

COLLABORATION: THE KEY TO SUCESSFUL  
BUSINESS ENGLISH COURSE DEVELOPMENT

by

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A Thesis Presented to the Faculty of the  
American University of Sharjah  
College of Arts and Sciences  
in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements  
for the Degree of

Master of Arts in  
Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

Sharjah, United Arab Emirates

December 2019



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## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my thesis advisor, Dr. Tharwat El-Sakran, for his valuable feedback and topic suggestions. Moreover, I am appreciative for the contribution of my thesis committee comprising of Dr. Victor Para-Guinaldo, Dr. Said Faiq and Dr. Tammy Gregersen, for their constructive feedback and thorough comments. Moreover, I would like to thank my colleague, Shada Alayan, for her continuous motivational and emotional support. I am grateful for all their outstanding efforts. I am further thankful for receiving a graduate assistantship from the American University of Sharjah. Finally, I owe a loving and warm thank you to my family without whose support, endless encouragement and understanding I could have not been where I am today.

## **Dedication**

To my family

## Abstract

In the dynamic nature of business, effective communication skills are mandatory through all pathways to success. Day by day, more educational institutions are investing in the development of their learners' communication skills by offering English courses focused on the language used within a specific field. This thesis explores current research on English for Specific Purposes (ESP) with a special focus on English for Business Purposes. The main objective of this study is to evaluate and review a current Business English course currently offered at the American University of Sharjah by researching, gathering data on and understanding the updated needs of business students. This study examines the perceptions of 84 business undergraduates, 76 business graduates, 9 business professors, and 5 English professors of a Business English course through feedback collected via online questionnaires and face-to-face interviews. The study highlights three main findings: the course's inability to fulfill the educational and professional market needs of learners, the need to refine the course's contents, and the significance of involving business specialists in the course design. Based on these findings, a multi-skilled syllabus has been developed to bridge the gap between the current course design and the market expectations of business students. The recommended syllabus further aims to holistically address all the weaknesses extracted from the collected data.

*Keywords: Business communication skills, English for Specific Purposes, business market needs, consulting business specialists, multi-skills business syllabus*

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## **Chapter 1: General Introduction**

### **1.1 Purpose of the Study**

The English language is being used all around the world and it is considered the dominant language of communication. The English language has become the lingua franca in one hundred and thirty nations” (Zughoul, 2003, pg.12). As cited in the work of Quirk and Widdowson (1985), Kachruvian (1982) classifies English into three concentric circles: the inner circle, the outer circle, and the expanding circle. The inner circle refers to the countries that use English as the primary language of speech, which are the United States of America (USA), United Kingdom (UK), Australia, and New Zealand. The outer circle represents the regions that have gone through colonization, particularly from the regions identified by the inner circle (Quirk & Widdowson, 1985). They represent the regions where English has been learnt from the colonizing countries and subsequently adopted. This circle represents the beginning of the spread of the English language in all forms of communication (Seidlhofer, 2006). Thus, the outer circle can be characterized as a large speech community with multiple backgrounds, diversities, and characteristics (Yano, 2007). The expanding circle represents the regions that adopt English merely due to its dominance and recognition as an international language (Quirk & Widdowson, 1985). Accordingly, examples of countries that would fall under this circle United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Korea, and Indonesia. In both the outer circle and the expanding circle regions, English predominantly takes the form of a second language, whereby the native language would be classified as the first language (Seidlhofer, 2006). As more regions have joined the expanding circle, English has become the lingua franca in almost all of the developing nations all over the world (Yano, 2007; Seidlhofer, 2006; Panero, 2017). Due to the vast spread of English globally, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has emerged as an independent field that caters for communication needs of particular areas. This field is focused on teaching English for occupational and academic purposes. English in the expanding circles is mainly taught to ensure that learners are proficient in the language of their domain. Disciplines including science, business, and engineering are focused on strengthening the communication skills of learners corresponding to in the language used in the workplace (Zughoul, 2003).

Nowadays, English has become the preferred language of speech in the business community, introducing the field of Business English (Neeley, 2012). “Business English”, is used in the context of finance, international commerce, and industry. Globally, non-native English speakers are commonly taking initiative in learning Business English as an advantageous tool to communicate nationally and internationally within the business domain (Pathi, 2008). In a nutshell, business associates willing to join, communicate, and compete in the international market must master the language of business. According to the Global English Company, as cited in Kutateladze (2014), 26,000 subscribers of business employees from 152 countries participated and were questioned about their use of English in the workforce in 2010. First, subscribers were questioned on the importance of knowing English in their job in which 74% responded that it is highly required. Second, researchers investigated the usage of English in their current job and found that 55% of subscribers revealed that English is used daily to do their job. Finally, the study gathered insight on the role of English in correspondence to job promotion. Data revealed that 69% indicated the need to know English for promotion, and 24% commented on the importance of boosting a promotion. The survey sheds light on the high demand, interest and need towards Business English globally. In today’s global business market, educational institutes must know the importance of good business communication skills in English. Gaining the skills of written and oral business communication is already recognized as prerequisites of the business workforce (Thill & Bovee, 2015; Woods, 2011). For example, international companies such as Apple, Henkel, and OSN require excellent communication skills. The prerequisites rose dramatically as most forms of business communications, such as presentations, legal documents, E-mails, sales, and marketing are carried out in English (Middleton, 2011; Woods, 2011; Rys, Sebranek, & Meyer, 2003). This common prerequisite allows business professionals to express ideas, negotiate, and join discussions in a language shared by all. The expectations to hire business employees who are proficient in the language of business place great emphasis on educational institutions to offer adequate learning and training (Bremner & Costley, 2018; Rys, Sebranek, & Meyer, 2003). Therefore, it is essential to ensure that current Business English courses offered at universities serve the purpose of shaping well-rounded communicators.

## **1.2 Statement of Problem**

English for Specific Purpose courses (ESP) are offered at educational institutions to serve the communication needs of learners within a specific discipline. Business graduates at the American University of Sharjah on the Business English course noted discrepancies in the content taught, such as outdated material, including business memos, that has been used for the past five years, as well as the absence of authentic material. The dynamic changes in technology and business processes require continuous research on the market needs of business students. The current study collects input from business and English professors, current business students, and graduate business students at AUS on the effectiveness of the course design with reference to materials and topics covered throughout the course. From the data collected, a new revised syllabus is recommended to cover a wider area of skills and expose the learners to more authentic and up-to-date materials.

## **1.3 Objectives**

The main objective of this study is to evaluate and review a course at the American University of Sharjah (AUS) that falls within ESP courses. The selected course is ENG 225: Writing for Business. To achieve the main research objective, this study focuses on achieving the following detailed objectives:

- Review previous research on Business English as a branch of English for Specific Purposes.
- Explore the needs of AUS business students undertaking ENG 225 course.
- Investigate the possibility of a synergic relation between the primary data collected, the literature on the needs of business students and the business labor market requirements.
- Design a recommended syllabus for ENG 225 that holistically addresses all the weaknesses extracted from the collected data.

Data collected will help answer the following questions:

Q1: What are the perceptions of current business students, graduate business students, business professors, and English professors on ENG 225: Writing for Business course taught to business students at AUS?

Q2: Is there a connection between the primary data collected, the literature on the needs of business students and the business labor market requirements?

#### **1.4 Overview of Thesis Chapters**

To address the research objectives, the thesis is organized into 8 chapters. Chapter one provides a general introduction to the study. It outlines the purpose of the study, a statement of the problem, and the study's objectives. The second chapter discusses research performed on ESP by describing its history, definition, and the challenges and effectiveness associated with an ESP course. Chapter three discusses the primary considerations in ESP, including the course design process, the needs analysis, material development, and course evaluation. The fourth chapter examines the types of ESP teachers, as well as the different forms of team-teaching and the techniques effectiveness and challenges in the classroom. Chapter five analyses English for business students by defining business English, determining the written, oral, and non-verbal communication needs of business students, and identifying business material development and course evaluation. Chapter six describes the research performed on ESP and English for Business students by stating the methodology and results of the study performed. In the methodology section, description of the participants involved in study is given, along with the research instruments used and procedures performed. In the seventh chapter, the results of the study are discussed from the perspectives of undergraduate business students, graduated business students, Business professors, and English professors. Perspectives are mainly analyzed based on course satisfaction, material selection, course content, input from the business department, and the course design process. Following the discussion of results, the chapter further proposes a reviewed syllabus inspired by the data collected from the four groups on the needs of business students. Chapter eight concludes the study by summarizing the study performed, expressing the limitations of the study and discussing potential research areas that extend beyond the current study.

## **Chapter 2: Research on English for Specific Purposes**

This chapter emphasizes the origin of ESP, its definition and historical development, and sheds light on how it has developed into an area of focus for the ESP instructor. The chapter further discusses the challenges faced by students and teachers in ESP courses.

### **2.1 History of ESP**

The origin of ESP has been traced back to World War II during an era that motivated many to learn the English language (Otilia, 2015; Kırkgöz & Dikilitaş, 2018). Recognized as an international language, nonnative speakers perceived English as the new lingua franca that provided opportunities for business development, cross-culture communication, and information sharing. Throughout the 1960s, changes in the world economy provoked the uprising of ESP as a discipline (Orr, 2001; Andriani, 2014; Kırkgöz & Dikilitaş, 2018). According to Otilia (2015), the emersion of ESP was a result of vast technological developments, an increase of economic power in oil-rich countries, and the growth of students studying in English-speaking countries. The introduction of ESP originated from the register of technical and scientific writing (Ahmed, 2014; Lesiak-Bielawska, 2014). Naturally, the teaching of technical and scientific writing placed importance on selected sub-technical vocabulary. Based on this type of teaching, interest in the study of language-specific registers flourished (Olitlia, 2015). Research published by Lesiak-Bielawska (2014) and Olitlia (2015) highlights the importance of teaching sentence form with minimal explanation of how and why sentences are combined or formed as such. The idea of relating language form to use was introduced. Both authors explain that such movement made language use the core criteria for creating or selecting ESP educational material. Communication became the main focus of ESP rather than grammatical and lexical properties of register. During the 1970s, ESP was heavily considered with language use, undermining the development of study skills (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Olitlia, 2015; Salazar, 2017). Leading towards the end of the 1970s, educators intended to address learner needs. They noticed it was not enough for students to learn how language works; instead, learners must be taught how to transfer their knowledge to the real world (Salazar, 2017). Subsequently, understanding the



reasons behind learners learning the English language as well as the need to conduct a needs analysis became essential (Lesiak-Bielawska, 2014). According to Basturkmen (2010) and Ahmed (2014), the narrow and wide-angle approaches on ESP were established through the decades of the 1970s and 1980s. The narrow approach advocated the teaching of topics within the learners' specialist area, whereas the wide-angle approach aimed to encourage English teaching beyond the students' specified area (Basturkmen, 2010; Ahmed, 2014). Concurrently, a debate on skill focus was in place. While some favored mono-skill to be beneficial, other members of the ESP community supported the work on numerous skills simultaneously for students to receive the optimum learning experience (Olitlia, 2015). In the 1980s, the inclusion of subject specialists became the new concern of ESP (Salazar, 2017). Subject specialists, also identified as "subject-specialist informants" (SSI), are highly involved in the selection of course material, and thus have become more involved in research on Business English (Barron, 1992; Ramírez, 2015). Furthermore, the choice of content, material, skill specificity, and instructor qualifications remained hot topics of debate (Ramírez, 2015; Salazar, 2017). According to Lesiak-Bielawska (2015) and Ramírez (2015), two key concepts were introduced to the discipline of ESP towards the end of the 1980s.

The two key ESP concepts that are still being widely used today are genre analysis and rhetorical moves. Genre analysis is defined as "a class of communicative events with some shared set of communicative purposes" (Palbridge, 2013, pg. 347). According to Ramírez (2015), rhetorical moves are functional components that constitute a specific genre and serve a communicative purpose. The identification of a particular genre commonly helps ESP learners participate and produce the language successfully by eliminating text and imitating conventions. Whilst genres are distinct in rhetorical and linguistic features, they are all required to carry a communicative purpose (Lesiak-Bielawska, 2015). There are various ways in which genre analysis has been incorporated in the classroom. One way genre analysis has been implemented in the classroom, which was proposed by Hammond et al. (1992) and Machen et al. (1989), is through the "teaching learning cycle" project. According to these researchers, the basic components of the "teaching learning cycle" include three stages: modeling, negotiation of text, and independent construction of text (Hammond et al., 1992; Machen et al., 1989). During the

modeling stage, students are presented with various texts that include a specific genre (Humphrey & Macnaught, 2011; Ahn, 2011; Rangi, 2015). Throughout this stage, the teacher and students recognize the cultural and situational context of the text, what social purposes the rhetoric functions serve, and how specific language features carry out particular functions (Ahn, 2011). This stage includes a transition from discussing the context and purpose to describing and analyzing the genre and rhetorical moves (Rangi, 2015). In the second stage, which is negotiation of text, the class engages in a discussion and negotiation following the construction of the text of the given genre in a collaborative manner (Humphrey & Macnaught, 2011; Ahn, 2011). Throughout the final stage of independent construction of text, students construct another version of the genre individually by drafting, editing, and evaluating the text, as well as conferencing with the teacher and peers (Humphrey & Macnaught, 2011; Rangi, 2015). Thus, this cycle helps students recognize the linguistic and functional features of genres and how they are connected to a communicative purpose (Humphrey & Macnaught, 2011; Ahn, 2011; Rangi, 2015). The current trend starting from the 1990s is moving more towards genre and discourse analysis in general. It can be said that genre analysis and discourse has become the heart of ESP today. With this growing trend, multiple international journals and publications have emerged, which reflects the importance and relevance of ESP today.

## **2.2 Definition of ESP**

Defining ESP has been deemed complicated. According to Ramírez (2015), an ongoing debate has scholars disagreeing on the term “specific” and its definition in the context of teaching English. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) were some of the first researchers to define ESP and address issues revolving around what the term “specific” in ESP implies to the when teaching language items, as well as the specific purpose of the content behind learning, and the distinctive type of teaching of ESP. Their perspective claimed that ESP should not be recognized as a product, but rather as an approach. They emphasized that learner needs build the foundation of ESP. The student needs for which they are learning the language must be understood, and as these specific needs change, so will the teaching approach. On the other hand, Jordan (1997) defined ESP following the examination of ESP learner needs and study skills. Accordingly, Jordan (1997) presented

three purposes behind learning English: general purposes where students learn English for personal reasons, social purposes to communicate with individuals in social situations, and special purposes for university or work reasons. From a different perspective, Strevans (1988) distinguished between absolute and variable characteristics to define ESP. Strevans' (1988) definition of ESP was later modified by Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) and is recognized as the most elaborate definition of ESP. As mentioned in Basturkmen (2010), Sierocka (2014), Otila (2015) and Salazar (2017), the revised definition is comprised of three absolute characteristics and four variable characteristics of ESP. The absolute characteristics of ESP involve: meeting the requirements and needs of the learners, making efficient use of activities and methodologies served by the disciplines, and giving emphasis to the terminology, syntax, discourse, registers, and genres of the English language. The variable characteristics of ESP include: designing for and associating to a specific discipline, focusing on particular teaching techniques that differ from those used while teaching general English, designing materials for adult learners, and lastly assuming learners have fundamental knowledge of the profession and the language scheme used.

The previous definitions have better tried to define the aim and scope of ESP. They have commonly accentuated, directly or indirectly, that, “in ESP . . . the purpose for learning is paramount and related directly to what the learners need to do in their vocation or job” (Harding, 2007, p. 6). To satisfy the purpose of ESP, Hutchinson and Waters' (1987) *Tree of ELT* subdivides ESP in the best and most logical manner. Accordingly, ESP has been divided into: English for Science and Technology (EST), English for Business and Economics (EBE), and English for Social Studies (ESS). These three branches further segment into English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP). Examples of EAP for EST, EBE, and ESS respectively are English for Medicine, English for Economics, and English for Psychology. Examples of EOP for EST, EBE, and ESS are English for Technicians, English for Sectaries, and English for Teaching. While these topics fall into clear branches, the distinction between EAP and EOP remains unclear amongst scholars (Sierocka, 2014; Otila, 2015). As cited in Ahmed (2014) and Bougues (2018), Hutchinson and Waters (1987) admit that individuals have the ability to study and work simultaneously, and that the likelihood of

using the acquired language when students start or return to their career is higher than using the acquired language while they study. Nevertheless, Sierocka (2014), Otila, (2015) and Bougues (2018) note that a distinction between EAP and EOP could be made within the scope of convenience. The authors clarify that EOP courses are commonly designed for learners studying a specific profession while focusing on the linguistic elements of a discourse community. This type is comprised of making presentations, writing academic texts, observing and listening to contexts, and analyzing academic discourses (Bougues, 2018).

### **2.3 Challenges of Designing ESP Courses**

The process of designing a tailored-made course in the area of ESP is one of the utmost challenges that confront educators in this field. The reality of designing an ESP course is complex. The decision of who will contribute to the course design (learners, sponsors, teachers, ministry of education, field experts, etc.), what aspects of English should students be taught, where the class will take place, when should the learning take place, why do learners need this type of education, and how learning will be achieved need to be addressed. While all the mentioned questions are essential, alarming issues arise in the areas of the students' needs, learners' and teachers' abilities, and the course design.

An obstacle in ESP course design is the predefined objectives and expectations learners uphold from the very start that are directly allied to their professional or job related needs. An ESP course evaluation conducted at the Government College of Commerce in Pakistan revealed that the current business communication course offered was unable to satisfy the professional needs of learners nor was it able to link theoretical concepts with practice (Aziz & Ghani, 2017). Out of the 200 learners surveyed, 80% revealed their concern with the present course. In addition, a study at the South East European University Law Department consisting of 85 ESP students found that only 46% of learners' needs were being met, leaving the remaining 54% unsatisfied or partially fulfilled (Saliu, 2013). The analysis of results highlights the management's inattention to understand who their learners are, what their expectations of the course are, and lack of assessment of their level of professional knowledge. Furthermore, teachers had their own concerns on the effectiveness of ESP courses. Data collected from 20 ESP teachers at the

Community College of Jazan University in Saudi Arabia disclosed that their Business Communications course syllabus is not appropriately tailored to the learners' needs at their workplace (Liton, 2012). The study requests a course redesign to include continuous needs analysis, implement task-based learning, and to lay emphasis on skills that concern business communicative competence.

The debate on who should teach ESP courses has been ongoing, whether it should be English teachers, subject specialists or both. An ESP instructor is nearly always a previous English for General Purposes teacher and the switch from teaching in one field to teaching in the other is sudden (Strevans, 1988). The ideal ESP instructor must possess an appropriate amount of background knowledge in the subject field (Soltani & Shafaei, 2013). The expected field knowledge has been a drawback of ESP teachers due to the constant doubt and questioning of the instructors' understanding of the subject's content (Spasić-Stojković, 2015). Nevertheless, this requirement is essential specifically for subject fields that differ entirely from English in order for learners to receive optimal education. An experiment undertaken at the Islamic Azad University in Iran aimed to implement team-teaching in a Computer Science course and investigate its effectiveness on the vocabulary of 40 students (Soltani & Shafaei, 2013). The control group, who were instructed conventionally by an English as a foreign language (EFL) teacher, scored lower in their ESP vocabulary than those who received collaborative learning. Similar results were presented in research done at the Kalashnikov Izhevsk State Technical University and found that learners have not only increased their lexicon but showed gratitude and motivation (Holly, 2015). Both studies shed light on the importance of teacher training and adequate qualification. This hot topic will be discussed further throughout the thesis.

In addition, course designers struggle at determining and selecting what learning materials to use in ESP courses (Orr, 2011; Nouredine, Youcef & Hassiba, 2015; Frendo, 2005). Instructors are bombarded with a variety of ready-made books from which they must choose or continue the search for the most effective book. Despite the selection of the seemingly perfect book, a balance between using the book and creating one's own course content must be present to avoid becoming a slave to the textbook (Basturkmen, 2017). Four common types of materials used in ESP courses are published course books,

materials adaptation, tailor-made materials, and authentic materials (Bocanegra-Valle, 2010). Nevertheless, the act of incorporating different types of material is not always common due to time restraints, shortage of resource allocation, and lack of experience in selecting and/or adapting material. Consequently, the absence of insufficient material, especially authentic material, lowers the student's quality of education by failing to present a realistic context of the student's discipline (Alibec, 2016). Through exploring the main considerations of ESP course design, the chapter further points out different types of materials recommended to ESP practitioners and highlight techniques to build a database of materials.

