions of complex cases by the higher courts, become binding law. Reading long complex documents presents problems to students of L2 not only in the reading and understanding these long, daunting texts but also because of different assumptions in the interpretation and application of these tasks.

Another problem is that the language of law is archaic, formal and mysterious because of the Anglo Saxon, Greek and Latin origins of the English language. Some see it as a desire for power on part of legal practitioners, their desire for certainty and also for making the legal language inaccessible for the general populace. Teaching BE to learners implies that they are either native students of law or second language learners. They have to be familiar with legal systems, practices and occupations in criminal and civil law. Business English teachers have to be familiar with legal occupations – Solicitors, Barristers, Attorney and Lawyers. Areas of legal language include:

- Language of contracts
- Language of employment
- Language of banking, business law, and company, etc.

Legal language is required in dealing with a number of issues:

- Court cases: Criminal and civil
- Forensic
- Contracts with multinational companies

The need of law students is to gain familiarity with writing of contracts, corporate law, and job contracts. There are materials for teaching legal English available commercially. The methodology of team teaching is beneficial as there is a language specialist and a legal specialist.

Topic – 182: Teaching Legal English

Legal English is difficult for the business communication teacher because of its technical nature. This technical language is difficult and full of archaic terminology. It is ideal that the help of a legal specialist be taken to carry out team teaching in which there is a language specialist and legal specialist and has been proposed as a solution to the problem. As in the Learner-centered Approach, using learners' knowledge can be an important resource for the teacher. Some feel that the solution is for the BE teacher to get a legal qualification.

Activities for teaching can include grammar practice based around preposition and collocations. There is a special legal lexis – register or specialist vocabulary. The key to teach legal English is to gain familiarity with common legal collocations – words that occur in natural partnerships, e.g. "*Merry Christmas*", but never "*Merry New Year*". Similarly, verb + noun combinations: *Do you accept liability?* And noun + verb: *The Gap widened between them.* It is important to give practice of prepositions, to use accurately as they change meaning. Learners can be given a bank of legally appropriate prepositions/phrases to memorize and use.

Legal register can be taught by using vocabulary lists, through activities in which texts using plain English have to be replaced by specialist terminology. Concordancing software also offers opportunities to teach vocabulary. Online bilingual corpus, e.g. of English and Chinese can facilitate self-study. The use of authentic materials is invaluable in teaching vocabulary, collocations, grammar, legal occupations.

Another approach is to use Genre Frameworks. Students need familiarity with generic structures of legal texts to develop their receptive and productive skills. Case reports and statutes are key genres and materials based on them can be used by students to model their law writing assignments on. Students need familiarity with generic structures of legal texts to develop their receptive and productive skills.

The problem question essay requires learners to consider a set of facts, identify legal issues, and apply the law to existing facts to a difficult legal problem, using the Model CLEO (claim law evaluation outcome) given by Strong (2003). The very nature of legal language can cause misunderstanding. This can be a disadvantage for socially vulnerable groups, as in the case of lawyer/client interview.

Topic – 183: Aviation English

Aviation English is the de facto language of civil aviation which is called *Radiotelephony;* it is a specialized communication between pilots and air traffic controllers, and other personnel associated with the aviation industry, like flight attendants, crew, mechanics and engineers. The difference with other forms of communication is that radiotelephony is carried out over radio frequencies and there is no face-to-face communication between the interlocutors. It is a hybrid language - a combination of a restricted, specialized, technical language and conventional English /other languages.

English is the language of air traffic control, officially mandated by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). The ICAO mandates that pilots and air traffic controllers must be proficient at Level 4, for effective English communication. Miscommunication is a cause of accidents; so pilots and air-traffic controllers are required to exhibit comprehensible pronunciation, intelligible fluency, and the ability to paraphrase in unexpected circumstances and sufficient vocabulary.

It is critical for the business Communication teacher to understand that aviation English is a combination of phraseology (The prescribed syntax and vocabulary) and plain English (Non prescribed use of common English vocabulary and syntax). Aviation discourse is characterized by a restricted syntax as the exchanges are brief. The following are the characteristics of aviation English:

Grammar: Grammatical forms are limited. Verbs are in imperative form, limited functional words, like prepositions, are used, omitting auxiliaries and pronouns.

Specialized Vocabulary: Use of numbers and letters is important

Pronunciation: Numbers, e.g. '*tree'* for three, '*fife'* for five

Interactional rules of exchange are fixed as a common language has to be used. Sharing a common language and frequency is critical in order to have situational awareness of the craft and its position. The discourse of the Pilot is as follows:

- Identifies his address
- Identifies himself
- Flight level

The discourse of the Controller is as follows:

- Identifies aircraft
- Identifies himself
- Acknowledges receipt of info
- Passes instructions to proceed
- Again contact when reaches point
- Repetition, Read-back
- Call sign

The use of plain English, used as politeness markers, "*thanks*", "*so long*" and honorific terms "*sir*" are not prescribed phraseology. These and other common uses of plain English might pose problems for non-native speakers. In serious situations, pilots are more likely to use plain English to supplement prescribed phraseology, which might be problematic for non-Anglophone interlocutors. The use of full syntax is non-prescribed and can cause problems of miscommunication.

Topic -184: Comprehension and Negotiation of Meaning

Negotiation of meaning is a critical skill in a situation where the flow of communication is almost entirely over radio channel, with no F2F contact. Comprehension is difficult when there is a rapid presentation of information as there are many aircrafts in approaching, landing and taking off positions at a given time. The air traffic controller has to guide approaching and departing aircrafts and convey multiple information in a single turn, for the sake of efficiency and accuracy. This flow is primarily from AT Controller to pilot, who has to respond and give read-back to ensure comprehension and accuracy of the exchange. For example, the controller would be identifying and directing pilots about their direction and speed and the pilot reads back, requests repetition for speed, uses politeness markers: '*Please'*, '*Thank you'*

When there is a lapse in communication, both the pilot and the controller will ask for clarifying and repairing information, request for repeating directions or asks for repetition of other information. So, there is a use of phraseology and intonation questions for clarifying/repairing.

The use of questions is an aspect of plain English but is not part of radiotelephony. However, research has found that use of plain English does occur frequently in pilot/controller communication. Besides conveying information, it is used to clarify, check, and repair information. The use of syntactic, intonation questions to get information and the use of WH – questions are not approved phraseology, but are used when unanticipated changes occur. Full, direct questions are used to verify and elaborate the unexpected information. The plain language features are used to aid comprehension and are used for greetings and signoffs. However, such politeness markers and questions are not part of approved radiotelephony.

Topic – 185: Cognitive Load, Politeness and Mitigation

The question of cognitive workload and its impact on communication has been a continuing focus in aviation studies. The controller-pilot exchange is mainly carried out as radio communication which is part of the problem. The ability of flight crew to understand and manage radio communication is directly related to the cognitive load of other tasks that require memory and processing, like coordinating multiple procedures and sharing information with crew members. A high cognitive workload may interact with language proficiency to affect the ability of flight crews to interact with air traffic controllers. Several factors that contribute to cognitive workload are as follows:

Length of the interaction: Traffic controllers provide a load of information in a single turn to balance approaching and departing flights, giving instructions about level, directions, clearing, position, etc.

Prosodic features: of language pose problems of comprehension in radio communication for both native and non-native English speaking pilots. Neutral prosodic contours and rapid delivery typically used by controllers may contribute to comprehension problems in radio communication for non-Anglophone pilots.

Code switching: A linguistic feature often related to cognitive workload is code - switching. Under normal flight conditions, code - switching may be an intentional interactional strategy. Greetings, signoffs and expressions of gratitude are often given in the presumed language of the interlocutor, establishing a friendly conversational tone. In emergency contexts, code- switching appears to be a less intentional result of cognitive workload. Cookson (2009) discusses how code - switching may have contributed to the well - known collision of two aircrafts.

Politeness markers: are discouraged in aviation English. They have a negative effect on pilot – pilot and pilot – controller communication.

Hierarchical relationship: impact interactional features. More work needs to be done to elaborate the linguistic strategies that pilots and controllers can use to maintain communication under stress. In normal situations, junior co-pilots' speech, is marked by indirect statements, e.g. in a warning. The pilot misinterprets and misunderstands the indirect warning.

Mitigation and requests: Mitigation and requests is a contested area in aviation communication. These strategies are used to accomplish job, and are made to the pilot when making undesirable and unexpected requests and to the controller when perceived as having increased workload. Language policy is determined by ICAO and how much it is actually used has to be researched. The use of non-prescribed language, to clarify meaning, to carry our cooperative tasks, has to be seen in relation to safety remains an open question.

Topic -186: Teaching Aviation English

Like all areas of ESP teaching, the teaching of aviation English should mirror the target language situation - the language, tasks and contexts. An authentic aviation discourse should be used for developing materials on work related contexts for topics of teaching. There is a need for teaching paraphrasing strategies to native speakers and to teach the standard proscribed aviation phraseology to non-native speakers, who are at the minimum proficiency level.

Using authentic aviation discourse and descriptions of work related contexts and topics are useful. Activities for pronunciation of numbers, practice of read-backs and repair of miscommunication can be used for improvement of communication. A discourse analysis can be supplemented by workplace observations, interviews and questionnaires. The technique of discourse analysis can be used to develop materials for practice of pronunciation of numbers and read-backs, repair of miscommunication and improvement of comprehension. A useful activity to teach aviation pronunciation and vocabulary can be based on semantic and phonetic contrasts.

A material development for ground staff, of basic language features, experienced aviation teachers can use field observations and notes and collate them with real dialogues and scenarios. These can be distributed to aviation professional teams to determine the most representative and frequently used forms and functions, to be used for teaching. The testing of aviation English can focus on routine exchanges and unexpected radiotelephony, using representative authentic combinations of phraseology and plain language.

In view of the public safety which is involved in the aviation profession, the need for efficient and effective communication skills is needed. The purpose of teaching aviation English is that personnel should be able to operate in a minimum level of proficiency level, which is validated through research, especially of interaction during stress.

Lesson 32

BUSINESS FOR MEDICAL PURPOSES-III

Topic – 187: EMP for Doctors

The need for medical English has never been as pronounced as now. The English speaking nations lead in medical research and development, requirements for professional development and the migration of doctors to English speaking countries are factors which have contributed to the need and growth of ESP in this area. EMP aims to improve the English skills of non-Anglophone health professionals. EMP literature focuses on:

- Pedagogical/research enterprise
- Health care communication: Doctor – patient

English is the international language for science and medicine. Some have pointed out that this has resulted in the loss of national languages and spews inequality in areas of research and publication. A significant majority of EMP learners are overseas medical practitioners who have migrated to practice in English speaking countries. Various types of medical courses are being offered, which vary according to duration, audience, and medical specialty and in skills, genres, and medical situations.

A needs analysis shows that rapid reading, detailed study, and technical writing are needed by doctors doing clinical work with English - speaking patients and engaged in clinical work with English - speaking colleagues. Besides these, other needs are:

- Giving papers, reports/articles in English for publication and symposia
- Corresponding with English - speaking colleagues on professional matters
- Understanding lectures/papers in English delivered orally at medical meetings, symposia
- Giving papers and lectures in English
- Participating in formal discussion at conferences
- Participating in post - graduate courses in English - speaking medical institutions
- Entertaining/being entertained

EMP courses are a major need for English for medical research, especially in doctor-patient communication skills and overseas doctors seeking to pass registration exams. Skill is needed in writing medical histories of patients and translating those written in local languages. It is important for the business English teacher to know what are the necessities and wants of students - what the medical student would need academically and what the students perceives he/she “wants”. If the language is English then one have to master medical terminology and improve listening skills and speaking skills.

Topic -188: EMP Course Content and Activities

EMP courses can be designed around relevant language items. But pedagogically useful activities with prominence given to authentic texts and tasks are useful. In simulated case studies, a case is presented, participants give suggestions about diagnosis/treatment, and the teacher notes language difficulties for feedback. Another activity is listening and reporting. Pairs/individuals listen to a topic of medicine, take notes and discuss with another group who have listened to another topic and presents clinical solution.

Other activities are:

- Read and report. Individual participants or groups read a medical article, summarize to another group who have read a different article.
- Listen to a guest speaker doctor.
- Preparing and presenting a paper: Based on a case, a medical topic previously researched by the speaker and the teacher records for feedback purposes.

Medical English language practice in the language laboratory:

- Doctor patient role plays
- Rehearsals of mini conference talks
- Presentations at conferences
- Feedback crucial component
- Recorded to give feedback on language, pronunciation, delivery style

Practice activities can include:

- Listening in pairs to recorded medical talk and giving summary report to another pair
- Describing and interpreting tables and graphs
- Transposing data into visual form and explaining
- Writing abstracts
- Giving mini talks
- Grading and sequencing: In length, audience, feedback

The teacher's role in practice activities is as:

- Activator of resources
- Animator of activities
- Provider of feedback

The activity can be designed around an event - doctor patient consultation. The teaching and training of doctors has to be in accordance with the medical communities' expectation, fulfilling the linguistic needs, and the subtle as well as a specialist use of language.

Topic -189: EMP Research and Publication

A research in the medical science is ongoing, giving new insights about treatments and diagnosis. Teaching business English to medical students and practitioners is important because English has become the accepted language for research in medicine. The needs of medical professionals for English revolve around research needs, reading EMP materials and language related EMP research.

Genre Studies: Written medical genres include abstracts, case reports, and review articles, book reviews. However, key genres area has been identified as the research article (RAs) which follows an internal schematic structure, and the case report, which is the narrative of a single case. Spoken communication, medical presentations, and questions are other areas.

Specific Grammatical Structures: Studies sometimes combine genre studies with grammatical features of medical language, e.g. the *If* conditionals (in doctor –patient consultation) and *Hedges* (in conference presentations)

Medical vocabulary is known by its large corpus of technical or specialized terms, derived from the Greek and Latin legacy of English, e.g. *diabetes*, *embolus*. There are a higher percentage of technical words in medical text as compared to a linguistic text. Teaching of vocabulary is widely debated with some holding the view that medical words/terminology is learnt in the course of studying medicine. Semi technical and lower frequency general vocabulary words are more problematic for intermediate level students and have to be given sustained attention in pedagogical contexts.

Pronunciation practice: This is another area which needs attention. Consultation is interaction between doctor and patient. The ritualistic aspect as well as power asymmetry between doctor and patient, through control of questions and topic development, shown in the patient's subjective account of his feelings and doctor trying to economically, briefly complete the consultation. This interaction consists of questions, with only 9% to 30 % questions asked by patients.

The use of euphemisms both by doctor and patient to evade referring to taboo, embarrassing, distressing subjects, e.g. taboo body parts, bodily emissions, and death and dying. Referring to death is a difficult subject in many cultures, and has therefore spawned a number of euphemisms.

Metaphors are pervasively used in medicine. Particularly common is the metaphor of the human body as a machine, or a plumping machine and diseases referred to with the war metaphor. Medical discourse employs an abstract and distancing language, e.g. in case studies. This feature tends to employ an abstract, and distancing language in which the disease entity is foregrounded and the patients appear as cases in a statistical data. The following linguistic features are used:

Depersonalization: Use of impersonal vocabulary, omission of the agent, and use of technology as agent "*Follow-up C.T. scan showed....*" for deleting agent and taking objectification further. The use of reporting verbs, as in patients assigned non-factive predicators (e.g. *state, claim, report*) and doctors factive ones like (*note, observe, record, find*, etc.). The health communication research is limited. More directed EMP research is needed to improve medical practice.

<u>Topic -190: Materials in EMP</u>

Commercially produced textbooks are a better choice to teach EMP. Some materials are locally produced, as they enable teachers to tailor contents. However, their drawback is that they are time consuming, and uneconomical unless reused. They require creativity and consulting trained personnel. Useful materials are those that focus on specific grammatical structures needed by learners, e.g. the *If conditional*, which has been shown by research as a structure frequently used.

The texts used for educating medical students aim to keep clinicians up to date, e.g. *The textbook 100 Cases in Clinical Medicine* (Pattinson et al. 2007) provides a ready source for teaching, and can be adapted for the EMP. Besides this there are numerous medical journals, articles, and recorded talks, and podcasts for medical practitioners. These are designed for a professional audience and online videos (e.g. see *http://www.bmj.com/site/video/*), which are all exploitable in EMP. Most of the texts for EMP emphasize:

- Doctor-patient interaction
- Consultation: presenting complaint to examination, and diagnosis to treatment

Various texts available give importance to listening and speaking, and the language for doctor-patient interaction. Cultural awareness, non-verbal communication and empathetic listening and intonation are other areas. The use of DVD recordings of consultation provides a solid base for student analysis and discussion.

Topic – 191: EMP – for Nursing

Business English for Nursing is a relatively new area within ESP which focuses on healthcare professionals' use of English in clinical settings and in nursing education. There are numerous textbooks for nursing published in recent years most of which focus on material for nurses entering the "Inner circle". The less recognized are English as a second language immigrants, and international students in the 'Inner Circle' countries who want to do nursing as their major in two and four year university courses.

A needs analysis of nursing reveals challenging issues which need to be addressed, e.g. objective, subjective and learning needs. Academic, discipline specific, cultural, and language related issues have been identified as challenges for ESL Students. Other needs analysis focus on language and communicative skills and tasks of nursing profession. This has led to more understanding about the discourse of nursing and the development of taxonomy of language use in nursing.

The academic skills are the same as other social and natural sciences. Nursing students need to apply reading strategies and skills to complex reading material, usually in textbook format; apply listening strategies and skills to lectures; take notes to supplement lecture outlines; study effectively for tests; participate actively in discussions; ask questions; and write research papers on various topics in nursing. Students must also be able to read and write critically, for example, question the way in which a problem has been defined, the data that have been gathered to investigate the problem and solutions that have been proposes. Reading strategies, listening, and taking notes, studying for tests, participating in discussions, asking questions, writing research papers, and reading and writing critically are needed.

Discipline Specific Skills: This includes nursing care plans are areas which students find particularly difficult. Require students to research medical diagnosis, create appropriate/desired outcome for the client, and implement the interventions that have been identified in the plan, evaluate client's progress towards achieving the desired outcome. The other discipline specific skills and tasks: are charting, change of shift report, interviewing skills to gather information, assertive skills to speak up in difficult situations, and the therapeutic communication skills.

