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**SUGGESTING A COMPETENCY-BASED APPROACH TO  
ESP TEACHING**

**A CASE STUDY OF MARKETING AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE CLASSES AT  
INSIM INSTITUTE**

*Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for Magister Degree in ESP*

**Presented by:**

Mrs. DJELIL Radjaa

**Supervised by:**

Dr. BELKHENCHIR Khadoudja

**Members of the Jury:**

President:	Professor MILIANI Mohamed	(University of Oran)
Supervisor:	Dr. BELKHENCHIR Khadoudja	(University of Oran)
Examiner:	Dr. MELLOUK Mohamed	(University of Sidi Bel Abbès)
Examiner:	Dr. MERBOUH Zouaoui	(University of Sidi Bel Abbès)

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## **DECLARATION**

I, hereby, declare that this work has not been accepted in substance for any degree, and is not concurrently being submitted in candidature for any other degree.

**Radjaa DJELIL**

The researching, preparation and presentation of the thesis have been undertaken entirely by the author.

**Radjaa DJELIL**

## DEDICATION

*This work is dedicated to my parents and family, and to my husband for being a source of inspiration and support.*

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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**Mrs. Radjaa DJELIL**

## ABSTRACT

Suggesting a Competency-Based Approach (CBA) to English for Specific Purposes (ESP) syllabus design is the main theme of this dissertation. This idea of research has its genesis back to 2006 when an observation was made by the researcher on the Business English syllabus which is taught at university. Syllabus analysis has shown that, even though, it instructs a rich repertoire of business vocabulary, it still lacks an essence of meeting the students' needs. Furthermore, if this syllabus eventually meets some of the learners' needs, it does not help develop the essential competencies for a successful professional career. Obviously, the traditional time-based education, which is used to teach English, is inappropriate when conducting specific and professional trainings in special educational environments. Implementing CBA to ESP education appears as an appropriate reply. It basically promotes the idea of developing specific skills to reach specific teaching set objectives. For this reason, highlighting CBA to the teaching of ESP at INSIM Institute is this research's aim and objective. The main point lies in identifying specific learners' needs, the expectations of business companies and combining these data for an ESP syllabus design based on developing specific competencies. In that sense, we shall consider the steps to reach in order to present the final product - syllabus. These steps include collecting data i.e. the students' and companies' questionnaires, corpus analysis and presenting a synopsis of the already existing syllabus. Results have shown that unless we include both, learners' needs and business companies' expectations, ESP syllabus cannot meet the purpose behind this specific type of training. The present study encapsulates the implementation of CBA in ESP teaching; training Business English students in the language as well as the practical business contexts. A Competency-Based syllabus is suggested to enhance the communicative skill which focuses on the target field – business. As a result of implementing CBA to ESP comes the Competency-Based syllabus for ESP learners. CBA is intensely incorporated in ESP syllabus design to suggest not only a language teaching tool but also a competency-related development teaching material – Business English syllabus. On the larger scope of education, CBA also appears to be an appropriate teaching method to LMD system. Educational reforms have adopted LMD to improve the level of efficiency of the educational and pedagogical systems in which “competency” constitutes the central educational objective. The LMD educational objectives target to train students to become competent and so does CBA which can better respond to the LMD system exigencies for more advantageous educational outcomes.

**Keywords:** *ESP, Competency-Based Approach, Business English, syllabus design*

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

**BE:** Business English

**CBA:** Competency-Based Approach

**CBI:** Competency-Based Instruction

**CBT:** Competency-Based Teaching

**CLT:** Communicative Language Teaching

**EAP:** English for Academic Purposes

**ELT:** English Language Teaching

**EOP:** English for Occupational Purposes

**ESP:** English for Specific Purposes

**GE:** General English

**INSIM:** Institut International de Management

**L1:** First Language

**L2:** Second Language

**NA:** Needs Analysis

**PBA:** Performance-Based Approach

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# **GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

## **General Introduction**

The world is changing rapidly and so is the educational sector. In a world increasingly dominated by science and technology, access to learning is becoming easier, thanks to technology and the available access to education via the internet, and the learning environments are experiencing fast transformations. The learning settings are consequently following this change by moving from physical to virtual infrastructures and from public to private sectors. As a result to these international economic changes, educational institutions are gradually submitting to the market economy laws. Post World-War II, notable expansion of international businesses has led to a huge growth in the area of English teaching and has logically served as a prelude to a more focused English teaching within which English for Specific Purposes (henceforth E.S.P.) has a considerable share.

English Language Teaching (ELT) has drawn attention of the Algerian government since the 1970's; it has been introduced as an unavoidable choice to have open access to the world, and as the means of communication. This fact has hitherto resulted in adopting continuous reforms that have started at the secondary level by implementing Competency-Based Approach and then adopting the LMD system at university. These reforms have also influenced ELT as they aim to improve the congruency between the input of teaching and the quality of the target language competency (ies). Specific to ELT in Algeria, these educational reforms appear as a concordance between the different levels of educational outcomes and the market needs for competent users of the English language in specific working settings.

On the other hand, the new exigency that calls for accountability between the educational outcomes and the labour market demand has urged the Algerian market to obviously submit to the international economic system. As a matter of fact, the level of English proficiency has become an important factor for employment opportunities within the Algerian market. Domestic, foreign and multinational companies show substantial interest in English proficiency (e.g. mastery of English is a necessary

criterion for job employment as shown in most job advertisements in Algerian newspapers) to compete domestically and to achieve an efficient communication internationally.

Organizations outside the education sector have drawn a framework for more sophisticated education. Institutions' students, as clients, whose purpose of learning English relates to specific professions, seek to acquire competencies in different educational sectors. Once these learners join private educational institutions, they seek trainings that help them fit in the external market demand to consequently embark on a successful professional career. As a result, private educational institutions have become more corresponding to the demand of learners and more in-tune with the growing demand of the labour market.

For these reasons, this dissertation aims to adjust learners' expectations to the specific demand of the market, by suggesting a Competency-Based Approach to ESP teaching at the Institut International de Management (henceforth INSIM) private institute. The optimal objective of this study is to match Competency-Based Approach with ESP teaching, and to propose a type of syllabus that can serve as a practical resource for the ESP practitioners at INSIM Institute.

The starting point of this dissertation comes from an evident belief that educational institutions can best provide organizations, in their different natures and activities, with the exact competencies and qualifications. Once the learners' expectations and the market diverse criteria of recruitment are assembled, Business English syllabus meets supply and demand; learners' needs and market expectations get joined in a type of syllabus that adheres to Competency-Based Approach.

The taught INSIM syllabus under study has been applied at university level during the academic years 2005-2008 where we experienced Business English teaching in the Department of International Trade using the current syllabus which results proved to be unsatisfactory. The final year exam results as well as the level of students in the

following academic years have given evidence of the syllabus hindrance. Today, applying the same syllabus at INSIM institute questions its efficiency and quality. Therefore, we question what this syllabus is missing to meet the needs and expectations of INSIM specific learners. This lack is evidently reflected on the students' marks at the end of the year.

At a different scale, the teacher was left on his/her own to design courses to this specific category of learners of International Trade and Marketing. Accordingly, the teacher was asked to achieve an advanced level in the English proficiency during a limited period of time, one session of one and a half hour weekly. She was not offered time to do needs analysis to decide what courses to design. The same teacher reports how students lack the positive attitude towards English courses and how they consider it as a complementary module. As a consequence, the teacher finds herself in front of a critical situation dealing with a heterogeneous group of learners whose level and motivation in learning English vary enormously.

On the other hand, the set objectives behind applying ESP courses by the institute have been made clear neither to the teacher nor to students. Thus, students could not comprehend the link of learning English and conducting special field trainings in sight. This fact has left the teacher with limited choices except to teach common core English in addition to some basic technical terminology. Moreover, the absence of a specific syllabus that appeals to learners' needs resulted in learning and teaching hindrances.

These previously mentioned issues urge us to try and find answers to the following hypotheses:

1. Does the syllabus used contribute to the weak level in English learning?
2. Is the method of teaching inappropriate to this special learning environment?
3. Is the entrance level of students a handicap to achieving a better English language learning level?



After having instructed the same syllabus and consequently having had experienced it, the aim, throughout this study, is to figure out the lacking elements in this syllabus and to incorporate Competency-Based Approach, to develop specific learners' skills in learning Business English. The final product, which is the proposed syllabus is hoped to best respond to learners' intentions once their needs and expectations as well as business companies' requirements are identified. Once these two elements are joined, education outcomes may experience harmony with the demand of the labour market.