## Chapter 3: Main Considerations in English for Specific Purposes

This chapter describes the course design process followed by the process of designing a well-defined needs analysis. Based on the course design process and the needs analysis, the chapter sheds light on the ways to develop suitable material and the importance of course evaluation.

### 3.1 Course Design Process

Tailor-made ESP programs are proven to be more effective and efficient for learners who require the development of special skills to accomplish specialized tasks (Orr, 2001). ESP course designers are unable to follow a one-size-fits-all approach. Consequently, the ESP instructor is challenged to create a syllabus that aligns with the learner's career goals and subject goals of the ESP environment (Jong, 2016). To design appropriate ESP courses for diverse disciplines, ESP instructors dedicate so much time and effort. ESP specialists developed various guidelines and recommended stages to aid in the development of satisfactory course designs. Dudley-Evans and St. John (as cited in Orr, 2001; Jong, 2016) categorize the five strategic activities essential to developing an effective ESP course, which are needs analysis, course design, material selection, teaching and learning, and evaluation. Orr (2001) and Górska-Poręcka (2013) clarify that although the mentioned steps seem logical to occur in a linear sequence, the activities are interdependent, and may occur simultaneously or frequently overlap. ESP specialists identify instructional parameters to ensure that course designs satisfy the specific needs of learners. Designing ESP courses could be considered a manner of asking orderly questions that provide detailed answers to assess in the processes of materials writing, syllabus design, teaching methodologies, and evaluation (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) have identified these parameters through the following questions:

1. Should instruction be given **intensively**, with little distraction from other concerns, or **extensively**, scheduled among other courses or work activities?
2. Should learner performance be **assessed** or **not assessed**?
3. Should instruction address **immediate** needs or **future** needs?

4. Should the instructor's role be that of **provider** (one with primary control of the learning environment) or **facilitator** (one who shares control of the learning environment along with the learners)?
5. Should the course have a **broad focus** with less depth or a **narrow focus** with more depth?
6. Should instruction **precede** application or **run parallel** to use?
7. Should the carrier content of specific linguistic lessons contain **general** topics to stimulate and maintain learner interest or **specific** topics of direct educational value to the learner's work or studies?
8. Is the learning group **homogeneous** with similar learning needs or **heterogeneous** with a variety of different needs?
9. Will course decisions be **determined in advance** of delivery or **evolve as the course proceeds**?

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) summarize the necessary questions one must consider when designing an ESP course under three categories. The first question is what content the student needs to learn?. The answer to this question will address language description. The second question is how learning will be achieved?. Its answer will address language theories. On the other hand, the answerers of the following questions: who will be involved in the course design?, why the student needs an ESP course? , and when and where the learning will take place? will address the needs analysis.

ESP course designers must select the most appropriate approach to course design. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) specify three primary types of approaches: learning-centered, language-centered, and skill-centered. The learning-centered approach implies that teachers become very sensitive to the learning needs of students. Each learner uniquely has his/her own wants, learning preferences, and cognitive structure. Teachers are expected to observe the students' reaction towards the lesson plans and always be flexible to make changes if needed (Ahmed, 2014). This approach requires teachers to consider their students at every stage of the course design. The language-centered approach aims to bridge between the language being taught in the ESP course with the language of the discipline used in the professional world. This type of course design analyses the genre and register of the subject area. Although it is language-oriented, the



approach does not justify how the language will be acquired and how students will learn how to use it (Ahmed, 2014). Finally, the skill-centered approach is goal-driven. This approach focuses on necessities and skills for achieving major goals while dismissing individual learner differences. The skill-centered approach is commonly comprised of various activities designed to strengthen the skill set of students.

### **3.2 Needs Analysis**

The nature of ESP courses focuses on the teaching of particular language skills. Prior to creating the course syllabus, course developers conduct research to identify the specific language and communication skills the targeted learners need. The identification of learner needs aids in selecting, determining, and refining the course content (Ahmed, 2014). This phase of the course design is described as the needs analysis and is acknowledged by many authors and scholars as a vital step in designing and conducting ESP courses (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Dudley-Evans & St.John, 1998; Cowling, 2007; Lockwood, 2012). ESP research places great emphasis on the creation of a needs analysis as it aims to determine the “what” and “how” of a course. Whether it is for designing a new course or altering an existing one, the first stage should be identifying the needs of the learners (Orr, 2001). Lockwood (2012) highlights that different types of needs appear, and it is essential to differentiate between the needs expressed by the learner and those identified by course designers or teachers. Regardless of whose needs are being gathered, the process of a needs analysis is an ongoing one due to the dynamic changes of learner and workforce needs (Lui, Chang, Yang & Sun, 2011). Barantes (2009) and Lui, Chang, Yang and Sun (2011) classify learner needs in three categories: necessities, lacks and wants. Necessities determine the language skills students should master to effectively succeed in targeted situations. Lacks aim to strengthen the gap between the targeted proficiency level and current performance. Wants define what the students feel they need or want. According to Basturkmen (2010) and Ahmed (2014), the process of a needs analysis may include a target situation analysis (identifying what students are expected to know and do), discourse analysis (describing the subject language to be used), present situation analysis (understanding what learners know and do not know in relation to the target situation), learner factor analysis (identifying the students’ learning styles and motivators), and teaching context analysis (realistically

considering what the ESP teacher and course could offer).

As cited in Ahmed (2014), Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) educate on the types of data one may gather when administering a needs analysis. Data collected may include: information on the learners' professional needs, information on how the language is used in their target situation, and information on the learners' personal factors. This data could be collected from one group or a mixture of groups that include current students, previous students, employers, colleagues, individuals working in the field, and ESP specialists (Sierocka, 2017; Chunling, 2014; Basturkmen, 2010). Data collection can be obtained through surveys, interviews, focus groups, course evaluations, learner diaries, language tests, previous research, observations, and monitoring (Basturkmen, 2010). A study conducted on 972 English as a foreign language (EFL) college students gathered from 6 Taiwanese universities aimed to investigate the needs of ESP students in terms of needs, wants, and lacks (Lui, Chang, Yang & Sun, 2011). The results reveal that students uniquely had their own needs, wants, and lacks that varied from one another. Nevertheless, the majority indicated their enrollment as an act of learning the language for their job relevancy. Alibec (2014) in her article on teaching ESP and Business English highlights the importance of understanding what learners want to achieve by dividing content into skills, and inquiring about the interests of the learners such as chairing meetings, writing reports, telephoning more effectively, etc. Such needs analysis could be conducted at the beginning of the semester, and results are to be shared and referred to throughout the course to keep learners motivated. Basturkmen (2017) took a different approach at investigating the needs of learners; he conducted interviews with course developers to better understand the process of developing meaningful teaching materials and assessments. The course developers described the process of gathering and analyzing samples of authentic material from targeted situations. Despite the importance of understanding students' needs, the data gathered shouldn't be overused (Jong, 2016). Teachers need not to include or teach only topics approved by their students.

### **3.3 Developing Material**

As ESP courses are uniquely tailored to meet learner needs, ESP instructors struggle to find a textbook that complements their course objectives (Orr, 2011; Nouredine, Youcef & Hassiba, 2015; Frendo, 2005). Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998)

emphasize that appropriate ESP course material should exemplify authentic language, be consistent and reliable, trigger cognitive processes, and present new ideas and information, while taking into consideration learners' prior knowledge and experience, cater to learner needs, and be self-explanatory. Thus, ESP instructors should rarely depend on a published textbook (Basturkmen, 2017). Rather, it is more common for ESP instructors to gather a pool of course material from several sources complementary to their own customized material. Four common types of materials used in ESP courses are published course books, materials adaptation, tailor-made materials, and authentic materials (Bocanegra-Valle, 2010). Although the use of textbooks in ESP courses does not always provide the complete range of materials needed by teachers and predetermines the content and structure for learners, it still enlists advantages. Textbooks provide an appropriate amount of material developed by field experts, identify a secure route map for learners and teachers to follow, and saves money and time when compared to custom-made material. Therefore, it may be advantageous for teachers to use but not rely on a satisfactory textbook. Alternatively, materials could always be adapted. Adapting course content commonly leads to the acts of personalizing, individualizing, localizing, and modernizing material. McDonough and Shaw (2012) present useful techniques for adapting material. Those techniques comprise of adding, subtracting, simplifying, reordering, and replacing materials. The act of adapting material should be present in situations when there are too many exercises of the same kind, great emphasis on only one skill, the subject matter does not involve required topics, and when certain content needs to be omitted.

To have a direct appeal to the interest of the students, some scholars believe that the teacher(s) should produce course material. Nevertheless, not all teachers are good content creators. To develop material, teachers must devise pedagogic descriptions used in a specific field, be familiar with its linguistic components, have experience in creating learning material, be able to embrace the ability to work with a team, and be able to assess effectiveness and clarity of materials (Tomlinson, 2014). Certainly, content developers must obtain the necessary resources, understand the learners' needs, comprehend the learning objectives, and have adequate time and finances allocated to material development (Sierocka, 2014; Tomlinson, 2014). A study administered at two

Spanish universities interviewed 19 ESP instructors on their experience designing material for three types of ESP courses: English for Business, Engineering, and Medicine (Basturkmen, 2017). The interviewees were requested to present two samples of materials developed and used recently, one of which learners were satisfied along with a sample that instilled unpleasant emotions. Commonly, teachers reported their lack of training and guidance in material development. Basturkmen (2017) stresses the difficulties ESP teachers face when developing relevant material. When questioned about their materials development process, the researcher found a pattern of mimicking the work of other ESP teachers or adapting published ESP material. Moreover, Jong (2016) shared his experience in developing material for an ESP dental course at the University of Los Andes. The author highlights that no book in the market successfully met his criteria. Hence, the faculty of dentistry collaboratively created and gathered authentic material, activities and assessments. To keep students motivated, activities in the course were dynamic, including workshops, group work, and content-related research (Jong, 2016).

The alignment of course material to reality is crucial for students. The use of authentic material creates an immersion atmosphere and presents a realistic context for assignments that correlate with learners' needs (Alibec, 2016). According to Orr (2012), incorporating authentic material that learners will be expected to comprehend and use, such as, real documents, videos and dialogues, aid in developing skills required in their field of work. Most importantly, the use of authentic material builds a bridge between theories learnt inside the classroom to the outside world (Guariento, 2001). As such, the use of authentic material increases student motivation, presents the register and discourse of a specific field, and provides knowledge about the professional discipline (Sierocka, 2014). According to Guariento (2001), authentic tasks could be designed from four perspectives, which are authenticity through genuine purposes, real world targets, classroom interaction, and through engagement and interest. One may question why so much importance is placed on the use of authentic material. Dudley-Evans and St. (1998) John draw attention to the vast differences between the content of textbooks compared to language used in reality. The author gives an example of how the structure, content, and journalistic style of desired magazines vary significantly from the structure and pedagogic or didactic language of textbooks. Alibec (2016) and Basturkmen (2017)

support the use of authentic material; however, it also raises some concerns. First, authentic materials are difficult to adapt to learners' level of language proficiency. Basturkmen (2017) further found that the text used in authentic materials were above the language level of the learners. Second, preparing and gathering authentic material is time consuming. Third, authentic materials must be commonly updated to meet new trends. A way to reduce these obstacles is for teachers to request that learners bring updated material that they find appealing and relevant to their needs. This approach helps involve learners in their education, build rapport between the students and teacher, and create a database of authentic materials (Alibec, 2016).

### **3.4 Course Evaluation**

Measuring the progress of learners and evaluating the effectiveness of the course are essential to ensure whether the course outcomes have been achieved or not. Despite the importance of constantly evaluating courses, the increase of students taking ESP courses and the complexity of educational goals for those courses have made it difficult to conduct frequent, effective, and complete reviews. In relation to ESP courses, course evaluation is critical. This is due to the fact that these courses have specified objectives that completely differ from other English university courses offered (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Thus, it is recommended to conduct reflection-on-action and/or reflection-in-action to study the relevance of the course in meeting labor environmental demands (Schön, 1991). Reflection-on-action is the process of interpreting and analyzing previous submissions to uncover knowledge that was used in target situations. On the other hand, reflection-in-action is the act of observing what one is doing while it is being done to observe the reactions of students in order to appropriately redesign occurring events. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) recommend two types of ESP course evaluations: learner's assessment and course evaluation. Summative and formative student evaluations should be done. Accordingly, learner's assessment includes achievement, placement, and proficiency tests, whereas course evaluations are not as direct. Questions as such must be answered and planned for: What should be evaluated, how should the course be evaluated, who should be involved in the evaluation, and when and how should the evaluation take place (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Traditionally, course evaluations are uniquely designed depending on the type of information in search. Nevertheless, course

evaluations are commonly categorized into three sections: teacher-related factors, student-related factors, and course and/or content related factors (Densona, Lovedayb & Dalton, 2010). Needless to say, some evaluations may not include areas on all three factors or may issue separate evaluations such as an evaluation of teaching practices and another on course content. Algozzine et al. (2004) and Edström (2008) identify common characteristics of successful course evaluations that include: a combination of close- and open-ended questions, questions regarding overall student satisfaction, written feedback about the instructor or course, and anonymity. Responses should be collected at the end of the course without the instructor being present. In the past, student evaluations of teaching (SET) heavily focused on the teacher and the teaching process with little attention to learning or curriculum design. Today, universities have become more concerned with student satisfaction, shifting the focus of SETs from teachers to learners. The findings of course evaluations may lead to educators adjusting their teaching methods and/or modifying course content. Most importantly, such feedback will investigate what parts of the course went well,, and what needs to be modified.

Feedback collected through student evaluations is traditionally used as a developmental tool towards teaching practices, content development, and student satisfaction. Past researchers have conducted ESP course evaluations to test whether or not the taught courses have been successful. Multiple English for Engineering Purposes courses were evaluated at different universities in Pakistan. While some courses were slightly more helpful than others, data collected by Anwar (2016) revealed that the three courses reviewed were unsuccessful. This was explained by the lack of teacher training to teach ESP courses as well as developing useful material. However, this was not the first course evaluation deemed to be ineffective. Soud (2016) further evaluated an ESP law specified course at Al Yarmook University College in Iraq. Data indicated that the ESP law course did not prepare students to communicate effectively using legal terms. Additionally, students exposed the course as being instructor-centered, uninteresting, passive, and behind in technology. Due to unsatisfactory results, Anwar (2016), Soud (2016), Aziz and Ghani (2017) recommended redesigning the ESP courses being evaluated prior to conducting a detailed needs analysis. The researchers further suggest the need to train ESP teachers or recruit those already experienced. According to Orr

(2012), various medical, business, law, and engineering schools took the initiative to include language experts that were confident at meeting the specific language needs of their learners for which teachers of general language are unable to address. Of the many knowledge requirements an ESP teacher should possess, the fundamental ones are: language knowledge base, subject content knowledge base, and knowledge of pedagogy (Górska-Poręcka, 2013). Researchers further aimed to determine factors that build student satisfaction. Richardson, Slater and Wilson (2007), investigated the correlation between survey factors and student satisfaction of the course. The teaching process and teacher support showed the highest correlation followed by assessment, skills development, feedback and workload. Other factors that influence student satisfaction are the clarity of objectives, strengthening of presentation skills, organization of content, build-up of content, effective course material, teachers' support throughout learning, teachers' knowledge of the subject, authentic assessments, and formative examinations (Spooreen, Mortlemans & Denekens, 2007). The next chapter introduces different forms of team teaching, a common solution to the lack subject knowledge expressed by ESP teachers, along with the advantages and disadvantages of this teaching technique.

## **Chapter 4: Teaching English for Specific Purposes**

This chapter discusses the types of ESP teachers and their expectations. It further defines “team-teaching” and presents the different forms of team-teaching that could be implemented in ESP courses. Moreover, the chapter provides insight on the effectiveness of team-teaching in the classroom as well as its challenges.

### **4.1 ESP Teachers**

For ESP students to receive optimum education and benefit successfully from the course, the instructor must hold relevant background knowledge in the discipline. According to Soltani and Shafaei (2013), most ESP teachers are previous teachers of General English and are switched from one field to another unexpectedly with little or no guidelines. One of the most controversial topics discussed in ESP is the amount of subject knowledge required by the instructor. In previous years, there was a strong belief that the acquirement of fundamental principles of the discipline was deemed sufficient (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Nonetheless, it was recommended that teachers inquire clarification of key concepts and terminology from the learners’ specialist knowledge when needed. Ongoing research continues to explore how much knowledge ESP teachers should possess. The knowledge of what teachers should know about their teaching role and about their students is defined as contextual knowledge (Grossman, 1990). Such knowledge is identified by Ferguson (1997) in three areas: knowledge of the subject’s values and culture, knowledge of discourse and genre, and knowledge of the epistemological basis of different disciplines. Other scholars view contextual knowledge more vaguely and note that ESP instructors should only understand the nature of the material of the discipline.

Educators teaching ESP courses could be categorized into two kinds: ESP teachers from professional or discipline courses, and those from the English college (Ming 2009; Mu, 2018). Regardless of which category the educator belongs to, each of their background teachings brings advantages and disadvantages to teaching ESP courses. While subject specialists convey strong knowledge of the academic discipline, they often lack pedagogical and language knowledge (Ming, 2009; Mu, 2018). Conversely, the English specialist exhibits language knowledge and reveals little to no knowledge in the



subject area. Hence, the collaboration between both professions becomes evident and essential for the teaching of ESP courses (Ming, 2009; Mu, 2018). Accordingly, team teaching bridges the gap between language and science, as well as reduces doubts ESP teachers may have about conceptual matters (Ahmed, 2014).

## **4.2 Team-Teaching**

**4.2.1 Definition of team-teaching.** Team teaching, sometimes synonymous with collaborative teaching, co-teaching, or cooperative teaching, features collective efforts from two teachers who wish to improve students' performance as well as teaching quality (Soltani & Shafaei, 2013; Mu, 2018). Team teaching is positioned at the very end of the teaching continuum and its placement is justified by the close interdependence of both teachers. The nature of team teaching traditionally requires teachers to work, design material, share responsibilities, and implement teaching together (Soltani & Shafaei, 2013). The implementation of team teaching necessitates both parties to collaboratively plan, organize, educate, and assess students of the same group while sharing one classroom (Mu, 2018). Nevertheless, team teaching is not limited to two coordinators. In a broad sense, two or more teachers could be involved in the utilization of teaching material, selecting teaching approaches, writing textbooks, creating assessments, and making evaluations (Stark, 2015). It is important to note that no team operates the same as the other. Each team develops their own distinctive relationships and work along one another to achieve their decided goal (Soltani & Shafaei, 2013; Sierocka, 2014; Stark, 2015).

**4.2.2 Types of team-teaching.** Working with colleagues from one's department or other departments is challenging. According to Barron (1992) and Sierocka (2014), four types of co-teaching methods have been distinguished: the subject-specialist informants (SSI) method, collaborative teaching, the consultative method and team teaching. The SSI method may be appointed at any stage in the course. This method is used to discover the specific language used in the genre of a specific discipline. The subject specialist is assigned to provide the language teacher with an understanding of the content, processes of the subject, and the organization of its text (Sierocka, 2014). Accordingly, collaborative teaching occurs when the English teacher and subject

specialist jointly cooperate on the course design such as topics, timing, and assessments; however, they do not share a classroom (Barron, 1992; Sierocka, 2014). The language teacher educates students on linguistic and communication skills, whilst the subject teacher instructs on subject concepts and additional skills deemed necessary. The aim of this method is to ensure that both instructors are on the same page while teaching in their specialized area (Sierocka, 2014). In accordance with Basturkmen (2010), Birmingham University developed a team teaching approach in their English for Engineering Purposes course to avoid scenarios in which the students' education was threatened by the EAP teacher's lack of knowledge in the subject area. Thus, roles were divided and implemented accordingly. The EAP teacher assists with any arising language issues, and the subject specialist lectures on conceptual matters (Basturkmen, 2010). The consultative method is present when the ESP teacher determines the content of the subject and solely designs the course (Sierocka, 2014). In this method, the role of the subject specialist is to serve as a content consultant to ensure and conserve content correctness. Such constructive consultancy may occur at specific stages of the course design or operating lectures (Sierocka, 2014). Despite all these methods, the true team teaching occurs when both teachers are conjointly teaching in the same classroom and at the same time while using the material that was collaboratively decided on. Elements of the whole course including syllabus design, methodology, materials, and assessments are agreed upon by both teachers (Barron, 1992; Sierocka, 2014).