Cultural Skills and Content: There are different cultural assumptions about mental illness, sexuality, concerns, and death/dying, which non-Anglophone students have difficulty in understanding and responding to. Cultural expectations in communication style cause problems in a multicultural medical team, e.g. in the West learners are expected to be assertive and self-directed, their lack of initiative may be viewed as lacking in problem solving and clinical reasoning. They may not participate actively, although may have important things to say in team meetings but may need more time in coming up with correct words. Delay in conversation may be taken as a lack of interest, lack of knowledge and students' incompetency.

Topic -192: Linguistic Content of Tasks and Activities

The linguistic content of tasks and skills is an important part of EMP. A pronunciation is accuracy in speech production. Spoken accuracy at five levels:

- Pronunciation
- Vocabulary
- Grammar
- Discourse

The pronunciation of the initial and final consonants and of suffixes and prefixes is crucial to effective communication. Phonemic contrasts, e.g. '*low blood pressure'* vs. '*No blood pressure'* can become problematic in clinical settings. Also specific nursing words, related to terminologies, procedures, and diagnosis have to be focused on as do terms, procedures, and diagnosis. General words, patients' names and commonly confused words, and intonation and stress, mispronunciation at suprasegmental level and misplaced stress all need to be addressed in teaching.

The vocabulary, word choice becomes crucial in medical settings. There are synonyms with many connotations, e.g. stomach, belly, gut, tummy. Appro. priacy of a term is related to the age, gender, social class and the degree of formality required for the addressee. Abbreviations, idioms and metaphor, and parts of speech, common collocations, and colloquial English are part of vocabulary training.

Paraphrasing is another skill required for nursing discipline. The use of non-technical words rather than technical words is important, e.g. instead of saying '*Suicidal ideation'*, the use of '*Thoughts of hurting yourself'*. Accuracy in speech production is related to following syntactic and morphological rules of grammar. The correct use of tenses and pronoun usage, the use of relative clauses to specify someone, e.g. '*The patient [who is scheduled for surgery] wants a bath*", have to be taught. Grammatical structures describing procedures use the third person subjects, passives and imperatives.

Asking questions for information, yes/no questions, when to ask and how to frame question, is an important skill. Besides this, imperatives and commands, "*cross your legs*", "*bend your elbow*", "*touch your finger to your nose,"* and "*follow the light*" (Cameron 1998) are structures routinely used. In addition to giving commands, nurses must also understand explicit and implicit instructions given by doctors and nurse supervisors.

A pragmatic competence is using language effectively and appropriately. Inferring the intent of communication which is inexplicitly stated to find the patient's emotional state is based on knowledge of local culture. Strategic competence entails the ability to clarify meaning, checking comprehension, and demonstrating understanding and recognizing verbal and non-verbal cues. The sociolinguistic competence is using language appropriately according to the context. Interviewing skills for getting information about culturally sensitive topics, showing empathy, and adjusting speech in social interaction and recognizing visual cues for talk are areas where ESL students face problems.

Lesson 33

AREAS IN BUSINESS COMMUNICATION-IV

Topic - 193: Business English for Academic Purposes

English for academic purposes or EAP comes under the umbrella of ESP, and is required for those who use language to perform academic tasks or for employment. ESP is a needs based concept which aims to determine which language skills should be profitably developed for academic and professional success of the students. It is a broad term which covers the academic needs of native students (NSE) who need it for reading textbooks, research and presenting it for non-native speakers of English (NNSE). Business English comes under the heading of ESP as it aims to equip students with the language skills which they require for academic and professional success. It takes into account certain basic questions like: "*who the learners are, what their linguistic background or level of competence is, what their view to language learning is, what their purpose and expectations are, what particular skill they will be needing in their actual, on- the- job situation",* etc.

English for academic purposes EAP as a branch of ESP is taught in higher institutions to improve the learners' proficiency in English language and to help them to overcome some of their difficulties in English as a medium of instruction and higher order writing.

Needs analysis is the first stage in the teaching of EAP, and aims to assess why the students are learning English and what are the skills they need. Jarvis (2001) points out that in British universities, English for academic purposes courses form an important language provision for native as well as non-native speakers (NNS).

EAP courses can be either pre –sessional, where students take the course before they go into further academic study or in-sessional, where students study while already on academic course. The pre-sessional EAP program is designed to provide the learners of English as a foreign language with basic English language skills that will enable them to pursue their academic course of study in English. The in-sectional on the other hand is taught to the learners of English as a second language to improve their proficiency in English.

The distinction between subject specific and common core EAP: The common core EAP focuses on general academic language skills, while the subject specific EAP looks at the language features of particular discipline. In common core EAP, students of different course backgrounds are taught the same language skills which may not have direct bearings on the students' academic course of study. The aims of teaching, however is to equip the students with the language skills that will enable them follow their academic fields of study. The basic aim is to raise the students' English proficiency to enter higher institutions or to study successfully in current courses as well as to provide guidance for thesis writing and for research and publication purposes.

Topic - 194: Purposes and Descriptions

The term *thesis* is used in UK and *dissertation* in the US, for doctoral research. The doctoral thesis is still neglected area in EAP. Majority of research on theses and dissertation has appeared in the

‘English for Academic Purposes’ or the ‘Journal of English for Academic Purposes’. Reference is not made to the many manuals that have been written for thesis writers, as noted by Paltridge (2002), and published advice on thesis writing is often at odds with actual practice, and the research that is discussed there is not empirically driven.

Basic differences can be seen in various forms of academic writing, for example a Ph.D. thesis and the research article in terms of length, audience, and requirements. A doctoral research is 80 – 100,000 words or more, while a master’s thesis could be 10, 000 words. The audience for these two genres is again different. The requirement that research works should be an original contribution to knowledge also varies with disciplines. There is also considerable variation across disciplines, in terms of whether the work is qualitative or quantitative. The forms and the organization of content can vary from the traditional simple to the traditional complex or the topic based. The compilation of the content in a research article (RA) usually follows the IMRD Model: Introduction, methods, results, discussions.

In the traditional complex organization, the model is: Introduction, review of literature, chapters, each following IMRD mode, with a general summary chapter. Humanities, these are usually topic based, with an introductory chapter, followed by a series of chapters based on the topic, with considerable overlapping of methods.

One organization is compiling various research articles together, so that all sections are separate articles, and there is an introductory and concluding chapter in which the author tries to give unity to the text. A new form is the topic based thesis in which the writer’s, ‘Writerly self’ can be seen. The writer writes as his/her reflexive self, not detached as in classic positivism. The key question is how the postmodern writer can textually position and represent him/herself.

Topic - 195: Genre Descriptions

Genre descriptions are useful approaches in EAP. Parts of the RA or the dissertation can be seen as a genre and the genre approach can be used for teaching. Descriptions are of the following:

- Introductions
- Literature reviews
- Discussion sections
- Conclusion

For introductions, the CARS Model (Create a Research Space), is followed. It is a three step model, with the following moves:

- Move 1. Establishing a territory
- Move 2. Establishing a niche
- Move 3. Occupying the niche

Literature reviews are composed of two dominant moves, Moves 1 and Move 2, with Move 3 occurring much less times (Kwan 2006). The three moves in this model for literature reviews function to establish a strong case for the writer’ s own work on which he or she is to be evaluated.

The use of citations is related how writers position themselves. In introductions, literature review and discussion, there is a tendency for non-integral citations, which are placed outside the sentence, usually inside brackets, focusing on information, not on people. Students use citations for knowledge display but higher level students also use them to support the writers' line of thought.

Discussions as a Genre: A three-move model is given by Bitchener (2010b:4) and a nine-move model by Dudley-Evans, 1994. The three-move model of Bitchener is as follows:

- Provide background information
- Present a statement of result (SOR)
- Evaluate/comment on results or findings in a restatement of aims, research questions, and hypotheses

Students tend to see their language problems at the sentence level while the supervisors see it in terms of creating clear meaning at the paragraph level, and in terms of understanding the rhetorical and organizational requirements of the genre. Students face difficulties, in the development of coherent ideas and arguments, and difficulties with appropriate lexical choice tend to obscure meaning.

Conclusions: The generic structure of the conclusion is not the same as discussion section. The following model for a conclusions chapter is with a small amendment to Move 4, drawn from Thompson (2005):

- Move 1: restatement of aims and research questions
- Move 2: consolidation of present research (findings, limitations)
- Move 3: practical and theoretical implications
- Move 4: recommendations for further research
- Move 5: concluding restatement

The most productive research approach to thesis and dissertation writing has been to describe the component parts: Introductions, review of literature, discussions and conclusions.

Topic - 196: Teaching of English for Thesis Writing

Specialist EAP support for theses/dissertation writing may be provided during, after and before the actual 'write-up', though it should be noted that many thesis writers engage in writing throughout the research process. The focus is on the texts which students need towards writing the thesis, genres like an abstract, an extended proposals or articles for publication, and the course prepares students for writing those genres. Short courses of as much as three sessions are offered to help students to practice the different genres.

There is a requirement for discipline - specific writing instruction, as students are required to work on critical summaries, problem-solving and brief research papers, non-critical summaries, lab reports, literature reviews, and case studies. This instruction should be given all through the course, covering the whole period of registration time and not only in the first year.

How to structure doctoral writing skills sessions, is a question which is frequently asked by students and supervisors. One way is to put content in sequential order – introductions, literature review, and methods, results and discussion and the linguistic content of each part with abstracts written at the end. Organization of a thesis is determined by the methodology being followed. Difference in discipline will also influence the organization of content. Even in a class of the same discipline, different models will be used; therefore it should not be taken for granted that the IMRD model will be followed by all. Students might be at different stages of writing within a homogeneous group, and teaching, therefore, needs to accommodate this range of development.

Students need to be aware of the disciplinary convention of writing of their area. Difference with supervisors' area of specialty can cause problems for the students. In such contexts it is important that the adviser and the students access examples for information about what is expected of theses in the disciplines that the students aspire to belong to, by using internet or by asking supervisors to guide them to relevant examples.

There are different expectations about roles and responsibilities of students/supervisor. These can be addressed in discussion sessions, where both students and supervisors can share their expectations about each other's roles. E.g. whose responsibility it is to select a promising research topic? Who assumes responsibility for the methodology and content of the dissertation? How much will the supervisor assist in the actual write up?

Doctoral students need to write regularly. Writing is the first step towards knowledge creation. The value of setting up writing groups for doctoral students has been acknowledged. The value of writing groups has been acknowledged for doctoral level students as it leads to an enhanced sense of identity, readership and community.

Topic - 197: English for Research Publication Purposes (ERPP)

The research publication phenomenon is on the rise. More and more researchers are wishing to publish their work in reputable journals. Competition for ranking in universities depends on the number of publications of the academia. Promotions hinge on how much research an academic gets published. It is literally "*Publish or Perish*" for them. It is also the requirement for doctoral thesis. English is an international lingua franca, so most of the publications are in English.

The disadvantages of publishing in English have been pointed out. Some argue that there would be a domain loss in certain languages with this emphasis on English as journals will stop using local languages. The inequality between NSE and NNSE already exists because of the language of publication being English. Because non-native speakers of English have to compete with native speakers, they are at a disadvantage. Since peripheral researchers do not have access to knowledgeable individuals because of their lack of networking, they will be disadvantaged in the long run.

Furthermore, there is a disparity in opportunities for ESL and Anglophone writer based on the center /periphery dialect. Publishing is unproblematic in center countries, as scholars can avail the 'location rent', that is, access to resources, research funding, and latest journals. This is not the case with those in the periphery, who besides the factors mentioned, are also 'off networking', and cannot take help from knowledgeable people who can help in editing and proof reading, etc.

Others have pointed out the advantages of publishing in English. Benefits are that scholars from all countries can access the latest research written in English. It is seen as a self-perpetuating process –the more English research is disseminated, the more scholars want to publish in it.

ERPP uses a whole range of methods. Flowerdew (2005) has given four foci of investigation, each associated with particular research method. These foci involve:

- Finding out what apprentice and/or experienced writers think about the process of writing for publication;
- Finding out what goes on in their minds when they are writing;
- Analyzing the different versions of texts written by scholarly writers; and
- Obtaining and analyzing peer evaluation in the form of editors ’ and reviewers’ reports and soliciting evaluations of manuscripts by specialist informants.

The most commonly used method is the discourse analysis method. With investigation of the social dimension, the interview and collecting personal reflections on the writing experiences of bilingual writer is used.

Topic - 198: Curriculum of ERPP

The curriculum to prepare novice researchers in academic writing has two interlinked aspects of the discursive task:

- Creating and communicating the research through the RA
- Bearing in mind the needs of the gate keepers

Particular competencies are needed for this task. The student has to be familiar with structures of the genre - the prototypical schematic structure of the genre and its parts, according to disciplinary and journal variation. Expertise in using citation according to discipline is needed. These particular skills are in addition to generic writing skills such as coherence, cohesion, and argumentation in writing.

Strategic management of research and publishing is a skill required by students to manage their research and publications to fit in the assessment schedules, and the type and amount of publication for each rank required by their institutions. Also to keep in mind the following:

- Time for writing and for review
- Relevant journals
- Be aware about rejection, and the possibility of re-submission

A competence for publishing thesis-in progress has also to be addressed in the curriculum. This concerns publications produced during the doctorate, a requirement which is becoming more and more common. One strategy is to use different parts of the thesis and structure them as a series of articles. Special skills are required in converting the thesis to articles and vice versa.

Another publication possibility is a joint - publication with a supervisor. In science disciplines, this is the norm, where papers are published by teams of people. Competence is required in dividing up the work - deciding who will do the writing, and so on. Writing for publication is an important contribution for scholarly formation. Publication in English is on the rise; however, few universities offer ERPP courses. EAL learners especially NNSE face numerous problems in getting guidance for publishing their work. This is the challenge which is faced by business English teachers - to fill this gap in ERPP.

Lesson 34

TEACHING BUSINESS COMMUNICATION IN DISTANCE-I

Topic - 199: Distance Learning

Distance Learning (DE) is not a new concept. It has been used in the 19^{th} C. through the postal services, and in the 20^{th} C. through radio and television. However, technological advances have given it a greater impetus in the 21^{st}C. Computer mediated learning, two way interactive videos and other modern technologies have made distance education an important choice as compared to traditional education.

The difference between traditional media or electronic media is basically the physical gap between learner and instructor in distance education, where classes (live or pre-taped) are delivered to students in their home, office, or classroom. It is used in higher education, continuing education and business. Various types of media can be used to help bridge the gap, including both traditional paper-based and electronic media.

The principles of effective teaching and learning remain the same. Here too the communicative needs of the learner are paramount, as is a clear idea of the target discourse they are aiming to master. At one extreme, distance learning can be almost ‘industrial’ in character, with training institutions churning out dozens of courses, and offering a well-established support infrastructure. At the other end of the scale, a much more personal operation can be found, with content and style decided by the teacher and the learner.

Interaction in distance learning courses can be synchronous, i.e. happening in real time, with people interacting at once, as in telephone conversations and online chatting, and it can be asynchronous. Communication takes place in stages where one communication event following another, separated in time, such as by email. Open learning is another aspect of distance learning and refers to degree of autonomy the learner has in terms of what is covered on the course, how and when. This ensures more independence for the learner in terms of easier incorporation of learning content.

Cost is another big difference between the two types of courses. As the cost of delivering quality education increases, institutions find that limited resources prevent them from building facilities, hiring faculty, or expanding curricula.

The rapid spread of distance education in the world not only offers learners and teachers great opportunities but also brings a lot of challenges. Learners are unsupervised, self-directed, and independent, and expected to be more autonomous. This freedom brings many questions together such as, *Does DE lead to low-quality education*? *Are the materials developed by specialized teachers used effectively as in face-to-face courses in distance education*? *Who controls the materials?* However, in spite of these negative opinions, researchers state that students are not alone in the process, but they are in a constant interaction between teachers and their peers. Although there appears opposition to distance education, it seems to continue to catch the attention of educators, teachers, and learners in the future.

Topic – 200: Advantages of Distance Learning

The most important advantage of distance learning as compared to traditional forms of learning is the flexibility which is present in Distance Education. The communication follows a delayed-time format, as in an email, a video, and a web page, as well as real-time interactive, a phone call, and a message, etc. The cost involved in DE is much cheaper than formal, traditional courses. The buildings and rooms which are required in formal education makes it very much dependent on an infrastructure, whereas in DE beyond the initial investment in technology, there are no recurring costs.

Materials and resources are electronically delivered and can be reused for subsequent teaching. Faculty hiring is at the lowest. There is a freedom to divert from Lock Step Approach. Learners' own goals are paramount, what they choose to study and when to study. Learning is more self-directed and autonomous. Teachers get more preparation time and are exempted from giving replies to students' questions there and then.

In rural districts, institutions cannot offer a variety of courses and subjects as it is too costly to hire subject specialists for a few students. Most institutions cannot afford special teachers to conduct courses. DE fulfills the need for teacher training and staff development in locations where experts/resources are not available.

Distance Education links learner communities and brings a wide array of experts/information to the classroom. It is convenient as learners can study at their pace. The travelling cost and time is minimum used. There is no age limit as it provides opportunities for lifelong learning. This signals a new approach to teaching and learning, and influences "how it can change our approach to learning and how it can change us" Ohler (1991:22).

Topic – 201: Disadvantages

The disadvantages of Distance Education have been pointed out. The first one relates to the communication problems, in the delivery systems by which the content reaches the recipient. Competence in using computers can also be a disadvantage for learners who are not computer literate or don't have access to computers. Using the traditional post for Distance Education can be unreliable and expensive. Sometimes it is difficult for learners to ask the teacher for help. Distance Education programs take longer to setup, besides the infrastructure, the hiring specialists, and recordings of content takes time and effort. However, once that is achieved the rest is easy.

Another point is that learning takes place in isolation and the student is denied the advantage of learning from peers as in traditional classes. Assessment of learners' performance requires direct and specific answers and learners subjective knowledge cannot be displayed.