In order to sort out the actual syllabus, this thesis considers the selected approach to teaching as a key to a more efficient ESP instruction, precisely Business English teaching. To reach this objective, this study will conduct questionnaires to learners, as being ESP clients, and to business companies as the representatives of the market demand.

This study has been divided into four chapters:

Chapter One starts with considering ESP, describing its origins, characteristics and different trends to help localize the field of study, Business English. The chapter also discusses ESP's core element - Needs Analysis - and covers ESP current teaching methods, approaches and objectives within which Competency-Based Approach is suitably applied. These combining factors illustrate ESP as an interdisciplinary method to language teaching, as it combines different disciplines e.g. a special content, a special language teaching in a special context - business.

Chapter Two is devoted to Competency-Based Approach to review and discuss the related terminology. It also reviews details of CBT development, characteristics, specific CBA related assessment and patterns of CBA specific to ESP. Essentially, this chapter brings out the two key teaching approaches in this work, Competency-Based Approach and ESP. Furthermore, this part of the study introduces this combination of the teaching approaches to design a type of syllabus that matches the learners' needs with the companies' expectations.

Chapter Three introduces the training environment, INSIM institute and its objectives. It also helps the researcher identify the population under study, its needs and expectations. It, then, gives general guidelines about the corpus, the current English syllabus, which is actually used. In addition, it describes the situation of Business English teaching and conducts questionnaires to study the case of INSIM educational environment. It ends with data analysis and draws on substantial conclusions in which CBA and ESP combined, would be best introduced for a more reliable teaching outcome.

Chapter Four concludes and represents the practical part of this thesis. Syllabus definition, criteria and discussion constitute the main theme. The chapter also discusses the companies' expectations of foreign language users, emphasizing on the need to adjust the ESP syllabus to meet the needs of learners and basic expectations of the market place. Moreover, Competency-Based course design for business English is reviewed and learners' suggestions are included to help in designing this syllabus according to their needs. All the suggestions finally propose a type of Business English syllabus which could best suit the training at INSIM Institute.

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **Literature Review of English for Specific Purposes and Competency-Based Approach**

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## CHAPTER ONE

### Literature Review of English for Specific Purposes and Competency-Based Approach

#### 1.1 Introduction

This Chapter begins by considering English for Specific Purposes (henceforth E.S.P), its origins, different types and major trends as they appeared chronologically. The chapter continues to introduce the key feature within ESP - Needs Analysis. Then, we introduce ESP key language issues and discuss mainly the grammar and vocabulary teaching. The chapter also highlights the ESP teaching objectives which target developing the students' competencies. Finally, the chapter ends with a discussion on ESP related teaching methods and which result in bridging ESP with Competency-Based Approach.

#### 1.2 English for Specific Purposes (E.S.P)

E.S.P. refers to teaching a specific genre of English for adult learners in a specific environment and for specific objectives. ESP clients therefore are supposedly adult learners who have - or sometimes do not have - some acquaintance with English. In addition, they are learning language to communicate a set of professional skills and to perform particular job-related functions.

Strevens (1980) defines ESP as the following:

*ESP entails the provision of English language instruction devised to meet the learner's particular needs; related in themes and topics to designated occupations or areas of study, selective as to language content, where indicated, restricted as to the language skills included.*

*(Strevens, 1980:108-109)*

The General English (GE) courses do not frequently meet the special field learners' or employers' needs. At the basis of ESP comes the concept of teaching a special content to a specific category of learners to reach a specific purpose. Mostly, this focus on the learner's needs is interpreted in the assumption that there are specific language problems to specific learners in a specific context.

An example for illustration could be the language problems that medicine learners meet as opposed to ones that computer programming learners encounter. Identifying both learners' needs and their related language problems explain the implementation of a focused language teaching which addresses these identified problems.

On the other hand, Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998:4) offer a clearer definition to the term “*ESP*”, and then attempt to apply a series of characteristics. Some are “*absolute*” and which describe ESP:

- To meet specific needs of learners.
- To focus on the use of an underlying methodology and activities which serve the target discipline.
- To be centred on language which is appropriate to the discipline it serves, including, grammar, lexis, register, discourse, and genre.

Then, Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998:5) switch to “*variable*” characteristics which introduce ESP as:

- Designing courses for specific disciplines for adult learners in non native speaking communities, whose level may vary from “intermediate” to “advanced”.
- Suggesting ESP courses to assume some basic knowledge of the language systems.
- Using a different methodology from that of general English in some specific situations.

Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) aim, through this *absolute/variable* conceptualisation of ESP, to distinguish the ESP indispensable features from what can be optional or continuously changing depending on other variable factors. These variable factors, according to the authors' view, may change whenever the learning situation changes.

For clarity, we suggest the following illustrated example, adapted from Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998):

<b>Type of Learners</b>	- Business People	- Tourism Learners
<b>Level of English familiarity</b>	- Intermediate	- Beginners
<b>Absolute Characteristics</b>	- ESP course based on the learners' needs. - Activities serve the business context. - The teaching of relevant language systems.	- ESP course based on the learners' needs. - Activities serve the tourism context. - The teaching of relevant language systems.
<b>Variable Characteristics</b>	- Grammar teaching includes: the function of “If” clauses in oral presentations, arguing, etc. - Oral course includes simulations of business activities like: meetings, giving presentations to the members of the company, etc.	- Basic grammar teaching e.g. present simple: forms, usage and functions. - Oral course includes the application of grammatical systems in useful sentences: defining a basic touristic function using the present simple, etc.

**Table 1.1: ESP Absolute and Variable Characteristics Applied in Course Design**

ESP has invited specialists to heated debates on whether it is described as simply the teaching of English for any purpose which is specified, or as the teaching of English used in academic, vocational or professional purposes only. For this reason, Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998:6) provide guidance in categorizing its various components. ESP, then, is a broad umbrella which contains:

- English for Academic Purposes (henceforth E.A.P.) under which various academic disciplines fall: business, medicine, tourism, law and science.

- English for Occupational Purposes (henceforth E.O.P.) which is subdivided into: English for professional purposes and English for vocational purposes.

Both of EAP and EOP designated to meet pre-experienced learners who bring their previously acquired knowledge to the learning of English. These specific learners are previously familiar with English. ESP, then, replies to the needs of learners that target much focused learning outcomes and that emerge in response to a myriad of historical reasons.

### **1.2.1 Origins of ESP**

An important number of books and essays have been written about the origins of ESP in which three major historical reasons are considered. According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987:6), these three reasons are:

1. The demands of a “Brave New World”<sup>1</sup>

Hutchinson and Waters (1987:6) note that two key historical points breathed life into ESP, the World War II and the oil crisis of the early 1970's and which resulted in:

- The expansion of science, technology and global commerce.
- The dominance of English through the economic domination of the United States of America.
- The emergence of a new generation of English learners with specific objectives of learning English e.g. doctors, businessmen, etc.

English teachers started developing business-oriented courses as they responded notably to the demand of more specific courses. Therefore, teachers designed specific courses for each demand, be it, business, medicine, etc.

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<sup>1</sup> "Brave New World" used by Hutchinson and Waters (1987) is adapted from a novel's title by Aldous Huxley (1932).



## 2. A revolution in linguistics

Traditionally, the aim of linguistics was to study the language usage. Gradually, new studies have shifted attention from grammar focus to the emphasis on English in the real world discovering modern ways where English is used in real communication (Widdowson, 1987). Hutchinson and Waters (1987:7) point out one significant discovery for linguists which was in the ways spoken and written English vary. Obviously, the variant the context in which English is used, the variant English becomes. Hence, the language teaching is tailored according to the specificity of a given situation which becomes the basis of the learners' course.

## 3. Focus on the learner

In the late 1960's, new trends in educational psychology, pro-activity in the learning, contributed to the rise of ESP. Hutchinson and Waters (1987:8) state that rather than simply focusing on the method of language delivery, more attention is given to the ways in which learners acquire language. Learners are asked to employ different learning skills and they are, consequently, motivated by different needs and interests. Up to date, the current thinking which rules any ESP course design is centred on the learner.

As a consequence, shifting the focus on the learners has put them at the heart of all the teaching objectives. In ESP, the learners' needs become as paramount as the method and content of language teaching upon which all linguistic knowledge is built to meet the desired teaching outcomes.

### **1.2.2 Types of ESP**

Carter<sup>1</sup> (1983) identifies three types of ESP:

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1. <http://www.iteslj.org/Articles/Gatehouse-ESP.html>

a) English is viewed as a restricted language

An example of air traffic controller is illustrated. The jargon required is very limited, and can be determined in its situation. However, this language cannot allow its user to communicate successfully in more general situations.