According to Mu (2018), cooperation between both individuals is crucial and should be present during three stages: pre-class, while-class, and after-class stages. During the pre-class stage, the language teacher and subject specialists cooperate in selecting or writing ESP textbooks and/or supplementary materials (Mu, 2018). The role of the subject specialist throughout this stage is to select the professional content, determine teaching objectives, create a consecutive course plan, create assessments, and establish an evaluation criterion (Anjou & Xiaohui, 2015; Mu, 2018). Meanwhile, the language teacher is responsible for overlooking specifications, language standards, and writing formats (Anjou & Xiaohui, 2015; Mu, 2018). Throughout the while-class stage, course educators should supportively organize the unfolding of their course flow. The teachers may decide to teach the same class in turns, or teach selected lectures on agreed

upon dates (Anjou & Xiaohui, 2015; Mu, 2018). Regardless of who holds the mick when, the class should provide opportunities for mutual learning. The subject specialist should increase the conceptual knowledge of the students and the language teacher on the discipline, while the language teacher ought to influence the linguistic skills of the students and subject specialist (Anjou & Xiaohui, 2015; Mu, 2018). In the after-class stage, the subject specialist and language teacher cooperatively evaluate the previous two stages searching for areas of improvement (Mu, 2018). In addition, teaching reflections received further promote the research on team teaching and provide guidance for improvement. Cooperation, collaboration, and team-teaching are identified as three progressive phases of an ESP course. Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) introduce four guidelines of effective team teaching of ESP courses. First, the content teacher or subject specialist provides the reference point, which are the topics to be introduced in a linguistic context by the ESP teacher. Second, the ESP teacher is responsible for developing the academic and professional skills associated with language teaching. Third, the content teacher should provide guidance to the ESP teacher on topics selected. Finally, team-teaching occurs when each of the teachers focuses on their field, with the ESP teacher focusing on language production and the content teacher focusing on professional skills. These guidelines model how both teachers could collaboratively be supportive subordinates.

**4.2.3 Effectiveness of team-teaching .** The literature on ESP confirms that team-teaching has a definite effect on students' learning and teacher development. As cited in Soltani and Shafaei (2013), Anderson and Speck (1998) highlight that students who are taught collaboratively by a linguistic and content specialist are exposed to a great variety of teaching materials, methods, and assistance. Each teacher's knowledge, teaching experience, and personal character bring their unique touch to the table. The combination of educational materials and complementary knowledge serve as added benefits for students co-taught as the potential combinations seem endless. Soltani and Shafaei (2013) conducted a study on the effects of team teaching on ESP students of computer science. Forty learners were randomly divided into an experimental and control group and while both groups received the same instructional material, the control group was team-taught. Results indicated that participants of the control group gained more ESP vocabulary as an

outcome of being team-taught. In addition, the performance proficiency of students in the control group was enhanced as they learned how to use the vocabulary of their field in written and spoken assessments. Furthermore, learners were provided with instantaneous feedback or assistance when faced with difficulties when they were team-taught (Ahmed, 2014). The division of course work provided them with more time to focus on difficulties faced by students. Depending on the topic of struggle, each educator could be assigned to consult on his or her topic of expertise (Ahmed, 2014). Those that require help in English may receive assistance from the language teacher and those whose inquiries are content-specific may seek support from the subject specialist. Moreover, team-teaching increases students' awareness on the direct relationship between their specialization and the English course enrolled in, making the ESP course more valuable to learners. This increase in awareness leads to higher engagement and the achievement of higher proficiency levels in English (Barron, 1992; Buckley, 2000). A study conducted by Besharati (2017) at Yazd University in Iran aimed to investigate the effectiveness of team-teaching on the English proficiency levels of Electrical Engineering students. Sixty students enrolled in an ESP course participated in the study and were divided into two groups: a control group who received instruction from one teacher and an experimental group that were educated based on the team-teaching approach. The data analysis of a questionnaire, pretest, and posttest, indicated that students who were team-taught performed better in English proficiency tests and demonstrated positive attitudes towards learning. When investigated further, the positive attitudes observed by students were a result of feeling that the course added value to their future career. Students of the control group revealed the content and assignments to be more meaningful.

At times, team-teaching is implemented as a training mechanism to improve teacher's growth. Other times, it is administered to improve the quality of instruction by utilizing the diverse expertise of teachers. Co-teaching has been commonly interrelated with the professional development of teachers in the workplace. Through co-teaching, teachers are provided with opportunities to gain a deep understanding of subject content and learn alternative methods that could be used when students are taught that information (Soltani & Shafaei, 2013). The EAP instructor becomes familiar with the discourse of the subject matter and familiarizes oneself on how language is used to

present the discipline (Ahmed, 2014). The EAP teacher observes and recognizes where linguistic complications emerge in association to conceptual matter. Subject experts can teach language instructors information they may not know. The language of the subject teacher could improve through linguistic exposure. In fact, subject teachers are found to become more understanding to students post working with language teachers. Moreover, as teachers work to complement one another, team-teaching helps promote building a communicative community by spreading responsibility, deepening relationships, and encouraging authenticity and creativity (Holly, 2015). If implemented correctly, the process could encourage teachers to learn new teaching techniques, perspectives, values, and insights from observing one another. In addition, this method helps reduce teaching burdens and increase morale such as lessening student-teacher personality problems (Holly, 2015). With the presence of another teacher, one may attend to any occurring conflicts or misunderstandings, while the other continues the lecture.

**4.2.4 Challenges of team-teaching.** Due to the language teacher's lack of confidence in relation to the subject content, it is feared that language teachers depend too much on the subject specialist (Barron, 1992; Buckley, 2000). Although they are subject specialists, it is only humane to be uncertain or wrong in some areas. Thus, language teachers need to educate themselves on the content being taught to students. This could be done by seeking further clarification on the content or browsing the Internet. What may be viewed as the key to resolving issues faced by ESP teachers, its implementation is not without difficulties, such as the heterogeneity of fields, diverse topics, purposes, and approaches, and conflicting teacher attitudes, beliefs, and timetables (Ahmed, 2014). While dealing with different personalities or ethnic groups, some teachers may be rigid to change or be wedded to their preferred teaching method (Holly, 2015). Others may not be open to sharing the spotlight and unwilling to lose half of their control. Accordingly, Barron (2002) and Buckley (2002) indicate that differences in teaching methods and beliefs about managing the team are areas where obstacles between the language and subject specialists are most likely to appear. They add that language teachers and subject specialists may exemplify undesirable pedagogical methods or attitudes during class time that will lead to misunderstandings and conflicts (Barron, 1992; Buckley, 2000). Conflict between both educators could vary from minor to major

disagreements, and may ultimately lead to chaos and complete failure of the course. Thus, it is essential for both parties to determine roles, develop a strong understanding, and thoughtfully organize the course prior to the start of the semester (Besharati, 2017). With both parties on the same page, conflicts are likely to be resolved more easily. Timetable concerns may further arise when two staff members from different departments are expected to attend the same class (Barron, 1992; Buckley, 2000). These members must adjust their schedules appropriately. Some educational institutes may not provide teachers with the flexibility in their schedule. Moreover, the reality of team-teaching does require so much time and effort. It is common for teachers to fear the expectation of contributing more work and effort for the same salary. Compensation may be demanded to reflect the added responsibilities (Holly, 2014; Stark, 2014). The nature of team-teaching expects teachers to meet regularly, consult one another, clear misunderstandings, spread conceptual knowledge, plan the lecture flow, divide tasks, and devise or create classroom activities (State University, 2019). The creation of activities may further involve added planning and deep research to ensure tasks are beneficial and engaging (Stark, 2014; State University, 2019). Reducing the sections, increasing the number of students, and compensating the teachers may account for this challenge. Nonetheless, the extra cost of having two teachers represent one course may lead to difficulties persuading the authority or administration (Sierocka, 2014). Consequently, the administration must be well informed about the benefits and value team-teaching ESP courses could bring to their students. On a final note, all parties involved must understand that the implementation of team-teaching is not black and white. The process requires extensive time, skilled management, effective planning, open-mindedness, creativity, positivity, imagination, support from the administration, and the willingness to risk change and even failure (Besharati, 2017). Despite the advantages and disadvantages of team-teaching, one must fully comprehend the current market needs of the subject students being taught. The next chapter explores current research on the written, verbal and non-verbal communicational needs of business students.

## **Chapter 5: English for Business Students**

This chapter begins by defining the term “Business English” and its evolution. It then examines and reviews previous research on the needs of business students in the workplace in reference to written, oral, and non-verbal communication. The chapter finally provides awareness on the type of material to be used in Business English courses and finally highlights the importance of course evaluation.

### **5.1 What is Business English?**

The Tree of ELT created by Hutchinson and Waters’ (1987) subdivides English for Business Purposes under the umbrella of ESP. Business English is the study of the English fundamentals (grammar, capitalization, punctuation, word usage, spelling, and so on) applied to sentences formed by business concepts (Ghunling, 2014). According to Feiran and Zhoubin as cited in Yanxin (2015), “Business English is the English variant of a social function, is a branch of English for specific purpose, is English used in business occasions, and is a kind of Standard English containing a variety of business activities and suiting the need of commerce” (p.28). Business English expert, Brieger (1997), argued that the language of business does not only require vocabulary knowledge, but also the skill of communication and cultural background. According to Bargiela-chiappini and Zhang (2013), it was not until the 1990s that discourse analyses and contrastive ethnography laid the foundation of a multi-method approach to “business discourse”. The development of English for Business Purposes rose as a devotion to improve the language of job-experienced employees (Kutateladze, 2014). According to the research of Kutateladze (2014), only later did educational institutes offer Business English courses to students as a means to train learners to become effective communicators in their professional discipline. As part of many university curricula, Business English is aimed to explore the language of trade, finance, business management, marketing, human resources, tourism, and economics.

### **5.2 Needs of Business Students**

The dynamic nature of businesses depends on a communication network to succeed. Communication is used both internally and externally. In a business

environment, internal communication is practiced through interpersonal interaction and information sharing within the organization. Internal communication is further divided into interactions that are done vertically, messages and/ or instructions moving top-down the management hierarchy, and horizontally, information and/or ideas exchanged inter-departmental. Inversely, external communication connects the enterprise to those outside such as customers, government, suppliers, financial institutions, and so on. Despite the type or size of the communication process implemented in any business, language plays a vital role. Accordingly, employees averagely spend 75% of their time involved in interpersonal or intergroup situations. However, it remains unfortunate that poor communication has been identified as the root of a large number of organizational goals. Both employers and certification agencies are asking a key question: Are we graduating students who essentially have the skills and information that we promise and that the business workplace requires? (May, Thompson, & Hebblethwaite, 2012). This chapter explores publications on the expectations and needs of Business English learners in reference to written, oral and nonverbal communications.

**5.2.1 Written business communication in English.** Writing skills are crucial for a business organization. In accordance with Thill and Bovee (2015), various organizations heavily depend on written communication for several reasons. First, written communication provides organizations with permanent records that could be retrieved for references. Second, written documents can be presented to internal or external parties at any time of preference. Third, this type of communication is deemed convenient to write, send, and read, and saves the company time and money. Depending on the type of job attained by business graduates, different levels of writing skills are required. Nonetheless, university business students are unaware of what the future holds and are all recommended learning communication skills that will contribute to their success as business people. These days, the graduates lack effective writing skills, which calls for great concern for corporate executives (Middleton, 2011). If good communication skills are absent, it makes the students face limited career choices and lower earnings potentials. Research reveals that university students commonly use unfavorable language, ramble often, write too much, present poor structure, and show a great deal of spelling and/or grammar mistakes (Ranaut, 2018). Bremner and Costley (2018) conducted



research on the communicative preparation of business learners at universities. Students in Hong Kong and England were provided with a series of activities that included E-mails to managers and clients. Students were expected to read and process provided text before completing the activities. Following the activities, the researchers revealed that business student writers showed challenges in presenting problems, considering their readers and deciding on information to include and exclude. Bremer and his co-author noted (2018), “Students need to be encouraged to think about the relationship as well as the message and to consider the question of how to acknowledge the ongoing dialogue and relationship effectively” (p.10). Zhang (2013) aimed to compare the writing of university business learners to that of business professionals. The researcher’s goal was to observe the response of business professionals to 40 written pieces of university students representing a mixture of different genres (business plans, application letters, rejection letters and job posting). Business professionals were asked to comment on their impression of the written text, their feeling of professionalism, and their recommendations on improvement. With over a thousand comments, the study showed that most students understood what to write and how to write it, but were unable to use satisfactory vocabulary. For example, students’ writing did not include redundant information, but used weak vocabulary and mixed positive messages with negatives ones and vice versa.

A good piece of written communication should be clear, concise, correct, concrete, courteous, and complete (Pathi, 2008; Rys, Sebranek & Meyer, 2003). The author adds that failure to be clear and accurate is wasteful time to the reader and has a direct effect on the goodwill of the organization. Coherence, unity, and emphasis are further noted as essential fundamentals of written communication (Jovin, 2007). Business learners should be trained to present unity in their writing pieces. Written communication must be clear, relevant, simple, direct, and brief. In addition, students must learn to write in a cohesive manner. They must learn how to structure information that is complete in a logical sequence. Learners are expected to ensure that the message receiver does not misread or misinterpret their written document. Moreover, the writer is recommended to adequately plan how to emphasize important information. For example, figures, font edits, and arrangements of data are ways to highlight concepts of significance. It is

further essential that students are able to differentiate between facts and opinions as well as to recognize information that should be included or omitted.

Rys, Sebranek, and Meyer (2003) indicate that of the utmost important writing activities business learners should be exposed to are how to write E-mails, reports, proposals and application letters. Jovin (2007) and Evans (2012) stress the importance of E-mail writing in Business English courses and professional development. Examples of E-mails to be practiced in an Business English course are informational, persuasive, instructional, and transactional. Evens (2012) enlightens the reader on the excess amount of E-mails exchanged by business professionals daily. The author stresses that business students should be taught how to deal with internal versus external E-mails separately and must learn how to reply quickly, briefly, and correctly. Although they may be difficult to gather, authentic examples and cases are proven to be most beneficial to the students' learning process. Within the writing of E-mails, Jovin (2007) recommends the practice of different types such as messages to managers, clients, and colleges with attention to vocabulary, tone, organization, and diplomacy. In addition to writing E-mails, business professionals commonly practice the writing of reports and/or press releases (Remachel & Ibrahim, 2018; Rys, Sebranek, & Meyer, 2003). However, there are concerns with teaching how to effectively write reports and press releases because of the variety of different types. For example, types of business reports include and are not limited to: research, survey, enquiry, investigation, analytical, technical, annual, and committee reports (Pathi 2008; Cooper, Schindler & Sun, 2006). Moreover, types of press releases include: product, event, launch, expert position, and employee press release (Pathi, 2008; Cooper, Schindler & Sun, 2006). Thus, limited research has been found on the type of report or press release Business English should focus on. Rather, many touch on the importance of exposing students to the gist of writing a report or press release and provide a structural guideline (Thill & Bove, 2015; Pathi, 2008; Cooper, Schindler & Sun, 2006). Remachel and Ibrahim (2018) believe that Business English learners should practice writing at least one report of their interest during the academic semester. They add that the interest of students of different majors vary and so will their selection of written types. Equally important is the practice of professional tasks focused on job preparation. As such, many business communication textbooks focus on resume creation

and writing application letters (Rys, Sebranek, & Meyer, 2003; Thill & Bove, 2015). During Business English courses, students are expected to create resumes and cover letters that are appealing to business employers.

**5.2.2 Oral business communication in English.** In any environment involving two or more individuals, oral or verbal communication is important. Unlike written communication, messages communicated orally cannot be retained for a long time or retrieved from records later on. However, it has an on spot adaptation advantage that allows the speaker to change his/her word choice, tone, pitch and voice when believed necessary, as well as provide immediate clarification, feedback, and response (Thill & Bovee, 2015). In addition, oral communication is the only tool to motivate and persuade effectively. It is the verbal aspect of communication that strengthens human relationships and develops a forthcoming community (Woods, 2011). Accordingly, business professionals dedicate a minimum of 60% of their time to oral speech (Pathi, 2008). To succeed in one's academic and professional cycle, one must learn to orally communicate effectively. A weakly conducted presentation, interview, or even presentation could reflect badly on the presenter and/or his/her team. Oral communication can be practiced among individuals and groups. Communication among individuals commonly includes: interviews, negotiations, telephone conversations and face-to-face interactions (Woods, 2011). Examples of communication among groups include but are not limited to: team presentations, meetings, conferences, group discussions, and public speech (Woods, 2011). According to Nickerson and Planken (2015), business people spend much of their time assessing the process of projects, in planned meetings, diving tasks, and discussing strategy. Despite their role, business professionals encourage all students to continuously work on improving their oral communication skills. Simple ways one could enhance their oral skills is by reducing verbal causes, such as "um" and "so yeah", using positive words, such as "that's great" and "you will love it", using an icebreaker, such as telling a story or joke, and using visual aids or handouts (Pathi, 2008). In addition to the techniques mentioned previously, it is essential that speakers provide content that is relevant to the receiver, clarify instant uncertainties and doubts, adapt depending on the audience size and environment, and understand his/her audience, and meet their expectations on what they wish to know (Wardrobe, 2002).

Research advocates that a majority of business graduates beginning their careers have insufficient oral communicational skills. According to Grey (2010), accounting employers in New Zealand are unable to find graduates with adequate communication skills. The New Zealand Institute of Chartered Accountants (NZICA) regularly stresses the importance of oral competency so much that the board has integrated an oral assessment in the requirements to becoming an official chartered accountant. In addition, local media outlets have been voicing a concern that universities are not producing sufficiently literate graduates. Research conducted at Massey University thrives to investigate the importance of 27 oral communication skills for business students. The lists of skills were provided to accountancy professionals to study which skills are important in the business field and how often those skills are found in graduating students. Results indicate that the top five ranked skills are in relation to interacting with management, colleagues and clients. Those rated least important were pertinent to giving presentations due to the unlikelihood that the responsibility of presenting to clients be given to a new joiner. The ranking of presentations in Grey's (2010) study contrasts sharply with findings of other researchers who highly rank presentation skills as a must-have in graduating students (Alwi & Sidhu, 2013; Wardrobe, 2002). Data on business communication courses were gathered by Wardrobe (2002) from 280 university chairs to determine the most essential topics covered. Results indicate that three communication skills were highlighted as most important amongst the universities: the creation and delivery of oral presentations, the ability to use proper pronunciation, and the selection of appropriate oral vocabulary (Wardrobe, 2002). According to Alwi and Sidhu (2013), business students are aware of the importance of developing the confidence and skills in giving oral presentations. Nakamura (2002) agrees with Alwi and Sidhu (2013) and further adds that graduating students tend to enroll in and focus on presentation classes that cover organization, content, delivery, and language. The faculty of business at a local university in Malaysia observed the presentations of 40 business undergraduates (Alwi & Sidhu, 2013). The evaluators noted that students' content and organizational skills ranged from fair to good. In relation to delivery skills, the evaluators rated the speakers from weak to good. When evaluating the language of students, the authors commented that they were "far from excellent". Overall, students scored below average in 3 out of 4

categories. Observers recommended more practice and guidance. Nickerson and Planken (2015) touch more on the poor language choices of business graduates. In their book, the authors explain how business graduates are not taught and do not understand the specific professional lexis related to the company's industry (retail or manufacturing), the business discipline (finance or marketing), and the participant's specialty (accountant or brand executive). Nickerson and Planken (2015) shed light on a study conducted by Dow (1999), where the researcher compares the language of business students versus professionals in negotiation. Dow (1999) realized that student negotiators did not recognize topic boundaries such as topic closure. Instead, business students ended negotiations with words such as "hm" and "well, yeah". On the other hand, business employees did acknowledge topic closure and used enthusiastic endorsement while doing so, such as "good, that sounds acceptable" and "you will have a lovely time". Dow (1999) further observed that students commonly flouted adjacency pairs and were unable to maintain a correctly flowing conversation. Alwi and Sidhu (2013), Grey (2010), and Dow (1999) indicate that students have difficulties using pragmatically-appropriate words, phrases and responses.