The nature of language holds that it is best learnt in actual use and interaction. This is something for which Distance Education courses are not equipped. Courses cater for the needs of an assumed class of homogenous learners. As such the individual language needs of learners remain unmet. As in traditional courses the needs of learners cannot be assessed during the course. So, there can be no formative assessment to help them remedy their errors.

Topic – 202: The Role of Teacher and Teaching Materials

Although the learner is autonomous in a Distance Education program, the role of the teacher remains the same - to provide guidance and support necessary for successful learning and to contribute in the designing of materials. One way to do this is to develop written wrap-around materials, which are normally short written texts designed to provide the support normally provided by the teacher's F2F instructions. Wrap-around materials are normally written in a conversational style, and often include anecdotes. Their role can be to provide motivation, point out options available to the learner give guidance as to what is important and what is less important, and offer study skills tips. They may even be written in the learner's own language.

In traditional teaching, the teacher is a role model for the learners. In Distance Education it is only so far as student can imitate spoken language and style. The nature of responsibility differs as opposed to traditional teaching. If the teacher is good, technology can become almost transparent. Skilled teachers are involved, enthusiastic, and experts in their area and can use the media creatively to enrich students beyond the four walls of the classroom. The teachers need to have a thorough training in the system's technical aspects and in the educational applications of the technology. He/she should be able to use strategies for adding visual components to audio courses, to increase interaction between students and faculty, and for planning and management of organizational details. Establishing, maintaining effective communication with students, and using strategies for group cohesion and student motivation is another role which DE teachers have to fulfill.

Topic – 203: Giving Feedback

Giving feedback in a Distance Education program is crucial for its success as students have fewer opportunities to ask for clarification. For maximizing the potential of the program, and raise awareness about strengths, and areas for improvement and to identify action for improved performance, learners need to be aware of their strengths and weaknesses. One of the key reasons for the teacher being involved at all is to provide the kind of specific and targeted response that it is difficult for self-study materials to offer. In some programs occasional meetings or talking on the telephone between teacher and learner are planned, but mostly in DE the feedback is in the form of written feedback on assignments, comments or suggestions about how the learner can improve his/her work. The written comments should be personalized and on a regular basis.

Giving feedback is important as learners feel disconnected and insecure, especially in the first year of study. Feedback is more sought-after by DL students than by their F2F counterparts, particularly by self-regulated students. Synchronous courses provide students with almost the only opportunity to get feedback from the instructors. Teachers should be aware of the course requirements regarding assignments, grading techniques, and clarity of students' responsibilities in order to guide the learners. Besides this, corrective feedback should be:

- Timely
- Effective: helps in remedial work, bonds tutor and learner.
- Regular
- Sufficient: Informative, suggesting improvements
- Meaningful and well-planned.

- Improve learning
- Responsive to specific elements, providing specific, related suggestions
- Not be generalized

Mutual feedback, i.e. feedback of peers is also important. The Social Constructivist Theory holds that personal construction of knowledge occurs in social contexts. With interaction with peers, tutors, and course material, the learner gets the opportunity to test knowledge and concepts. However, lack of connectivity may occur in large classes. Negative feedback is discouraging for learners in Distance Education situations just as in all other types of situation. It destroys students' confidence, self-esteem, and the desire to improve their work, especially for learners who are not able or willing to undertake academic challenges. Furthermore, it is humiliating and discouraging.

Topic – 204: Designing Courses

Although the principles of designing courses and writing materials for use in distance learning are the same as in F2F teaching, i.e.:

- Setting objectives
- Needs Analysis
- Material Development

Judicial use of commercially available textbooks is required. It is useful to ask certain question when using them in DE situations, e.g. can the learner do this activity on their own, and does it have enough examples? Are the rubrics (instructions for an activity) clear? Are there other possible answers? Is there an answer key?

At Stage One in course designing the purpose is to see the availability of workbooks, websites, which can be combined with supplementary material, and could be used for practice activities. It involves ensuring that students have their own copies. Teachers and learners both need to have answers and explanations.

Stage Two is about checking of learner's book is carried out, asking questions like does it have enough activities for teacher and peer support? Can adaptation be carried out to suit a particular class' needs? What to delete and include? Additionally how will the meeting up with peers and teacher be arranged?

Developing Business English courses in DE, involves developing language as the main content of the courses, focusing on all language skills, within a business context. Particular focus should be on professional language skills which learners need to operate in their job places. Intercultural communication should be part of a business English course because of the global nature of most businesses these days. DE has its strengths and weaknesses. It cannot replace F2F teaching, but can supplement it. An effective way of teaching business English is to blend it with some F2F interaction in the shape of occasional meetings and pre-planned workshops.

Lesson 35

TEACHING BUSINESS COMMUNICATION IN DISTANCE-II

Topic – 205: Teaching by Telephone

Traditional distance learning materials are paper-based, but another common medium which requires little or no technical expertise is the telephone. Using the telephone is also an excellent way to create the interaction which is so necessary for effective language learning. It puts teachers and learners in direct contact, which is often the easiest way to solve a particular problem. This is more likely to be so in an in-company situation, where the teacher is often the first line of support for finding the right word, or clarifying a customer's needs. There are several possibilities of using the telephone.

In a distance learning program, several things must happen, e.g. delivery of contents, regular communication, and continuous feedback, interactions between the learners themselves, and also the instructors. Just as day-to-day business is carried out on the phone, in distance learning, also it plays an important role. It can be used for a variety of purposes - clarifying, confirming, and getting information, and giving feedback. Quality in distance education depends on delivery of contents, course design, and regular communication and continuous feedback, for learners to make sense of their learning, for motivation, and especially for beginner learners.

Experience shows that a "live" interaction with the instructor is the most significant aspect of distance learning process. Presently there are several ways to achieve this goal using different available technologies, e.g., text chat, audio chat, video conferencing, and conference calls. Video conferencing and conference calls have one major limitation. They do not support "distributed" learning, and are effective only for point-to-point delivery. In some situations the cost of delivery and the ease of use influence the choice of technology.

Using the telephone has the following advantages. There is an ease of use, as no technical expertise is required. It is much more cost effective than any other means of communication. This is particularly true in in-company situations where the teacher is often the first line of support for finding the right word, or for clarifying the concepts. Teachers and learners may use the telephone to discuss assignments, plans, or learning themes which are causing problems. Teachers and learners may use the telephone to discuss customers' needs, assignments, plans, and learning themes which are causing problems, as well as for feedback. Using the telephone in this way provides an excellent way to create the interaction which is so necessary for effective language learning. The communication here happens synchronously as interaction is in real time. Furthermore, it gives learning opportunities through an authentic use of language where teachers and learners can access company intranet, and the authentic materials can be availed. DE through telephone is widely practiced, although mobile communication is also catching up. Its SMS feature can be used for continuing education and distance education. In mobile technology, the use of text messaging - SMS is growing every month. Its rapid growth is generating substantial commercial applications and research interest now-a-days. The mobiles SMS service along with a live telecast can be used to create 'almost' an ideal classroom situation.

Topic -206: Practical Tasks

Practice and feedback as in all language learning is vital in distance learning as well. The business English learners will need practice to use electronic media to enhance their skills. Various practical tasks can be designed to give learners the desired practice of telephoning. For instance an activity can be devised around taking messages on the phone. Students should first be warned and a suitable interaction model is selected. A native speaking colleague can be asked to phone students and the ensuing conversation be recorded and then transcribed. The message could then be listened to by the teacher and student and the places where improvement is required are selected for remedial work.

Listening to recordings with learners, discussing possible improvements and reformulating if necessary, can be done with or without peers presence. This can be repeated with a similar task one month later and results can be compared and feedback given.

Similarly, checking and clarifying information are useful activities. The learner can be called and dictated a text; this may include difficult words, numerical information, depending on the needs of the learner. The conversation can be recorded. The learner can hand over the text to the teacher and get a corrected copy of the recording, listen to recording and discuss lack of accuracy. The focus is on the expressions, with the learner producing checklists of useful expressions for checking and clarifying.

Working with specific authentic documents is useful. The learner is given a document taken from the workplace and is warned that he/she will be called for information (comprehension questions), from customers, and partners, and then the teacher can call and ask questions about the document. Similarly, recording the conversation is useful. The teacher or the learner can transcribe the conversation and use the transcription as a basis for feedback.

Topic -207: Language for Telephoning

A language for telephoning in DE programs refers to the traditional categories of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. The social aspect of how to converse on the telephone have to be kept in mind, how socializing on telephone follows cultural norms of interaction. Activities for practice could be ringing someone and inviting them for a party, cancelling an engagement, and changing the program of an event, etc. You (or the learner) transcribe the conversation and use the transcription as a basis for feedback.

- Activities for practicing telephoning skills: Role plays based on client conversations, complaint letters.
- Social aspect: Conversation routines, e.g. inviting, informing, (cancellation or conforming time, date, venue of appointment). Asking opinions, asking for information

There are two parallel structures of a phone call: The caller and the called. These structures can be broken down into following building blocks:

Caller: Greeting, identifying, requesting called party

Called: Greeting, identifying, requesting called party

These building blocks give us a starting point to provide the steps involved in phone calls as well as a template for evaluating performance.

Topic – 208: E-learning Possibilities

E-learning refers to learning which takes place with the help of electronic media. The content is delivered electronically rather than being paper-based or via a person, i.e. the teacher. The electronic media can be CD-ROM (Compact Disc, Read Only Memory, which is a data storage device), the Internet, an intranet (a network of connected computers similar to the Internet, but used exclusively by a specific group of users, such as employees within a company), or software files of various types (electronic dictionaries, digital audio files, word-processed or spreadsheet documents, or whatever). These media are not exclusive to distance forms of learning, but this is where they are normally found. It is less usual for a group of business English learners to be sitting in a classroom working through CD-ROM activities on their laptops, than it is for them to be doing such an activity alone, and away from the teacher.

E-learning offers some advantages over more traditional paper-based materials, even when they are supplemented by audio and video tape. Firstly, e-learning is now fairly common in many companies; it has a professional and modern feel to it which is attractive to some managers, it uses technology which is normally already in place, and it can be designed to provide managers with feedback on what the learners are doing. In some companies, language learning is just one of several training services offered online.

Modern DVDs, CD-ROMs, and Internet connections offer increasingly high-quality video and sound as well as text; and some packages offer the facility for students to record their utterances and have the computer compare what they have said to a model. Access to the web allows teachers and learners to do a variety of things; they can organize webcasts (broadcast audio or video, just like radio or TV, but delivered via the Internet), deliver materials, and join discussion boards (which allow visitors to read or leave messages), participate in real-time text chat, or listen to and leave voicemail.

Sometimes the teacher will want to put their own teaching content online without the use of a commercial learning platform. There are two ways to do this. One is to translate documents into html, a format that can be read by a web browser such as Microsoft Explorer™ or Mozilla Firefox™ (remembering that it is not only online delivery that uses web browsers).

Topic – 209: Learning Platforms

Sometimes the teacher will want to put their own teaching content online without the use of a commercial learning platform. There are two ways to do this. One is to translate documents into HTML, a format that can be read by a web browser such as Microsoft Explorer™ or Mozilla Firefox™. An alternative is to use authoring software, such as those packages provided by Clarity or Hot Potatoes, which allows the creation of activities like crosswords or 'drag and drop' exercises reasonably painlessly. One limitation is that normally such packages have a set number of exercise types; so on longer courses, learners may get bored looking at the same type of thing.

Worksheets can be produced, which can be delivered via an Internet, or intranet website, or on CD-ROM). The learner is required to click on the correct answers, and then listen to the dialogue to check. Such material needs to be written in a format which will download quickly, and which offers the use of different choices of technology (for example, there might be a choice between which software to use for the listening part.) Note that the materials may also need to give guidance as to how to obtain such software, as well as an easy-to-use menu system which allows navigation to other worksheets. The designer has included a cartoon to make the worksheet visually more exciting.

E-learning can have its disadvantages or difficulties, too. Some learners (and teachers) are technophobes, and are unwilling or unable to use the technology without extensive support. It can take a lot of effort before everyone in a group is getting the best out of an online learning forum, and there are also issues of control which the teacher will need to consider. How do you draw the 'quiet' learners into a discussion, for example, or how do you make sure that learners are doing the work themselves?

Computers are patient - they don't get bored or frustrated when people can't do something - but they also lack intuition, which means that the feedback they give is limited to what was programmed into them. This can be very frustrating if the computer keeps telling you your answer is wrong when you are sure it is actually right, especially if it does not explain what your supposed mistake is.

Another disadvantage is that business people spend most of their time on computers and don't want to spend more time in learning English via computers as well. Sometimes the right technology isn't available. Sometimes schools do not have sound cards, which mean learners will not be able to access audio recordings.

Topic -210: Using the Internet for Teaching Business Communication

The best aspect of e-learning for many is the Internet which is an extraordinarily rich resource for both teacher and learner, both in terms of the ease of delivery which is offered and breadth of content which can be accessed. There are many useful links for the business English teacher (www.besig.org). The use of the Internet is not limited to distance learning, but can be exploited for many learning situations where the teacher being present.

Several types of resources are available which give general business information. Some sites require payment, others are free. Some include interactive activities, up to date business issues, and company facts sections and other useful features. Specific Company Information is also available and is particularly accessed by learners who are often more interested in specific company sites of their own or of their competitors or partners. Large companies have websites which run into thousands of pages. In-company teachers can have partial/full access to these authentic materials such as in-house journals, company policy documents, and information about particular projects and so on.

The Web offers many sources of news. BBC and CNN as well as national/local channels are many sources of news on the web. The large sites offer a huge variety, of possibilities ranging from audio and video to written texts. Traditional media like newspapers also offer similar potential, providing information about specific topics, like stock prices latest political scandal, or even latest sports news. The BE teacher can encourage learners to explore sites to download articles, read and report topics for assignment. They can compare the accents of regions by listening to reports from different parts of the world. Accessing archives for a business topic is another way in which Internet sources can be exploited.

The Internet provides numerous language learning resources. Some have to be paid for and allow a preview, e.g. PEAK English. The syllabus design focuses on discrete language items, assuming that languages are best learned by focusing on smaller units of language. There are other sites with different syllabus designs, for example BBC's website is an extensive site, which offers various business features, vocabulary, context, and a glossary which many learners find particularly useful, and a window which allows a video clip to understand the context.

The advantages are that they are updated by designers for the quality of the content. They include –thesauruses, concordances, and pronunciation guides. Most are geared for the general English learner. Publishers' resources are additional online resources used without the teacher being present, e.g. the Longman Business English publishes an article for a company each month. Just by clicking on one word, a pop-up window provides the definition. A convenient feature is the availability of online support to a course book. Such supplementary material allows teachers to vary their materials.

Web quests can be used by teachers to provide a structured web experience for students. It is a "directed learning experience", composed by teachers, that takes students to those preselected sites which are related to their course content. Instead of wandering aimlessly, the students can access the required material on the web quest recommended by the teacher. There are activities designed to get learners to use Internet resources to get information and answer questions. Learners play active role in finding/evaluating websites and use them to achieve a particular goal. The advantage is that it provides more than just delivering course content. The needs of different levels of learners are addressed. For beginners, who might be overwhelmed by the amount of sheer information available on the Internet, a web-quest will answer questions and point to a useful site. For high level learners, information and reasons to do the task are given as well.

Lesson 36

TEACHING BUSINESS COMMUNICATION IN DISTANCE-III

Topic – 211: Traditional Distance Education

Traditionally, Distance Education is paper based. Material, examinations, and assessments, and assignments use paper materials and tutor interaction with students. Most go by the name of The Open University. In Pakistan, the AIOU (Allama Iqbal Open University) and the VU (Virtual University) are the two universities which impart DE. Students are given a course pack for self-study on registration. Some DE institutions such as the Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL) differ markedly from a conventional university in its mode of teaching, where the student on registration receives a course pack which is designed for self-study and self-learning. Students are therefore expected to work on their own responsibility. Assistance and guidance are provided by day school sessions which are held at regular intervals mostly on weekends. Typically, students will be expected to attend day school sessions, and also present themselves for the Continuous Assessment tests. It should also be noted that the program will utilize audio-visual as well as print material. Most of the texts in literature and some of the topics in language/linguistics are supported by radio and TV programs.

The traditional method of teaching through correspondence and providing guidance through tutors was gradually supplemented by radio and television programs. Developments in communication and information technology, particularly the Satellite and Internet, have revolutionized DE. The satellite and internet are used which provide the medium of instruction and information source.

Part-time tutors are appointed throughout the country out of the roster of qualified experts in each field available. Groups of students are assigned a teacher/expert. Continuous guidance is given through correspondence as well as personal visits. Face to face and group coaching is provided through tutorials arranged at the study center established in institutions of formal education or at the regional offices.

University programs and courses have audio/video or non-broadcast media support. These programs are broadcast/telecast according to a given schedule. Copies are available. Two or four assignments have to be submitted as per schedule and returned after evaluation. Performance is recorded and feedback is given. Assignments form a compulsory part of a final evaluation. Non-credit courses usually do not have assignments or examination. In some courses, students have to fill in a questionnaire based on its content at the end of the course. Workshops/practical training is arranged at the study centers to develop necessary skills, where learners get an opportunity to interact with peer groups and experts. Presentation activities during these workshops are a feature. Face to face teaching has recently been started for those courses which require intensive practical/lab work or skill development. Internship of short term and long term duration in industrial or business is provided, especially for Computer Science, BBA and MBA programs. Final examinations are on the pattern of public examination at the end of the semester, with weightage for assignments and final examination.

Topic – 212: Teaching Business in Distance

Designing courses for a DE program is a team based project. There is a program developer specialist (DLPDS), a multimedia coordinator, a copyright coordinator and an e-learning technology assistant.

Good instructional design is the foundation of a high-quality online course. During the design phase, the DLPDS works closely with the coordinators to establish a framework or structure for the course, and develop and align outcomes and assessments. These activities include:

- Writing the course outcomes
- Defining the course structure
- Determining the evaluation strategies
- Writing the unit outcomes
- Defining the unit structure for students

Courses are designed through collaboration of tutors and area experts. The process involves the selection of topics, making outlines and getting approval after review by an external source, an area expert. Business communication courses are designed as 3 credit hours courses divided into 45 lectures, subdivided 6 modules of 5 minutes each. Pre-recorded lectures are delivered which can be accessed by learners on university website/You tube. Once recorded, these lectures become a permanent resource for learners and the institution. Courses are taught by instructors/tutors with significant disciplinary expertise. They will guide learners through the course content and provide support through an active and engaging learning environment. Day to day teaching involves checking, assessing, and awarding marks and compiling results. Distance education courses are primarily delivered asynchronously - interactions may occur at different times. Business communication courses in distance education programs are just as academically demanding as on-campus courses and are equivalent in terms of curriculum and credit weight.