The point of learning specific jargon for specific purposes may not allow the user of English to communicate outside of the field of interest. This somehow disables the user of English from functioning correctly in other general topic situations. Carter's (1983) first type of ESP inspires us to think of another example.

The learner of tourist words and expressions for strictly touristic purposes may very well communicate his/her needs correctly in a given situation like being in a restaurant:

- Knowing the technical cuisine vocabulary to order a specific food.
- Asking for a check.
- Knowing expressions of dealing with waiters and payments.

Yet, he/she may face difficulties to engage in a conversation about a different topic, say politics, with another fellow traveller. This situation happens frequently when the user of specific English becomes unable to get involved in a different topic conversation.

b) EAP and EOP

Hutchison and Waters (1987:17) introduce the tree of English Language Teaching (ELT) in which ESP is broken down into three branches:

1. English for science and technology (English for medicine and technology).
2. English for business and economics.
3. English for social sciences (English for teaching and psychology).

These branches are sub-divided into:

- English for Academic Purposes (EAP) which is related to English needed in educational contexts, usually at universities and other educational institutions.
- English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) which is related to professional purposes. It is divided to sub-branches: English for medical purposes, English for tourism, English for business purpose, etc. There is an obvious dominance of English in the fields of science, technology and international business. In particular, the market for Business English course is often described as *booming* (St. John 1996:3).

Gatehouse (2001) quotes that Carter (1983) believes employment as the end purpose for both EAP and EOP. Furthermore, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) note that there is no clear distinction between both of them as people can learn and study simultaneously. However, the means taken to achieve this end purpose varies considerably as EAP's purpose targets academic use while EOP's goes for occupational use.

#### c) English with specific topics

Carter (1983) notes in this type of ESP that emphasis shifts from purpose to topic. This type of ESP is uniquely concerned with anticipated future English needs. It is somewhat regarded as an integral component of ESP courses which focus on the situational language.

Implementing these previous types of ESP should not fail to pre-consider the target situation, register and type of learners. ESP, then, takes a step forward to analyse the target register, situation, needs and the underlying meaning of the language - discourse.

### **1.2.3 Major Trends in ESP**

Carter's (1983) classification views ESP in terms of specific situations, related functions and the necessary language-related structures. Whereas, Hutchison and Waters (1987:9) target aspects beyond the language structure to the underlying facets of ESP: Register

Analysis, Discourse Analysis, Needs Analysis, Skills and Strategies and finally the Learning-Centred Approach. They define five major trends in ESP.

- Register Analysis

Starting from the view that English varies according to register, the analysis of that register seeks to identify the grammatical and lexical items which are specific to the field under study and which, consequently, are special to the subject.

*Register analysis revealed that there was very little that was distinctive in the sentence grammar of scientific language beyond a tendency to favour particular forms such as the present simple tense, the passive voice, and nominal compounds. It did not, for example reveal any forms that were not found in general English.*

*(Hutchinson and Waters, 1987:10)*

Register analysis is based on the principle that, for example, the English for medicine differs from that of engineering. Therefore, register analysis aims to identify the features within grammar and lexis which help in designing the relevant course to teach.

- Discourse Analysis

In discourse analysis, the intention has shifted from focusing on the sentence grammar to how sentences are combined to producing *meaning*. At the basis of this analysis, the remark is that foreign students are able to understand a word and a sentence while they fail to decode the underlying message of the writer or the speaker. At this stage, then, ESP learners' need is met when teaching them how to grasp the conveyed message in specific communicative settings.

- Target Situation Analysis/Needs Analysis

After discourse analysis, the following stage introduces Needs Analysis (henceforth NA). Hutchinson and Waters (1987:11) state that the target situation, e.g. business verbal communication or technical medical writing, determines what type of language structures the learners may need to acquire. Therefore, ESP curricula focus on the different possible situations that encounter the studied field and provide learners with the necessary common linguistic features for those situations. Munby (1978:52) sets out examples of situation analysis and communicative settings. He starts by:

- Considering a participant who is referred to as speaker/hearer.
- Identifying this participant, by listing details like: age, sex, nationality and residence.
- Identifying the mother tongue, the target language and the proficiency level of the participant.

NA has become a fully integrated part in ESP course design. The overall objective is that learners' needs are at the centre of each syllabus design procedure. Certainly, ESP emerged with the emphasis on NA as a remarkable factor in the development of current language teaching curriculum development (Richards, 2006).

- Skills and Strategies

This stage is characterized by looking beyond the surface of language structures and considers the thinking process that underlies the language use. This is done by focusing on the development of skills and strategies that learners need in order to acquire a second language. Hutchinson and Waters (1987:13) emphasize on a main idea that there are common logic and interpreting processes which enable to extract the meaning from discourse regardless of the surface forms. Good examples are stated to clarify it, e.g. the ability to exploit words that are similar in mother tongue and target language, to infer words from the context, etc.

- Learning-Centred Approach

Hutchinson and Waters (1987:14) emphasize on the importance of a learning approach that is more effective to ESP unlike the traditional trends which focus on what people

usually do with the language. They also state that everything within the teaching environment should aim at helping learners meet goals by using their own learning strategies; learners have to be involved in the making of curricula from the beginning. Needs Analysis, then, plays a vital role in any ESP syllabus design.

### **1.3 Needs Analysis**

ESP is characterised by the idea of finding out what learners need to learn in order to meet specified requirements. Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998:122) believe Needs Analysis to be the cornerstone of ESP and leads to a very focused course. In fact, its main distinctive feature is to identify the learners' specific needs which constitute the basis in designing a suitable syllabus. Needs Analysis appears in response to some emerging ideas which called for more focus on learners.

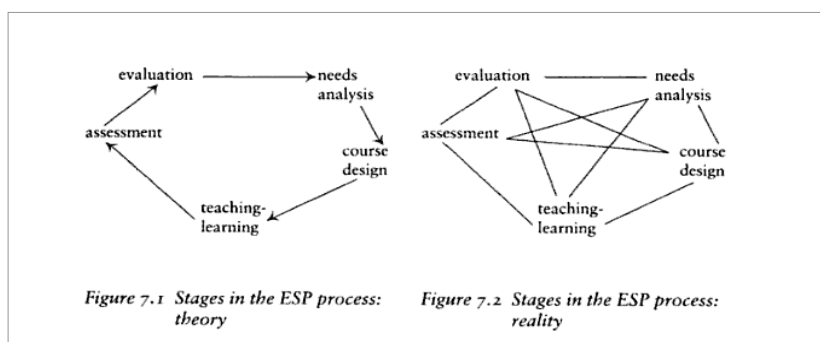
What learners will do with this foreign language in the target situation is the first main question to determine and identify those needs. Moreover, if we suppose those learners to be able to communicate effectively, how well they need to develop specific skills and for which purpose. Based on the results, course designers and curriculum developers come to successfully integrate, and then mix those different elements to a better language acquisition.

Accordingly, Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998:54) define Needs Analysis as being "*the awareness of the target situation - a definable need to communicate in English - that distinguishes ESP learner from the learner of General English.*". As it can be put, Needs Analysis is the "what to teach" and "how to teach" of the course.

Furthermore, Munby (1978:98) presented a thorough work on Needs Analysis and set detailed procedures to find out the target situation needs. We cited, in Pages 12 and 13 of this chapter, examples of an air traffic controller handling exceptional circumstances and a tourist at a restaurant situation. In these cited examples, the users of English are in

need to perform a specific activity for which a special jargon - technical vocabulary is needed.

In another viewpoint, Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) make a distinction between identifying target needs, i.e. what learners need to do in the target situation, and the learning needs which refer to what learners need to do in order to learn. Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) present an in-depth perspective to Needs Analysis linking course and syllabus design, materials selection and evaluation. They state that all of these stages are linear-related activities, where one stage drives to the other. They present it in the following diagram:



**Diagram 1.1: Stages in the ESP Process (Dudley-Evans and St. John, 1998:121)**

The diagram interprets how all the stages are inevitably interrelated when it comes to effectively study the needs of learners. While in theory, the stages are linearly related, reality proves otherwise. The choice of a teaching method, assessment and evaluation style have to serve the needs of learners. ESP teaching and course design are based on a network of the needs of learners, objectives and learning preferences, in addition to relevant assessment, teaching content and most obviously, the learning/teaching pair.

In the same line of thought, assessing in ESP is also specific. Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998:128) define evaluation as a whole process which begins with determining what information to gather and ends with bringing about changes in current activities or influencing new ones. Assessment, on the other hand, is basically concerned with

collecting information about the ability of a student or the success of a teaching course. It is a critical link, therefore, for teaching which plays a major role in curriculum design.