Alwi and Sidhu (2013) and Wardrobe (2002) highlight that although oral presentations are considered an advancement of personal growth on business students, this activity is recognized as one of the most challenging forms of assessments. Students who have not gained enough confidence and experience speaking in front of an audience tend to become nervous, read from written text, rush or avoid questions, and quickly take their seat following a presentation (Zappa-Hollman, 2007). Evidently, it is these students who are unable to refine their presentation skills. On the contrary, other students view oral tasks as an opportunity to strengthen language and presentation skills (Zappa-Hollman, 2007). Jackson (2013) recommends a mixture of teaching techniques to help encourage all learners of different levels. The author believes that oral communication should not solely focus on formal oral presentations, but should include discussions, negotiations, interviews, role-play, small group projects, informal/formal assessments, and individual/group presentations. Research conducted by Crosling and Ward (2002) study the workforce needs and job roles of business employees. Reflecting on data collected from business organizations, the authors argue about the misconception of

universities to focus on formal presentations and emphasize the informal nature of business organizations. Pathi (2008) and Nickerson and Planken (2015) clarify that organizational communication is both formal and informal; however, it is more informal due to daily face-to-face conversations and interactions about ideas, issues, and emotions.

**5.2.3 Non-verbal communication.** Accompanied by oral communication, non-verbal communication is also a key aspect of effective communication. Non-verbal communication can be defined as the process of sending and receiving messages via means other than words like facial expressions, gestures, behavior, tone of voice, etc. (Voves, 2008). The most prominent features of non-verbal communication are eye contact, gestures, and posture. Mehrabian (1981) is most famous for the rule of 7%-38%-55%. The researcher believes that the core elements that make an effective communicator are non-verbal behavior, tone of speech, and spoken words. As noted by Mehrabian (1981), 7% of information delivered is through spoken words, 38% through the tone of voice, and 55% is through bodily movements. Accordingly, 93% of what is communicated is done through nonverbal communication (Mehrabian, 1981). Complementing the work of Mehrabian (1981) is that of Pease and Pease (2008), in which the author's research reveals that 60-80% of communication is delivered through bodily movements such as eye contact, posture, and gesture. In a business context, Carrington (2010) finds that professional appearance is particularly important to provide sufficient financial audit. The author states that an audit is almost never insufficient as long as the auditor's appearance is not jeopardized in the view of the audit client. Anh (2017) touches on the importance of non-verbal communication and emphasizes that there is a lack of training in non-verbal communication amongst employees in the workplace. Thus, it is important for teachers to acknowledge the significance of non-verbal communication and provide the necessary training for their students.

### **5.3 Business Material Development**

The Internet and bookstores are flooded with online and physical textbooks designed to serve English for Business courses. Some of those commonly used by educational institutes are *Business Plus*, *English for Business Studies*, *Communicating in Business*, *Cambridge Business English*, and *Excellence in Business Communication*. Despite the variety of books an instructor can use, it remains rare to select a textbook that

holistically satisfies the educational needs of a group of business learners (Orr, 2011; Ibrahim, 2015; Nouredine, Youcef & Hassiba, 2015; Frendo, 2005). Dudley Evans (2001) argued that “ESP is a materials-led field. Most materials, however, are prepared by individual teachers for particular situations, and there is not a huge amount of published ESP material” (p. 135). Frendo (2005) stresses that the best learning material for Business English students are selected from real business environments. The author suggests the use of learners and business instructors as a key source of material gathering and selection. Gathering letters, contracts, presentations, minutes, and reports from internships and on-campus workshops encourage English instructors to implicate collected samples in various techniques such as simulation, role-play, framework materials, and case studies (Nouredine, Youcef & Hassiba, 2015). In simulations, the instructor can create contexts like those encountered or could be encountered by learners and encourage real role-plays. The incorporation of framework materials could provide learners with pictures, diagrams, or charts, allowing them to participate in presentations, discussions, and descriptive tasks. Furthermore, case studies will encourage learners to discuss and negotiate common scenarios related to their careers. Chailikandy (2013) further recommends the use of technology to widen material exposure such as the presentation of online video clips and sound files. The author highlights the variety of YouTube videos posted on business-led cases. Alibec (2016) lists examples of authentic material that she witnessed motivated her business English students; those included films, posters, objects, photographs, presentations, lectures, reality or other shows, the news, documentaries, and TV and radio commercials. In addition to utilizing published material, Ahmed (2014) recommends the use of tasks that thrive authenticity and creativity. As cited in Ahmed (2014), Crookes (2001) introduces an E-commerce webpage project designed for an ESP business course in Australia that requires students to create a web-site advertisement as a group inspired by data collection from a local business. Through such task, students were able to experience creating an advertisement, interviewing business owners, discussing design techniques, and writing web content. After all, ESP courses are expected to use themes, topics, examples, activities, and methodologies that are specific and mimic the profession (Ibrahim, 2015; Frendo, 2005). Nonetheless, it is beneficial for practitioners to select a textbook that explores the

structural formats of business writing and presentation development. However, it is essential that the textbook should be used only as a guide and complemented with external material (Basturkmen, 2017; Ibrahim, 2015).

#### **5.4 Business Course Evaluation**

The literature explored above indicates that student satisfaction has become the main focus of ESP course evaluations. The concentration on students is a result of the nature of ESP courses: to prepare learners to become effective communicators in their profession. Aziz and Ghani (2017) reviewed an ESP business communication masters course at Bahauddin Zakariya University in Pakistan. By analyzing the results received, Aziz and Ghani (2017) found that the ESP course was unable to satisfy the professional communication needs of students. Furthermore, the course failed to link theoretical frameworks with business practices. The findings of the study indicate a need to design the course syllabus and select more appropriate course material. Fethi and Feriel (2016) further evaluated a Business English course offered at Annaba Economics and Management school. During the investigation, 100 first-year students were questioned on whether the Business English course offered met their needs and wants. According to the results, 85% of students were satisfied with the course, leaving 15% unsatisfied. Conversely, the majority revealed that although they enjoy learning new business terms, many students had difficulties in understanding, pronouncing, and using business terms in their assessments. Examples of such terms are *depression*, *bulk*, *booms*, *hierarchy*, *endorsement*, *scheduling*, *wholesale*, and much more. Learners suggested the implementation of make-up sessions that cater to their experienced difficulties by further explaining business terms and providing more time for practice. White (2015) gathered evaluations from students on a Business Communications course offered at Luther College and found that students were motivated to work in-group and peer exercises on business cases. During the end of semester self-observation, the author noticed improvement in confidence and communication skills. While educational institutes chose to conduct a course, teacher or student evaluation, researchers suggest coordination among all three evaluations. (Densona, Lovedayb & Dalton, 2010). The aim of the course evaluation is to determine whether the content is satisfactory to the needs of business students and provides opportunity for improvement on the concepts and material used. A



teacher evaluation helps indicate if the pace, terminology, and methodology used by the practitioner is appealing and beneficiary to the learners (Chalikandy, 2015; Górska-Poręcka, 2013). Finally, the students' evaluation could be divided into two: learners' assessments and learners' feedback (Chalikandy, 2015; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). According to the authors, the learners' assessments assist the practitioner in observing whether the students' communication skills are improving and whether or not the theory learnt is put into practice. Learners' feedback collects opinions on their course satisfaction. Frenco (2005) further recommends an external evaluation on students' performance from Business professors or professionals during end of semester assessments such as oral or poster presentations. The insight of discipline professionals will provide insightful feedback on the learning process of students. While it is acknowledged that evaluations demand time and effort, it is recommended to conduct one every year or two (Ibrahim, 2015). The continuous act of evaluation will ensure that courses are kept up to date with the dynamic changes and expectations of the professional world (Frenco, 2005). The next chapter introduces the methodology taken in action to evaluate the current Business English course being offered at AUS.

## **Chapter 6: Methodology**

This chapter illustrates the methodology framework used to collect data for the study performed. It describes the types of participants; the research instruments used, the steps of the research procedure, as well as, the results received by the contributors.

### **6.1 Participants**

Four groups of participants are used to explore the perceptions on the current Business English course offered at AUS. The first group of contributors were business students completing or recently completed ENG 225: Writing for Business. This group should have been undertaking their third or fourth year at university and age between 21-22 years. Participants enrolled in or have completed the Business English course from five different majors: Management, Marketing, Finance, Accounting and Economics. The second group of participants was business graduates who completed the Business English course and are currently working in the business field. Business graduates participating in the study should not have had more than three years of working experience. The cap on their experience helps to investigate whether or not they are using the content learnt from the Business English course in their occupation. These participants should age from 22-26 years. The purpose of choosing two groups within the same department is to study the different perceptions towards the ESP course between those completing the course and those who have graduated, which in return, helps test the efficacy of the course due to their different level of experience in the labor market (El-Sakran & Mesanovic, 2013). Furthermore, these groups will have different opinions about the usefulness of the ESP courses offered at AUS, which provides additional insight on modification suggestions. Those categorized in the third group were English professors who are currently or have recently taught the course. Besides understanding their perceptions of the course, it was interesting to gain knowledge on the course design process. Finally, the fourth group was made up of business professors. Business professors were selected to better understand the current needs of business graduates, gather their opinions on the course material, and to collect recommendations on ways to improve the course.

## **6.2 Research Instruments**

Data was collected during the months of June and July 2019 through two mediums: questionnaires and interviews (see Appendixes A, B, C, D).

**6.2.1 Internship and job advertisements.** To further understand the market expectations from business graduates, internship and job advertisements have been analyzed (See Appendix E). Internships and job advertisements are carefully formulated by human resource professionals, alongside field managers, to clearly represent their requirements from possible candidates. Thus, what job and internship applicants need to learn are the systematic steps that need to be in place to carefully examine the requirements of job advertisements. (El-Sakran, 2018)

**6.2.2 Questionnaires.** Business undergraduates, graduates, and English professors were sent E-surveys that were created on Google Forms. Both the business undergraduates and graduates groups received the same questionnaire for comparison purposes (see Appendixes A and B). The questionnaire included 44 questions that took approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. The first part of the questionnaire gathered information about the participants' demographics, for example: age, gender, and major. The second section of the survey was a five-point Likert scale used to investigate the opinions and perceptions of students on the Business English course, ranging from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1). The third section of the questionnaire included open-ended questions aimed to gather detailed opinions and recommendations. English professors received a slightly different questionnaire (see Appendix C). They were given a questionnaire that was more attentive to their experience, skill focus, types of materials used, and information on the course design process. The surveys included 14 questions and took approximately 5-10 minutes to complete.

**6.2.3 Interviews.** Interviews were conducted with business professors (see Appendix D). During the interview, participants were requested to read the course syllabus, share their opinions, and provide recommendations based on their experience as business experts. The interview was made up of 10 questions and took no longer than 15-20 minutes. Interviews were recorded and later transcribed for the purpose of seeking patterns and differences.

### **6.3 Research Procedure**

Data collected was gathered from and represented the perceptions of the AUS community. Multiple steps were involved in the research procedure. The first step was the creation of the research instruments used. The process of creating the media of collecting data involved the activity of reading previous course reviews and engaging in informal conversations with business graduates on their thoughts of the course. Following the creation of a self-developed interview and questionnaires, feedback from two ESP professors was received and implemented in the final version. The second step was to create online versions of the instruments. The interview was created using Microsoft Word, while the questionnaires were formed using Google Forms. The third step was to fill the application for review of research involving human subjects and to submit the request to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for approval. In addition to the application form, an appendix file including the interview questions, links to the questionnaires, and the consent form were further attached. Following the approval on May 1<sup>st</sup> 2019, the fourth step was to contact participants. The AUS Banner website, a platform for course registration, was used to indicate which business professors were available during the summer semester. All business professors teaching a summer course were E-mailed with the request to set up interviews. Banner further aided in finding which English professors were teaching or previously taught the Business English course. These professors were E-mailed a web link to their online questionnaire. An additional E-mail was sent to current Business English professors' with the request to survey their current students at the end of the semester. In addition to the use of Banner, Ilearn, the AUS learning management system based on Blackboard, was utilized to search for previous business classmates, and E-mails were sent with the survey link. Three reminder E-mails were sent to each of the four groups. The fifth and final step was to conduct the interviews during the assigned time. Prior to the interview, the Business English course syllabus, interview questions, and the consent form were printed and presented to the interviewee. During the interview, extensive notes were written and sessions were recorded to be later transcribed. The following segment introduces and discusses the results gathered.

## 6.4 Findings

The following section introduces data collected from the four different groups: business undergraduates, business graduates, business professors, and English professors. The aim was to investigate the perceptions of the aforementioned groups on the Business English course provided at AUS and determine whether a pattern exists in the feedback received.

**6.4.1 Business undergraduate questionnaire.** Below are representations of the data received from the business undergraduates. The demographics of students are first illustrated, followed by the learners' perceptions on their level participation, content selection, instructor knowledge, inclusion of the business department, type of resources, usefulness of topics, recommendations and overall course satisfaction are described.

**6.4.1.1 Demographics.** Data was collected from 84 undergraduate business students on the perceptions of the current Business English course being offered. Out of these 84 participants, 56% of respondents were female and 44% were male. Moreover, 30% of students contributed from the field of finance, 23% from marketing, 23% from management, 5% from economics, 9% from design management, 8% from accounting, and the remaining 2% of students were specialized in international studies, advertisement, and others (see Figure 1).

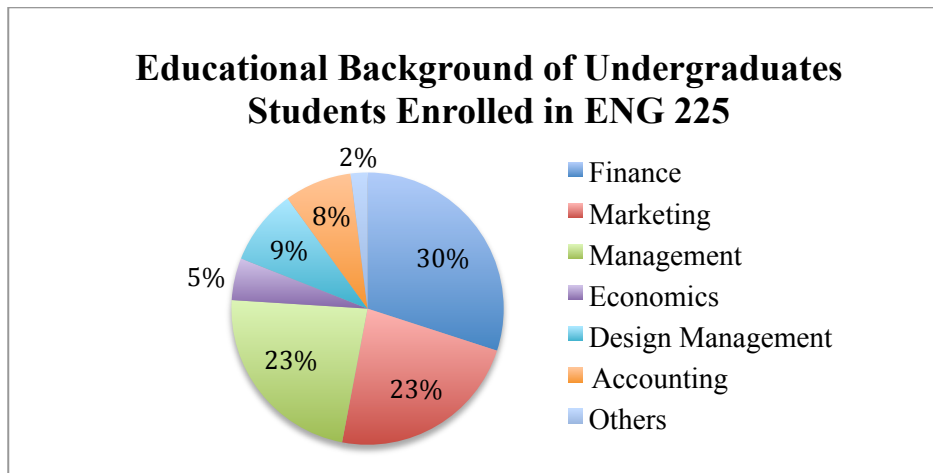


Figure 1. Educational background of undergraduate business students

**6.4.1.2 Student participation.** The first topic touched on throughout the questionnaire is the students' own participation in class. Data revealed that 49% of those surveyed actively participated, 62% believe they made positive progress in the course, and 42% highlighted their motivation to attend all lectures. On the other hand, 27% of participants responded that they were not active in the course, 26% of students did not believe they made positive progress, and 35% were demotivated to attend all lectures. Additionally, 24% of students responded *neutral* in relation to course participation, and 24% in regards to motivation. Finally, 11% of students were neutral when questioned on their overall progress through the course (see Figure 2).

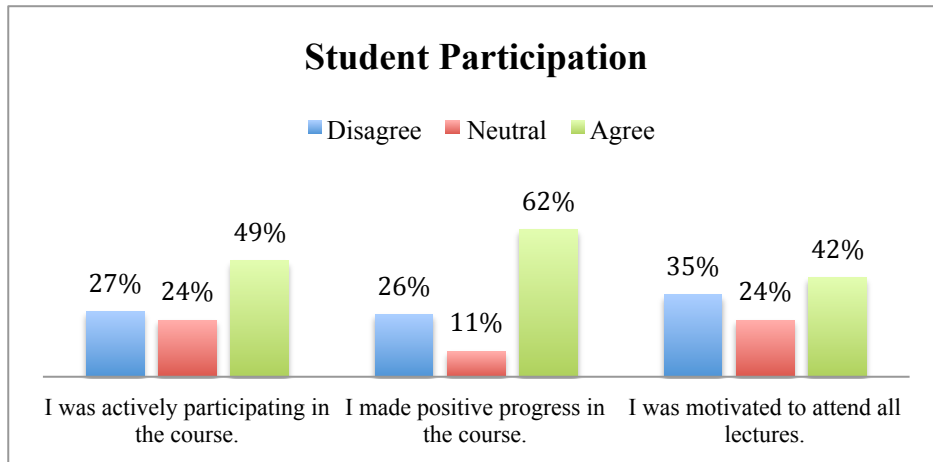


Figure 2. The perception of undergraduate business students at AUS towards their participation, progress and overall motivation

**6.4.1.3 Course content.** The second topic in the questionnaire introduces the perspectives of undergraduate business students on the content used in the Business English course. These perspectives are illustrated in Figure 3. First, 58% of business students highlighted the importance of the content taught throughout the course, 27% believed the course material is not valuable nor worth learning, and 14% were indifferent. Undergraduate business students were further questioned about whether or not they believed the material needed to be revised. With that being said, 57% of the sample advocated the need to revise the content selected and taught, 26% were satisfied by the current selection, and 17% remained neutral.

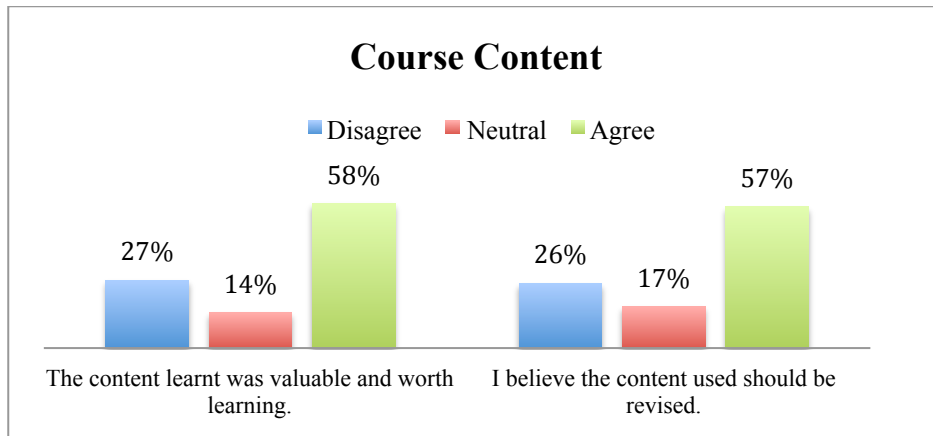


Figure 3. The attitudes of undergraduate business students at AUS towards the content of the course

**6.4.1.4 Business English professors.** The third topic in the survey aimed to investigate the learning experience of students with the Business English professors. As Figure 4 shows, 51% of students believed that their professors’ revealed adequate knowledge in the business subject, 40% emphasized the lack of business knowledge expressed by the English professors, and 9% were neutral. Nonetheless, the results emphasized the positive attitude and immense effort expressed by the Business English professors. Moreover, 63% of participants believed that their professor was effective at explaining the course content, 24% disagreed with that statement, and 13% were neutral. Furthermore, 73% of those surveyed considered their professor to be enthusiastic about the course, 20% did not sense any enthusiasm, and 7% were indifferent.