Topic – 213: Teaching Business Communication Online

Teaching BE in an online environment can be quite different than teaching in a classroom. Teaching online requires specific competencies and skills associated with effective online course teaching and facilitation. Before your online course begins, it is important that you feel confident using the tools in the online learning environment and that you become familiar with how the course is set up. The following are some of the key activities to consider:

- Create an effective course outline that communicates course expectations
- Create guidelines of online behavior, and course organization
- Effectively use the learning management system (LMS) and other technologies selected to support the course, including Microsoft Office and Adobe Acrobat
- Possess an understanding of copyright and intellectual property issues in using content in an online course

During the course, fostering an engaging and interactive online learning environment for your students may seem challenging. The following are a number of strategies and considerations to keep in mind during the course:

- Teach students about online learning and help them to connect materials with their own personal learning styles.
- Promote active learning techniques and relate the subject matter to students' interests and experiences.

- Develop relationships with students and encourage social interaction between students.
- Encourage the exchange of ideas, arguments and perspectives among students to facilitate the development of a community of learners.
- Promote collaborative learning and model good participation; if needed, redirect the discussion, if headed in the wrong direction.
- Create ongoing opportunities for reflection, critical analysis, and self-exploration.
- Encourage students to respect the course schedule and assignment submission due dates.
- Provide students with meaningful feedback on their assignments and participation in a timely fashion.
- Maintain frequent contact with students.
- Effectively and efficiently manage and administer the course.
- Be sensitive to disabilities / diversities and respect various ways of learning.
- Monitor student compliance to the University's academic integrity policies.
- Effectively navigate the course website and use the tools of the course LMS.

At the end of a course too it is important to continue to engage with students, take care of administrative tasks and take time to reflect on your practice. Following steps can be considered:

- Provide students with assignment grades and submit final grades to your academic department.
- Give prompt feedback to students on final papers and tests.
- Evaluate your own teachings.

Topic – 214: Assessment in Distance Teaching

The established practice for course evaluation in distance education consists of the following:

- Continuous Assessment (CA)
- End of course examination or assignments.
- (CA) component is a mandatory component.

A percentage of the CA marks are taken in the calculation of final grades. Some of the courses culminate in a final examination, while others require a final and comprehensive assignment. Continuous assessment is based on quizzes, MCQs and various discussion boards. The final evaluation is based on the final and mid-term examinations as well as a number of assignments/projects. The focus in assessing the learner is on the content of what he/she has produced and generally there is a toleration of minor grammatical mistakes. The basic focus is on the intelligibility of the message, whether the learner can be understood in written/oral communication.

In Graded Discussion Board (GDB), named as such by some institutions, the topic and time for the discussion are shared a week before the activity. Students connect with teacher in real time, through software interface and are graded on 5 marks for one discussion. Unlike assessment, which continues throughout the semester online, examinations are in real time. Students can choose the dates in which they want to take the exams. Setting of question papers is done by the tutor and examination department. Hundreds of questions have to be made, so that each student gets a different question paper.

Topic – 215: Feedback in Distance Teaching

Meaningful online feedback is critical to all learning environments, traditional as well as on-line. An online presence that includes feedback is easily established within an online learning environment Meaningful online feedback is critical to all learning environments and improving learners' motivation. In online learning, feedback occurs between the learner and instructor in various ways. Methods of communication in eLearning include verbal and written electronic exchanges called commuter-mediated communication, such as through Skype or email.

Instructor's feedback provides learners with critical information about meeting course goals and performance expectations. Meaningful online feedback requires a partnership and trust between learner and instructor. This partnership requires the instructor to provide learners with meaningful, effective and constructive feedback, where learners can think about the work he/she has produced. Instructors can provide effective feedback by maintaining an encouraging tone and delivering feedback in a reasonable amount of time. Being responsive to student inquiries and posting grades in a timely fashion are examples of timely and responsive feedback. Instructors who provide thoughtful online feedback provide learners with explicit expectations for the performance outcomes for their work and an opportunity to understand areas where academic improvement is needed. Feedback in not limited to the learner. Teachers also benefit from the feedback which learners provide, to assess course content, pedagogy, and feedback for professional reflection about instructor presence in the online environment. Therefore, online feedback should serve as a learning opportunity for both the instructor and learner.

Learner-Learner feedback is also important. In collaborative learning communities some students will assume mentoring roles providing other learners with important peer feedback. The use of peer feedback within an online course places the learner in the role of instructor as learners review, analyze, and synthesize peer work. The key to peer feedback is that it is constructive, academically sound, and encouraging. Learners are likely not to be "reticent" about the participation of their peers within collaborative group assignments. Therefore, it is important that instructors provide learners with clear feedback expectations, so that learners provide peers with quality, timely, and academically focused feedback. Rubrics can be developed to help guide peer feedback by providing necessary assignment or course expectations. Providing specific assignment rubrics encourage learners to be honest and constructive in the feedback they deliver to one another. Requiring learners to provide significantly relevant learner-to-learner feedback increases their own self-reflective skills and knowledge, and forces learners to compare their standard of learning to the learning standards of other group members. Learners who participate in learner-to-learner feedback activities are better prepared for real-world situations.

Online feedback immediacy is an important component of effective online communication. Meaningful feedback is necessary because it provides learners with constructive academic feedback in which to reflect, inform, and adjust learning. In order for meaningful feedback to be used effectively a trust between learner and instructor must be developed, supported, and communicated.

Topic – 216: F2F Interaction

One of the most significant issues encountered in the mainstream correspondence model of DE is transactional distance, which is the result of lack of appropriate communication between learner and teacher. This gap has been observed to become wider if there is no communication between the learner and teacher and has direct implications over the learning process and future endeavors in DE. Distance education providers began to introduce various strategies, techniques, and procedures to increase the amount of interaction between learner and teacher using ICT particularly the Internet. These measures result in more frequent face-to-face tutorials. The increased use of information and communication technologies, using teleconferencing and the Internet aims to close the gap of transactional distance. Connectivity between tutor and students can be synchronous, asynchronous, using adobe connect, *skype* and email for regular sessions.

Even in the traditional teaching use of technology is becoming popular. Most of the content is delivered on-line. In some courses, F2F interaction is provided for parts of the course and the degree is awarded in real time. There are various ways to provide activities, synchronous and asynchronous. In Moderated Discussion Board (MDB), the learners can ask questions on software interface. In Graded Discussion Board (GDB) and Team Discussion Board (TDB), learners participate in discussions in real time. The time and the topic are shared a week in advance of the activity. Interaction is important in DE situations as it improves learner's motivation, especially of beginner students.

Lesson 37

HOW TO INCLUDE INTERCULTURAL TRAINING-I

Topic – 217: What Is Culture?

Communication is an important activity in business. Team building, leadership and delegation of work require managers to have good communication skills. Businesses are now more complex – communication covers a broad range in which cross cultural communication is included. In the 2nd half of 20th Century, organizations have become more complex. Managers need to be multi-specialist. Internationalization of business has made business people more likely to find themselves together with others from different national/cultural backgrounds. The breakdown of national barriers and more mobility means a challenge for business teachers to prepare learners for the range of cultural settings in which their learners may find themselves. There are mergers, joint projects, anoughts and behavior fashioned? In other words, "This is how we do things around here" (John Mole). Other key categories are ideas, behavior and products. Many factors affect national and business culture. Some originate and are based on the world of work, others from local environment and influence from the world of work – e.g. social (gender roles, priorities of personal life/work, punctuality, etc.), work (company organization, hierarchy, and attitude towards leadership, authority) and physical (space between people, contact, gestures).

National characteristics influence and show themselves in a number of areas of activity and undoubtedly also play a role in shaping company life and culture. A number of visible/invisible features that members of this culture are shared values, norms and world views. Company life and culture include norms/values which company employees should share. Like-minded employees can benefit the company. The synergy of like-minded people would encourage everyone to work together to benefit the company. Most people don't confront another culture and their lives. But faster, easier and cheaper means of travel, immigration, and education has led to cultural awareness which leads to tolerance of diversity.

Topic – 218: Multiculturalism

Internationalization of business has impacted the economy, making it global. Production and communication are affected by the global economy. This has increased awareness about the importance of diversity in technical communication. Companies market their services/goods worldwide, so they have to communicate, share information across the globe and for multicultural communication.

Challenges in multicultural communication have to be addressed to communicate with a diverse audience. Internet affects the global economy, and while the use of emails and Facebook facilitates business with better and faster communication, they also pose challenges. For example, a multilingual report, addresses an audience of various cultures who have disparate notions/norms about communication.

Success in multicultural team projects depends on verbal/non-verbal communication norms, management style, and decision-making procedures, sense of time and place and awareness of local values and attitudes. Successful technical communication acknowledges diversity. It evaluates people according to their values and beliefs. The opposite of this is *Ethnocentrism*, the belief that your culture represents the norm.

The world's citizenry speaks many languages. Technical communication would look at the problems which ensue in translation. Accommodating multicultural audience, writing, speaking as well as in non-verbal communication is crucial in business. For example, a car named "Nova" which means "No go" in Spanish would not go well in its marketing in a country which uses the Spanish language.

Topic – 219: Culture and the Teaching of Business English

In some teaching situations, experts are brought in to complement what the language teacher is doing in class. Others argue that the two areas cannot be separated, and that business English teaching and intercultural training are two sides of the same coin. After all, every time one of our learners uses English, it is likely to be with someone from a different culture, be it a different national culture or a culturally different organization. According to this view, it is up to the language teacher to deliver such training. As culture is linked to language and communication, the business English teacher needs to have awareness about cultural content, like other areas of BE teaching – management and business. This serves a two-fold purpose - business people have contact with incoming and outgoing groups and can influence both. They should know about their own and target cultures norms to avoid conflict and to create harmony.

Language is embedded in a culture in which it is used; some would say it is the product of the culture, therefore language teachers cannot be expected to know all the cultures of the world. Their knowledge will help their learners become more aware of the behaviors that will help them achieve their business objectives and avoid blunders, both inside and outside the company setting.

Imparting knowledge of English speaking cultures is helpful to achieve business objectives as English has become the acknowledged business language. However, knowledge of other languages helps in creating awareness about their cultures. Many corporations provide foreign language teaching to their employees in order to inculcate respect for their culture. This becomes an important need in certain situations. Creating scenarios of target discourse can be used for practice activities involving interaction and speaking. These could focus on work specific and real life needs, e.g. asking "Where does it hurt?" in different languages. An awareness and understanding of the relationship is beneficial for the teachers themselves to avoid conflict arising from negligent or innocent use of language. This would help to avoid pitfalls which can lead to a dysfunctional work environment.

Topic – 220: Defining Terms for Multicultural Audience

Communicating to a multicultural audience is challenging. Various sectors like banking, healthcare systems, and hospitality, tourist industry, packing, construction and agriculture, all use English. For a multicultural audience, defining acronyms, and abbreviations and jargon become important. Besides this, reference to culturally sensitive things, colors, and animals, puns and jokes also need cautious use. Words used as verbs and nouns can also be challenging for people of other cultures. Defining acronyms and abbreviations can cause problems for low tech, NNSE, audience, e.g. '*sysmgr'* for 'system manager', would be translated as, '*system leiter'* in German and in French: 'le *responsible'*.

Jargon and idioms should be avoided as well as common expressions in business communication. Transitional phrases, like 'o*n the other hand'*, and those used for financial status: '*in the black'*, or '*in the red'*, become meaningless outside the borders. Distinguishing between nouns and verbs is important, as some words are used both as nouns and verbs: e.g. Computer terms - *scroll, boot, code, file, paste*. Care is needed in the use of slash marks. For example the use of '*And'* '*Or'* or both 'And/Or', mean different things '*and'* means '*Both'* and '*Or'* means '*One* or the *other'*.

Translation creates problems, as they may take more or less space. English word count expands up to 30% when translated into a European language. The word 'Spam' translates into '*courier de masse non sollicite'*. Chinese is more compact. Paper size used for official correspondence is different in the USA and Europe. A printout would not leave any margins for holes in different contexts.

Topic – 221: Guidelines for Multicultural Communication

While communicating with a multicultural audience, one has to watch out for cultural biases and expectations, making careful use of words and graphics. Colors have different connotations in cultures, e.g. the colors red and black especially have negative and positive connotations in Eastern and Western cultures. Animals are also viewed differently, e.g. Turkey, eagle, and dog.

Humor and puns are regional are related to culture and have more chances of being misunderstood. Times and dates, numbers and measurements are also different regionally. Time presents a challenge as there is Pacific Time, Central Time, and Eastern Time, and Mountain Time, etc.

Figurative language can cause misunderstanding. Use of sports terms, e.g. '*Tackle*', '*A good defense is the best offense'*, '*Huddle*', '*booted*', '*to hit a home run'* should be avoided, using precise terms.

Stylized graphics to represent people should be used with care. A photograph, a realistic drawing might offend some cultural groups. Mention and representation of skin color, hairstyle, and race and gender should be avoided and simple stick figures can be used. Similarly, graphics using stylized hands should avoid representing male/female images. Even simple words like: Yesterday, tomorrow, today present a challenge. The time in Japan is 24 hours ahead of US Eastern Standard Time. Determining the audience and changing the message accordingly should be done at the proof reading stage.

Topic – 222: Ethnocentrism

The concept of Ethnocentrism is related to culture - the view that one's culture is the center of everything, and other cultural groups are judged with reference to it and are compared to one's cultural group. Ethnicity is also related to culture. Other related and important concepts are as follows:

Essentialism: The assumption that groups, categories have one or several defining features/characteristics exclusive to all members of that category and that there is an essential cultural identity for each cultural group.

Universality: The concept that features of human life and experience exist beyond the constitutive effects of local cultural conditions.

A Hegemonic view: A hegemonic view of things holds that values, experiences, and expectations of a dominant group are held to be true for all humanity.

Ethnocentrism influences communication at the global level and even within the neighborhood, in your own city and country. Language barriers become challenging for people working in business, hospitals, and police, firefighters, government agencies, as in many countries, there is an ethnic mix in these areas. The need is to transcend national boundaries. For students, it is important to be aware of these concepts when interacting with people from other cultures. Lack of awareness and sensitivity can be problematic and may create communication barriers.

Lesson 38

HOW TO INCLUDE INTERCULTURAL TRAINING-II

Topic – 223: What Is Intercultural Training?

Intercultural training is about helping people to interact successfully with people from other cultures. It includes teaching appropriate language use in different contexts, and also develops learners' understanding of the role that culture plays in communication. There are different opinions on how the avoidance of intercultural misunderstanding is best addressed in the business English classroom. Some argue that business English teachers are primarily language specialists, and should leave such issues to people who have formally studied intercultural communication. So, in some teaching situations, experts are brought in to complement what the language teacher is doing.

Others argue that the two cannot be separated, and that business English teaching and intercultural training are two sides of the same coin. After all, every time one of our learners uses English, it is likely to be with someone from a different culture, be it a different national culture or a culturally different organization. According to this view, it is up to the language teacher to deliver such training.

There are two ways of thinking about what intercultural training is and what it can achieve. The first, which we could call the dealing with diversity or culture-general approach, encourages learners to understand what culture is, gain awareness of how their own culture works, and appreciate that the way they do things is not necessarily the only way. The idea is to:

- Break down prejudices.
- Look at the pros and cons of stereotyping.
- Recognize that other people have points of view that are as valid as our own.

It is not about learning to deal with specific countries, but about how to deal with people who may have different ways of doing things. The aim is to provide learners with strategies that they can use to cope with diversity, and ultimately to create value out of that diversity.

The second approach focuses on preparing people to work with specific cultures or in specific contexts; this is often called culture-specific training. Sometimes learners will only need to deal with one or two cultures. This is typical for expatriates who are posted abroad for a period of time, and need to have some understanding about how a specific culture works, and what behavior is or is not acceptable. The danger of this approach is that it can be somewhat superficial, with learners being lulled into a false sense of security. Nevertheless, provided that learners appreciate the limitations of simple (often simplistic) 'dos and don'ts' lists, such training can serve as a useful first step. This is especially so if the teacher comes from the country in question, or has first-hand experience of that culture. Such culture-specific training often includes elements of culture-general training discussed above. Providing training before departure, with follow-up training, say two months into a foreign assignment, may be particularly beneficial. Repatriation training may also be necessary at the end of an assignment in order to ease the move back into one's own culture. Where does this leave the business English teacher? As ever, it depends on the needs of the learners. The rest of this chapter focuses on different perspectives and activities which the business English teacher might find useful with particular groups.

Culture is not an issue in itself. It is only problematic when there is conflict (Brieger 1997). First, conflict can arise if teams are composed of people from various cultural backgrounds and no common ground has been established for them to work together. These can lead to dysfunctional working. Second, in case of a merger or a joint venture in which the management does not share the local culture, failure can be predicted. Examples are of expatriations of senior managers ending in failure, because they were not adequately prepared for the cultural work setting' or the family could not adapt to 'local cultural norms'. The cost of such failed projects can run into millions.

Topic – 224: Cross Cultural Communication

The three important changes which have been brought about by globalization are the changes in transportation, in communication technology, and in immigration patterns. A major consequence is that people from different societies are now in contact and have reason to speak to each other. Intercultural communication takes place when the conversation between two speakers is carried out in a language which is not the L1 of either. Many conversations that bilinguals have, take place in the L1 of one speaker, but not the other.

Culture is something which is learnt, and not something one is born with. It is a group identity, partly shared by others who live in the same society. A useful definition for culture is the one given by Hofstede (1991). He refers to culture as: "The collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another".