#### **1.4 Language Issues in ESP**

According to Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998:74), the language issues in ESP focus mainly on grammar, vocabulary and discourse. However, the main focus in this research brings about grammar and vocabulary issues as they both constitute the basis of syllabus design for this research specific environment - INSIM Institute. Although grammar and vocabulary dominate the idea of ESP teaching, ESP concentrates more on language in context than on teaching grammar and language structures (Lorenzo, 2005:1).

##### **1.4.1 Grammar**

Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998:74) state that the role of grammar is redefined when tackling ESP. Grammar is closely linked to the productive skills that ESP learners are supposed to use to communicate. Reading and writing skills are based on the good mastery of grammar, whereas, listening and speaking also influence the learners' receptive skills.

Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) confirm that grammar weakness influences the comprehensive ability within learners. They suggest in return:

- Teaching the relationship between meaning and form as most of the grammar lectures.
- Paying more attention to instructing the different patterns within grammar.
- Asking learners to apply them in specific tasks.

Learners face difficulties when applying these same patterns to communicate a subject. For this reason, it is generally advised to link the grammatical form to its use, and to put both of them in a given context for practice. For instance, it is very helpful for an ESP learner to be put in a real professional situation, and to arrive at connecting the use of grammar with what he/she is going to produce in order to communicate.



In a Business context - INSIM case study - learners can play different roles to speak the language. They will appreciate hedging in a business genre, which refers to the specificity of the language patterns used in the field of study - Marketing and Trade - in this case, and be more able to manipulate its relevant linguistic devices (Dudley-Evans and St John, 1998).

#### **1.4.2 Vocabulary**

The main concern when teaching vocabulary in ESP, particularly Business English courses, is what Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) call “*core business vocabulary*”. This interprets the teaching of technical vocabulary which is related to the targeted subject of study. In this specific teaching context, it is paramount to differentiate between comprehension and production vocabulary. In the former, the word itself, after being deduced from the context, has to be understood, so it can be acquired. Whereas, in the latter, storage and memory retrieval are essential in memorising new concepts and words of the field, mostly specific technical vocabulary.

Based on the idea that both deep reading and repetition help the brain to retain words, learners can be encouraged to use the acquired words orally in repetitive conversations. The actual field teaching experience has shown this to be a suitable method for a better and a faster memorisation. In addition, Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) explore the process of learning vocabulary; they suggest for a successful memory retrieval, to use antonyms, synonyms and situational chains, e.g. for students whose first language (L1) is French and who aim to learn a second language (L2) – English, it is advised to learn words this way: the verb “atteindre” in L1 has the same root as the verb “attain” with slight differences.

As opposed to antonyms, learning orally confusing words like “passed” and “past” may require that the teacher puts those words in chains as the following: the word “passed” is linked with action, when the word “past” is linked with time/clock. The same idea goes to the usage of the noun “wound” in contrast to the verb “to wound”. Teaching the

difference may require implementing the sequence of action. “To be wounded” describes an action that takes seconds, while the noun “wound” refers to a long process of healing, so the pronunciation of the two terms is related with the different sequences of time that both actions take.

Both grammar and vocabulary teaching are essential for language learners. For ESP learners, the emphasis is made on the learning of special grammatical patterns and technical vocabulary. The course designer goes back to Needs Analysis to enable him/her establish a framework for relevant grammatical and vocabulary content to instruct. Thus, the implementation of grammar and vocabulary teaching becomes focused on the learners' target objectives. The ESP learning and teaching objectives may be said to be content-driven and also objective-driven.

### **1.5 ESP Teaching Objectives**

Generally, English Language Teaching (ELT) has a broad objective of instructing the language. Basturkmen (2006:133) discusses Stern's (1989-1992) categorization of language education objectives which list four objectives. The first objective targets the proficient mastery of the four skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking. Basically, if learners achieve a good mastery of the four skills, the teaching objective gradually moves to a higher knowledge level which concerns the linguistic and the cultural information which once mastered, they help develop a positive attitude towards the target learnt language.

A successful delivery of language teaching results in establishing the relationship between what is learnt with the near-future situations possibly encountered in the learning as well as life situations. This teaching outcome is referred to as the transfer objectives which concern the ability to generalise from what has been learnt in one situation to another one.

Specific to ESP, these teaching objectives become narrow in nature and focus. Basturkmen (2006:133), then, highlights five detailed objectives for teaching ESP, believing that each teacher's objective may be closely related to one, two, or many of them.

- To reveal subject specific language use.
- To develop target performance competencies.
- To teach underlying knowledge.
- To develop strategic competence.
- To foster the critical awareness.
  
- To reveal subject specific language use.

Basturkmen (2006) states that since earlier, the teaching content in subject-specific language has dominated ESP. Furthermore, the teaching oriented to this objective is foremost concerned with English used in the target environment. What is notable is that most of the teaching methods within ESP focus on this point, that is, to bring the necessary materials which are closely linked to the subject of study. The use of English in this situation is more likely to be a tool of communicating the subject. However, learners, who generally experience language difficulties, tend to take more time in comprehending, thus the acquiring process may be lengthened.

- To develop target performance competencies.

This objective goes along with developing special competencies within learners. She states that Competency-Based education is an approach that teaches target workplace skills and develops adequate competencies within ESP learners. Teaching ESP aims to present English operationally, that is to say, to introduce English as a means to communicate professionally in which the skills are important for a better and effective communication. Providing ESP learners with the necessary skills help them to fit successfully into the expected competencies. This is what can best suit ESP learners at private institutes particularly - the INSIM international school.

- To teach underlying knowledge.

In ESP, teaching learners the way of thinking in the target situations becomes paramount for a better integration in the professional life. Cross-cultural aspect naturally adheres to this objective, for it is essential to raise the ESP learners' inter-cultural awareness by implementing effective cross-cultural communication skills. For this reason, being aware of these cultural differences likely helps foster communication.

- To develop strategic competence.

In this research, we assume that ESP learners are, for the most part, pre-experienced learners who have an in-depth knowledge about the taught subject – Business. Therefore, the teaching, for this objective, aims at developing their strategic performances. This is broadly defined as the means of combining the context of situation, the professional real situation, with the language knowledge when communicating.

Developing competencies is the key to a successful as well as an effective communication. It assists learners to actualise the previous acquired knowledge with the target language. The role of the teacher, when selecting a given teaching method to fit this objective, is to be a mediator between the language and the subject knowledge to better communicate this content.

- To foster the critical awareness within learners.

As it has been explained in the previous objectives, the role of the teacher is to help learners by providing them with the necessary language, behaviour, and knowledge which are deemed necessary to fit into the specificity of the target environment. The teaching, which aims to raise this sense of critiques within learners, will undoubtedly help them to establish their personal vision about target situations, how to consider them and how to easily adapt to them. The teacher's role is to seek to change the way learners

feel toward themselves, and to develop accordingly their perceptions in relation to the target environment.

ESP teaching objectives aim to identify learners' competencies and to develop new ones based on the target occupational situations. Narrowing the teaching objectives to specific competencies enables the teacher to build around the necessary language structures. ESP objectives reverse the situation, they start with identifying the needs of learners, and then they study the workplace skills. These objectives gather the learners/workplace components and use them as the platform for the syllabus design, and they, then, move to select a relevant teaching method of instruction.

## **1.6 ESP Teaching Methods**

In an attempt to discuss the difference between the terms “*approach*” and “*method*”, Richards and Rodgers (1986:15) offer an explicit explanation to these two terms. According to the authors, an approach is described at the level of language teaching theories and principles. They offer the following definition:

*...An approach is a set of correlative assumptions dealing with the nature of language teaching and learning. An approach is axiomatic. It describes the nature of the subject matter to be taught...*

*(Richards and Rodgers, 1986:15)*

Based on the above definition, an approach is defined at the level of beliefs about the language and language learning which serve as the basis of principles for the language teaching. In other words, an approach can be viewed as a higher status in language teaching as it deals with views, visions and beliefs about the language learning.

At a different level, a method appears to be more concerned with the practice of an approach. Accordingly, Richards and Rodgers (1986) define a method as:

*An overall plan for the orderly presentation of*

*language material, no part of which contradicts and all of which is based upon the selected approach.*

*(Richards and Rodgers, 1986:15)*

Thanks to these definitions, the difference between an approach and a method is noted. An approach is related to the assumptions and ideas about the language teaching that are specified and chosen and it describes the nature of the subject to teach and can use a/many method (s) of teaching. On the other hand, a method is generally viewed as a mechanism for language teaching. It is the level in which the theories of language teaching are put into action.