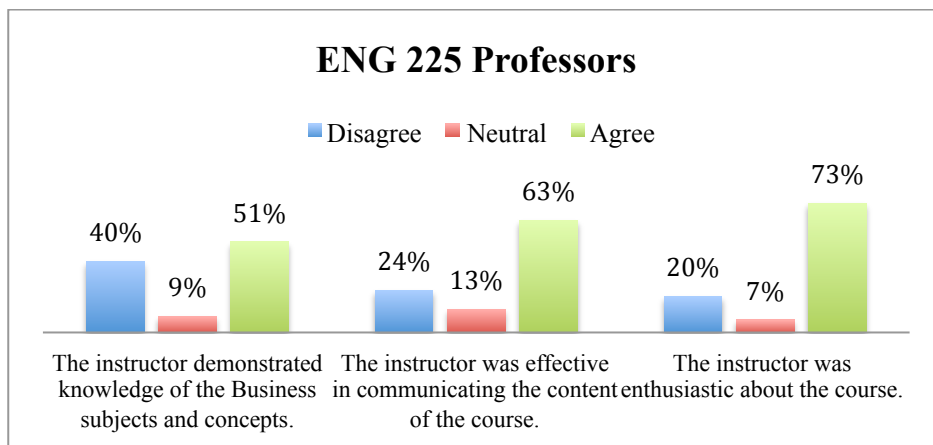
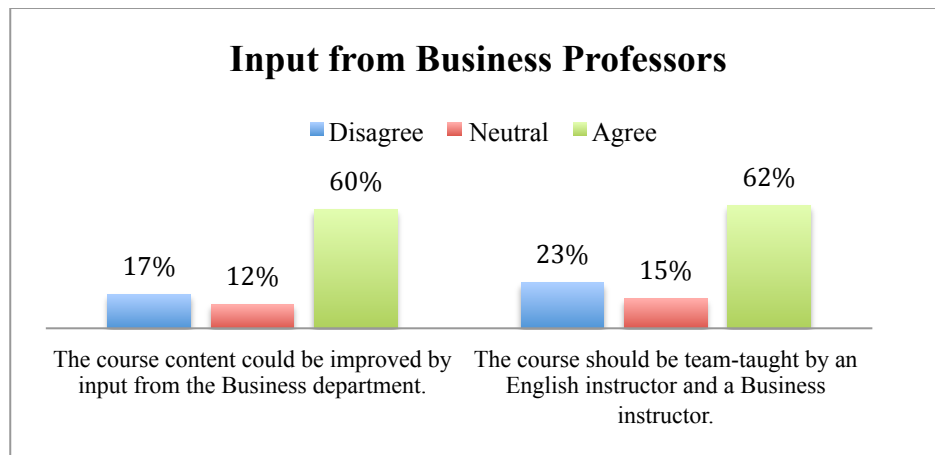


Figure 4. The perception of undergraduate business students at AUS on the knowledge and attitude of the English professors towards the business field

**6.4.1.5 Input from the business department.** The fourth topic in the questionnaire investigated the perceptions of undergraduate business students about the involvement of business professors in the course design and its implementation. Data revealed that 60% of those surveyed believed that the content of the Business English course could be enhanced by the expertise of the business department. In addition, 62% of participants agreed that the course should be team-taught by both departments. Nonetheless, 17% of participants dismissed the need to collect input from the business department, while 12% remain neutral. Finally, 23% of the participants were against the idea of team-teaching, whereas the remaining 15% were indifferent (see Figure 5).



*Figure 5.* The perception of undergraduate business students at AUS on the involvement of the business department in the course design and teachings

**6.4.1.6 Use of resources.** The fifth topic touched on the types of resources used to aid the teaching of the course and is illustrated in Figure 6. In relation to the use of technology, 44% of students confirmed the incorporation of technology throughout the course, 27% underlined the absence of technology, and 29% were neutral. Participants were further inquired on the material resemblance of real life scenarios. As such, 61% of candidates believed that the materials used were a good presentation of reality, 29% of those surveyed did not think the materials adequately represented reality, while 11% responded neutrally.



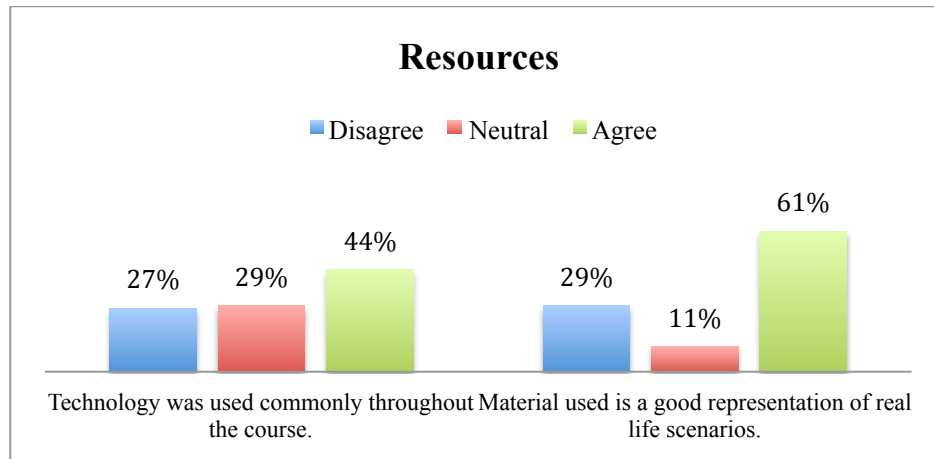
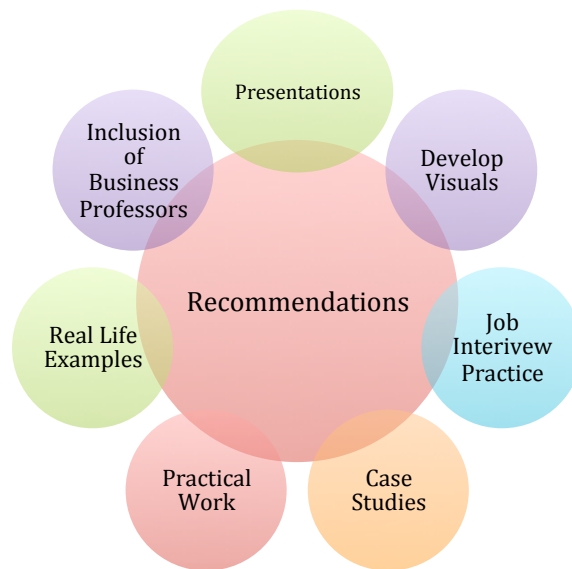


Figure 6. The reflection of undergraduate business students at AUS on the usage of technology and authentic material throughout the course

**6.4.1.7 Usefulness of topics.** The sixth section questioned business undergraduates about their perceived importance of topics. After tallying the results received, it was evident that students believed writing cover letters was most important, followed by writing CVs, writing formal letters, applying and interviewing for jobs, planning reports, giving oral presentations, writing proposals, designing presentations, completing pre-employment subject and personality tests, and creating an online presence. Table 1 below displays the students' perceptions.

Topics	Ranking	Percentage
Writing cover letters	1	85%
Writing CVs	2	82%
Writing formal letters	3	81%
Applying and interviewing for jobs	4	64%
Planning report	5	58%
Giving oral presentations	6	51%
Writing proposals	7	46%
Designing presentations	8	45%
Completing pre-employment and personality tests	9	42%
Creating online presence	10	39%

**6.4.1.8 Course recommendations.** The seventh question asked students whether there was an aspect missing from the course that they would recommend. Responses received (see Figure 7) included oral presentations, developing visuals, incorporating mock interviews, including case studies, shifting the course from being too theoretical to more practical, providing real life examples, and cooperating with the business department.



*Figure 7.* Course recommendations suggested by business undergraduate students at AUS

**6.4.1.9 Overall course satisfaction.** The final section inquired whether or not business undergraduate students found a good match between the skills acquired throughout the course and labor market requirements. Accordingly, 14 undergraduate students responded yes, 20 replied no, and 6 were neutral.

Participants who responded positively believed that the course trained them to perform daily tasks, included content relevant to their internships, involved CV creation, business letters, and relevant scenario activities. Furthermore, the collected data revealed that the unsatisfied participants believed the course did not strengthen their oral communication skills. They also stated that the course was limited to CV development,

composing E-mails, messages, and was too theoretical and grammar-focused. The groups further indicated that they failed in gaining all skills needed for the work place. These include verbal, creative, and problem solving skills. They suggested that the work conducted during the courses need to be edited by business professionals.

**6.4.2 Business graduate questionnaire.** Following the results received from business undergraduates are those of business graduating students currently employed in a business workplace. Similar to the sequence presented above, the demographics of business graduates are first introduced, followed by the participants insights on their level of participation, content learnt, subject awareness of their instructor, interference of the business department, resources used, the effectiveness of topics, course suggestions and overall course satisfaction are revealed.

**6.4.2.1 Demographics.** Seventy-six AUS business graduates, who are currently working in the business market, further contributed to this study. Out of these 76 participants, 51% of respondents were female and 49% were male. Moreover, 30% of participants were specialized in finance, 27% in marketing, 18% in accounting, 17% in management, and 6% in economics (see Figure 8). In addition to business graduates, 1% of those surveyed were design management graduates and an additional 1% had an advertising background.

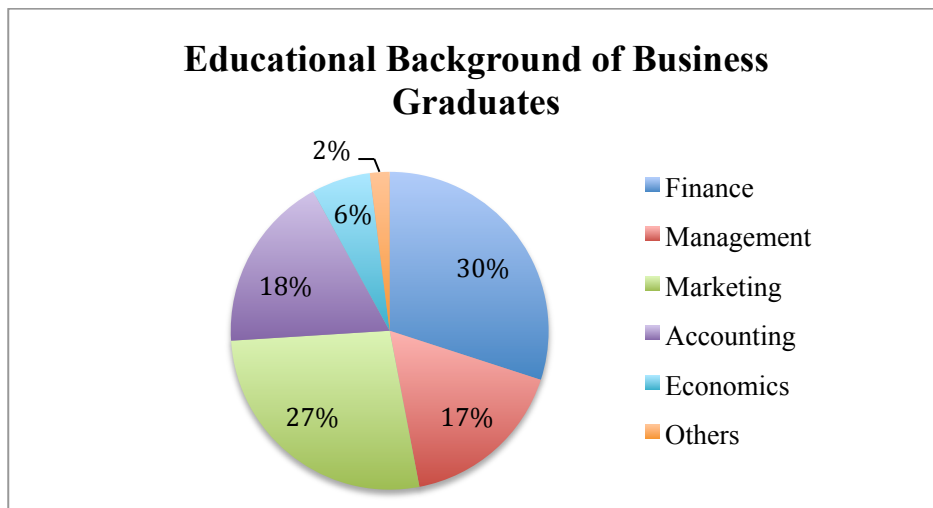
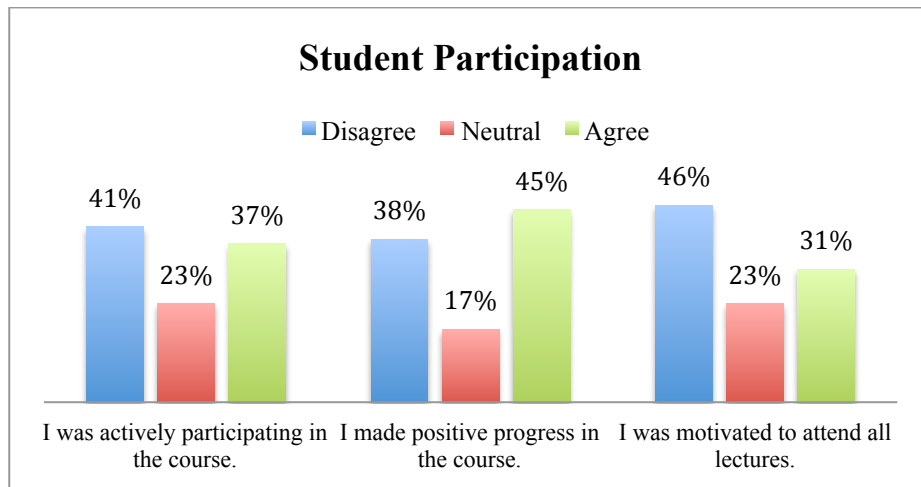


Figure 8. Educational background of AUS business graduates

**6.4.2.2 Student participation.** The first section of the questionnaire aimed to collect data on the participation of business graduates throughout the Business English course. Data analysis showed that 37% of business graduates enthusiastically participated in the course, 45% believed that they made positive progress in communication, and 31% were motivated to attend classes. On the contrary, 41% of graduated participants were inactive throughout the course, 38% of them do not think that they benefited from the course, and 46% revealed negative attitudes. Additionally, 17% of students responded *neutral* in relation to course participation, and 24% in regards to motivation. Finally, 23% of students were neutral when questioned on their overall progress through the course (see Figure 9).



*Figure 9.* The perception of AUS business graduates towards their participation, progress and overall motivation

**6.4.2.3 Course content.** The second section of the survey presented the perspectives of business graduates on the content used in the Business English course. Figure 10 indicates that 41% of the participants viewed the course content to be valuable and worth learning, 42% did not see the content as being valuable, and 17% were indifferent. Furthermore, when questioned about whether or not the group believed the material needed to be revised, 68% were in agreement, 11% disagreed, and 21% did not advocate or were against the revision of content.

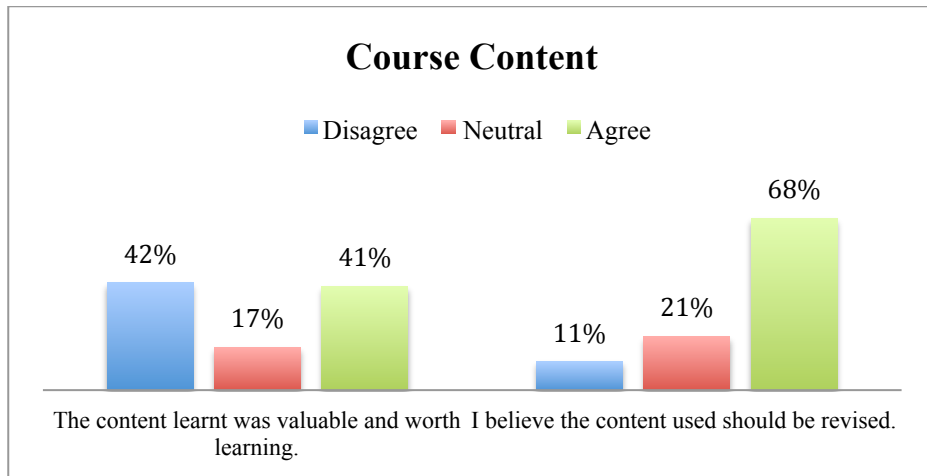


Figure 10. The attitudes of AUS business graduates towards the content of the course

**6.4.2.4 Business English professors.** The third section of the questionnaire gathered insights of business graduates on the knowledge and attitudes and effort of English professors. The perspectives of business graduates are exemplified in Figure 11. In relation to business knowledge, 38% of those surveyed believed that the English professors expressed adequate knowledge in business, 44% of participants indicated that English professors lack background in the field, and 18% were neutral. Furthermore, 39% of business graduates highlighted the professors' success in communicating the course content, 42% indicated the opposite, and 18% were indifferent. Nonetheless, 55% of business graduates revealed the professors' enthusiastic attitude throughout the course, whereas 34% believed their professor was dispirited, and 11% were in between (see Figure 11).

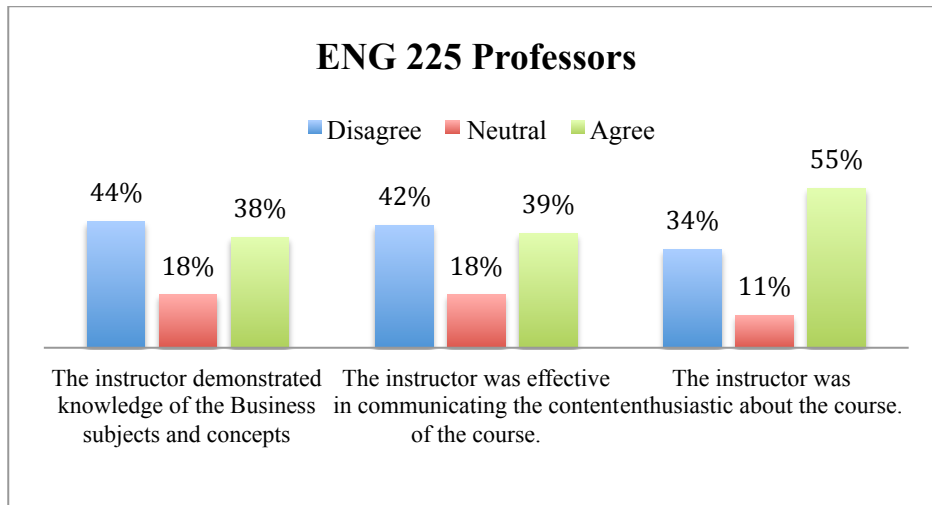


Figure 11. The attitudes of AUS business graduates on the knowledge and attitude of the English professors towards business

**6.4.2.5 Input from the business department.** The section of the questionnaire researched the views of business graduates on the involvement of business professors in the course design and its implementation. Figure 12 indicates that that 65% of participants believed that the Business English course should be co-taught, 10% did not support the idea of team-teaching, and 25% of the graduated population were indifferent. On the contrary, 90% of business graduates advocated the involvement of the business department to improve the course content. With that being said, 2% of those surveyed disagreed with involving the business department in the content selection, while the remaining 8% were neutral.

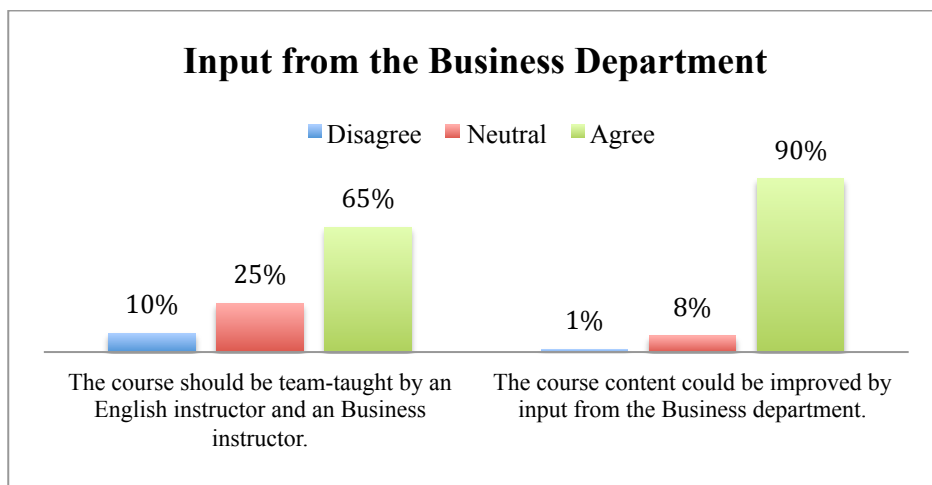
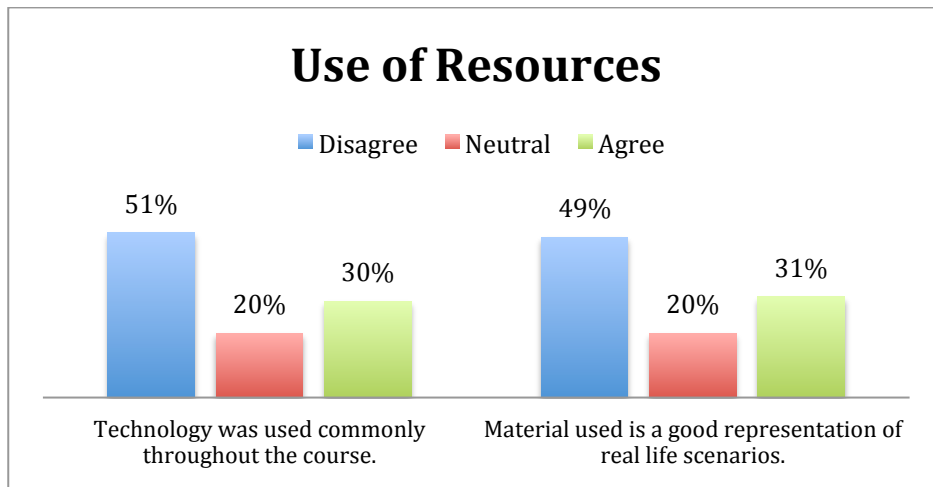


Figure 12. The perception of AUS business graduates students on the involvement of the business department in the course design and teachings

**6.4.2.6 Use of resources.** The fifth section included data on the types of resources used throughout the course. According to feedback received by business graduates, 30% expressed the usage of technology in the course, 20% were indifferent, and 51% highlighted the absence of using technology. In addition, 31% of those surveyed indicated that the materials used were authentic, 20% were neutral, and 49% believed the materials poorly presented real life scenarios (see Figure 13).