A national culture is composed of several sub-cultures which influence language which influences our patterns of language use the most. These are based on our perceptions of gender, ethnic group, and age, social class, region, and religion. This is why there is a difference in meaning, perception, humor, and response to serious problems. A broader definition of culture is that a message is produced by one society, and processed by another. The 'message' could be (non-verbal), like a gesture or body language, but as long as it evokes a response, it is a message.

Culture might be 'an international youth culture', which transcends national cultures. There is a student culture which seems to be homogenous in a given group only because they might not notice cultural differences, or are too like-minded or casual, so they miss the 'real' culture. Looking at cultural communication is important, precisely because, as Sharwood-Smith advises: "precisely because it is possible to go to another country and fail to notice differences, to behave appropriately and never get corrected" (Sharwood-Smith: 1999). An individual's conception of culture is the code people are following in interacting in a society, an understanding of the rules of the 'game being played' (Keesing: 1974)

Topic – 225: Problems in Cross Cultural Communication

Without training in cultural awareness, problems in interaction can occur. We attribute intentions to utterances that go beyond the surface utterance itself, as utterances have referential as well as intentional meaning due to experiences that have developed in our own societies. "The degree of influence culture has on intercultural communication is a function of the dissimilarity between the culture" (Samovar and Porter 1991: 12). In conversations, problems emerge because of:

- Different cultural assumptions
- Different ideas about cultural values
- Different use of honorific titles, silence, and pauses, reticence, and turn-taking.

In conversations, social identities and different ideas about cultural values emerge. In L2 learning, as well, we assume our own views about appropriate language use are universal, e.g. a Polish host greets her guests cordially and offers her a seat of honor with these words: “*Mrs. Vanessa! Please! Sit! Sit!”* (Wierzbicka 1991b: 27). Here the use of the honorific term “*Mrs*” would not be appropriate in certain cultural contexts. Similarly, the imperative in “*sit*” seems like being addressed as to a dog. The Swedish manufacturer of Electrolux used the slogan: “Nothing sucks like Electrolux”(Victor 1992: 33 -4), which could have obscene connotations in certain cultures.

Views about appropriate use of language can cause serious misunderstandings. What is ‘marked’ in one culture is ‘unmarked’ elsewhere. Communicative competence is to be able to recognize marked and unmarked choices. Marked choices are the expected appropriate ones and unmarked are the unexpected ones. Different cultures have different ideas about marked and unmarked choices. What is marked or what is unmarked can be referred to as ‘conversational etiquette’. Culture is not an issue, except where there are conflicts. Corporate conflicts can arise where there is no common ground for a team composed of different backgrounds and where there is a lack of respect for diversity.

Topic – 226: Dividing Society into Individualistic and Collectivistic

Societies’ views differ about appropriate conversational etiquettes. Forms of language reflect different things about its users, how their society is organized, its world view, and the individual’s place in society. “Forms of language not only reflect people’s social position and the circumstance, but also express their view of the way society is organized and of their own position within the social network. . . The forms of language encode a socially constructed representation of the world” (Lim 2002).

Attitude towards group membership varies in individualistic and collective culture. In individualistic societies the individual’s achievements and self-actualization is held important and acceptance and willingness to have different opinions. In individualist societies the individual can express themselves freely. The listener pays attention to the speaker, and not to his/her group membership.

In collectivist societies, the emphasis is on the group and cooperation in shared activities. The individuals’ own opinion is not expressed or if it is, then expressed indirectly. Care is taken not to offend group members by the free expression of opinion. 70% of the world’s population is collectivistic. In such societies, conformity and loyalty are rated more highly. “*Putting yourself forward*” is frowned upon. Perceptions of equality and personal freedom can vary -horizontally or vertically. The collectivistic society’s emphasis on group doesn’t mean equality. In India it is vertical with recognized divisions in society, whereas Japan is a horizontal culture.

In individualistic cultures standing up for one’s self is admired, e.g. in the USA and Norway which are individualistic and horizontal cultures.

The importance of in-groups can be seen in strong ties within the family. However, the influence of in-group differs, affects behavior, but it lasts throughout life. For example, the university one attends can influence an individual’s life in the way he/she acts and thinks. The importance of in-group is embedded in social networks, and in group membership. In-group views dominate and the emphasis is not on individual's goals but in group cooperation. Intercultural communication differs in societies. Asians are seen as being timid and reserved while Westerners are seen as pushy and egotistical by other cultures.

Topic – 227: High context verses Low Context

There are many ways for our learners to understand the nature of culture, general or specific. Researchers and cultural commentators have identified different dimensions as a method of analyzing and describing what is happening. Dimensions are perspectives which allow us to measure and compare certain attributes of different cultures, although it must always be remembered that other cultures may see these attributes quite differently. The named dimensions are very useful for the business English teacher because they help to generate useful discussion and debate about relevant issues. The particular discussion formats and activities that teachers may choose to employ will depend on the group of learners and what they are trying to achieve. When planning intercultural training, it is helpful to have an awareness of the main dimensions of cultural comparison that are commonly used in the literature on intercultural training. Different researchers have arrived at a range of dimensions, which can at times overlap, as the following brief summary shows:

In a high-context culture, members use the context itself as a means of communication. This means that they do not need to explain things explicitly which are readily available from the situation, or from the environment. Often they use non-verbal behavior, value long-term relationships, and work with spoken rather than written agreements. In low-context cultures, things need to be communicated much more explicitly - people often appear direct and dislike ambiguity. Outsiders may find it relatively easy to become a member of the group. The business manager from a low-context culture will value long and detailed contracts, which are, of course, adhered to once signed. After all, that is the point of a written agreement. For the high- context business manager, the contract may be seen as more of a guideline, to be used for further discussion if need be. After all, flexibility is paramount. Or imagine a situation where a visitor has arrived after a long journey. The high-context host might suggest that the visitor takes time to rest and recuperate, whereas the low-context host might expect an explicit statement of tiredness before making the same offer.

Misunderstandings in interaction can occur as high-context listeners interpret an expression in its context while a low-context listeners pay attention to literal meanings as well as speakers' personality. The relationship between high-context/low-context and collectivistic/individualistic societies can be seen in that high context societies distinguish between insiders and outsiders, and don't perceive people as individuals. Most individualistic cultures prefer low-context messages, while collectivistic cultures prefer high-context ones. The USA is a high context, while Asian societies are viewed as low context.

Topic – 228: Deconstructing Low and High Context Societies

Low and high-context societies can be viewed as how they interpret messages, which are based on their beliefs, values, attitudes, systems, and worldviews as well as in their social organization. Whether a culture is high or low depends on interpretation of these constructs. In high-context societies, most of the information about societal priorities is 'invisible'. What is important is never said directly, in fact, may never be said at all. Expectation is that others will understand their unarticulated meanings. In contrast, in low-context societies what is considered really important is always out in the open.

The main difference in between these two types of societies is that high-context conversations do not reveal much information about what people really consider when they organize their lives. High-context conversations do not reveal much information. In individualistic societies, there is an ongoing public debate about social issues which means that there is a lot of talk. In collectivistic, Asian societies would count as high-context societies, people tend to think of people in low-context societies, as being less attractive, and credible, perhaps because of their lack of talk.

Lesson 39

HOW TO INCLUDE INTERCULTURAL TRAINING-III

Topic – 229: Five Areas of Potential Difference: Is Silence Golden?

Culture can be analyzed by using a number of dimensions. Five areas are usually seen in differentiating culture. The first one looks into how silence is viewed in different cultures. In some cultures, silence is favored, e.g. in Finns and Asians. In others, it is viewed as a breakdown in conversation leading interlocutors to get uncomfortable in some and to endeavor to fill up the silence. In some societies, silence is important. It is a way to guard your individuality and ward against the fear of someone changing your opinion. This refers to a frequent conversational goal in Western societies for each person to check out his sense of reality (or point of view) against that of other people in the conversation. Part of this checking out may result in encouraging others to change their point of view which, in some cultures means a disrespect of other's rights.

Sometimes it is viewed as a way of being with others, as Wieder and Pratt say, "The real Indian . . . must know that neither he nor the others has an obligation to speak – that silence on part of the conversant is permissible" (Wieder and Pratt 1990). In some societies, people don't talk unless they are introduced. When acquaintance is established then it becomes an obligation to stop and talk and to initiate conversations. At one end of this continuum of silence are long pauses and at the other loud talk, where talking becomes a competition, an assertion of one's self by the sound of one's voice and ignoring the concept of turn taking. Norms against interruptions also differ in cultures. In some loud boasting is a show of strength, a form of defense against any attacks or criticism.

Topic – 230: Conversational Routines

Every day conversational routines can be very different in cultures. Investigations have been carried out of the best way to communicate in initial face-to-face interaction in different cultures. In initial encounters, some cultures emphasize paying close attention to the other person, making eye contact and exhibiting appropriate posture, for example, head-nodding. Besides this it is considered appropriate to embrace, handshake, kiss, and exchange words of greetings. Mexicans, Chileans, and Spaniards differ from American Latinos and Anglos in their expectation that appropriate initial interaction includes kissing, but they also differ regarding the degree of appropriate head nodding, and appropriate posture, among other characteristics. The Mexicans, Chileans, and both American groups all place importance on eye contact. Among the non-US groups, Mexicans and Spaniards differ from Chileans in the rated importance of attentiveness and maintaining eye contact during a social interaction.

The concept of '*at a loss for words'* and concepts encoded by the English words '*thanks* and *apology'* don't really fit all cultures. In an appreciation routine the 'Thanks' is unmarked, in some words is normal, but in others it is marked. Expressing thanks is thus another area which shows variation across cultures. It is surprising that not all cultures subscribe to what is connoted by 'thanks', in the Western culture. In Japan with its emphasis on rights and obligations, thanking someone comes close to an 'apology' as Japanese culture views what someone does for you as an obligation for which you have to apologize. Japan, with its priority to obligation: "*I recognize my unending debt to you*". The same is taken for a mistake or omission.

There are differing views about conversation routines in service encounter, which are influenced by a hierarchy in societies. Stereotypical perceptions about the other culture influence that conspires. Some offer sociable comments, others respond with restrained politeness, communicating personal information, offer sociable comments, humor, and mock signs of indignation, to some tending to respond with what Bailey (1997) calls, “restraint politeness” rather than “involvement politeness”.

Members of individualistic cultures tend to use a direct style of speech and members of collectivistic cultures use a more indirect style. Speakers from individualistic cultures feel free to ask questions. Still, in many individualistic cultures many personal questions regarding age, religion and salary are considered too private to be asked. Culturally distinctive strategies are used by cultural groups, e.g. the call-response routines: Daniel and Smitherman (1990) describe and analyze the significance of call–response routines in traditional African-American churches in the United States. These routines function to emphasize group cohesiveness and cooperation. Ritual insults are used to show wit, daring in breaking rules of mainstream.

Culture-specific speech acts of men can be seen in conversational routines. To symbolize the cultural values of frankness and hardness associated with Israelis, the term “*a dugri talk*” is used. It means ‘To talk straight’, implying that the listener needs to hear, as harmony may be sacrificed for a moment of true contact. The idea is that such talk symbolizes the cultural values of frankness and hardness associated with native-born Israelis.

Topic – 231: The Face of Politeness

‘*Face of Politeness’* is a technical term meaning attention paid to the self-respect of addressee and ultimately of oneself. It is about meeting a person’s ‘face needs’ for self-respect. Not all cultures have the same idea about appropriate ways to meet face needs.

Everyone has two faces that need attention, a person’s positive face and a person’s negative face. A person’s positive face is one’s need to have self-worth recognized. The way to preserve someone’s positive face is by paying positive attention to that person. In some cultures, positive attention can be such conversational moves as complimenting a person on his or her appearance or achievements. Another way is to use language that builds solidarity with that person (e.g. remembering the person’s name, using “we” to include the person in your group). But how much such solidarity is welcomed depends on the culture. A person’s negative face is one’s need not to be imposed on. But the problem is that any time you ask someone to do something, you are imposing on that person. The solution is that there are ways to cut down on the imposition, based on how you ask (saying “Give me that!” can be very imposing in comparison with “Would you please give that to me?” and “If it’s not too much trouble, could you please hand that to me?”is even less imposing.

Strategies for expressing approval and mitigations vary in cultures, “Concerns for politeness are dependent on local forms of social inequality and hierarchy, forms which differ considerably between such relatively ‘egalitarian’ peoples as Ilongots and ourselves”(Rosaldo 1982).

Topic – 232: How to ask for things: Requests

Asking for things or making requests are expressed in different ways in cultures. Expectations about how people ask for things vary across cultures. Speakers, listeners of a certain culture have implicit knowledge of how to make requests. In Westerner societies overt requests are accompanied by some mitigation, like making the request indirect. There are three general types of requests:

- Direct, explicit: Imperatives, “Clean the kitchen”
- Non-conventionally Indirect: “The kitchen needs to be cleaned”
- Conventionally indirect: they include mitigation to cut down on the force of the utterance, using ‘possibly’, and ‘when you get a chance’

These requests are conventionalized because they follow a certain formula that makes them recognizable as directives in the relevant community. Such directives have a beginning with a modal verb ‘could’, plus ‘you’. This gives them the same syntactic form as a question, even though they are interpreted as directives. In general, speakers from all cultures share the common feature of varying the directness of their directives by situation. Research shows that there are no sharp differences in the degree of directness in requests across the speakers of the different languages, only gradient ones.

Topic – 233: Power Differentials in Family

Societies can be seen as those which fall along the inequality/ hierarchy continuum. The way a society is organized hierarchically, is reflected in language use of its people. Power differentials within the family vary according to culture. In every society, there is inequality, whether more or less. Power is, ‘The control someone has over the outcomes of others’, and status is: ‘The respect that someone enjoys because of physical or intellectual capacities or wealth’.

The way power differentials show up in language use, vary in cultures and the control which is exercised in conversations can be surprising for some. A construct given by Hofstede (1991) shows how people accept power differentials, how inequity is tolerated. First part of this construct is ‘Accept’: Less powerful peoples’ acceptance of inequality and the second part is ‘Expect’: more powerful people expect to have more power. He uses the term power distance to define “the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally”.

Expectations about tolerating inequities are shaped by the family. In some cultures children are not expected to speak at all. Obviously, such societies fall at the high end of the hierarchical end of the equality–hierarchy continuum. Power in such cases is not evenly distributed and this is accepted by the children. In contrast, in other societies which fall at the other extreme of the continuum, the goal is to raise children showing initiative and independence from an early age. Here, there is a low tolerance for inequality based on power of adults and of age.

Mealtime conversations in families show how power is viewed cross-culturally. In some cultures, deference is expected from children at mealtimes, in that asking questions, volunteering information is discouraged. In Western cultures, children entering conversations and giving information is seen as a positive thing. However, a comparative study of mealtime conversation across Swedish, Finnish and Estonian families found that Finns and Estonians spoke less than did Swedes.

Social class and education of parents play a part in the power differentials of families. As children grow up in middle class families, grow up to become equals with the adults and participate in conversations as equals. This strikes others as ‘cold and distant’, to people from other cultures. This point is reinforced by the Iraqi viewing the Americans habit of living apart from parents. There is a cross-cultural division in views about authority in the family and a workplace along class lines. Lower status employees have more 'authoritarian' views, which affect their views of family interactions.

Topic -234: Equality and Hierarchy in the Workplace

Tolerance for expressions of inequities in the workplace varies from culture to culture. There are differing views about accepting power inequities. In Japan, consensual agreement is sought from all before changing policy or procedures, as they value harmony in the workplace. In Mexico, it is accepted without questioning that those in charge have authority and seldom will the juniors question about the implementation of a new policy. When workers and management interact, the US workers "have little difficulty in openly disagreeing with their superiors . . . This world view, focusing on the individual and his or her personal achievements, can produce conflict when Americans interact with people acculturated with differing concepts of authority"(McDaniel and Samovar: 1997).

Mexican workers, when speaking to managers provide only positive information. The Japanese, who place emphasis on indirectness, avoid a direct "no". Who speaks first or most or later or not at all also varies cross-culturally. In some cultures, no one expresses an opinion before the most powerful one speaks. The expected choice is agreeing with him/her. The powerful people take more turns and speak the most. Even in individualistic societies, most participants expect the powerful to speak more. The topic of conversation is also nominated much more freely than less powerful one, e.g. the boss can ask how the secretary's son is doing at university more easily than the secretary can ask about the boss' son.

Requests are the most frequent components of workplace talk. We have discussed requests as politeness strategies, but they belong here too. Power differentials often show up not just in who makes the request but in the structure of the request that one person gives another. An American study shows that people in positions of power make direct requests to juniors, which expresses a high power distance. However, this pattern isn't always found. One reason is that in many American workplaces the view is that accepting and expressing a high power distance is frowned upon. So, everyone uses the same directive type in the office.

Expectations of German and American managers in meetings contrast in their emphasis on hierarchy: Germans pay more attention to it while Americans because of their need to be liked and accepted, don't. Americans use first names quicker, and have a casual style. For Germans credibility is more important, and establishing it by adhering to known barriers. Americans want to reduce barriers and hierarchies.

Even when power differentials are explicit, (depending on age, sex, caste, wealth, prestige, morality, and reputation) there is room for negotiation. In one African ethnic society, people of higher status would carry out, what Irvine (1974) calls *status manipulation in greeting routines*, to escape from obligation of the financial burden of being higher in status, although high status implies respect, prestige, and political power. How people speak is a reflection of their power and status, it is a reflection of their power/social standing, e.g. in Burundi, low-status people are expected to speak haltingly in comparison to high-status people.

Lesson 40

HOW TO INCLUDE INTERCULTURAL TRAINING-IV

Topic -235: Confucianism and Communication Patterns in East Asia

The philosopher, Confucius, who lived in about the fifth century BC is often cited as understand additional dimensions of culture. June Ock Yum (1991) argues that ethics in Confucianism are based on good relationships and harmonious interactions. Unlike communist collectivism of the 20C., Confucius emphasized ethics as the basis of good social relationships and their maintenance rather than on any abstract concept of collectivism, as most East Asian cultures do.

