

## **Business English in PG Curriculum of Indian B-Schools: A Study**

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### **Abstract:**

Business management education of Indian B-schools get struggle to produce world class professionals and number of graduate/ post graduate students have also problem on employment. The talent managers cited English communicative problem as one of the key reasons in most of the cases. The present article investigates the position of Business English syllabus in B-schools of Ahmedabad city. The faculties associated with the profession provided several insights through mail/phone by suggesting to improve communicative competence of students. In conclusion, the need for recognizing Business English as independent discipline can be proved as sustainable academic discipline in Indian HEIs.

**Keywords:** Business English, curriculum, communicative competence, faculties, independent discipline.

### **Introduction**

India is known for its identity as multi-lingual across the world and its language of business communication is English in most of the MNCs, media houses, financial institutes and state –owned PSEs employs management graduates. Such management graduates require to train adequately for business communication in excellent manner. An MBA degree is the key to unlock successful career with excellent business communication skills along with business savvy. The survey on Skills Gap Survey conducted by Higher Education Forum concludes views of employers as: “They expect new MBAs to come to

the corporate world with the proper attitude, they must possess proper analytic, listening and analytic skills.” (SGS, 2011) The survey also reflected on need for increasing core competencies of management trainees in India.

Graddol D (2009), observed on business communicative skills in his *English Next, India* as “a part of the unemployment problem emanates from the mismatch between the skill requirements of the market and the skill base of the job seekers. English is a vocational skill which substantially improves labor mobility and improves employment outcomes. He goes to state that the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) has demanded that accelerated English learning classes must be included.” Indian B-school curriculum on *Business English* need to match with global parameters in terms of communicative competence in English. It is necessary to meet employer expectations in this context in Indian corporate world.

The reviews obtained on business communicative gaps from faculties engaged with teaching Business English/ Business Communication in select ten B-schools of Ahmedabad city provide several directions on diluting gap between the two.

The key reason reflected during the faculty interview on phone are related to recognize the significance of study course. Another reason concerns with qualitative faculty to teach students. The B-schools need faculty that enable the students to coach 360-degree English communicative skills and can able to constitute strong business relations through effective BE.

The most eye-catching point traced during the phonic interviews with faculties teaching business on recognizing separate discipline on *BE & communication* with a view to enhance employability in business sector in India. Joshi Prem Lal (2006), observed that: “the sudden spurt in these B-schools has also raised concerns about quality and the need for regulatory mechanisms among academia and industry captains.” Business communication is considered as a separate subject in Indian B-schools from the last several years but it is insufficient. It is necessary to come out from entertaining business communication skills as an elective subject in B-schools. Kelly & Sokovtz (1996), studied that “... it implies that communication is not a core expertise for managers...the students who need the course most are often the ones most likely to avoid it.” The students take lightly the subject during their MBA pursuance.

Another point traced during the phonic interviews with faculties teaching business on the role of curricula designers. The curriculum designers at appropriate level have strong machinery to design the course but it is necessary to make stronger with more experts' participation. The theoretical part of the subject like BC should be made more effective by using ICT and practical tools. The AICTE plays the role of an umbrella for B-schools as regularity authority. It has to review curriculum design of BC in HEIs.

Another point is related to need of BC and BE in Indian B-schools. There should be undergraduate as well as post graduate courses in BC and BE in Indian B-schools. The time has taken place to keep away traditional courses on Business communication in Indian B-schools. The government of India to establish individual body on recognizing BC and BE as special and separate discipline in management studies.

Another point is noticed during the present investigation on teaching Business English in B-schools of Gujarat concerned with giving due weightage to L<sub>2</sub> during school level English teaching. The problems associated with teaching and learning English as a second language at par with the standard of International curricula. Second point concern to cultural influence during English teaching and learning during school level. The same reflects during learning BE in higher education. It is a bare fact during learning BE in higher education.

The point concern to medium of language learning during the school level. The most of the students learn English as a second language through Gujarati language and the same also reflects during BE learning at higher educational level.

Another factor is noticed on time constraint by the faculties during their phonic interview on BE or BC teaching-learning in India. The core level courses such as marketing, finance, HR take precedence over BC or BE within the span of semesters. It means full time four semester for an MBA does not have the space of sufficient time to learn and teach BE/BC which can match the need of business industry. It is necessary to allot full flow of time for teaching /learning BE/BC during the entire time tenure of an MBA i.e. six semesters. It should be ongoing study to students' point of view. It is also need of time to collaborate students, teachers, stake-holders, employers and curriculum designers on one axis to develop BC/BE as separate full-length discipline in Indian B-schools or in academic world.