## **1.7 Traditional Teaching Approaches**

As far as the language teaching approaches are concerned, Richards and Rodgers (2001) discuss several shifts to language teaching which have appeared as alternative approaches to the traditional grammar-based teaching. They introduce them in three brief phases and classify them as they appeared chronologically.

### **1.7.1 The Grammar Translation Method**

Traditionally, the Grammar Translation Method has been the most common method to language teaching that stresses a repetitive practice and drilling of the grammatical structures (Richards and Rodgers, 2001:5). Methodologies based on the same teaching techniques have also stressed the importance of memorization of the structured lesson, questioning/answering practice and drilling of various forms of guided speaking and writing practice (Richards, 2006:7).

Up to the late 1960's, language teaching has given priority to grammar as a core teaching component. Basic teaching methods like, Grammar Translation Method, the Structural approach or Situational language teaching in UK, and Audiolingualism in the United States of America, have adopted simple methodologies and were established

through oral drilling and controlled practice, where the four language skills were introduced. Syllabuses, during this period, consisted of word lists and grammar graded across levels.

The assumption behind the Grammar Translation Method starts from the belief that language is a formal system and, therefore, what matters is the learning of language systems which consist of the learning of verb paradigms, grammar rules, vocabulary and applying these to translate both into and from the mother tongue (Baiche, 2009:54).

As far as the teaching based on grammar is concerned, Richards (2006:7) carries on presenting the grammar-based teaching forms while instructing. In general terms, the grammar-based teaching does not exceed a three step procedure which starts with:

- Presenting the grammatical structure to students.
- Inviting students to practise the learnt structure.
- Asking students to apply it in a different context using their own content.

However, Richards (2006:8) points out the incredibility of such an approach to language teaching since students are learning automatically, that is to say, they acquire forms as they are experienced, and then reproduce them while they may not seem as producers of language.

### **1.7.2 The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) (1970s - 1990s)**

During the period of 1970s until 1990s, the centrality of grammar in language teaching was questioned as language acquisition required more than the mastery of language systems – grammar. As a matter of fact, intention was shifted towards knowing the productive language skills. Unlike grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation could be used similarly for different communicative purposes such as making requests or giving pieces of advice, etc. Richards (2006:8) states that the missing point in this approach was the teaching of communicative competency, the “what to say” and “how to say it” appropriately which is based on a given target situation.

Richards' (2006:8) analysis continues to consider Communicative Language Teaching (henceforth CLT) as an ideal approach to language teaching. Learners' tastes and demands were changing to learn specific linguistic skills that suit the professional communicative situations. Meanwhile, teachers were asked to meet the needs and expectations of learners by implementing specific syllabus and special methodologies. This resulted in Needs Analysis which consisted of:

- The undertaking of interviews.
- The use of questionnaires.
- Situation analysis.

As a result, Needs Analysis (N.A.) helps to determine the type of situational communicative patterns which may best serve learners. Therefore, ESP started to appear as a logical response to specific expectations of language learners. Richards (2006:9) argues that the syllabus should identify some aspects other than grammar and vocabulary to teach. These aspects could be:

- To consider possible purposes for which learners would use the acquired language, e.g. using English for tourism purposes.
- To consider the setting, where learners would use this acquired language, e.g. in an office, a factory, a classroom, etc.
- To consider what communicative events those learners may participate in, e.g. a casual conversation, a meeting, a travel, etc.

In addition to the above listed elements, Richards (2006:9) continues to consider a number of elements that underpin the teaching of the communicative competency to learners like the language functions that are involved and the skills needed to help develop the communicative competency.

### **1.7.3 The Current Communicative Approach (1990s to the present)**

By the 1990's, the Communicative Approach has been widely implemented as Richards (2006) explains it:

*Communicative Language teaching today refers to a set of generally agreed upon principles that can be applied in different ways, depending on the teaching context, the age of the learners, their level, and*



*their learning goals and so on. The following core assumptions or variants of them underlie current practices in communicative language teaching.*

*(Richards, 2006:20)*

Richards (2006) refers to the flexibility of CLT to adapt to the changing variables of the teaching situations. CLT, in the same line of thought, meets ESP principles in its nature of adaptability to the target teaching situation. This flexible nature of CLT is taken one step further. In his analysis, Richards (2006) states core assumptions to the current communicative teaching.

To begin with, Richards (2006) assumes that communication and interaction facilitate the process of learning a second language in the sense that a good combination of communication strategies with an effective learning lead to a successful learning outcome. Given that language learning is a trial/error process which is acquired gradually, its ultimate goal lies in measuring both the accuracy and fluency of learning.

Learners, on the other hand, having different needs and motivations in language learning, develop personal routes of learning. As far as the learning process is concerned, the language rules are shaped by the specific learning context, in the sense that grammar learning is centred on the specific field of study and the same goes for the learning of the remaining language skills.

Richards (2006) continues to consider assumptions for CLT which is not only characterised by the learning adaptability, but also by the flexibility of the teaching process. The teacher's role is a facilitator whose role varies from creating the learning climate to providing opportunities of language practice. Teaching the language for specific purposes implies taking into consideration some elements that will inevitably influence the learning process. These elements include calling upon the skills to be included and the relevant tasks and exercises to be provided. The teaching context responds to the nature of the teaching specificity, therefore; it invites learners to a meaningful and relevant communication i.e. using the language structures and systems

for specific communication situations like in business presentations, conducting television interviews, etc. As the result, the classroom becomes henceforth a community where sharing and collaboration take part.

CLT, in its nature, preludes to implement new ideas in the English language teaching. It helps integrating more than the language structures in isolation, henceforth; it invites the components of communication and skills outside of language to play a role in the overall language teaching. It also redefines the role of the teacher as more than just a knowledge provider to become a facilitator of the underlying knowledge and a partner in the learning process. Communication becomes the dominant activity in the classroom.

In contrast to CLT, not only does communication take a remarkable share in ESP, but also developing the communicative competencies, which means, identifying, selecting and incorporating specific communicative skills that meet targeted workplace situations, especially if the learners' category conducts special field training concurrent to ESP learning – that is the case of INSIM learners.

### **1.8 Teaching Approaches Related to ESP**

Regarding ESP teaching relevant approaches, ongoing discussions have concluded that ESP does not adopt any specific approach or method. ESP appears to be distinctive in being free to innovate and merge the suitable approaches and methods that serve its teaching objectives. Its major focus lies in studying the learners' needs and designing, based on the results, relevant materials which determine the specific teaching methods to adopt.

According to Richards (2006), some ESP syllabi have been named under different teaching approaches. The following approaches are classified into two categories.

- Content and Task-Based Instruction: they develop the language competency of the learner.

- Text, Corpus and Competency-Based Instruction: they shift to the final learning objective as the basis for course design, they may be called as product – driven approaches.

### **1.8.1 Content-Based Instruction**

This approach promotes the use of content to communicate a language. Unlike traditional approaches, Content-Based Instruction seeks to find the context as a starting point of a lesson plan. Then, it builds around all the linguistic skills, context and content. Religion, technology and economics, can all constitute suitable frameworks for a language lesson plan. In a nutshell, Content-Based Instruction focuses more on language as a means of acquiring information instead of learning it as an end purpose in itself.

### **1.8.2 Task-Based Instruction**

This approach claims to build tasks as prior teaching methods. Instead of instructing grammar and other language skills, Task-Based Instruction advocates the creation of special tasks to be undertaken in the classroom. Learners are asked to comment on a picture or assimilate a real professional situation. In the cited examples, language is used as a means to convey specific messages.

In addition to Content and Task-Based Instructions, Richards (2006) moves to two other secondary approaches that are described as product-based and in which we include Corpus-Based Instruction as it is also related to ESP teaching. They start by identifying the kind of language situations that learners are expected to master at the end of training. The teaching strategies then are selected to help achieve the instructing goals.

### **1.8.3 Text-Based Instruction**

This is also known as the genre-based approach which emphasizes on the text teaching method. Text refers to an oral or written sequence of structured language which is used in a specific context. According to this view in teaching, learners are asked to master the use of texts mostly occurred in specific contexts such as: discussing the language use to

plan an appointment with a dentist, a hairdresser, or a conversation with a stranger in the street. Therefore, Text-Based Instruction has much to do with ESP approach to teaching as they both share special text teaching as basic units. Moreover, they both rely on Needs Analysis in determining the suitable teaching materials and methodologies.