Actual role terms, rather than 'you', are used to get someone's attention and as terms of address. Examples of occupational terms as terms of address are easily found across a variety of collectivistic cultures. For example, in Yoruba in Nigeria, a blacksmith is addressed as alágbède 'blacksmith' and in Chinese, a factory supervisor whose surname is Wang is addressed as Wáng jı¯ng lı ˇ), with the Chinese term of address for 'supervisor'. Use of occupational titles clarifies and accentuates relationships

In Thailand occupational titles are used as second-person reference terms. Most denote a social superior, e.g. university students might call their instructor, "Zaacaan", and he/she too might refer to themselves as such. This shows the social distance as well as closeness as someone senior, and in a caring role.

To develop relationships, frequent contacts to create common experiences are required under the dictates of Confucianism. There is no distinction between business and personal relationships and meetings create warm feelings of "*jen*". People are more willing to share personal information as in anticipatory communication, guessing speaker's point or need without the other actually conveying it. Americans emphasize freedom of choice, but East Asians anticipate others want and likes. While interacting with person of a different culture, L1 speakers should think of how they would view your conversation with someone of own L1 would be viewed in their culture. Everyone views the conversation through their own cultural lens.

Topic – 236: Time, Power Distance, Uncertainty and Avoidance

a. Time: Concepts of time vary culturally. In monochronic cultures, time is seen as linear, with one event following another. Polychronic culture might spend the meeting doing various things, making phone calls, and talking. Monochronic person feels comfortable dealing with the matters in sequence. Members of polychronic cultures are able to manage different activities at once. The person from the polychronic culture might spend the meeting doing various things like making phone calls, talking to different people, and so on. The monochronic person would feel more comfortable dealing with the matters at hand, in sequence, one after the other. This refers to the distance or equality between individuals in a hierarchy (if, indeed, there is one).

b. Power Distance: Power differentials vary in different societies. In a low-power distance culture, people find it easy to approach their leaders, to discuss issues, and even to criticize them.

c. Uncertainty Avoidance This dimension reflects how different cultures approach ambiguity and uncertainty. If there is low tolerance of uncertainty, for example, people value job security and clear rules and regulations.

Topic – 237: Masculinity versus Femininity, Long Term Orientation, Universalism versus Particularism

a. Masculinity versus Femininity: In masculine cultures, achievement is often measured in terms of power and wealth, and emphasis placed on work goals and assertiveness. Feminine cultures see personal goals, human contact, and relationship building as more valuable.

b. Long term orientation: This dimension highlights differences between cultures that see short-term benefits as important (consider, for example, the way some company strategies focus on short-term profits), and those that feel that time spent developing longer-lasting relationships brings greater benefit.

c. Universalism versus Particularism: The Universalist says that rules and regulations are there to be followed. The particularist would argue that it depends on the situation and people involved. The following example is somewhat simplistic, but might help to clarify the concept. If a cashier is caught stealing from the till, in a Universalist culture, he or she would probably lose their job. In a particularist culture, the fact that the person was stealing to pay for a child's education might be seen as an excuse for the behavior.

Topic – 238: a. Neutral versus Emotional b. Specific versus Diffuse c. Status d. Relationship with Nature

a. Neutral versus Emotional: This dimension looks at how people show emotions in various situations. In a neutral culture would pride itself on staying calm and in control in the face of chaos and confusion. In an emotional culture might give vent to feelings. People want to find ways to express their emotions, even spontaneously, at work. It is welcome and accepted to show emotion.

b. Specific versus Diffuse. In specific-oriented cultures, people see work and personal life separate. Work is not impacted by relationships. In 'specific' cultures the relationship between managers, subordinate depethe situationtuation. The 'at-work' relationship is different from the 'at-play' one. In 'diffuse' cultures, people see an overlap in work and personal relationships are vital in achieving business objectives. Spend time with colleagues and clients. The relationship is always there, and business can be done at any time or place in such cultures.

c. Status: Different cultures accord status in different ways. We can say, simplistically that in Japan, age is treated with respect. In the US achievement is regarded as more important. Ascription is held differently in cultures. Some people believe that you should be valued for who you are. Power, title, and education, and position matters in these cultures and these roles define behavior. In cultures where achievement is held important, people believe that you are what you do, and they base your worth accordingly. These cultures value performance, no matter who you are.

d. Relationship with Nature: Some cultures believe that the environment can be controlled, whereas others see themselves as part of the environment. This might influence the way people accept technology and how they work with plans. People believe that they can control nature or their environment to achieve goals. This includes how they work with teams and within organizations People believe that nature, and environment controls them; they must work with their environment to achieve goals. At work they focus their actions on others, avoid conflict and need reassurance in their work.

Topic – 239: Verbal, Non Verbal/Paralanguage

Researchers have looked at other dimensions too. The way different cultures use non-verbal communication is particularly interesting. Here, we can look at body language (kinesics), eye movement and contact (occulistics), touch (haptics), and body distance (proxemics). If we look at speaking, paralanguage (the way we vary tone, pitch, and volume, and speed of talking) can also be quite different between cultures. So it can be turn-taking. Note, for example, how Anglo-Saxon speakers tend to wait until the other person has finished speaking before contributing to the conversation. In a spoken interaction in Latin cultures, on the other hand, utterances tend to overlap, while in some East Asian cultures, conversationalists may feel more comfortable with a short pause between utterances.

Topic – 240: Company Culture

The culture of a company or organization is the personality of a company. It defines the environment in which employees work. It includes a variety of elements:

- Work environment
- Company mission
- Values, ethics
- Expectations, goals

A company culture differs in from a traditional, formal culture to a team based culture in which employees participate. For example, Google's culture is informal and have a low distance. Workers enjoy their work and time in the workplace. Employees' needs and values are consistent with the workplace, better relationships with coworkers, and are even more productive. In traditional, formal management styles, responsibilities will be clearly defined. Not many opportunities to advance without going through a formal promotion or transfer process. There is more *red-tapism*. The company culture in Japan differs because of having different cultural perceptions. Decision making is a long corporate hierarchy, focusing on ROI (Return on Investment) but on the process too. It is a risk adverse culture, and since it is a homogenous culture, face to face interaction is valued. Priority is given to work life and working from home is not the norm.

In a typical USA company, decision making is carried out by incorporating all employees. The focus is on the ROI, not on process. It is a risk taking culture, heterogeneous culture, with priority given to personal life. Working hours are flexible, employees can work from home, or in cubicles independently.

Lesson 41

HOW TO INCLUDE INTERCULTURAL TRAINING-V

Topic – 241: Generating Discussion

Teaching culture as business English teachers is the same as teaching management content, as both areas are not their core domains. However, by using the cultural content, discussion can be generated in class for critical thinking. Learners can study a series of advertisements, from their own and other countries, or look at CVs or tips for writing CVs, and discuss those. There are different ways in which news agencies of different countries report the same news, which can be discussed as well. Activities can be created by discussion between representatives of different companies – their procedures, contracts, dress codes and work hours. Groups from people of various organizations can discuss what is the normal way of doing things in their contexts? For example, signing of contracts, heading meetings and how long do people stay for work. If the participants are from other countries, it is much better. Discussion can be generated by how people talk about foreign business, travel, national influences and individual characteristics.

Different cultures use metaphors in different ways (a good way of combining linguistic input with intercultural training). Discussion can be based on how English expressions involve different concepts of time, space, honesty. English expressions of time can be used to focus on how different cultures view time. What does it mean to waste time? How can a person run out of time? How is it possible to save time? Using sports metaphors is also a good way to generate discussion, e.g. is it possible to have a level playing field, how can we take the ball and run with it? The English language provides a rich source of metaphorical language which can be exploited in the context of intercultural training.

Topic – 242: Understanding own Culture

The cultural dimensions can be used to understand your own culture vis-à-vis other cultures. Cultures are often judged by the way they differ from our own culture i.e. our way of doing things. The dissimilarity between cultures basically influences intercultural communication and judgments are based on language resources. When speakers from different societies don’t use their language resources as speakers do in our culture, it affects our assessment of them.

Ethnocentricity refers to the judging of another culture using one’s own standards, beliefs. An Anglo-Saxon perspective may be to view projects as plans for the future, with clear aims, milestones, and deadlines. Yet this perception is colored by the fact that Anglo-Saxons, in general, tend to see time as a linear concept, with one event following another. A culture which views time differently may deal with projects in other ways. Individual objectives, for example, may be flexible, depending on factors seen as outside the control of the project managers. Yet the project might still succeed because that culture has a more holistic view and takes better account of all factors.

Similar arguments could be made for almost all communicative situations in the business world. What goes down well as a presentation in one culture might be profoundly irritating in another. The use of humor during important meetings might be interpreted as a lack of seriousness in some cultures, but vital for rapport building in another. How do people interrupt during meetings (if they do at all)? What are acceptable topics of conversation on social occasions? Is it appropriate to see a job interview as a situation where both sides are equal partners, or has one side higher status?

What should be clear from the follow-up discussion, which may need sensitive facilitation, is that we see ourselves differently from how others see us. Secondly, different cultures may use different stereotypes to describe other groups: cultures A and B may see culture C in very different ways.

Topic – 243: Increasing Awareness

It is important to increase awareness in students and employees about multiculturalism. Various activities have been created for bringing awareness:

- Cognitive activities: In which learners increase their knowledge about culture.
- Affective or experiential activities: in which learners emotions and feelings are evoked.

Typical of these methods are role-plays and simulations where emotions, interpersonal skills are brought into play. Teachers have to see the appropriateness of activities for some groups, as follows:

- Cultural
- Personal sensitivities are concerned

Activities to practice:

- Turn Taking (in some cultures, turns are normal while in others, it follows different rules)
- Silences
- Pauses (how some cultures silence and pauses are normal and desired while in others it is viewed as a failure of communication.
- Using metaphors: It is a good activity; it can generate a lot of discussion, and bring awareness about how things are viewed in different societies.
- Requests, e.g. an activity for turn taking involves two participants.

A useful activity is in which people of different national cultures are asked to list stereotypes of their own culture and write down three positive and three negative things about how other cultures and view your culture. Such an activity helps in bringing awareness about own culture.

Another activity will make learners aware of how turn-taking takes place and how pauses show respect for participants in different cultures. Person A finds silence uncomfortable, so fills them with talk, which makes it difficult for Person B, to get a chance to speak at all. In the debriefing, the teacher gives feedback as to why was Person A feeling uncomfortable with silence, if he/she comes from a culture where silence is normal, change Person B's card. It is useful to ask questions for both teachers and students. Culture is like an iceberg; only a fraction of it is visible, manifested through customs, language, and physical appearance. The majority of cultures is hidden from view and expressed implicitly, through deep-held values and preferences.

Topic – 244: Cultural Shock/Rules of the Game

More activities can be used to bring awareness about cultural shock. In one activity, 4-6 learners participate. Two are asked to leave the room, and each is given a role-card to read (The 'rules' can be changed to suit the group - for example, they should answer only by people wearing glasses, or brown shoes, or ties, or whatever). What happens is that the group goes through some culture shock, as they realize that the others are operating to different rules, and that they do not know what those rules are. The value of the activity is enriched by getting both sides to discuss how they felt and what they thought was happening.

Another activity (6+ learners) on cultural rules involves briefing the learners that they are going to take part in a simulation to practice small talk. The setting should be something relevant to your group, such as a trade fair reception, a product launch, or a conference opening ceremony. Each learner gets a role card which asks him or her to behave in a certain way, as follows (you may wish to change some of these, depending on the group).

Rules of the game - another (similar) activity is to split a large group into small groups around tables, and give each group a set of rules for a game you have devised (it could be based on cards, or a chess set, or Ludo, or whatever you have available). The learners study the rules, after which no more talking is allowed. After a few minutes of playing time, ask people from different tables to swap, to join another group and carry on playing. They will assume that the people are playing to the same set of rules - but each group has its own, slightly different set. Playing the game with unknown rules leads to another intercultural experience.

Finally, another way to increase awareness is to use culture as a backdrop for all the other aspects of communication skills training. Thus, if the topic is negotiations, one of the aspects of negotiations is to discuss how different cultures might approach them. A key part of presentations training is to make sure that the presenter is doing something appropriate for his or her audience - clearly there is an intercultural aspect here. Even the way people answer the phone is influenced to a greater or lesser degree by intercultural factors. Feedback on any business English activity can and should include intercultural aspects if it is appropriate.

Topic – 245: Managing Cross Cultural Conflicts

Cross cultural conflicts are situations which business English teachers have to confront frequently in class. Considerable skills are required to manage them. Most important is to keep communication channels open, and to focus on similarities not differences. Also to keep in mind the following:

- Solving individualists' need to the collectivists' positive face as extension of the group.
- Deal with conflicts when they are still small and manageable.
- Help maintain face
- Pay attention to the collectivist's indirect messages and non-verbal communication. Try to be more indirect.
- Avoid absolute statements, like "no"
- Collectivists use avoidance. To let go, if they are avoiding.

Collectivists need to alter their unmarked conversational strategies towards the strategies that individualists favor, and attempt to be more direct, assertive in stating opinions, and provide more verbal feedback than they normally do. While they may value periods of silence in conversations, they should recognize that individualists do not and also be aware of how silence is viewed.

Topic – 246: Critical Incidents

Using critical incidents in teaching can improve our learners' intercultural competence through various activities, and facilitate understanding of their own culture. It brings about increased awareness of cultural differences by analyzing critical incidents from different cultural perspectives. However, building awareness of cultural differences is not enough. Learners need to be able to cope with the differences, and to do this they need practice. One way is to move and live with the target culture. However, this is not practical in all situations. Critical incidents focus on differences from a practical not theoretical perspective. Sometimes learners do not find a solution, or perhaps there is no perfect solution. This is a reflection of the real world, and is not a method failure. The example can be used of an employee, moving from an Asian culture to a South European one, might be uncomfortable with her colleagues touching her hand/arm or putting their arms around her. How to deal with the situation? Another scenario can be of an employee moving to another culture and finding that the way meetings are conducted by the HOD in the new job, is quite different from his previous job. If he is promoted to be HOD, how should he conduct meetings? Another could be how does one deal with unethical practices in a foreign culture? The benefit of such activities is that students are not personally involved in the situation. They can usually discuss the issues objectively, and decide upon a course of action.

Lesson 42

ASSESSMENT IN BUSINESS COMMUNICATION-I

Topic – 247: Assessment and Evaluation in Business Communication Teaching

Evaluation is of critical importance in supporting and shaping how teaching is done. Assessment is concerned with individual student's learning. Evaluation refers to course evaluation as a whole. Evaluation can be of the trainer/teacher as well as of the course. It is a broader concept, and has two important elements:

- Validity: It provides information on what we want to test, e.g. if we want to test our learners presentation skills we would not want to give them a test on business vocabulary.
- Reliability: It is the consistency with which assessment tools measure learners' ability, e.g. an assessment is reliable when there is little difference in learner's scores or in ratings across different occasions, timings, or different judges.

Assessment involves asking questions: How well have our students done? How well has our program served the learners' needs? It has to do with collecting relevant information, and making judgments, all within a context of specific purposes and goals. A needs analysis, discussed earlier, is a form of evaluation. Placement tests involve evaluation, as does making decisions about materials**.** A sponsoring company may wish to evaluate a course that is on the market, or learners' language skills may be assessed to see if they are ready for an exam. There are other types of questions that teachers may need answers to. For example, they may want to check if the teaching objectives have been met, or if the teaching methods that they used need improvement.

Answering such questions can take up a lot of time and effort, so the first question to ask is whether it is worth doing? Other questions to ask about evaluation include: Who will do it? When will it be done? What will be evaluated? How will it be done? How these questions are answered will depend on the situation. Evaluating a one-off, in-company course will differ from evaluating a university course that runs ten times a year. One model of evaluation commonly found in business English training (particularly in-company) is based on Kirkpatrick's work in the 1960s. This model is built on the following five levels of evaluation, all interrelated:

- Learner
- Learning
- Transfer
- Results
- Return on investment

Topic – 248: Principles of a Test

Tests are not easy to make. Principles of test-making have to be kept in mind. *Validity* is a complex concept in testing. A test is considered valid when it reflects the test-takers' ability in a particular area and it measures what it is supposed to measure and does not measure anything else. The concept of face validity is that the test makes sense to the test-giver.

Reliability is the second principle. A test is considered reliable if it is administered on different occasions and similar results are obtained. Brown and Abeywickrama (2010) suggest the following ways to ensure that a test is reliable:

- It is consistent to be administered for two or more applications.
- It gives clear instruction and uniform rubrics about scoring.
- It lends itself to consistent application by the evaluator and contains items/tasks that are unambiguous for the test-taker.

Practicality refers to the logistics, the practical and administrative issues involved in the process of constructing a test. The test should be easy to administer and it should be cost effective. Constructing a test involves keeping a balance between the relationship between the resources that will be required in the design and its development, and the resources that will be available for these activities. *Authenticity* refers to the fact that the test should reflect the target language, and the way it is used. This is why a placement test should, ideally, follow the target situation analysis.

Topic -249: Summative and Formative Assessment

Summative evaluation is carried out at a pre-specified stage in a course (such as the end), and looks at whether or not the course objectives have been achieved, or how effective, or efficient the course was at achieving those objectives. A typical method is the use of tests, such as www.bookwidgets.co. The goal of summative assessment is to evaluate student learning at the end of an instructional unit by comparing it against some standard or benchmark. Summative assessments are often high stakes, which means that they have a high point value. Examples of summative assessments include a midterm examination, and a final project. Another example of summative assessments is a midterm examination or a final project.

Formative evaluation looks at what was good and not so good on a particular course, and forms a basis for change and future action. In other words, the aim is to make improvements. For example, an end-of-course questionnaire might ask participants to comment on the quality of the hotel used to run the course - adverse comments may result in the next course being run in a different hotel. Formative evaluation is kind of a snapshot of the learner. Observation is one of the most widely used methods of keeping track of the learners' progress in class. Teachers observe on a day to day basis, follow up with some kind of diagnostic feedback, either verbal/written, which alerts the learner to his/her strengths/weaknesses. In this way, observation is an important part of formative assessment. Other methods are keeping checklists, asking simple yes/no questions, or using a rating scale describing attainment.