*Figure 13.* The reflection of AUS business graduates on the usage of technology and authentic material throughout the course

**6.4.2.7 Usefulness of topics.** The sixth section asked business graduates to rank 10 topics based on their perceived importance. After tallying the results received, Table 2 highlights that business graduates considered giving oral presentations to be the most important, followed by preparing for job interviews, designing presentations, writing formal letters, writing CVs, completing employment tests, writing cover letters, creating an online presence, planning/writing reports, and writing proposals.

Topics	Ranking	Percentage
Giving oral presentations	1	75%
Applying and interviewing for jobs	2	64%
Designing presentations	3	59%
Writing formal letters	4	56%
Writing CVs	5	53%
Pre-employment subject and personality tests	6	51%
Writing cover letters	7	50%
Creating online presence	8	48%
Planning and writing reports	9	34%
Writing proposals	10	31%

**6.4.2.8 Course recommendations.** The seventh section inquired if there were any changes that business graduates would like to recommend. As illustrated in Figure 14, many add-ons were recommended, which included: adding oral presentations, developing infographics, incorporating job practice, practicing quick pitches, inviting guest speakers, integrating technology, planning workshops, explaining office etiquette, discussing case studies, shifting the course from theoretical- to more practical-based methods, providing real life examples, and cooperating with the business department.





*Figure 14.* The recommendations suggested by AUS business graduates on course content

**6.4.2.9 Overall course satisfaction.** The final section aimed to research if business graduates found a good match between the skills acquired in the Business English course and the labor market requirements. Feedback received by business graduates indicated that 12 of them believed the course to be satisfactory, 44 of those surveyed expressed a mismatch between the course outcomes and labor market requirements, and 20 participants were neutral. Participants who responded positively believed that E-mail writing was helpful, and the course improved their written skills. Those unsatisfied with the course pointed out that the course had no verbal communication, was too theoretical, did not develop creative skills, failed to foster problem solving skills, did not introduce current technology, was too focused on writing E-mails/messages, the tasks conducted throughout the course did not meet employer expectation, the course failed to acknowledge the informal aspect of the business environment, and that the course should focus on all communication skills.

**6.4.3 Business professors' interview.** The interview consisted of ten questions that were asked after looking through the syllabus of the Business English course. Questions presented focused on the participants demographics, their perceptions on the effectiveness of the course, recommendations on changes of the syllabus content and skill focus, the interviewees believes on team-teaching as a solution and the potential role of the business department in the course.

**6.4.3.1 Demographics.** In addition to collecting data from business undergraduates and graduates, business and English professors have further contributed to this research. Two professors from the finance department, one from the economics department, one from the marketing department, two from the accounting department, and three from the management department were interviewed. Eight of the nine professors had over nine years of experience teaching business courses, while one had seven years of experience.

**6.4.3.2 Course effectiveness.** The first question asked business professors whether or not they believed that the Business English course prepared students to communicate effectively in the business world and to provide a justification for their answers. All nine professors responded *no* to the former question. Seven professors expressed their concern about the content covered, commenting that the coverage of topics was poor and not satisfactory to the business world. Three professors thought the course was too theoretical and lacked practical application as well as student engagement. In addition, two professors indicated that the course content was too basic and satisfactory to secretarial training. Furthermore, two professors elaborated that the course only satisfied the skill of writing E-mails. Finally, two professors believed the material was outdated and irrelevant to today's business environment.

**6.4.3.3 Content alteration.** During the second question, professors were asked what topics they would remove from the course. Four professors commented on the need to remove memos, as they are outdated and no longer being used in the business environment. Moreover, the majority of professors agreed on reducing time spent on teaching students how to write messages and E-mails. The participants holistically believed that prior to completing three writing prerequisites, learners should already know how to write. One professor further added, "*We offer everything on this syllabus*

through workshops for free, and continued, *If students are paying for this course, it should be much more valuable*”.

**6.4.3.4 Content add-ons.** In relation to what learners should be taught, the third question inquired about topics that should be added. Eight professors stressed the importance of presentations and the implementation of workshops by professionals such as CV development. Moreover, seven professors listed creating and explaining visual graphics as an important addition to the course, such as charts, info-graphics, and posters. Body language, interview preparation, pitch creation, report writing, crisis management, and real life examples were also mentioned as potential add-ons (see Figure 15).

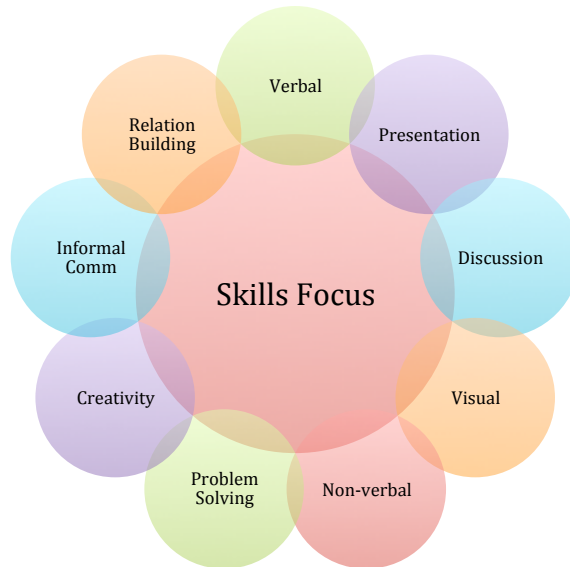


*Figure 15.* The recommendations suggested by AUS business professors on the course content

**6.4.3.5 Skills satisfaction.** The fourth question asked whether or not the skills developed were satisfactory to the business workforce. In response to this question, all nine professors responded *no*.

**6.4.3.6 Recommended skills focus.** The fifth question complements question four, which asked professors what skill sets they believed the Business English course should focus on. Eight professors agreed on the need to focus more on verbal skills, four participants stressed on the enhancement of presentation and discussion skills, and three

highlighted the importance of visual communication skills, non-verbal interactions, and problem solving skills. Other skills mentioned included creativity, informal communication, and relation building at the workforce (see Figure 16).



*Figure 16.* The recommendations suggested by AUS business professors on skills the course should focus on

**6.4.3.7 Perceptions on team-teaching.** Next, the professors were asked about their beliefs on team-teaching in question five. The results for this question were spread. Four professors highly encouraged the implementation of team-teaching, three did not encourage the method, and three were indifferent. Business professors believed that it would add value to the course and give students a better learning experience. Another professor commented on this method’s ability to encourage professors to learn from each other. One professor further stressed the importance of team-teaching when the course is first being taught to ensure English professors gain satisfactory business knowledge. In addition, those who are neutral believed that it depends on the coordination of both teachers, indicating the result of two cases: going well or not at all. Furthermore, two who did not advocate team-teaching highlighted the challenges of implementing team-teaching. A third business professor stressed that both departments would not satisfy the needs of students, underlining the need of business professionals or adjunct professors.

**6.4.3.8 Restructuring the course design.** The seventh question investigated how business professors were to change the course syllabus. All nine professors stressed on

holistic planning (input from business students, professors, and employers) prior to creating the course syllabus. Six professors emphasized the need to add presentations, four mentioned the inclusion of guest speakers, two recommended the addition of a big project that overlooks many steps, and two suggested the inclusion of more authentic material as well as more student engagement activities.

**6.4.3.9 Involvement of the business department.** The eighth question was related to the involvement of business professors in the course design and content selection. All nine professors agreed on the contribution of business professors in the Business English course. As the needs of students of different majors vary, two professors believed it would be beneficial to have a presenter from each major provide their input on learner necessities.

**6.4.4 English professors' questionnaire.** The following results are a presentation of the data collected from the English professors questionnaire. The subsections subsequently illustrate the demographics of English professors currently or have previously taught the Business English course, the experience of participants in business, the materials used to teach students throughout the course, ways in which technology is integrated in the classroom, the skills focused on by the instructor, the process of course design, the perception of surveyors on the implementation of team-teaching, the believed market needs of business students and potential course recommendations.

**6.4.4.1 Demographics.** Five English professors who currently teach or had previously taught the Business English course participated in the study. The first two questions focused on demographics. Out of these five professors, three had 0-2 years of teaching the course, one professor had taught the course for 3-5 years, and one for over 6 years. In addition, professors assigned to the course are specialized in Rhetoric, Historical, and Applied Linguistics.

**6.4.4.2 Experience in business.** The third question inquired about the professors' experience working in business. Accordingly, one of the English professors had previously worked in a business environment, while the remaining four had not gained experience in the subject area, academically and professionally (see Figure 17).

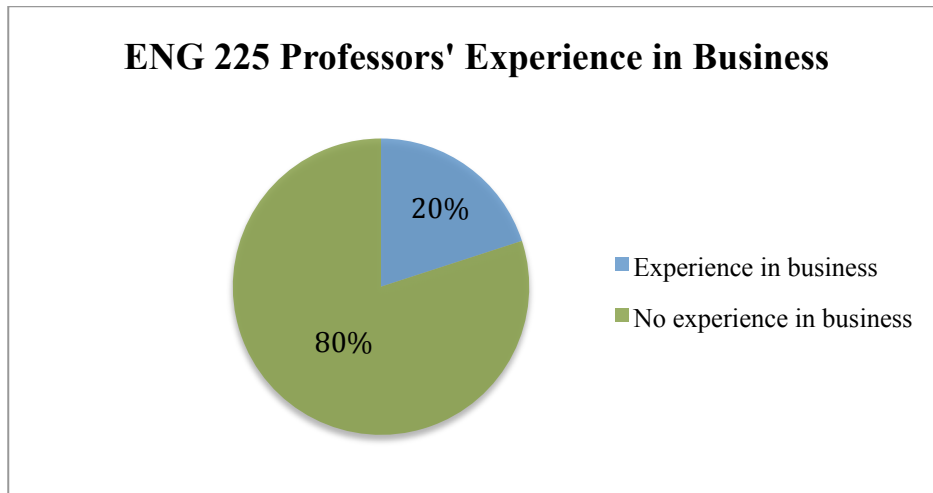


Figure 17. The responses of AUS English professors on their experience in business

**6.4.4.3 Materials used in the course.** The fourth question gathered data on the types of materials used by the Business English course professors. Figure 18 revealed that all five professors commonly used the textbook; however, two of them complimented the textbook with customized materials, and the other complimented the coursework with authentic materials.

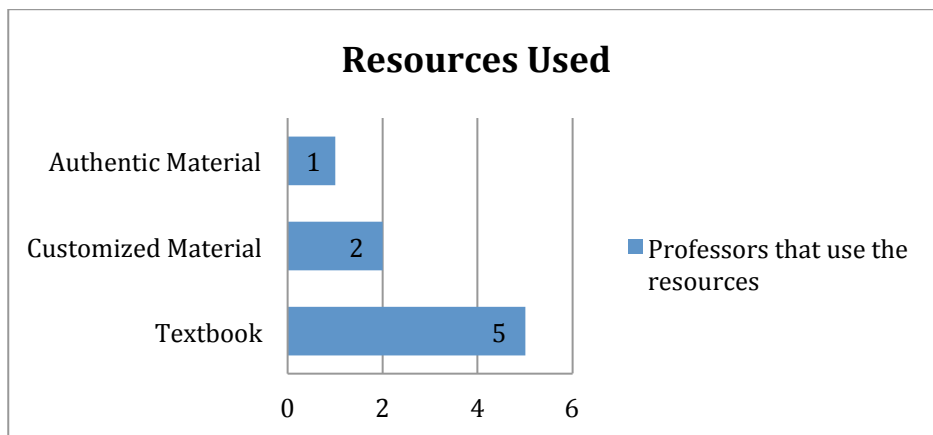


Figure 18. The feedback of AUS English professors on the types of materials used in the course

**6.4.4.4 Use of technology.** The fifth question was focused on ways in which technology was incorporated throughout the course. Five English professors stressed their use of technology in assessments, three used technology for presentations, three to play

videos, two for the implementation of discussion boards, three for introducing visual images, three to collect feedback, and three for creating tasks. Nevertheless, none of the professors surveyed used technology that included social media in their lesson plans (see Figure 19).

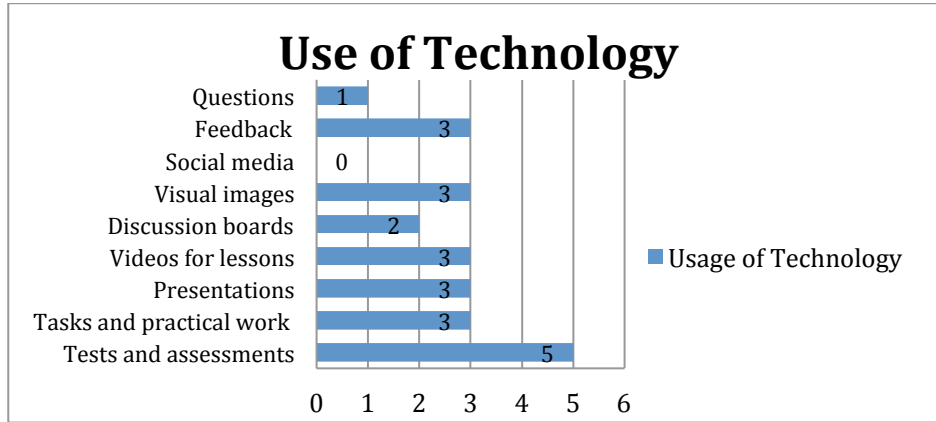


Figure 19. The feedback of AUS English professors on ways technology was used in the course

**6.4.4.5 Skills focus.** The sixth question was related to the skills set mostly focused on by English professors. According to Figure 20, all five professors highly focused on writing skills. In addition, two professors were attentive to skills related to oral communication, presentation, creative thinking, problem solving, critical judgment, and linking theory to practice. Furthermore, one professor aimed to develop team building and independent thinking skills.

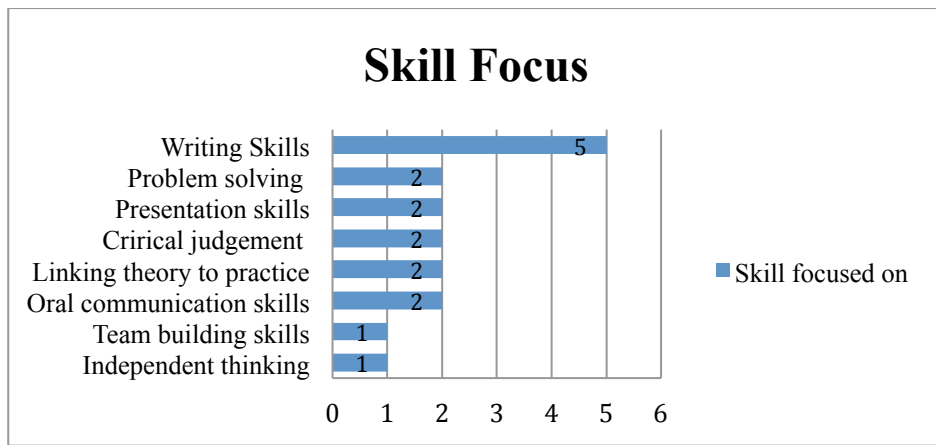


Figure 20. The feedback of AUS English professors on the skills focus of the course

**6.4.4.6 Course design.** The seventh question aimed to gather insight on how the course was designed. Three professors believed the course was designed by a group of professors from the English department. On the other hand, two professors shared that they did not know who designed the course. Further investigating the course design process of the Business English course, question eight asked if anyone from the business department was involved in this process. Responses received include *no*, *I don't know*, *not yet*, and *a couple of meetings were held with the Associate Dean of the Business Department to discuss possible changes to the curriculum, but so far we're at a standstill*. Evidently, no one from the business department was involved in this process.

**6.4.4.7 Perspectives on team-teaching.** The ninth question gathered thoughts on team-teaching from the perspective of English professors. Three out of five professors believed it was a good idea; however, they feared that its implication might add complications. One professor suggested that a Business English expert, bringing together the best of both worlds, should teach the course. Another professor advocated a partnership between an English professor and a business professional employed at a company.

**6.4.4.8 Knowledge of business market needs.** The tenth question dug further into the knowledge of English professors on the needs of business students by questioning whether or not the course prepares students to be effective business communicators. Three professors indicated their lack of knowledge of business and uncertainty of business market needs. On the other hand, one professor believed that the course does prepare students to communicate effectively in the business world due to positive feedback received at the end of semester. Another professor also believed it does, but more written communication than anything else. The 11<sup>th</sup> question explicitly asked English professors to list the market needs of business graduates. Two professors did not answer this question, one acknowledged that what he or she was not familiar with the current market needs, one professor shared that students should learn how to write for specific purposes, and the last professor commented that learners were expected to develop persuasive and professional business communication skills.



**6.4.4.9 Course changes.** The final question gathered feedback from the professors on the design course by asking what they would change, add, or remove from the course. Similarly to data collected from business professors, most English professors recommended additions that included: group assignments, oral activities (e.g. mock interviews), presentations, personal development, workshops, and company visits (see Figure 21). A professor advocated the submission of student reports to business professionals. The contributor further added, *Rejected writing could be improved in class for B plus maximum grade. Accepted writing by the business could equate to an A-minus minimum.*



*Figure 21.* The recommendations suggested by AUS English professors on the course content.

The following chapter interprets and analyzes the results highlighted by the four groups of participants and collectively suggests recommendations.

## Chapter 7: Discussion and Implications

Chapter 7 aims to critically analyze the data received in search of similarities and differences highlighted by the participants. Based on the feedback provided, the discussion has been subdivided into three topics: course satisfaction, material selection and the Business English instructor. Preceding the interpretation and discussion of results, a recommendation for creating a multi-skilled syllabus has been created.

### 7.1 Interpretation and Discussion of Results

Upon thorough examination of the responses received, three main considerations have been drawn: the current Business English course failed to satisfy the needs of business students, the inadequate choice of course material highlighted the need to review the selected content, and the lack of discipline knowledge among English professors advocated the involvement of business professionals in the course design.

**7.1.1 Course satisfaction.** Results received throughout questionnaires and interview processing underlined the course's inability to successfully satisfy the communication needs of business students. While the majority of undergraduate and graduated business students believed that the content was worth learning, both groups were unable to find a good match between the skills acquired throughout the course and labor market requirements. Accordingly, 14 undergraduate students found a high match, 20 indicated a low match, and 6 were neutral. On the other hand, 12 business graduates answered positively, 44 reported negatively, and 20 were neutral. Participants who responded positively believed that the course successfully trained students on daily tasks, such as writing business messages and creating CVs. Conversely, unsatisfied contributors noted the course to be very limiting to the mentioned tasks, lessening their opportunities to gain and/or strengthen additional skill sets, specifically verbal, visual, and problem solving skills. Those dissatisfied further clarified the lack of practicality presented throughout the course. Dissatisfaction with the course was further supported by business professors when asked whether or not they believed the Business English course prepared students to communicate effectively in the business world, in which all nine professors responded *no*. Comments further resembled those received by students elaborating on the theoretical focus of the course, and that it solely enhanced their skills of writing E-

mails/messages. The business professors in question further stressed the importance of updating the course content and widening the coverage to better satisfy business learners in the environment of their workforce. The shock perceived from business professors about this course being the only Business English course offered to their learners was highly recognizable. One professor added, *...the material is too basic and does not satisfy the needs of graduating business students; it satisfies the needs of secretaries*. In addition to results received by business professors and students, those of English professors varied. While two professors believed the course prepared students to effectively communicate in the business world, the remaining responses of three professors raised some uncertainty and commented that *it should, I think so, and I guess, if business prose styles is taught*. The first professor underlined how students learned to communicate with different individuals using the audience-centered approach to persuade and seek written information. The second professor observed an improvement of communication skills at the end of the semester in writing and critical thinking. However, it is noteworthy to clarify that communication skills are not limited to written skills, but can also be verbal, nonverbal, and visual. The recognition of communication skills as written skills and the uncertainty expressed by English professors questions their true beliefs on the course.