#### **1.8.4 Corpus-Based Instruction**

At the root of Corpus-Based Instruction comes the concept of “corpus”. In general terms, a “corpus” is defined as *a body or collection of linguistic data for use in scholarship and research*. (The Linguistics Encyclopedia: 84). “Corpus Linguistics” is the field which studies linguistics combined with computer science and which includes scholars from both fields. It associates computers for machines translation between languages (Belkhenchir, 2006:72). In “Corpus Linguistics”, a *“corpus is a collection of texts, from a specific source or field, in the form of a single computer-readable file.”* (in Belkhenchir, 2006:xiii). Corpus Linguistics has a strong tie with language teaching, the common ground for this approach lies in enhancing the learning of language-in-use i.e. developing an understanding of how language is used in a specific context since it describes, studies and analyses the domain-specific corpora for specific language learning settings – academic and profession.

#### **1.8.5 Competency-Based Instruction (CBI)**

There are two main themes when defining competencies: “competence” which describes a work task or a job output; and “competency” which is related to a human behaviour and which contains the person’s skills that make him/her more effective in life as well as in workplace. Richards (2006) defines Competency-Based teaching as follows:

*Competency-Based Language teaching an approach that has been widely used as the basis for the design of work-related and survival-oriented language teaching programs for adults. It seeks to teach students the basic skills they need in order to prepare them for situations they commonly*

*encounter in everyday life.*

*(Richards, 2006:37)*

This approach is widely used in vocational and technical education since it focuses on implementing specific skills that some working environments look for. Thus, the starting point to CBI uses programmes that focus on learners with very specific needs. It meets ESP in this point, if not, it is assumed to be the most adequate linking approach to an ESP course design.

The leading goal in a course design within CBI is identifying the specific tasks learners may encounter in a specific setting e.g. nurse tasks, worker in a factory, businessman in a meeting, etc. and the language needed for those tasks. That is why the competencies needed to perform those tasks constitute, accordingly, the basic platform for a more adequate syllabus design. ESP teaching may adopt one or many teaching approaches and Competency-Based Approach is chosen as the main focus of this research, yet we do not discard the need to go back to one of these approaches that are related to ESP teaching if required.

## **1.9 Conclusion**

This chapter has reviewed the literature of ESP, its origins, types and trends. It has, then, attempted to introduce some major elements of ESP language issues, objectives, methods and approaches that target developing specific language competencies. Accordingly, ESP modern teaching approaches have been highlighted for a more relevant syllabus design to this case under study - INSIM Institute. Narrowing the focus on ESP related to CBA has also been this chapter's dominant purpose. The chapter has brought out the similarities and relevance of the use of CBA with ESP learners as these two are likely to serve the needs and purposes of developing specific workplace skills for ESP clients - INSIM learners.

# **CHAPTER TWO**

## **Relating Competency-Based Approach to Teaching English for Specific Purposes**

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## CHAPTER TWO

# Relating Competency-Based Approach to Teaching English for Specific Purposes

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter is devoted to relating the Competency-Based Approach to ESP teaching. From the perspective that ESP can be taught using multiple techniques, implementing Competency-Based Teaching (henceforth CBT) is the present response to a more effective Business English course at INSIM Institute. This chapter reviews details concerning CBT such as origins, terminology, distinguishing characteristics, standards and assessment of learners. It starts with giving definitions of the terms “competency” and “competence”; next, the chapter highlights a few considerations for CBT implementation. Finally, the chapter ends with a discussion of the teaching tools - curriculum and syllabus.

### 2.2 Definition of Competency and Competence

At the root of CBT is the concept of competency. According to Burke (1989:9), the terms “*competence*” and “*competency*” are often used interchangeably. As he chooses to use “*competence*”, he refers to two main ideas for the term “*competence*” alone:

- *Competence* indicates the capacity in an individual. For example: a person’s ability to perform adequately to the standards required. The effective use of a skill.
- *A competence* is an element of a life role or occupation. It can be described as a specific skill or ability.

On the one hand, Burke (1989:9) distinguishes between a general competence which is viewed as an ability to perform life roles that are not necessarily professional, while he



uses the same term for a restricted professional objective. In a way, Burke (1989) does not offer an evident difference, instead, he uses the same term to distinguish between the specific from the general competency-related roles.

On the other hand, Velde (2009:140) discusses the confusion of the term “*competence*” that means a skill, and the term “*competency*” that is mostly linked to the behaviour of the individual that yields to performance. Yet, we do not observe evident confusion to use both terms and we choose to use “*competency*” as it addresses individual behaviours that lead to performing a specific job-related activity.

### **2.3 Competency-Based versus Performance-Based Terminology**

An observation is made that the term “*competency*” is interchanged by some writers like Velde (2009) and Burke (1989), by the term “*performance*”. It is less common to encounter the term “*Performance-Based Teaching*” which it is mostly used in USA sources. However, some writers use these terms independently to distinguish variations on the theme. In this research work, these two teaching terms, “*competency*” and “*performance*” are used interchangeably.

Burke (1989) faced this similar definition dilemma:

*US sources show Performance Based Education in some cases as an alternative to Competence Based Education. Thus, early articles refer to Performance Based Teacher Education (PBTE).*

*(Burke, 1989:9)*

Burke (1989) introduces the terms “*competency*” and “*performance*” interchangeably reporting how the meaning and usage of the concept “*Competency-Based*” alters greatly in many writings. He states that:

*There are conceptual differences in the view of some writers, but this chapter takes the terms as being virtually synonymous, since competence based curriculum design demands performance based assessment.*

*(Burke, 1989:9)*

These selected quotes are included to help illustrate the confusion of the definition and terminology of CBT which is ideally a blend of both meanings of the terms “*competence/competency*”. It focuses primarily on developing a target competency of the learner in specific desired skills. In other words, students learn and the learning is validated and ultimately made adequately for the competency target use e.g. learning English grammatical patterns has to be validated when performing a job-related classroom activity.

### **2.3.1 Linking Personal and Workplace Competencies**

Competency can be a complex blend of the personal past experience, the learning focused content and the performance of the target activity. Billet (2009) puts the personal, cultural and situational dimensional aspects all together to explain this complexity by stating that:

*A complex of societal and local factors shapes the diversity of the requirements for competent performance across workplaces even for those enacting the same occupational practice stated.*

*(Billet, 2009:35)*

On the other hand, the work requirements are so diverse, mainly shaped by the social, national, personal and even enterprise-level factors. To better understand and analyse these concepts, the relationship of workplace and personal competency is presented.

Both the social and personal perspectives constitute the basis for a work competency to be set. According to Billet (2009), from a social perspective, there is a need to look at

both occupational requirements and situational factors that contribute in the job performance. He states that *“this performance has occupational, cultural and situational dimensions that constitute the product of the social world.”* (Billet, 2009:33)

However, the social perspective alone is not sufficient to constitute a workplace competency. In this case, the personal skills, behaviours, traits and knowledge of the target competency become all essential in the sense that each individual has a personal sense of how to view, interpret and perform a given job task.

These personal considerations affect directly the individual performance of a specific job. Yet, the personal self-awareness of how to explore one's capacities in job performance is not generally taken into account in job requirement analysis. For this reason, Billet (2009:33) refers to cultural and situational dimensions which also take part in the job-related performance requirement. For more clarity, we offer the following explanation:

1. The cultural dimension interferes to shape the nature of the target competency, to mostly respond to local job requirements of a given competency that needs to be developed to suit the demand of the domestic market place.
2. The situational dimension distinguishes between developing a special competency, say business writing, to address two different situations: writing reports about products and preparing business written presentations.

### **2.3.2 “Competency” Applied to CBT**

The general focus of CBT is to favour education investment towards the current and near-future demands of the business environment. Specific to ESP, the assumption can be made about the lack of cross-language skills which refer to the knowledge of the language and its related cultural use that may meet demand in cross-culture or international business. In many cases, teaching the language in isolation from its related cultural background may not meet the demand of multinational and foreign business

companies as the latter seek a reliable cross-cultural awareness of mannerism, etiquettes, etc.

There is an applied principle of linking job-related skills with teaching methods in CBT which could emphasize the teaching of specific language skills that could be used to perform specific job-related activities. CBT instruction is focused on building off the existing and targeted competency of the student; it is important that communication in the teaching environment is similar to that of the work environment in which students are asked to perform specific job activities. In order to integrate competencies needed for a student to cope with the specific occupational environment, the instructor should establish focal points for a competency profile.

The competency profile should set goals for the specific competency to be developed within the student. To illustrate this concept, a receptionist might be best instructed with a focus on a conversational spoken language. In contrast, a salesperson who processes email customer orders might best be instructed with the focus on written interaction.

Combining the coined term “*competency/competence*” definitions and discussions lead us to classify the professional facet of competency as follows:

- If it is essential for fulfilling a key professional task, e.g. high communicative verbal skills for a hotel host job position.
- If the developed level of competency influences directly the performance of the job task.