Feedback serves the purpose of informing and improving the learning process, through observation of activities. Illuminative evaluation is designed to help us understand the teaching and learning processes within the course - typically this will look at issues like classroom interaction, or learning strategies used by the participants. Richards (2001) says that illuminative evaluation is employed to find out how different aspects of a program are implemented and this type of evaluation is one way to attain a deeper understanding of the process of teaching and learning that occurs in the program. Examples of illuminative evaluation that Richards provided are finding out the strategies for error correction teachers employ or the strategies students use to deal with different text types. Illuminative evaluation for classroom teachers can be an instrument designed to assess a specific language point or problem to have a better understanding about students' difficulty in acquiring it, so that appropriate actions can be made.

Finally, Richards indicated that summative evaluation, the kind of evaluation most teachers and administrators are familiar with, is concerned with determining the effectiveness, efficiency, and to some extent the acceptability of a language program. Questions related to summative evaluation are whether the course achieved its aims, what did the students learn, and if appropriate teaching methods were used. Summative evaluation can usually be final tests for classroom teachers.

Topic – 250: Quantitative and Qualitative Assessment

In order to find answers to various pedagogical issues we need to collect and measure data in a systematic way. The next step is to use it analyze and interpret it to make a judgment which leads to innovation. Quantitative and qualitative data are common within a business English teaching context. The results of a proficiency test can be assessed in two ways:

- Norm referenced: Norm referenced scores are compared with each other: e.g. '*Mariam scored 90 out of 100 in the top 10 percent'*. Numbers, rankings, and letter grades are used.
- Criterion referenced: Criterion referenced are compared with an external standard, gives qualitative information what a learner can do with language.

Students' performance can be described both quantitatively and qualitatively, by assigning numbers or written descriptions, oral feedback or narrative reports. In education, measurement is "the process of quantifying the observed performance of classroom learners" (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010).

Topic – 251: Testing Learners

The common terms used by teachers are tests, measurement, and evaluation, and assessment. Informally, they may be used interchangeably to refer to the practice of determining learners' proficiency in a variety of contexts - before, during and after the completion of teaching.

Pre-course tests: These are proficiency tests which aim to find the learners' current communicative competence. Placement tests are also used for the same purpose - to group learners with similar needs and abilities. They can be used for selection of learners according to their profession. Placement tests are thus designed to find learners' current communicative proficiency/competence. They provide comparison with other learners or with known standards or benchmarks.

In-course tests: These can be seen as continuous assessments carried out during the course. They refer to regular checks and tests to give a cumulative picture of learners' progress. Teacher assesses learners in every lesson, and activity. Achievement tests, based on clear objectives or specific content are also in-course tests. Diagnostic tests also fall in the same category. Once learning is underway, so some type of progress/ achievement test is required, which can be used to give feedback to learners. So, in a sense, the aim of such tests is diagnostic. Non-Test procedures are also adopted in this regard, e.g., systematic observation, conferences between teacher and student, and self and peer evaluation. Portfolios are collection of learners work, selected by him/her. They demonstrate learners' efforts, progress, or achievement over a period of time and can contain examples of class tests, of writing, audio tapes, and video tapes.

End of term/Final tests: These are used to report to an external body. These tests are constructed by an external educational body or expert teachers with assessment responsibilities. They carry out a summative assessment in the shape of final examinations or a final project.

Topic – 252: Testing Speaking Skills

When we are assessing learners' proficiency in business English, speaking is the area which comes foremost. Assessment of speaking is concerned with traditional categories of language and their correct use by the learner.

When we are assessing learners' proficiency in business English, speaking it is important to keep other factors besides these in mind, verbal/non-verbal communication as well as linguistic competence and sociolinguistic skills. Because speech is full of hesitations, pauses, and repetitions, so it is hard to judge speaking ability without actually listening to the speaker. Transcripts only give part of the picture. A test of a person's communicative competence is more than a reading/writing test (or transcripts). Also business English competence is not only about language. Often mastery of the language is intertwined with other skills.

In evaluating a negotiation activity, the outcome of the negotiation will be an important consideration - did the seller close the deal satisfactorily? Another common business English speaking skill is giving presentations. A good presenter needs to be able to do other things besides simply produce language. It is important to hold the audience' attention/interest and engage with them. The delivery of content, the aids being used, and body language, language, rapport and structure for the presentation are all factors which will influence the assessment. These points can be used by anyone in the group to evaluate a presentation. It gives an idea of the wide range of criteria which need to be considered. The measurement scale can be composed of pluses, minuses, and not numbers.

Lesson 43

ASSESSMENT IN BUSINESS COMMUNICATION-II

Topic – 253: Testing Reading Skill

Time and training are required to assess reading skills. The aim is to assess growth, development and progress of learners in this skill. Assessment can be qualitative, seen through their responses to reading journal, reading interest surveys, and responses to reading strategy lists. Quantitative assessment used for comprehension, reading rate, phonemic and letter knowledge.

There are many types of reading comprehension assessments. One type involves a student reading a passage that is at an appropriate level for the student, and then having the student answer factual questions about the text. A second type involves a student answering inferential questions about implied information in the text. A third type involves a student filling in missing words from a passage. A fourth type is to have a student retell the story in their own words (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1992; Wren 2004). The following list is a sample of assessment measures to test reading comprehension skills:

- Degrees of Reading Power (DRP)
- ERDA
- GORT4
- ITBS
- TPRI

Fluency is the automatic ability to read words in connected text. The most common example of an assessment for fluency is to ask a student to read a passage aloud for one minute. Words that are skipped or pronounced incorrectly are not counted. The number of correct words read is counted and this total equals a student's oral reading fluency rate. The following list is a sample of assessment measures to test fluency in reading skills:

- Curriculum Based Measurement (CBM)
- DIBELS
- Gray Oral Reading Test IV (GORT - 4)
- TOWRE, TPRI

Letter knowledge is the ability to associate sounds with letters. Phonemic awareness is the ability to hear and manipulate sounds in words. The following tests are available to test these skills:

- Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), ERDA
- Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)
- Early Reading Diagnostic Assessment (ERDA)

Evaluating journals is a useful activity in which students make a journal entry daily, responding to questions focusing on class activity. For example, students are asked to engage in a repeated reading activity, and then asked what they have learnt about their reading rate. This helps learners to see the progress they are making.

Topic – 254: Testing Writing Skills

Testing of writing skills can be carried out by using the following:

- Non-weighted rubric
- Weighted rubric
- Holistic rubric

Holistic rubric describes in general terms the qualities of excellent, good, and fair, and unsatisfactory assignments. The description is tied to grades or stands on its own. The instructor chooses the description that fits the assignment. Students of business English love to be given feedback about their progress. It is useful to involve students in forming rubric. Asking them what they enjoy reading, what features of writing, what distracts them. Discussion can be carried out about what they think is a good piece and a poor piece of writing and give explanations for it. In this way they can generate the criteria. It gives learners a voice in evaluation and provides vocabulary to discuss the writing of others as well.

Topic – 255: Task Based Test

The task-based approach in language teaching aims at providing opportunities for learners to experiment with and to explore both spoken and written language through learning activities which are designed to engage learners in the authentic, practical and functional use of language for meaningful purposes. Task-based assessments are therefore designed to reflect real-life situations. They focus on performance and language. Performance is assessed using criteria which are worked out beforehand. It is critical that the task designer knows the actual use of language in the target situation from the test taker perspective. Who are the people he/she has to deal with? This takes care of the intercultural aspect. The tasks need to reflect real life situations. For example, if people need to be given presentations, students can be asked to give one. The learner can be assessed according to the needs of the target situation.

The pitfall of this situation is that it is difficult to create a test environment reflecting real life. If the task is based on negotiation, there would be factors outside control of the test taker. The success of a realistic negotiation task, for example, can be influenced by several factors outside the tester's control. How skillful is the other party in the negotiations? How open is the task to relatively uncontrollable issues such as problems with price, availability of components, and suppliers? Such non-linguistic issues may directly bear on the difficulty of the job. Business tasks often rely on knowledge other than language, e.g. the sales director needs to know her field as well as language. Such issues have an influence on the difficulty of task.

Topic – 256: Commercially Available Tests

There are several tests which can be purchased from the market. Such commercially available tests are used to assess learners' performance, if learners do not have specific needs. Frequently the sponsor wants an outside assessment, or learners need a certificate to apply for a job. Also, sometimes tests are used during courses to boost learners' motivation.

Teachers may prefer to use these tests as they are well thought out and test general English competence. Some examine only certain language skills TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication). Others test only certain skills like reading/listening but can be used to make assumptions about general competence. They are attractive because they are easy to administer. They are designed for different levels – e.g. the BEC test tests at the preliminary, vantage, and higher level.

Some tests, like BEC, require takers to achieve a threshold score in order to pass. Others, like TOEIC, do not have a pass/fail threshold, but instead result in a score which can then be compared to a set of can-do statements. There is an example table from the TOEIC can-do guide at the bottom of page 128. One problem with commercial tests is that they do not explicitly test the test taker in their own specialization. SEFIC (Spoken English for Industry and Commerce (London Chamber of Commerce and Industry)) tries to get past this problem by requiring candidates to give a presentation on a subject of their own choice. This does not test the candidate in all relevant discourses, but goes some way to recognizing the importance of the target language situation. Likewise, Pitman provides a test called English for office staff aiming to target specific types of discourse.

Tests can be marked holistically, which means that the markers try to get an overall impression of competence. Analytic marking, on the other hand, uses more detailed sets of specific criteria for the examiner to use. For example, a BEC speaking test assesses candidates in terms of four separate criteria as follows: grammar and vocabulary, discourse management, pronunciation, and interactive communication.

Topic – 257: Backwash effect

When the course is designed with the test in mind, its effect is called washback. It may also be called backwash, test impact, and measurement-driven instruction, alignment with course objectives and test feedback. Washback, according to Brown and Hudson, is “the effect of testing and assessment on the language teaching curriculum that is related to it”. While Hughes (2003) says that washback is used to refer to the influence that a test has on teaching and learning.

Washback, can both be beneficial/detrimental or positive/negative. If the test content and testing techniques are at variance with course objectives, then washback could be harmful. If it is regarded as more important, preparation for it can dominate all teaching and learning activities, for example, in a situation, where students are preparing for a test of language skills necessary for university study in an English speaking country, but where the test does not test those skills directly. If the skills of writing are being tested by MCQs, then pressure is to practice the MCQs rather than writing itself.

Positive washback is attained when the test measures the same kinds of materials, skills stated in the objectives and taught in the courses. It is positive if it encourages learning, provides opportunities to enhance learning. For beneficial washback, test the abilities whose development you want to encourage and take sample widely and predictably. In order to achieve the result, course objectives have to be borne in mind. Is the direct testing being used? Is the test criterion-referenced?

Beneficial washback is achieved by basing achievement tests on objectives. Test makers should ensure that the test is known and understood by students and teachers. Assistance should be provided to teachers. The cost of administering the test is another crucial factor to keep in mind. If a test causes anxiety, then the washback is detrimental. Mismatches between goals and objectives, curriculum can also be negative washback. Negative washback effects, as Mihai (2010) discusses, or when the teacher teaches *to* the test or when students cram for the test.

Topic – 258: Item Types

The test maker should have knowledge and experience of how to make test items. The following test items are usually used:

Multiple choice - items consist of a statement (question stem), plus a selection of alternative statements/choices (distracters), with one correct option. The research literature suggests including a minimum of 3 answer choices. MCQs are effective items, they are flexible, easy to implement and to grade. Teachers can access test bank questions through their departments, previous courses, or online resources. Reliability of MCQs depends on grading procedure of question format.

Matching - is a typical way to check lexical proficiency; for example, test takers match collocations, or sentence halves, or synonyms. For example, the items can be made more difficult by giving more than one match, or by using distracters.

Multiple choice questions effectively assess student learning because they are flexible, relatively easy to implement and grade, and allow instructors to sample a range of course materials. Additionally, instructors often have access to test bank questions through their departments, previous courses, or online resources. Research suggests that practice multiple choice questions outside of class - testing recall, conceptual awareness, and even problem- solving - can be as effective as active learning for deeper conceptual gain (Karpicke and Blunt, 2011). In designing or choosing multiple choice questions for assessments, instructors can take steps to ensure that questions are accurate and to the point.

Lesson 44

ASSESSMENT IN BUSINESS COMMUNICATION-III

Topic – 259: Choosing a Test

Some important factors have to be thought about while choosing a test. What is the reason for the test, is it to apply for a job? Or is it to enter a training program? In both cases, the employer/organizer demands a score/grade or test success. In either case the organization may dictate what type of test. It is important that teachers (and the people who use the results of the tests to make decisions) fully understand what the test result actually means. If the test gives a score out of 500, with plus or minus 10% accuracy, then it is justifiable not to differentiate between scorers of 390 and 430. Within the limitations of the test scoring system, both candidates' performance is equal. Some examination boards use a simple statement of 'Distinction', 'Pass', or 'Fail', rather than numbers, which suggests a precision , and is important when a minimum score required for university admission issues considered.

Practical issues involved in test taking are time - some tests are only available on certain days/dates in the year and location - tests are often carried out only in authorized test centers. Registration is a factor - some testing organizations require early registration, but this may not be practical. Cost is another important factor.

Chances of success - ideally the teacher should advise learners to take tests which they have a reasonably good chance of passing, otherwise the only beneficiary is the testing organization. A currency of a test means that the test is acceptable in the relevant marketplace (for example, an exam-based qualification well known in one country may not be recognized elsewhere). Certificate-specific testimonials or details (e.g. can-do statements) may be more useful to prospective employers than a test score. In some places, certificates come in an identity-card format, including a photo, to prevent fraud.

Correlation with other tests — sometimes studies are available that provide comparisons with other tests. Relevance to workplace - some sponsors will only pay for a test if it will benefit the organization (they may want to know, for example, if the discourse types tested are relevant to the workplace). Notification of results - some tests take months to confirm results, which may be too late for some candidates.

Topic – 260: Using Computers

Computer based tests (CBT) are tests that have been put on computers as opposed to traditional testing which use pen and paper. Advantages of CBT are that feedback is fast and accurate. This is ideal when large numbers of candidates are involved. It is easy to incorporate visuals and listening elements. CBT can be tailor-made for specific solutions, such as placement tests. Such tests are available on the company internet, besides being available commercially. Disadvantages are that these tests may not be exactly equivalent to a paper test. They might not give a true picture of learners' proficiency if test takers are not used to computers (e.g. handling a mouse). This will affect the results.

Computer-adaptive tests (CAT) are CBTs where the computer selects items based on the response of the test taker to the previous item. A computer selects items according to test takers preference. The results can be found easily. The professional testing organization has item banks i.e. collections of items, checked by a large number of test takers, compared against other (known) items. Where tests are tailored to suit particular assessment criteria, careful grading needed if self-made. CATs ensure a high degree of reliability and are easy to administer and grade. The advantage is that test takers do not have to answer questions which are far too easy or far too difficult.

Topic – 261: Evaluating: using Feedback and Observation

Testing learners' language skills is one of the main ways to find course success. Tests give quantitative results, making data convenient to record, manipulate, and compare. Checking reaction of learners, through plenary discussions, in which the whole group participates, sits and talks about issues, and everyone gives suggestions provides useful feedback. This gives qualitative data. Participants write comments on a feedback sheet, prompted by a series of questions. Some participants may prefer a more anonymous method. Another alternative is to incorporate feedback into some sort of activity, such as a simulation in which they can provide feedback orally or in writing.

Others may find it difficult to be completely honest so learners use stickers to reflect their feelings. The teacher leaves the room and comes back to find the board filled with emoticons to show learners' responses. In some schools and companies feedback sheets filled by participants are sent directly to school - not via the teacher. The advantage is that learners write what they feel. Some participants might want to avoid the teacher loosing face by their comments. In a monolingual class, this may be done in the learners' own language. The advantage is that learners can express their feelings, opinions more fluently than they might be able to in English. Some schools may use these forms as a basis for employment - teachers with low scores may not be asked back.

Topic – 262: Peer and Self Feedback

In self-assessments, students have to rate their own language through performance and self-assessments (students reading a situation and responding). In comprehension self-assessments, students read a situation and decide how well they comprehend it. In observation self-assessments, students listen to audio or video recordings of their own language performance and decide how well they think they have performed.

Peer assessments involve students assessing the language produced by their peers. They classified self - and peer- assessments into five categories:

- Direct assessments of a specific performance
- Indirect assessment of general competence
- Metacognitive assessment
- Socio-affective assessment
- Student-generated tests

There are four important benefits of self-assessments:

- Can be developed to administer quickly.
- Involve students in the assessment process.
- Involvement helps students understand and learn a language autonomously.

- Both student involvement and their greater autonomy can greatly increase students' motivation to learn the target language.

However, some disadvantages are that the scores from self-assessments may be affected by factors such as past academic records, career aspirations, and peer-group, and parental expectations, lack of training in self-study. Accuracy of self-assessments varies according to the linguistic skills and materials. Proficient language students tend to underestimate their abilities.

Topic – 263: Reflective Practitioner

Conscious reflection is a form of assessment – thinking about what is going on in the classroom by the teacher. It can be simple, quick, informal (keeping a mental note of things) or it could be a systematic approach (keep a journal and note down things). Typical methods include discussing issues with colleagues, how they dealt with a similar problem, drawing on their experiences, attending workshops, conferences (networking with like-minded people, gaining insights, and new areas), reading and keeping up to date about latest literature as well as keeping diaries journals carrying out action research. Of course, this process can be cyclical in nature, if based on the observation and reflection, for planning and carrying out further improvements. Here are examples of such action research carried out in business English classrooms:

Teaching approach - the teacher was not sure that learners were benefiting from an approach to teaching grammar which entailed the teacher explaining a new verb form, followed by the learners doing exercises designed to give controlled practice and freer practice (they always seemed to make the same mistakes, no matter how often the forms were covered). Having read up on other methods, he decided that on the next course he would change to a method of teaching where new forms were presented less overtly - learners were given texts containing the new forms, and asked to try and deduce how the form was being used. End-of-course test results showed no significant improvement in results. After discussion with colleagues, he decided that this might be due to the fact that learners have different learning styles, so he tried another change which combined the two methods. This time the end-of- course results did show some improvement.