Another important factor traced during the interview with the faculties on shortage of competent faculty in Indian B-schools in general. It is desired to bridge the gap between teaching and learning on BC/BE through the value-added training to students as well as teachers of BE/BC in Indian B-schools. It is necessary to pay due importance to such training in academic industry. The previous research on communicative skills indicate that communication skills can be developed through appropriate training. It is also learnt that several Indian B-schools adopted BE/BC as a part of curriculum in full flow but it is not sufficient as a whole. The role of faculty in B-schools also becomes important. Zang and Wang (2011) studied that:” The rise of Business English as a major poses immediate challenges on faculty development, curriculum development and modes of multi-competent Business English talent as well as academic requirements such as quality standards and criteria of Business English teaching just to name a few. “In this case, BE/BC teachers were trained in relevant subject Kelly (2005) also raised his fingers towards increasing demand on BC/BE teachers in Asia including India. He also reported that there were various reasons such as non-standard government legislations and non-regulated teaching institution in Asia.

Another point is traced during the interview with the faculties on lack of classic study material to teach and learn BE/BC in India. It is necessary to know the demarcation line between BE and BC. It is also noticed that the faculties hired for BC or managerial communication studies have academic background on English literature. It is a bare fact that only proficiency of fluency of language cannot meet the criteria on teaching BC at par with global level. Most of the faculties reported as bookish concerned in terms of knowledge of English as a communicative skill. They are proved as irrelevant to management students. It is necessary for faculty to have sufficient theoretical /practical knowledge on BC/BE with excellent skills.

Bhatia and Hynes (1996) studied that shortage of qualified teachers on BC/BE, Indian B-schools preferred to use part time of visiting faculties. This also can be barrier to quality teaching of BE/BC. Several B-schools handshaking industry-academic to resolve the issue on teaching BE/BC, but teacher-learner gap on building appropriate environment during the study period was found unhealthy. It also constitutes as a barrier to management students to learn BC.BE. One more study conducted by Rajadhyaksha (2002) found that hiring part time or visiting faculty for the purpose of teaching BE/BC seems to be reiterated

by the students. So that, it can be said that ideal teacher of BE/BC should strike balance between global and local business communication.

It is also noticed during interviews with the faculties that BC/BE teacher need to be facilitator instead of controller of teaching. One study on teaching BC conducted by Cepon (2005) supports the observation made.

It is also noticed during the interview that Government India should think over stored data base of BE/BC experts for future business managers by conducting examinations as doing in Indian Administrative Services.

The following model can be more useful to understand need of increasing business communication skills of management students in India.

The teacher's role in teaching business communication at PG level is quite responsible. The teacher can be seen as diagnostician. The teacher also can be seen as very good planner. The teacher must be seen as a manager, also. As a whole, the teacher also can be seen as a provider, also. Such type of different roles should remain present during learning-teaching process. The teacher should find out the needs, interests, and language difficulties and preferred learning styles of the students. The teacher should also foster group feeling (such as co-operation, likings, common aims, mutual confidence, etc.) The teacher can also ensure progress of learners. It is a prime function of teacher to help student to develop positive and individual strategies for learning. Therefore, it can be said that teacher is clearly acting as a diagnostician, planner, manager and provider according to situational environment in performing certain functions.

Government is empowered with state- directive policy on foreign language teaching in India. The central as well as state governments make and implementing policy on English teaching in Indian HEIs. An alternative mechanism on teaching English at higher educational level is adopted in India. Government should prepare world class professionals in Business English teaching. It becomes prime duty of the government to eliminate loopholes on teaching/learning BE at higher education. The needs of BE teaching must be fulfilled by the government. The government should encourage use of technology in teaching BE in a large scale in the state.

HEI's role towards English teaching becomes very important in present scenario. It is a prime function for any HEI to create competency in Business English teaching by giving world class training to the teachers. HEI must minimize the limitations on BE

learning/teaching in the classroom. HEI should improve student`s study and career prospectus.

The student`s role on learning BE is always crucial. The students of BE should adjust themselves with new social media tools in terms of learning BE. The students demand on learning BE with new or alternative curricula designing. The key point is motivation. The students must motivate themselves to learn BE which can compete them at global change in learning BE.