Through data collection and analysis, one can perceive the high expectations placed on the Business English course offered by the Language Department of AUS. It is worth mentioning that the current ESP course being offered does outplay the course description and satisfies the written expectations of business students. According to the university catalog, the course “aims to develop skills in writing business documents such as CVs, correspondence, memoranda, short and long reports, and proposals necessary to communicate effectively in the business world” (AUS Catalog, 2019, p. 156). Nonetheless, the course is continuously compared to an ESP course designed for engineering students at AUS. While the Business English course is originally identified as *ENG 225: Writing for Business*, the English for engineers course is titled *ENG 207: Professional Communication for Engineers*. The inclusion of “communication” in the course title, without exclusively focusing on writing skills, changes the full description, content selection, and teachings of the course. Evidently, the English for Engineers

course is described as follows: “Develops technical writing and professional communication skills through engineering multidisciplinary projects (EMDPs). Analyzes, through EMDPs and teamwork, the distinctive features of various professional oral and written genres. Develops and enhances work ethics, leadership, interpersonal and decision-making skills” (AUS Catalog, 2019, p.156). The course title and description alone implies a wider skill focus. Due to the fact that both groups are required to take the same writing pre-requisites followed by a specialized ESP course, the expectations of being taught how to become a professional communicator in their field of disciplines are alike. When in reality, one group is taught how to communicate effectively, while the other group is advised on how to become a better writer. Thus, it is unfair to train students of one department to become professional communicators and not the other, considering the need of business students to be effective in communication. Naturally, this issue could be resolved in two ways: creating a Speaking for Business course (in addition to the Writing for Business course) or adapting the current Business English course to collectively include all communication skills. In chapter 8, this research aims to provide insightful recommendations on how to develop a course that satisfies the professional communication needs of business students.

**7.1.2 Materials selection.** A large portion of the questions was dedicated to receive feedback on the type of materials used throughout the course, and to gather proposed recommendations for change. Results revealed that all five professors commonly used the textbook; however, two of them complimented the textbook with customized and/or authentic materials. The use of materials by the Business English professors was different from those recommended by researchers (Guariento, 2001; Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998). With one professor using authentic materials, the most critical mode of material in ESP, the majority of learners were not exposed or introduced to the reality of their field. The textbook-centered approach used by the Business English professors limited the probability of learners receiving enriched standards of education. Evidently, 57% of undergraduates and 68% of graduated students believed that the course material should be revised. As discussed in the literature above, the Internet is bombarded with authentic materials that compliment the quality of education provided to students. The implementation of films, photographs, external presentations, videos, magazines,

news channels, documentaries, and radio commercials serve a long way in connecting students to the reality of the business world (Alibec, 2016; Chailikandy, 2013). Despite the respondents' positive feedback provided by business undergraduates on the use of case studies presented by professors, one-third of undergraduate participants advocated the incorporation of technology more effectively and efficiently. In addition, 51% of business graduates highlighted the absence of using technology in the Business English course. In contrast to the lack of technological utilization highlighted by business undergraduate and graduated students, English professors stated otherwise, indicating their use of technology in assessments, presentations, videos, discussion boards, visual images, feedback, and tasks. Nevertheless, none of the professors surveyed used technology to include social media in their lesson plans, despite the booming importance of social media in self-marketing (e.g. LinkedIn), and in the discipline of business.

Overlooking the sources of materials used, one must supplementary investigate the selected topics for skills development. The survey provided business undergraduate and graduated participants with a list of topics and required contributors to indicate the usefulness of the course. In respect to undergraduate students, writing cover letters was the most popular, followed by writing CVs, writing formal letters, applying and interviewing for jobs, giving oral presentations, designing and delivering presentations, planning reports, receiving pre-employment subjects and personality tests, and creating an online presence respectively. The results of business graduates contrasted those of business undergraduates. In first place, business graduates ranked giving oral presentations as the most useful topic, followed by applying and interviewing for jobs, designing presentations, writing formal letters, writing CVs, pre-employment and personality tests, writing cover letters, creating an online presence, planning and writing reports, and writing proposals. One may notice that while business undergraduates found written tasks more useful, business graduates marked oral skills as most effective. The difference in results could be determined by two explanations. First, business undergraduates highly ranked tasks they have undertaken throughout the course and thus, found those as the most useful. As such, the lower ranked tasks were not necessarily experienced during the course period. Second, business graduates, who currently work in corporate, may have a different perspective on the significance of tasks due to their

experience in the labor market. These differences shed light on the importance of gaining input on course expectations external to the language department.

Propositions on content topics and tasks for further course planning were gathered during the collection of data. One graduated business student highlighted the importance of informal communication in the business environment, a topic that was not covered by the course. As mentioned in the literature review, Crosling and Ward (2002) emphasized the need to prepare students for informal communication based on the informal nature of internal business communication. Eight out of nine professors stressed the importance of presentations and the implementation of workshops by professionals, such as CV development or presentation design. Having workshops led by business experts ensures that students are completing tasks that successfully meet the expectations of business employers. As such, assignments conducted in the Business English course would no longer need to be re-edited and revised externally, a point highlighted in the data received from students. Moreover, seven professors listed creating and explaining visual graphics as an important addition to the course, such as charts, info-graphics, and posters. Body language, interview preparation (mock interviews), pitch creation, report writing, crisis management, and real life examples were also mentioned as potential add-ons. These suggestions were in line with research published by Jackson (2013) and Anh (2017) regarding business needs. At a glance, one may reflect negatively on the large number of recommendations; however, the suggestion of topics merely illustrates the dynamic environment of the business workforce. Similarly to data collected from business professors, most English professors recommended additions that included: group assignments, oral activities (e.g. mock interviews), presentations, personal development, workshops, and company visits. Whereas business graduates recommended the presence of business professionals during the end of the semester presentation, an English professor advocated the submission of student reports to business professionals. The contributor further added, *“Rejected writing could be improved in class for B plus maximum grade. Accepted writing by the business could equate to an A minus minimum”*. The involvement of and feedback received from business experts about the learners’ education appears to be very favorable. One interesting recommendation mentioned by a business professor was visiting well-known companies to expose learners

to their future environment. Barron (1992) and Buckley (200) shed light on the importance of involving subject specialists in ESP courses. Learners must understand the direct relationship between their specialization and the English course they are enrolled in. This increase in awareness makes the course more valuable, leading to higher engagement and the achievement of higher proficiency levels in English (Barron, 1992; Buckley, 2000). The reassurance from business professionals on the content and materials of the course will help provide missing pieces to the puzzle. Questions by learners on the effectiveness of the course and the uncertainty by English professors on the business market needs will be fulfilled. Moreover, business undergraduate and graduated students, in addition to English professors, were asked about their perceptions of group work poster presentations. Unexpectedly, English professors and undergraduate business students were neutral and emphasized that there are a large amount of group work presentations already present in business courses.

In addition to potential additions, business and English professors were questioned about their suggested topic eliminations. Four business professors mentioned the need to eliminate memos, as they were outdated and no longer existent in the business environment. Moreover, the majority of business professors agreed on reducing time spent on teaching how to write messages and E-mails. The participants holistically believed that prior to completing three writing prerequisite courses, learners should have already mastered the skill of writing, which contradicts a comment suggested by an English professor, in which he/she believed that additional prerequisites should be added. Nonetheless, the study conducted by Zhang (2013) on the business writing of university business showed that most students understood what to write and how to write it, but were unable to use satisfactory vocabulary. Thus, more focus should be stressed on the language of business, which could be practiced through other means of communication such as verbal communication, or activities like investigating case studies and analyzing published articles by company CEOs. One professor further added, *We offer everything on this syllabus through workshops for free*, and continued, *If students are paying for this course, it should be much more valuable*.

**7.1.3 Business English instructor.** As observed by business undergraduates and graduates, professors at AUS teaching the Business English course demonstrated

enthusiasm when teaching the course, brought authentic materials to aid in explanations, and demonstrated adequate knowledge of business concepts. Nevertheless, both groups were in support of real involvement of the business department. The absence of the business touch may result from the English professors' inexperience in the field. Correspondingly, one of the English professors had previously worked in a business environment, while the remaining four had not gained experience in the subject area, academically and professionally. The lack of experience in the business environment may have had a direct influence on the knowledge expressed or feedback provided on the subject area during coursework. Furthermore, when English professors were questioned on the needs of business students, three professors responded that they lack knowledge of business market needs. It is essential that those teaching the Business English course personally invest in learning more about the market needs of business learners or request training on the subject prior to educating students. Ferguson (1997) believes ESP teachers express subject knowledge in the subject's values and culture, discourse and genre, and/or the epistemological basis of different disciplines. Out of those who responded to the question, one professor considered writing for different purposes a necessity for business students, while the final contributor listed interviews, presentations, and communication skills. As such, 62% of business undergraduates and 65% of business graduates advocate team-teaching that included both departments. The discussion on team-teaching with business professors varied in nature. Four business professors highly encouraged the implementation of team-teaching, three did not favor the method, and three were indifferent. Similar to the opinions of students, business professors believed that it would add value to the course and give students a better course. Those who did not agree with this teaching technique highlighted the burden of challenges associated with team-teaching. Reinforcing the concerns made by business professors, three out of five professors acknowledged that it was a good idea; however, they further feared that its implementation might add complications. While team-teaching exposes learners to a variety of teaching materials, the expert knowledge of the business professionals, time, effort, and collaboration are essential to the success of implementation (Holly, 2105; Ahmed, 2014; Soltani & Shafaei, 2013; Buckley, 2000; Barron, 1992). One professor further added that a Business English expert, bringing together the best of both worlds,



should teach the course. Another advocated a partnership between an English professor and a business professional employed at a company. On the other hand, a further recommendation was to dismiss both departments, the language and business departments, and make use of hiring business professionals or adjunct professors who could successfully satisfy the needs of business learners.

Despite the recommended combinations, what both groups failed to understand was the different types of team-teaching. While the professors in this study referred to the true team-teaching technique to be two teachers conjointly teaching in the same classroom and the same material that was collaboratively decided on, there are other ways the business department may be of use. As mentioned in the literature above, the consultative method may be adopted, whereby the role of the business specialist is to serve as a content consultant, at any stage of the course, to ensure and conserve content correctness (Sierocka, 2014). Alternatively, the subject-specialist informants (SSI) method could be employed, whereby the subject specialist is assigned to provide the language teacher with an understanding of the content, processes of the subject, and organization of its text when needed (Sierocka, 2014). Through little or large contribution, 60% of business undergraduate students and 90% of business graduated students indicated that the content taught could definitely be improved by input from the business department. The data gathered supports the works of Ming (2009) and Mu (2018) and acknowledges the value of discipline specialists in the design of ESP courses. Soltani and Shafaei (2013) highlighted the unexpected shift that ESP teachers experience when required to teach a course beyond their expertise with little to no guidelines.

All business professors interviewed agreed on the contribution of business professors to the Business English course. As the needs of students of different fields vary, it would be beneficial to have a presenter from each field provide their input on learner necessities. In fact, holistic planning (input from business students, professors, and employers) prior to creating the course syllabus was commonly declared during the conducted interviews. Investigating the process behind the course design of the Business English course revealed that half of those surveyed did not know who designed the course. This introduces a very important question, who really designs the course? How is the content selected? And why is not anyone from the discipline involved? The lack of

involvement from the business department contradicts the interest shown by business professors on the course and its selected content. Following the introduction and discussion of results, the next section aims to develop a collective syllabus that represents the feedback received during data collection.

## **7.2 Practical Implementation**

The following section introduces a recommended syllabus customized towards catering to the needs of business students as expressed by published research, the business community at AUS, English professors, and the business labor market requirements (see Table 3). The recommended syllabus aims to shift the focus from writing to developing additional communication skills deemed necessary to thrive in the business world. The adapted syllabus has further been elaborated on to explain the selection of topics and potential structure (see Table 4).

Table 3

*Recommended syllabus for the Business English course at AUS alongside the current one*

<u>Current Syllabus</u>		<u>Recommended Syllabus</u>	
ENG 225: Writing for Business		ENG 225: Professional Communication for Business People	
Week	<b>Course Structure (3 lecture per week)</b>		
<b>1</b>	Introduction to the Course	Introduction to the Course and class members.	
<b>2</b>	Achieving Success through Effective Business Communication	Business Idioms (expressions and jargon)	
<b>3</b>	Planning Business Messages	Business Messages	
<b>4</b>	Writing Business Messages	Job preparation	
<b>5</b>	Completing Business Messages	Job preparation cont.	
<b>6</b>	Writing Routine and Positive Messages	Informal Communication	
<b>7</b>	Writing Negative Messages	Planning Reports and Proposals	
<b>8</b>	Writing Negative Messages (continued)	Report Outline and Resource Gathering	
<b>9</b>	Writing Persuasive Messages	Workshop on Writing Report	
<b>10</b>	Building Careers and Writing Resumes	Visual Communication	
<b>11</b>	Writing Application Letters and Other Employment Messages	Presentation Design	
<b>12</b>	Planning Reports and Proposals	Non Verbal Communication	
<b>13</b>	Writing Reports and Proposals	Workshop Week	
<b>14</b>	Completing Reports and Proposals	Final Presentations	
<b>15</b>	Course review	Creating an Online Presence and Introduce Pre-employment Tests	

Table 4  
*Further explanation of the recommended syllabus for the Business English course*

Recommended Syllabus	
Week	Course Structure
<b>1</b>	<p><b>Introduction to the Course and Class members</b></p> <p><i>Sample outline:</i></p> <p>Sunday: Explanation of course syllabus.</p> <p>Tuesday: 2 Ice breaking activities with rotational groups.</p> <p>Thursday: 2 Ice breaking activities with rotational groups.</p> <p><i>Further explanation:</i></p> <p>The use of ice breaking activities helps build comfort and rapport among students. It further engages students in informal communication with unknown individuals of different fields and backgrounds.</p> <p><i>Skill focus:</i></p> <p>Interaction and informal communication skills.</p> <p><i>Examples of activities:</i></p> <p>Basket of secrets, 5 things in common, heads up, and show and tell.</p>
<b>2</b>	<p><b>Business Idioms</b> (expressions and jargon)</p> <p><i>Sample outline:</i></p> <p>Sunday: Present students with a list of idioms, their meanings and examples used.</p> <p>Tuesday: continuation of business idioms.</p> <p>Thursday: Assign an individual assignment to students asking them to select 10 idioms and write them in sentences.</p> <p><i>Further explanation:</i></p> <p>To expand the vocabulary of business learners, idioms should be introduced at the beginning of the course and used throughout. Students will be able to recognize the meanings of Business English idioms and learn how to use them.</p> <p><i>Skill focus:</i></p> <p>Vocabulary skills.</p> <p><i>Examples of business idioms:</i></p> <p>Smooth sailings, the elephant in the room, up in the air, twist someone’s arm, word of</p>

	mouth, and see eye to eye.
<b>3</b>	<p><b>Business Messages</b></p> <p><i>Sample outline:</i></p> <p>Sunday: Planning and writing positive, negative and persuasive messages.</p> <p>Tuesday: Exploring and discussing samples of messages.</p> <p>Thursday: Case study assignment. Present students with a scenario from an online publication. Ask learners to analyze the case, select two roles and write two E-mails to each other.</p> <p><i>Further explanation:</i></p> <p>The exposure to the structure of business messages, in addition to samples, ensures that students understand the transition between theory and practicality. The introduction of a case study allows students to read about a real life scenario and experience how to react with similar situations. The instruction to select roles enables learners to put themselves in the shoes of different positions of employees. On the other hand, the exchange of messages allows learners to choose vocabulary appropriate to a range of topics during different environmental scenarios and write E-mails that are specific to the intended purpose.</p> <p><i>Skill focus:</i></p> <p>Problem solving, creative, informal communication and writing skills.</p> <p><i>Examples of case studies:</i></p> <p>Job performance, miscommunication problems, performance issues and fraud.</p>
<b>4</b>	<p><b>Job Preparation</b></p> <p><i>Sample outline:</i></p> <p>Sunday: Explore the sections included in business CVs, sample updated business CVs and provide students with websites to create appealing CVs. Request students to start conducting their CV for Thursday's workshop.</p> <p>Tuesday: Introduce cover letters and the hacks of writing effective cover letters. Ask students to look for a job application and begin writing a cover letter. Give students the time to complete the cover letter in their own time.</p> <p>Thursday: CV building workshop.</p> <p><i>Further explanation:</i></p>

	<p>The creation of CVs and cover letters helps build a portfolio of documents necessary for job applications. Introducing students to the many platforms available for creating a CV development showcases samples of updated CV expectations and allows learners to explore and select one appropriate for employment. Moreover, organizing a CV workshop will allow students to gain immediate feedback and approval from experts on their current progress.</p> <p><i>Skill focus:</i></p> <p>Creative skills.</p> <p><i>CV workshop may be held by:</i></p> <p>Human resource professor, career management professor, the business internship department, the alumni office at AUS and external business sources.</p>
5	<p><b>Job preparation cont.</b></p> <p><i>Sample outline:</i></p> <p>Sunday: Discuss the dos and don'ts of job interviews with the use of published articles and online videos.</p> <p>Tuesday: Peer assignment. Request students to choose peers, research and write five interview questions and conduct a practice interview.</p> <p>Thursday: Mock interviews at the professor's office.</p> <p><i>Further explanation:</i></p> <p>Instead of having students read and memorize what to do and not do during interviews, learners would benefit more from watching examples and engaging in practice interviews.</p> <p><i>Skill focus:</i></p> <p>Interview and verbal skills.</p> <p><i>Mock interview preparations:</i></p> <p>Request students to bring their CV, cover letter, dress to impress and treat the interview as it were real.</p>
6	<p><b>Informal Communication</b></p> <p><i>Sample outline:</i></p> <p>Sunday: The appropriateness of informal verbal communication and in what context.</p> <p>Tuesday: The appropriateness of informal written communication and in what context.</p> <p>Thursday: Classroom activity. Writing and presenting a one-minute informal pitch.</p> <p><i>Further explanation:</i></p>

	<p>In addition to being formal, learners need to practice being informal in order to communicate with or even pitch an idea to a colleague.</p> <p><i>Skill focus:</i></p> <p>Informal verbal communication, informal written communication and working under pressure <i>skills</i>.</p> <p>Pitches could be about:</p> <p>An invention, observation, concern or about oneself.</p>
7	<p><b>Planning Reports and Proposals</b></p> <p><i>Sample outline:</i></p> <p>Sunday: Introducing and discussing the structure of a business report or proposal.</p> <p>Tuesday: Selecting and determining topics for the assignment.</p> <p>Thursday: two-minute informal speeches on report plan and immediate feedback.</p> <p><i>Further explanation:</i></p> <p>Learners need to be familiar with the writing structure of reports prior to writing one. The two-minute informal speech ensures that students select their topic and begin visualizing what they will write.</p> <p><i>Skill focus:</i></p> <p>Informal communication and organization skills.</p>
8	<p><b>Report Outline and Resource Gathering</b></p> <p><i>Sample outline:</i></p> <p>Sunday: Start of outline.</p> <p>Tuesday: Analysis of adequate business reports.</p> <p>Thursday: Library session on searching for sources</p> <p><i>Further explanation:</i></p> <p>Examples always help students visualize the professor's expectation of the assignment. Thus, showcasing samples and discussing its strengths and weaknesses provide students with insights on correct or incorrect writing. In addition, the implementation of a library session encourages learners to begin looking for sources and helps those experiencing difficulties.</p> <p><i>Skill focus:</i></p> <p>Organization skills and selecting resources.</p>

<p><b>9</b></p>	<p><b>Writing Workshop</b></p> <p><i>Sample outline:</i></p> <p>Sunday: Students work on reports.</p> <p>Tuesday: Students work on reports.</p> <p>Thursday: Students work on reports.</p> <p><i>Further explanation:</i></p> <p>Providing students with a week of writing workshop allows them to conduct work, show drafts and receive immediate feedback.</p>
<p><b>10</b></p>	<p><b>Visual Communication</b></p> <p><i>Sample outline:</i></p> <p>Sunday: Lecture on the importance of generating graphs, self-explanatory illustrations, and selecting and/or creating complementary images and/or videos.</p> <p>Tuesday: Classroom demonstration and exercises on creating visuals.</p> <p>Thursday: Workshop on creating a visual relevant to the presentation.</p> <p><i>Further explanation:</i></p> <p>Receivers find themselves more focused when introduced to a visual of some sort. Often, visuals are needed to compliment the words being expressed. In addition to complimenting ones work, visuals provide the document or presentation with a more attractive touch. During the demonstration, students could use their laptops to follow the steps taken by the professor who is creating interesting visuals.</p> <p><i>Skill focus:</i></p> <p>Creative and visual communication skill.</p>
<p><b>11</b></p>	<p><b>Presentation Design</b></p> <p><i>Sample outline:</i></p> <p>Sunday: Lecture on managing white space, choosing fonts, adding text, selecting colors and creating a theme.</p> <p>Tuesday: Review examples of effective presentations and provide students with online platforms to create their presentation on.</p> <p>Thursday: Workshop day on starting presentations.</p> <p><i>Further explanation:</i></p> <p>It is essential that students learn how to create presentations that are concise and</p>