Learning strategies - learners in the class were not convinced that vocabulary notebooks were effective. So, the teacher made a careful note of new vocabulary introduced in the classroom, but asked the learners to include only some of these words in their notebooks. A subsequent test proved to the learners that they were better able to recall the vocabulary which they had written down in their notebooks. The following case studies can help understand how reflective practice works in class:

Teacher instructions - a teacher felt that she was not particularly good at giving instructions which everyone in the class understood. One of the reasons for this was probably the low language level of the learners concerned. The teacher decided to videotape a few classes, and see if improvements could be made - perhaps she was talking too fast, or using too many difficult words. The results showed clearly that she never checked whether or not her instructions had been understood. Consequently, she made sure that she did this every time.

Perhaps the best way to evaluate ourselves as teachers is to consider formal training or development which will allow us to reflect on key issues, as well as benefit from other teachers' experience. There are a number of courses designed for business English teachers, ranging from short workshops concentrating on particular topics like materials development, initial training courses such as the LCCI Cert FTBE, right up to masters and doctoral level degrees. Many of these courses are offered on a part-time and/or distance basis, and are designed to allow the practitioner to reflect on their specific teaching context

Topic – 264: Customers Perspective

Assessment should include how the customer assesses the course. Corporate customers may be more interested in the following outcomes:

- The impact at the workplace/benefits to a company.
- An educational establishment might be interested in the effect the course may have on its marketing strategies/ its overall reputation

Understanding costs is a fundamental part of the business English teacher's trade, particularly in an in-company context. Some costs are fairly self-explanatory (hiring people, providing equipment, administration, materials). Other, less immediately obvious, costs are more significant.

Opportunity costs are related to the fact that learners on a course are then not available to do their 'real' jobs (the work that they are paid to do, and which benefits the company) - if the course participants are five highly-paid senior managers, then the cost of the teacher's fees is insignificant in comparison.

Waiting costs refer to the costs incurred because a company has to wait for training to be carried out. For example, a company which has received a license to do business in an English-speaking country, but has no staff who can speak English will incur a loss of potential income until staff can be trained. If the school cannot deliver the training for a couple of weeks, then this cost will be taken into account. Interference costs are incurred because the training interferes with other people - for example, the staff in the departments belonging to the managers who are on a course may not be able to carry out their jobs properly because their manager is absent. Cost itself is rarely the sole deciding factor - it is how these costs relate to the benefits of the teaching which is more important. Organizations normally use one of the following approaches to help them think about this cost/benefit relationship.

Payback looks at a straight comparison between the cost of the training, and the savings made (or new income earned) in consequence. It asks how readily the costs will be covered by the savings/income. The cost/benefit ratio compares the training cost with tangible and intangible benefits. Intangible benefits are improved work climate, reduced stress, motivation and enhanced customer relations. All these are factors in evaluation of courses.

Return on Investment (ROI) is essentially the inverse ratio ('return' being the 'benefit'). It views transaction as an investment, rather than focusing on cost, as a situation where resources are spent. The company looks at alternate investment. Teachers are usually not involved in such calculations, but the HR is required to carry out an analysis before decisions are made. Freelance teachers can point out that their fee is a small part of an expenditure. Awareness of opportunity and interference costs can help teachers to understand why managers are available only in evenings, although a learning potential is diminished by being on desks. BE teacher needs to keep in mind that sponsors need to be able to see the benefits of training. Meeting/discussing issues with a boss may benefit more than all the tests and feedback sheets.

Lesson 45

CURRENT TRENDS

Topic – 265: Context of Globalization

Globalization has impacted technology, migration, and education, multiculturalism, and business. English is now the global language of business. Multinational companies mandate English to facilitate communication and performance across geographically diverse functions and business endeavors. Companies adopt English as a corporate language strategy. So, using English is not a choice, but a need. Primary reasons are driving the move toward English as corporate standard are:

- Competitive pressure
- Globalization of tasks and resources (Changes in employment patterns).
- Integration across national boundaries (Mergers and Acquisitions).
- The expansion of globalization in general and the Internet in particular, requires a more pragmatic, project-based approach to teaching and learning English as a means of both commercial development and individual empowerment.

Obstacles to Successful English-Language Policies: One-language policies can have repercussions that decrease efficiency. Proper rollout mitigates the risks, but even well-considered plans can encounter pitfalls. The most common are that change always comes as a shock, employees resist and performance suffers. Steps that companies can take to manage English-only policies include involving all employees, using managers as referees and enforcers, and to take responsibility for ensuring compliance.

Adoption a language policy depends on two key factors - employee buy-in and belief-in capacity. Buy-in is the degree to which employees believe that a single language will produce benefits for them or the organization. Belief in their own capacity is the extent to which they are confident that they can gain enough fluency to pass muster.

The way forward for BE teachers is to provide language assistance needs of different businesses, courses, and programs and improving belief in capacity. Managers can use four strategies to help people boost their belief-in their ability to develop language proficiency - offering opportunities to gain experience with the language, fostering positive attitudes, and using verbal persuasion, encouraging good study habits and improving employee buy-in. Buy-in and belief go together. Encouragement from managers and executives—simple statements like “You can do it” or “I believe in you”—make all the difference.

Topic – 266: Changed Needs

Changes in the business world influence the teaching of business English. There have been four major influences over the last ten years with a great impact on the process of teaching and learning business English which are as follows:

1. The development of technology which allowed more connectivity.

2. New powerhouse economies, the second important influence, when countries like China, Russia and India became major players, due to cheaper raw materials and labor force.

3. Third influence is the emergence of new markets in Eastern Europe after the collapse of the Soviet block.

4. The huge growth of the financial sector which became more dynamic creating a closely joined world, where economies influence each other, be it in a positive or a negative way.

All these important movements and changes naturally influence the teaching of business English. Students are no longer that much interested in grammar or basic business language, but need to know specialized vocabulary, to be aware of cultural differences and their implications in the business world.

Occupational Needs: EBP, English for business purposes is the most rapidly growing area within ESP. Areas of business (EBP) and medicine (EMP) are well-researched, however many EAP areas remain under- investigated in occupational communities, for example within medical English, nursing care plans is a challenging task for immigrant nurse-in-training in English dominant countries. Work needs to be done in professional/non-professional communication, e.g. doctor-nurse-patient interactions. Other areas are hospitality industry, sports, and beauty industry, tax accountants, to mountain guides, hotel maids, and immigrants working in factories and sales persons.

Academic needs: Academic needs arise because of internationalization of education, demand for publishing in English, and competition in university ranking, and for doctoral thesis requirements. Students are no longer that much interested in grammar or basic business language. They need specialized vocabulary to be fluent and quick, and to have cultural awareness.

Topic – 267: English for Academic Purposes EAP and ERPP

English holds a preeminent position as the language of research and publication. This sometimes poses as a disadvantage for EAL periphery writers/researchers. Language figures in its divisive role here, as the native English users have been brought up in English, while the NN have to acquire it. Besides this the lack of proper networking, resources and mentoring adds to the problems faced by NN writers. The difficulties of EAL writers will continue to increase in international publication in English.

Suggestions for removing these disadvantages could include removing the labels of NNS and NS with L1and L2 or EAL writers and opening doors to different varieties in publication - spoken versus written. An important step in this respect would be for journals to stop requiring writers to have their papers vetted by a “native-speaker” before submission. As Swales (2004) and Hyland (2006) have both argued, the degree of experience may be more important than the question of L1 and L2. Swales (2004) accordingly suggest referring to “junior” and “senior” scholars instead of using the above labels.

The difficulties faced by NNS researchers/writers are unlikely to diminish and the difficulties experienced by EAL writers will remain. However, it has been argued that this inequality is possession of English provides an important space for ESP researchers and practitioners, where there is a potential for contribution through BE. The ESP profession is not prepared as yet to handle demands for helping learners in ERPP. Writing for publication is an important part of scholarly formation. However, not many universities offer such courses. Where such courses are offered, they may be run by individual academic departments or by language support centers. There is an urgent need, therefore, for ESP practitioners to up their game. This is a field where there is an important need and it is an area that offers unique challenges and opportunities for the ESP profession to demonstrate its value. It is time for ESP practitioners to respond.

Topic – 268: Methodologies and Materials

Traditional methods of teaching have changed because of globalization. The paradigm of the traditional teacher-directed learning is shifting towards self-directed learning or student-oriented learning, that is, most probably easy and practicable with the help of the new technologies. The emerging and innovative technology has undoubtedly changed the whole teaching process from school education to university education. Thus, teachers need to get familiar with technological innovation, the new methodological approaches that help in their instruction and need to know how they can get relevant information from available technology.

Team Teaching: There is an increasing need for all university students for help with writing. This has signaled a shift away from a pure study skills approach towards embedding the teaching of writing into the mainstream curriculum. Embedded writing courses can be designed and delivered by various combinations, of language developer and subject specialists. Students view delivery by subject lecturers as more valuable, but subject specialist delivery may be challenging for those lecturers who feel it is outside their zone of expertise and consider writing as the province of learning developers. On the other hand, it is difficult for language developers to contextualize such teaching in terms of subject values and expectations, and shared knowledge of coursework assignments.

Using Authentic Materials: The structures of business English and general English are same. The difference is in context and vocabulary. Vocabulary can be best learnt in context which makes using authentic materials a good choice. Teachers agree that authentic texts or materials are beneficial to the language learning process since they increase students' motivation for learning and expose the learner to real language. Controversy in this regard is related to when authentic materials should be introduced and how they should be used in a language classroom.

Materials taken from Learners' Workplace: Internet and Intranet are great sources of authentic materials which are ideal for use in business English classes, whatever the level of students. Even though some of these materials are clearly intended for native speakers, teachers can create different types of activities to suit all levels of students when exploiting these materials.

Advantages of using authentic materials: 1. Authentic materials provide exposure to real language, for a reality level of business English. 2. Authentic materials drawn from periodicals are always up-to-date and constantly being updated. 3. Authentic materials relate more closely to learners ' needs and provide them with a source of up-to-date relevant materials for learning business English. 4. Authentic materials have a positive effect on learner motivation. 5. Authentic materials provide authentic cultural information. 6. Authentic materials offer a more creative approach to teaching.

Disadvantages of using authentic materials: Authentic texts often contain difficult language, unneeded vocabulary items and complex language structures, which causes a burden for the teacher in lower-level classes. Some argue that authentic materials may be too culturally biased and too many structures are mixed, causing lower levels to have a hard time decoding the texts. The solution might be for teachers to decide when and how to introduce authentic materials taking into account especially the students' level of English.

Corpus Based Materials: Corpora provide the highest-frequency business lexis. Corpus studies can give information on the most frequently used business terms: single words as well as multi-word items such as compounds, collocations, and noun phrases, and acronyms. If these items are identified in corpus studies, included in a language course and treated as priority items, it can considerably speed up the teaching process and contribute to increased effectiveness of language courses. The corpus evidence can serve as a powerful database that will make it possible to intensify the language acquisition process.

Technology: The practice of teaching business English with the help of technology affects the teaching learning process in terms of performance and quality. The teacher is able to make use of the latest tools of information communication technology and electronic communication to support language teaching and learning process. The Internet can be used to provide authentic material as well. The teacher can search for sites that focus on a specific topic, make questions, and use online dictionaries for meaning and pronunciation. The company websites are also an interesting source of authentic materials, providing the vocabulary practice students need. There is a vast amount of research, anecdotes, and discussion on the use of technology that can be of vast importance in helping the ESP teacher decide about the appropriate use of technology. As Belcher (2004: 166) argues, one of the great strengths of ESP has been its “eagerness to be responsive “to the needs of the students. As new contexts for the use of technology interact with what Belcher calls the social situated-ness of the ESP teacher, the ability of ESP practitioners to respond to these continual changes in the development of technology will be one of its greatest challenges.

The Internet provides online language courses, evaluating computer assisted language learning and website along with incorporating and dealing with multimedia language laboratories. The BE teacher can use and implement technologies in his/her classroom for Business English teaching because a teacher’s attitude towards technology will massively influence their approach to teaching Business English and will also influence the students’ feedback.

Topic – 269: Cross-cultural Awareness

Globalization has impacted all areas of human life. There is more cultural interaction between culturally diverse groups. A hundred years ago a person would live and die in his/her own culture without confronting another person with a different worldview and belief system. Now, due to globalization, easier and faster means of travel and ITC development, communication all over the world can happen with the push of a button. This has led to the internationalization of education and business, more professional migration, and faster means of travel for education, entertainment and tourism. ESP practitioners should recognize that BE learners need to be better equipped to communicate with a culturally diverse audience by both broadening and deepening their understanding of:

- the communicative practices, or discourses, learners need to feel comfortable enough with to use and critique
- the communities of practice (CoP) learners wish to be part of
- the community of ESP practitioners’ efforts to mediate specific -purpose - driven learning

Published research as a resource will facilitate the praxis of playing this supportive, pragmatic role, and of understanding and teaching cultural awareness. Cultural differences in business communication can be understood by the distinction of low-context and high-context cultures. It explains how negotiation proceeds, how agreements are specified, and how workers are managed. Another more fundamental distinction is between rule-based and relationship-based cultures, moving to deeper levels to explore how communication styles are integrally related to other characteristics of the culture.

Transparency: The issue of transparency comes to foremost obviously in finance and investment, and it likewise reflects an underlying orientation toward rules or relationships. Western-style investment places a premium on publicly available information. In rule based cultures of the Western business world's most distinctive form of communication, the accounting statement, and the prospectus and the annual report are important. All rely on rule based activities. Accounting, in particular, relies on an entire profession that develops intricate reporting standards in the form of Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and certifies its practitioners with grueling examinations. Prospectuses and corporate annual reports are regulated by law to ensure transparency.

In Relationship Based Cultures: Investment in a relationship-based society typically occurs through pre-existing trust relationships. The phenomenal growth of the Chinese economy in recent decades, for example, has been fueled largely through family-based investment, much of it coming from overseas Chinese communities in Canada, Indonesia, and Malaysia, and North America. The process is anything but transparent, and financial statements are of secondary importance. It may even be insulting to one's business partners to ask for them.

Marketing and Advertisement: It is not as homogenized as is generally supposed because of the globalized nature of business. Western practice of "relationship marketing" in business-to-business commerce, provides a doorway to culturally appropriate marketing elsewhere. However, business networking styles may differ. Networking in the West often involves approaching strangers at a trade fair or a cocktail party, and the relationship rarely develops beyond a casual acquaintance. Networking in a relationship-based business system works through pre-established connections with family and friends to cultivate new partners and build trust relationships.

Bureaucracy: Another difference can be seen in the working of bureaucracy. In high-context societies may require greater paperwork and bureaucratic regulations even though they take written rules less seriously.

Students training needs to include the Western practice of "relationship marketing" to learn what to expect and how to behave. While Asian students of business English are learning how to shake hands properly, in a firm manner, their counterparts in the opposite part of the world are probably learning how to exchange different currencies properly. Although English has been acknowledged as the international language of business, it is not standardized with generally accepted business etiquette. Up to date vocabulary along with practical business skills can be found now alongside the traditional grammar and standard skill exercises. The use of case studies, as they give the students the opportunity to get in touch with real situations of business practice is beneficial.

Topic – 270: Growing Professionalism

As is the case with other ESP areas, the business English teacher has to move from being a subject specialist to a service provider for other specialists. This, for some people, entail a lowering of status, been given a low priority by the administration and students. BE teachers; therefore, need to be proactive, to strive for continuous development and to gain knowledge of specialist content.

Need to know the ESP community: Some in ESP might well argue that the community that ESP professionals know the least about is their own. How do those interested in language education become ESP specialists? How do those actively engaged in ESP praxis exercise and hone their expertise? How do ESP practitioners know that what they do results in the learning outcomes that they and their students desire? These are the areas which ESP practitioners should strive to acquire.

Reflecting on the Education of Novice ESP Educators: Little preparatory course work is available for new entrants in the field. There are very few programs in TESOL, applied linguistics, or language education which offers ESP as an area of specialization, although more exist on ESP approaches. Limited ESP pre-service becomes a base for limited research in ESP professional education. However, calls for specific-purpose areas, such as medical English are common. More teacher education opportunities should be made available by those who have developed them, by focusing on how they had designed and implemented these courses. Novice teacher training can include critical approaches to EAP instruction/design: "To look at the 'bigger picture'", socio-political and economic conditions that shape educational agendas". Such self-reflective accounts inspire pre-service EAP/ESP curriculum development and do the same. More self-reflective accounts of course design might inspire not only more pre-service EAP/ESP curriculum development but also more similar self-reflective practice.

Understanding the Practices of ESP Practitioners: Much of the published sharing of ESP practitioner reflects on what has been done, and what seems to work, or on action research which focuses on a needs analysis. There is less focus on material development and specialist knowledge needs. Recent approaches to needs analysis look into learners' identity as one way to discover their needs, out-side the school and in long term language use and is concerned about first language maintenance.

The Issue of Specialist Knowledge for ESP Praxis: Some have addressed the above issues by making less specialized courses or by collaboration with subject specialists. Use of corpus tools and case studies could reveal how other ESP practitioners' content knowledge needs have been met.

Learning about ESP Learning: Considering that there is limited awareness of how learners learn in ESP classrooms, promoting advancement in ESP professional expertise would seem a fairly utopian goal. One reason could be because there is so much faith in the value of materials and tasks which are developed in response to a needs analysis. Few studies focus on teachers' efficacy and the relationship between teaching and learning. There is a need for classroom based research, specific-purpose-oriented classes, which focus on analysis of case studies, using case study data, e.g. students' comments on the generic moves in discipline-specific text samples. This genre-analysis approach can equip learners with genre knowledge and improve their autonomy. Other areas to focus on are teaching and assessment strategies which can now expand our limited knowledge of what can be accomplished in ESP instructional context.

Role of BE/Communication teacher is not only inside the classroom. They should understand that professional teachers have a responsibility to collaborate and cooperate with faculty, staff, and administration, parents, and community members. One teacher's comment that "professional teachers are involved in developing and changing policies and rules" illustrates that professionalism should impact many educational settings. This includes an awareness of subject specialisms and discourse from specialists and learners. Business communication is a growing discipline, so there is a need for research in students' needs, students' motivation, and local learning contexts, authentic materials and learner-centered approaches.