Thus, teacher role, student role and government role are important in teaching/ learning BE in Gujarat where L2 has less opportunity to develop. As a nutshell, employer-centric curricula in BE is the most emerging need of time in the state like Gujarat.

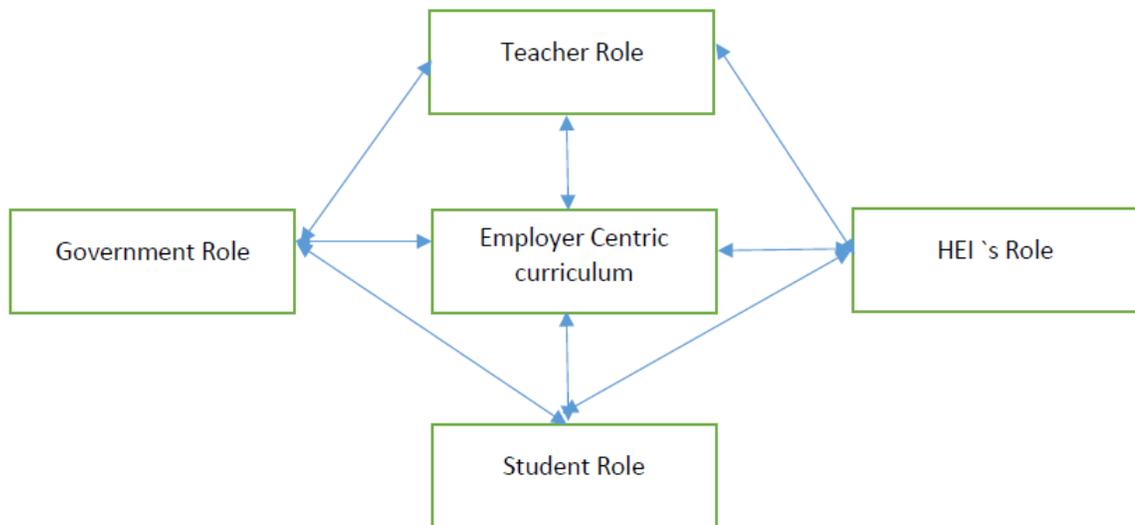


Figure-1 self-prepared: Curriculum Expectation Model (self-prepared)

Figure-1 consists of elements such as government role, student role, and teacher role in employer –centric curriculum for an MBA students in Indian B-schools. The different roles of components should change time to time as business stages are changing in India from time to time. In the present study, teachers` perceptions on an MBA curriculum for BE/BC are reflected in different dimension. All the dimensions such as: government policy on curriculum design, student-teacher role and HEIs` role concentrated on demand-centric curriculum in business industry of India. India will be able to produce BC/BE professionals at par with global demand.

The following suggestions made by the authors on the basis of concluding the essence of interviewed faculties of B-schools awarding degree of an MBA in Ahmedabad city.

The regulatory body of course designers need to ensure importance of BC/BE in business industry by giving sufficient weightage to BE/BC curriculum at post graduate level. The time span on reviewing the syllabus should be speedy in rotated manner.

The theoretical knowledge on BE/BC to students of an MBA need to recognize as a bunch of knowledge capability which can be shared to others on need base.

The practical knowledge on BE/BC to an MBA students should be made more accessible by using ICT and other tools. Such practices should measure communicative competence of the students. It may improve integrated communication across an MBA curriculum.

The need of UG/PG level course on BC/BE should introduce in all HEIs of India which will produce world class BE/BC professionals as well as professionalism across the nation. It will create more job opportunities to ELT professionals across the nation.

The need of separate cell in Ministry of Education on BE/BC experts with data base information which can meet demand supply ratio of teachers in HEIs.

Employer –centric need of Business English teaching cannot be overlooked for further more time. The need must be analyzed by handshaking with industry and then curricula can be designed.

It is the time need to embrace the new requirements in teaching/learning BE as a special drive by recognizing it as discipline at UG/PG level which will provide excellent opportunities to BE professionals.

To conclude, sustainable innovation is a need of HEIs of India by redesigning and implementing curricula for an MBA students to meet global demand of excellent business professionals in India. In other words, an MBA curriculum should be employer`s demand centric not only student-centric or teacher centric or HEI`s –centric. The HEIs` will surely achieve their goals on producing world class professionalism through BE in India.

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