	<p>appealing. Throughout this week, learners are exposed to a variety of effective presentations and introduced to presentation platforms other than PowerPoint.</p> <p><i>Skill focus:</i></p> <p>Creative and presentation development skills.</p> <p><i>Examples of presentation platforms:</i></p> <p>Visme, prezi, canva, moovly and emaze.</p>
<p><b>12</b></p>	<p><b>Non Verbal Communication</b></p> <p><i>Sample outline:</i></p> <p>Sunday: Lecture on body language, posture, eye contact, distance, voice, touch, fashion, behavior, time and emotions.</p> <p>Tuesday: Introduce the concept of active listening and the steps to becoming effective listeners.</p> <p>Thursday: Discussion on nonverbal cues following a video analysis. Play a video on the projector and ask students to write what the individual did appropriately and inappropriately.</p> <p><i>Further explanation:</i></p> <p>Non-verbal cues could send subtle signals that reinforce what is being said and showcase the emotion or thoughts conveyed by the listener and speaker. It is essential that students are exposed to appropriate and inappropriate non-verbal communication cues for the final presentation and future employment. Watching a video and discussing behaviors learnt in the lecture will provide students with an eye opening experience that may further increase self awareness on their nonverbal communication.</p> <p><i>Skill focus:</i></p> <p>Situation analysis and non-verbal communication skills.</p>
<p><b>13</b></p>	<p><b>Presentation Workshop</b></p> <p><i>Sample outline:</i></p> <p>Sunday: Students work on presentations.</p> <p>Tuesday: Students work on presentations.</p> <p>Thursday: Guest speaker on presenting effectively.</p> <p><i>Further explanation:</i></p> <p>Providing students with a week of presentation workshop allows them to conduct work, show drafts and receive immediate feedback.</p>

<p><b>14</b></p>	<p><b>Final presentations</b></p> <p>Students present their final presentations. The Business English professors can send invitations to business professors and experts to attend, question students and provide feedback.</p> <p><i>Skill focus:</i> public speaking and oral communication skills.</p>
<p><b>15</b></p>	<p><b>Creating an Online Presence</b></p> <p><i>Sample outline:</i></p> <p>Sunday: Introduce LinkedIn and encourage students to create an account.</p> <p>Tuesday: Send pre-employment tests and allow students to fill them out.</p> <p>Thursday: Course feedback.</p> <p><i>Further explanation:</i></p> <p>Students should be encouraged to create an online presence prior to applying for internships or jobs, for example LinkedIn account. LinkedIn has become a very important platform for students looking for jobs. In addition, pre-employment tests are encouraged to determine what positions, fields or even companies one's interest and personality is compatible with.</p>

## **Chapter 8: Conclusions**

### **8.1 Summary**

Today, English has become the international language of business. Globally, it has become essential for business workers from marketing, management, finance, accounting, economics, and international trade to acquire the particular vocabulary and communication structures Business English entails. Due to high communicative expectations from business employers, many educational institutes have initiated the development of Business English courses. With that being said, this research aimed to study the perceptions of four groups on the Business English course offered at AUS: business students, business graduates, business professors, and English professors. The analysis of collected interviews and student questionnaires could conclude that the Business English course does not fulfill the professional needs of business learners and develop the required market skills. Feedback revealed the course content to be very theoretical, outdated, and limited to the development of oral, nonverbal, and visual communication skills. Moreover, business students and graduates highlighted the importance of including input from business professors on the course content, reworking the materials used and possibly implementing the technique of team-teaching. To ensure that learners receive satisfactory course outcomes, it is highly recommended that the Business English professors receive adequate training of business communication to increase their knowledge of the discipline prior to teaching the course, in addition to incorporating the consultative team-teaching method for the selection of appropriate content. Furthermore, business SSIs may be assigned to support uncertainties or misunderstandings experienced by the Business English professors. Nevertheless, a customized course structure has been recommended based on the responses received from all four groups, in addition to the topics expressed by researchers. Out of the most common points emphasized by researchers and understood from data collected is the importance of developing well-rounded communicators. Thus, it is recommended that the Business English course at AUS titled ENG 225: Writing for Business be changed to ENG 225: Professional Communication for Business People. The course has been designed to purposely include theory and practice (providing a mixture of workshops,

group activity, peer exercise, or weekly discussions), and expose students to a variety of topics and include business experts when possible. In conclusion, this customized syllabus is just the start of improving the Business English course. Additional recommendations from business employers in corporations should further be taken into consideration prior to any official course change.

## **8.2 Limitations of the Study**

A few limitations related to the study were identified. Answers to the survey and interview questions were compiled to collect data relevant to this study. In spite of piloting the survey and ensuring clarity of all questions and statements included, such data collection tools have an inherent risk of students misunderstanding the formulated questions, which may impact the findings of this research. Rice et al. (2017) explored the disadvantages of internet-based surveys, while raising concerns associated with misunderstanding the formulated questions. Furthermore, feedback received from business undergraduates and graduates underlined the exaggerated length of the questionnaire. Thus, responders may have been less cooperative towards the end of the survey. Also, all the participants of the study represent AUS students with backgrounds, cultures, and attitudes that differ from students attending other universities around the world. As such, the findings and recommendations of this study may not be representative of students in other universities. Moreover, the new syllabus proposed in this study has not been implemented yet in the classroom. Therefore, it would be difficult to make conclusions over the effectiveness of the proposed syllabus. Nonetheless, the proposed syllabus can be to tailor an ESP course for business students.

## **8.3 Areas for Further Research**

This study scratched the surface of investigating the needs of business students enrolled in a Business English course at AUS. While the proposed syllabus gathered feedback from business undergraduates, business graduates, business professors, and English professors, examining job postings, and reviewing perceptions from business managers and employers have not been taken into account in this study. Thus, future research should aim to investigate the similarities and/or dissimilarities between business practitioners and business professors on an English language business communication

course. Such research should occur prior to implementing a new syllabus in order to ensure that students receive optimum education that satisfies the market needs. Furthermore, as this study might not be representative of students attending other universities, further research could be performed on this topic involving students of several universities.

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## Appendix A

### Survey for ENG 225 Undergraduate Students.

#### **The Effect of Collaboration Between Discipline Specialist and ESP Instructors on the Efficacy of ESP University Courses.**

This study explores the efficacy of the ENG 225 course (writing for business) at the American University of Sharjah and contributions of the Business departments to the course design. Your responses help gain an understanding of your perception on the course contents and delivery. Your participation is voluntary and you can withdraw from the study at any time. Your responses will be kept confidential and only used for the purpose of this study. Your participation in this survey will not affect your grades in any way. It will require between 10-15 minutes of your time. Participating in the survey will be considered an act of consent to use your responses. Your cooperation is highly appreciated!

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me (Leena Abu Yousef) through the following E-mail address: [g00047210@aus.edu](mailto:g00047210@aus.edu)

#### **Section I:**

Gender:       Male       Female

Status:  Student       Graduate

Major:       Marketing    Management    Finance    Accounting    Economics

Other \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Section II:**



Please read the list below carefully. For each statement, select the response that best represents the degree of your **agreement** or **disagreement**:

1 Strongly Disagree (SD)      2 Disagree (D)      3 Neutral (N)      4 Agree (A)      5 Strongly Agree (SA)

	SD	D	N	A	SA
<b>Student Participation</b>					
I was actively participating in the course.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I made positive progress in the course.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I received effective feedback throughout the course.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I was motivated to attend all lectures.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall, I would recommend this course to other students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Content</b>	SD	D	N	A	SA
The content taught was valuable and worth learning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The content taught fulfills my professional needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The course content could be improved by input from the Business departments.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The course covered enough topics throughout the semester.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The course content positively influenced my internship or job tasks.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Instructor</b>	SD	D	N	A	SA
The instructor demonstrated knowledge of the Business subjects and concepts.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The instructor was effective in communicating the content of the course.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The instructor was enthusiastic about the course.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The instructor brought his or her own material to class.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The course should be team-taught by an English instructor and a Business	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

instructor.

<b>Material</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>
Technology was used commonly throughout the course.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Material used is a good representation of real life scenarios.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I found oral communication tasks effective.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I found written communication tasks effective.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I believe the material used should be revised.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>

**Usefulness of topics (If you have not covered any of the topics below, please keep them blank)**

Writing CVs/Resumes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Writing cover letters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Writing formal letters and E-mails	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Writing proposals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Planning and writing reports	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Giving oral presentations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Designing and delivering PowerPoint presentations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Applying and interviewing for jobs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Creating an online presence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pre-employment subject and personality tests					

**Section III:**

Is there anything missing from the course that you would recommend adding?

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Did you find a good match between skills acquired and labor market requirements?

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Do you believe that ENG 225 should have a group work project similar to the poster presentation of ENG 207? Why or why not?

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What topics did you enjoy most from this course and why?

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**Thank You**

## Appendix B

### Survey for Business graduates

**Official link:** <https://forms.gle/phmio5ueQfpaZDuG7>

#### **The Effect of Collaborative Discipline on the Efficacy of ESP University Courses.**

This study explores the efficacy of the ENG 225 course (writing for business) at the American University of Sharjah and contributions of the Business departments to the course design. Your responses will help gain an understanding of your perception on the course contents and delivery. Your participation is voluntary and you can withdraw from the study at any time. Your responses will be kept confidential and only used for the purpose of this study. It will require between 10-15 minutes of your time. Participating in the survey will be considered an act of consent to use your responses. Your cooperation is highly appreciated!

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me (Leena Abu Yousef) through the following E-mail address: [g00047210@aus.edu](mailto:g00047210@aus.edu)

#### **Section I:**

Gender:       Male       Female

Position:     Student     Graduate

Major:       Marketing  Management  Finance  Accounting  Economics

Other \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Section II:**

Please read the list below carefully. For each statement, select the response that best represents the degree of your **agreement** or **disagreement**:

1 Strongly Disagree    2 Disagree    3 Neutral    4 Agree    5 Strongly Agree

**Student Participation**

	SD	D	N	A	SA
I was actively participating in the course.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I made positive progress in the course.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I received effective feedback throughout the course.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I was motivated to attend all lectures.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall, I would recommend this course to other students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SD    D    N    A    SA

**Content**

The content taught was valuable and worth learning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The content taught fulfills my professional needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The course content could be improved by input from the Business departments.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The course covered enough topics throughout the semester.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The course content positively influenced my internship or job tasks.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Instructor**

	SD	D	N	A	SA
The instructor demonstrated knowledge of the Business subjects and concepts.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The instructor was effective in communicating the content of the course.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The instructor was enthusiastic about the course.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The instructor brought his or her own material to class.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The course should be team-taught by an English instructor and a Business instructor.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Material</b>	SD	D	N	A	SA
Technology was used commonly throughout the course.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Material used is a good representation of real life scenarios.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I found oral communication tasks effective.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I found written communication tasks effective.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I believe the material used should be revised.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Usefulness of topics (If you have not covered any of the topics below, please keep them blank)</b>	SD	D	N	A	SA
Writing CVs/Resumes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Writing cover letters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Writing formal letters and E-mails	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Writing proposals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Planning and writing reports	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Giving oral presentations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Designing and delivering PowerPoint presentations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Applying and interviewing for jobs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Creating an online presence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pre-employment subject and personality tests					

**Section III:**

Is there anything missing from the course that you would recommend adding?

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Did you find a good match between skills acquired and labor market requirements?

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Do you believe that ENG 225 should have a group work project similar to the poster presentation of ENG 207? Why or why not?

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What topics did you enjoy most from this course and why?

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**Thank You**

## Appendix C

### Survey for ENG 225 Professors

#### **The Effect of Collaboration Between Discipline Specialist and ESP Instructors on the Efficacy of ESP University Courses.**

This study explores the efficacy of the ENG 225 course (writing for business) at the American University of Sharjah and contributions of the Business departments to the course design. Your responses will help gain an understanding of the course foundation and design. Your participation is voluntary and you can withdraw from the study at any time. Your responses will be kept confidential and only used for the purpose of this study. It will require between 10-15 minutes of your time. Participating in the survey will be considered an act of consent to use your responses. Your cooperation is highly appreciated! Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me (Leena Abu Yousef) through the following E-mail address: [g00047210@aus.edu](mailto:g00047210@aus.edu)

#### **Section I: Personal Information**

1. How long have you been teaching the course?

0-2 Years

3-5 Years

6 Years +

2. What is your area of specialization?

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3. Have you ever worked in a business environment?

Yes

No



## Section II: Course Description

4. What kind of material do you use in the ENG 225 course?

- Textbook
- Authentic Material
- Customized Material
- All of the Above
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

5. How is technology incorporated in your course?

- Tests and assessments
- Tasks and practical work
- Presentations
- Videos for lessons
- Discussion Boards
- Visual Images
- Social Media
- Feedback
- Questions
- Technology is not used in my course
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

6. What kind of skills do you focus on most?

- Oral Communication skills
- Writing skills
- Linking theory to practice
- Critical Judgment
- Independent thinking
- Creative thinking

- Presentation skills
- Problem solving skills
- Team building skills
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Section III: Course Design**

7. How is your current ENG225 course designed?
- I design the course syllabus.
  - The Head of the English Department designs the course syllabus.
  - A group of professors from the English department design the course syllabus.
  - The Business departments design the course syllabus.
  - Both, professors from the English Department and the Business Department cooperatively design the course syllabus.
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_

8. Is there anyone from the Business Departments involved in the design of the ENG 225 course?
- Yes
  - No

If yes, how does this process play out? Is their input valuable to your course?

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If no, how do you understand the needs of your students? Do you believe your students would learn more with input from the Business Departments?

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9. What are your thoughts on team-teaching/ co-teaching?

- I think it's a good idea and should be implemented.
- I think it's a good idea, however its implementation may add complications.
- I do not think it is necessary, as it will not add any benefits to the course.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Section III: Course Outcomes**

10. How do you link the gap between your students' linguistic needs and the reality of their field?

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11. Do you believe this course prepares students to communicate effectively in the Business world?

- Yes
- No

Why or why not?

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12. What are the business market needs that you are preparing students for?

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13. If given complete flexibility, what would you change, add or remove from the ENG 225 course?

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**Thank You**

## Appendix D

### Interview Questions for Business Professors.

Please have a look at this syllabus. (Hand out syllabus of Eng 225 to business professors)

Name (optional) : \_\_\_\_\_

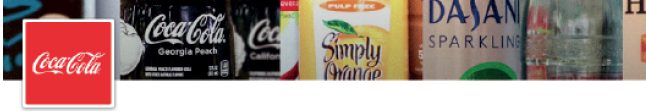
Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Years of experience:  0-2 Years  3-5 Years  6-9 Years  9+

1. Do you believe this course prepares students to communicate effectively in the Business world? Why or why not?
2. What topics would you remove?
3. What topics would you add?
4. Do you believe the skills developed are satisfactory for a Business workplace?
5. What skills would you add or focus on more?
6. What are your beliefs about team-teaching/co-teaching?
7. If you were designing the course syllabus, what would you do differently?
8. Do you recommend that the business professors should be involved in the course design and selecting its contents?
9. Do you think that students should be introduced to and taught about pre-employment subject tests content and personality tests?
10. What are the business market needs that students should be prepared for?

## Appendix E

### Internship and Job Ads



#### Employee Relations Consultant (EMEA)

The Coca-Cola Company • Dubai, AE

What you need to be successful

- Business Level English language oral and written communication fluency essential. Local language desirable.
- Exceptional communication skills.
- Ability to establish relationships of trust with local business leaders.
- Ability to recognize impact of own behavior on others and to adjust/flex style appropriately.
- Strong personal relationships building across the business.
- Team player.
- Cross-cultural sensitivity.
- Approach to challenge constructively.
- Eagerness to drive change.

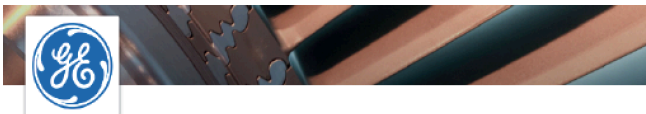


#### HR Intern - Unpaid

Emaar Hospitality Group • Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Requirements:

- Creative, out of the box personality and CAN DO attitude.
- Currently located in Dubai with valid residence visa.
- First class people skills and the ability to communicate effectively.
- Fluent in spoken and written English.
- Ability to communicate effectively across a multi-national, multi-cultural environment.



#### FMP Trainee - Dubai

GE Power • Dubai, AE

Desired Characteristics:-Academic excellence with financial or quantitative interest/competency.

- Strong analytical and problem-solving skills.
- Proven leadership ability and initiative.
- Excellent communication, interpersonal and influencing skills.
- Flexible, adaptable and geographically mobile.



## Assistant Brand Manager

Procter & Gamble • Dubai, AE

### Desired Skills and Experience

#### Qualifications Needed:

- Bachelor's or higher in Marketing, Business Administration or any business-related field coupled with Brand Management interest/passion.
- 0-3 years relevant experience (preferred)
- Leadership/Self-starting/out of the box thinking capabilities
- Excellent interpersonal and collaboration skills
- Ability to think strategically, work effectively, in a diverse environment, and solve problems through innovation and creativity
- English Fluency, Arabic is a plus



## Finance Analyst

Apple • Dubai, AE

### Key Qualifications

Due to the nature and criticality of this role, we are looking for an individual with a proven track record of success in a comparable environment  
You will be well versed in Channel Sales in particular and are likely to come from a complex, fast paced, matrix driven business and be able to demonstrate how you have successfully led a finance team  
You will have exceptional Finance grounding and understanding  
You will have a strong understanding of Channel business models and a track record of working with Sales teams  
You will have a demonstrable track record in leading change and business improvement and will be an innovative team player  
Top tier communication and influencing skills along with being fluent in spoken and written English and Arabic is essential



## Audit Intern - EY Abu Dhabi Assurance Audit

### Skills And Attributes For Success

- Commercial acumen
- Team player
- Strong analytical and problem-solving skills
- Confidence to work effectively in a high-energy, fast-moving environment
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills in Arabic and English



**Credit Controller**  
OSN • Dubai, United Arab Emirates



**Customer Excellence** (internal/external customer engagement and relationship management)

- Develop and maintain an excellent relationship with all stakeholders
- Close Liaison with Sales and regional finance teams

**People Excellence** (internal/external customer engagement and relationship management)

- To create an environment which is a great place to work for you and your colleagues through your dedication, enthusiasm, sharing of knowledge, honesty and desire to support others.
- To display excellent standards in all you do and inspire others to do the same, and that you operate within legislative/regulatory and company policies and procedures.
- To display confidence, self-belief and openness to new ideas, adapting and embracing challenges and opportunities with a determination to excel.
- Continuously develop own skills by attending all required training courses and maintaining an up to date knowledge of products, services, systems and work processes.



## Vita

Leena Abu-Yousef pursued her undergraduate degree in the year 2016 at the American University of Sharjah (AUS) with a major in Business Management and minor in Design Management. Preceding her graduation, Leena was selected from a large pool of applicants to join a marketing training program at L'Oréal Group, the world leader in beauty. Her role was to organize product launches and communicate the brand's future visions visually, orally, and in writing. Throughout her training, Leena commonly mentored other colleagues on their communication tactics. Reaching the end of her training, Leena recognized a passion for teaching Business English.

Immediately after completing the training program, Leena joined the MA TESOL program in 2017 at AUS. During her studies, she planned the execution of the Bridge Program's first social media platform, privately tutored students in need, and aided in the research of multiple professors. With a passion for and educational foundation of business, Leena dedicated her research on investigating ways to improve a Business English course offered at AUS.

Leena is ambitiously working as a part-time instructor in the Outreach Program at AUS within the domain of Business English. Her profession consists of guiding job seekers to becoming well-rounded communicators that are able to communicate effectively in their application process and throughout their occupation.