Work competencies have their own profile criteria. The labour market sets standards for job competencies; these criteria constitute the basis in job interviews and job performance analysis and job tasks require a set of skills and knowledge the learner of specific skills seeks to acquire.

As a result, once the connection between a student’s knowledge, skills and personal characteristics is set, requirements of a profession will thereby become more comprehensible. The challenge lies in determining competencies that can be packed

together to provide type of learners with optimal combination of skills and knowledge which are needed to perform specific job tasks.

As a Competency-Based instructor, it is best to know the target job competencies and to analyse learners' needs and expectations, and to bring relevant content to instruct. The instructor is asked to best use the behavioural competencies to help develop other required work-related competencies. The already existing individual talents, skills and behaviours are needed for building a competency profile of the target workplace tasks.

## **2.4 Performance-Based Approach in Competency-Based Approach**

According to Burke (1989:9), Competency-Based Approach (CBA) and Performance-Based Approach (henceforth PBA) are similar in usage as already discussed in page 36. CBA effectively delivers to students the competencies which are important for them to attain job skills. Learners feel satisfied with the learning experience and the efforts to meet their personal expectations. They are likely to become motivated consumers of the information about the target competencies.

In the same line of thought, Basturkmen (2006) states that:

*Competency-based occupational education can be described as an approach focused on developing the ability to perform the activities of an occupation and function to the standards expected of those employed in that occupation.*

*(Basturkmen, 2006:135)*

CBA teaches the language as a tool to accomplish work-related tasks and it does not follow the language teaching philosophy that puts language as both a means and an end. Instead, CBA advocates the idea of using language as a means to reach another end, that of a good performance of specific job communication.

In light of linking Performance-Based Approach to Competency-Based Approach, Richards and Rodgers (2001) offer an insightful illustration:

*Competency based education has much in common with such approaches of learning as performance-based instruction, mastery of learning and individualized instruction. It is outcome-based and is adaptive to the changing needs of students, teachers and the community.*

*(Richards and Rodgers, 2001:141)*

Performance-Based Approach refers to skills' demonstration necessary for an individual to function adequately within a society. Performance is then assessed through the demonstration of those acquired skills and is measured from the result of applying them. In a nutshell, Performance-Based Approach can be regarded as the final stage of Competency-Based Approach.

CBA is related directly to the performance of specific skills. Richards and Rodgers (2001), referring to Grognet and Crandal (1982), emphasize on the notion of performance in CBA programmes. These specific teaching programmes are based on “*the performance outline of language tasks that lead to a demonstrated mastery of language associated with specific skills.*” (Grognet and Crandal, 1982:3) in (Richards and Rodgers, 2001:142)

While most of the teaching methods, like the “Grammar-Translation Method”, focus on inputs of learning, providing syllabi and selecting teaching materials, CBA to language teaching shifts attention to learners and what they are expected to do with language. It chooses the output of learning as a starting point by focusing on what those learners will do with the acquired language. Thus, emphasizing on output rather than input has characterized CBA as a distinctive perspective in teaching.

## **2.5 Competency-Based Teaching (CBT)**

CBT is an approach to language teaching that has been widely used, mainly in the United States of America. Its prior aim is to design a work-related language teaching programme for adults. It focuses on outcomes of learning and addresses what these learners are expected to do, rather than what they are expected to learn.

Unlike traditional education approaches like the Grammar-Based approach, CBT seeks to teach students basic skills they need in order to get prepared for situations commonly encountered in the target workplace environments and in life situations. Similar to ESP, this specific approach is adopted in vocational and technical education where trainees are expected to perform various tasks once they join the professional life.

In CBT, a major concern lies in providing a diversity of alternatives of learning to accomplish the formerly stated objectives. Burns and Klingstedt (1973) mention a psychological aspect behind the different learning styles learners have and they state that *“the emphasis on Competency-Based Education (CBE) is on the achievement of specified objectives and not the ranking of learners.”* (Burns and Klingstedt, 1973:8)

Since CBT is a function-related teaching approach, it emphasizes life skills and evaluates the mastery of those skills according to learners' performance. It was viewed by the USA Office of Education (1978) as a process that is based on performance and that leads to demonstrate the mastery of basic and life skills which are essential for the individual to function in a society.

### **2.5.1 The Development of CBT**

In CBT, the majority of experts in this field emphasize that the term *“training”* generally replaces the terms *“teaching”* and *“instructing”* as CBT is deliberately concerned with tutoring and fostering students to develop specific skills. The teacher's role shifts from a knowledge provider to a mediator and a facilitator. Taken to an extreme, the CBT instructor becomes more of a mentor than a book reader.

Competency-Based Training was developed primarily in the USA. Burke (1989:9) states that this method of teaching originates back to the 1920's. Educational reforms were directly influenced by industrial and commercial models centred on the specification of requirements in those areas.

World War II vastly changed much of the world with new ideas, cultural mixing and technology development. The 1960's witnessed an obvious discrepancy between the education outcomes and labour market demand. This mismatch resulted in a call for more accountability in educational system to weigh positively on the USA national economy.

Academic educational environments started a movement that advocated defining the educational goals in terms of precise objectives, including descriptions of skills and knowledge students should possess at the end of a course of study. These skills and knowledge are adapted to the specific needs of students, teachers and the community.

The 1960's characterized a thriving time in education in the USA. CBT appeared as an imperative approach to societal change by offering a triple objective according to Oukaci (2010)<sup>1</sup>:

1. Bridging the gap between education and the growing labour market demand.
2. Refocusing on the instruction outcome, from elementary school level to university, to fit the primary demands of the labour market, its adaptability and mobility of workers.
3. Resolving the contradiction between a very broad educational output and a very focused demand of the labour market by specialising the topic of teaching.

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1. "1. Rapprocher le monde de l'enseignement du monde de l'entreprise.

2. Recentrer la formation, de la maternelle à l'université, sur les exigences premières du marché du travail: l'adaptabilité et la mobilité des travailleurs.

3. Résoudre la contradiction entre un enseignement largement commun et un marché du travail de plus en plus polarisé." (Oukaci. L. Le Quotidien d'Oran. 2010:21)



With a growing demand for educational curriculum reforms worldwide, a large investment was made in curriculum development. Government grants were given to universities and colleges to develop a model for training programmes. These models, as discussed by Burke (1989:10), concentrated on students' achievements and have included:

- Specification of skills and competencies to be learnt.
- Modularisation of instruction.
- Evaluation and feedback methods.
- Field experience of these learnt competencies, post-education performance.

By the early 1970's, Competency-Based Training established itself as "*a self sustaining movement*" in the sense that it started to function as an independent and healthy trend to teaching and education. Burke (1989) refers to the diverse state governed academic system in the USA that "*Competency Based Education and Training (CBET) was seen by some State departments as the means of creating and enforcing the standards so long talked about.*" (Hertzberg, 1976) in (Burke, 1989:12)

### **2.5.2 Competencies and Standards**

Standards related to jobs come across many writings which tackle CBT. Competencies and standards are considered as core concepts in most CBT vocational and educational trainings. Competency, as previously defined in page 35, is precisely concerned with the individuals' skills and abilities to perform specific tasks in a specific working environment.

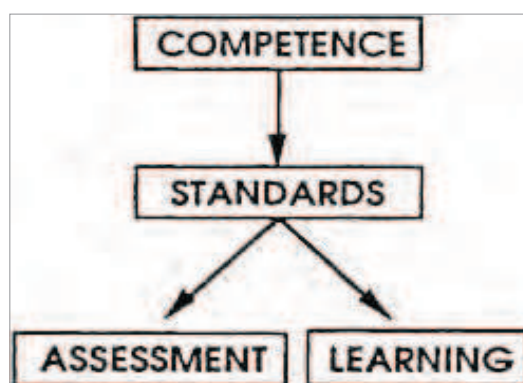
Standards associate and describe what competencies mean in a particular occupation or a workplace. Burke (1989:26) views standards as "*the means by which the model of competence is specified in the current occupational context.*" Burke's view explains the nature of standards in a way that they trace guidelines for a particular competency to be developed within learners.

Furthermore, Burke (1989) continues to describe "*standards*" as keystones of vocational education and training and affirms that:

*Standards are then used to develop 'new' vocational qualifications and the assessment which underpins them; plus learning programmes which deliver the achievements identified in the standards.*

*(Burke, 1989:23)*

Each competency has its own occupational standards; these standards are used to create the structure of the competency profile. These competency profiles are used to guide the instructor in meeting the occupational needs and expectations of the learner. Some standards are narrower in focus and nature than others depending on the competencies they are associated with. This relationship directly affects the chosen assessment and learning systems and the link of these terms has been shown by Burke (1989) in the following diagram:



**Diagram 2.1: Deriving Standards (Burke, 1989:27)**

The diagram describes how the relationship between competency and workplace standards is established. Introducing standards as a linking element shows the importance of determining which standards best match the targeted specific competency. It is essential to mention what characterises a given competency when referring to standards as they are the benchmark to all elements: competencies, associated assessment and learning systems.

In CBT, competency standards can be selected and designed by the instructor for the overall competencies profile to teach. For example: to teach communicative competency for hotel receptionist requires setting specific standards for the language competency to be learnt. The input of this specific competency may include the teaching of specific jargon related to hotels and some basic communicative skills:

- How to deal with clients.
- How to indicate room numbers.
- How to communicate a check “in” and “out”.
- How to ask for proper name spellings.

The outcome of teaching needs to reach the target workplace requirements. Whereas, teaching communicative competency for a TV anchor will require different standards which may include the nature of tasks the anchor has to accomplish. For example:

- How to read news (political, economic, sport or cultural news).
- How to conduct efficient interviews.

Based on identifying workplace standards, assessment nature and learning strategies take another form which matches the teaching process. CBT depends on identifying characteristics of target competencies that help to decide which language systems and specific content to integrate. Similar to ESP, knowing the needs of learners and the target situation both determine the implementation of the special language to teach.

## **2.6 Competency-Based Assessment**

Assessment has characterized almost all the teaching and educational methods. Evaluating the learner’s gained competency is a major key element in CBT. Harris *et al.* (1995) describe assessment as both an ongoing process and a final step in CBT. Overall, it is seen as a process of measuring against the previously established competency standards, evaluating how well students can perform in a given professional situation.

According to Harris *et al.* (1995), assessment and standards can be closely coupled in practice. The authors emphasize on a key issue in education and training and offer the following definition:

*In many cases our assessment is based on a set of standards or principles which provide guidelines and help to overcome our inherent subjectivity. The important issue here is that standards or principles on which decisions are based are commonly held and therefore have credibility.*

*(Harris, Hobart, Lundberg, 1995:160)*

The assessment process, therefore, can be broken down and analysed. Harris *et al.* (1995:161) describe seven steps for a competency-based assessment:

1. To define the competencies for assessment.
2. To describe standards under which the previous competencies are selected.
3. To identify the competency profile which encompasses the level of competency, the components of standards which are crucial to judge competency and what knowledge people are interested to know.
4. To develop an assessment plan. This accompanies the instructed curricula development.
5. To select testing process that goes with the nature of instruction.
6. To use and refine those testing techniques.
7. To manage the assessment process by evaluating results; how the results are recorded and reported.

We observe, when making a step back, the existence of both the competency profile and its related standards as demonstrated in Burke's (1989:27) diagram in page 45. These two elements take part of the assessment plan as they already set a framework for the standards competencies with the related profile to be instructed.

Assessment process requires time to gather evidence. It may be planned and can be pragmatic and flexible to the various needs of students. According to Harris *et al.* (1995:162), decisions about a competency can be advised by “*formative*” assessment processes which cover activities primarily concerned with helping the learning process. Or else, “*summative*” assessments which are more concerned with final judgements.

In the larger context of ESP, Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998:128) also describe evaluation in terms of “*formative*” or “*summative*”. ESP practitioners are mostly concerned with “*formative evaluation*” which is an ongoing process during the course. They also include “*summative evaluation*” by the end of the course, as do almost all university courses.

### **2.6.1 Assessment versus Evaluation**

The terms “*assessment*” and “*evaluation*” are similar but they often have a subtle difference depending on the context of use. The concepts of “*assessment*” and “*evaluation*” are often used to refer to a single process, testing an individual’s knowledge, performance or skill. The difference between these two terms is merely arbitrary since both terms serve the same means and reach the same end.

The process of assessment covers activities of grading, examining and certifying. Not only are students’ competencies assessed but also their attitudes and performance for particular job-related functions. Assessment, then, is the gathering of information about an individual’s ability to perform specific tasks. Burke (1989) describes the theory behind assessment as:

*The process of getting hold of evidence by one or a number of means and making judgments of the evidence in order to make inferences about an individual’s competence.*

*(Burke 1989:52)*

At a different level, the term “*evaluation*” refers generally to the interpretation of data about the student to determine how well he/she has grown towards the instructional objectives. Precisely, how well or poorly the student performs against the established standards. Evaluation seems more applicable to curricula and programmes of training as it measures entities of progress of an individual.

Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) define evaluation as:

*A whole process which begins with determining what information to gather and ends with bringing about change current activities or influencing future ones.*

*(Dudley-Evans and St. John, 1998:128)*

This implies progressive measurement, ideally repeating evaluation and adjusting teaching based on the feedback. Measurement is included in both assessment and evaluation processes. It is the collection of data by subjective means like oral questioning of learners and objective means like conducting questionnaires, which typically involves the assigning of marks, scores or percentages of students' performance. It typically results in a numeric value or grouping of the students by performance. The instructor can measure the learners' level in language. Evaluation and assessment give more accurate and objective measurements.

### **2.6.2 Assessment Objectives**

Assessment serves many teaching and learning objectives. It primarily collects information about the knowledge, skills and attitudes students have acquired. Assessment also helps to determine the level of competency students have acquired and whether they can likely apply this knowledge outside the learning environment.

Harris *et al.* (1995:160) categorize assessment:

1. *Assessment of an aptitude*: of an individual for a particular job.
2. *Assessment for diagnosis*: to help determine educational and training needs.
3. *Formative assessment*: to assist and support learning.
4. *Summative assessment*: to determine whether an individual has achieved the specified outcome of the learning programme, the unit of competency, completed a training module, etc.
5. *Assessment for the recognition of prior learning*: to determine whether the person has achieved the standards of competency that have not been assessed; so he/she can have a certification of some skills' proficiency.

6. *Assessment for performance appraisal*: to assess people at work against specific criteria for the purpose of management or Human Resource planning.

The above are purposes for assessing competencies. As CBT starts with identifying competencies and developing competency profiles, assessment could be said to finish the process of instruction by evaluating the learner's mastery of the target competency. It also produces measurable evidence on how good or poor the instructing process has been.

### 2.6.3 Methods of CBT Assessment

Among the various assessment methods, some are relevant to CBT and can better serve it. These methods serve the purpose of assessing the transfer of skills or knowledge. They can also include instruments like<sup>2</sup>:

- *Questioning*: a method that is generally applied to test knowledge. It can be oral or written.
- *Simulations* of workplace situations and communications.
- *Skills Demonstration* of skill samples and vocabulary for a specific working task.
- *Direct Observation* of a product or a process of the job reporting what has been witnessed first-hand.
- *Indirect Observation*: these are feedback from clients using interviews or surveys.
- *Evidence of Learning* through examination of evidence, e.g. examining reports, portfolios, logbooks, etc.

Assessment has evolved to put emphasis on feedback between the teaching process and the desired learning outcome. CBT assessment advocates the concept of an individual's performance matching job-related requirements which is more helpful than just failing or passing with marks and grades.

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2. The listing of CBT assessment is being collected from various resources like Burke (1989) and Thomas (2002).

## 2.7 Criteria for Describing and Assessing CBT Programme

There are many guidelines for setting CBT programme. Some of them have been classified by Burke (1989:11) as follows:

- *The specification of competencies*: these are based on the analysis of professional role(s) and a theoretical formulation of the professional responsibilities. This is accomplished with an analysis of the professional role; selecting all the skills needed for an individual to perform a specific task as accurately and successfully as he/she is asked to be.
- *Competency statements*: they describe the outcomes expected from the performance of related job functions. In addition, they outline the knowledge, skills and attitudes adequate to the nature of target job functions.
- *Competencies are treated as tentative predictors of professional effectiveness*: they are subject to ongoing mandating and validation procedures. Selected competencies are only tentative; they help in a more satisfactory syllabus, but are not necessarily the exact competencies students will need to perform.
- *Competencies are specified and made public to instruction*: they should be known to both learners and teachers, e.g. developing business writing skill for business administration – classroom activity.
- *Learners who complete CBT programme dispose a wide range of competencies profile*. In CBT programme, learners have an advantage of being trained on the target competencies which reflect professional related functions or simply tentative functions. That is why CBT programmes are advantageous to learners as they focus on a set of target competencies to develop.

The above criteria set up the foundation for any CBT programme to get started by the competency specifications, selection and performance outcomes and then, moving to



mandating these competencies and making them public to learners. All these steps allow students to have a privileged knowledge to master more than just the targeted competencies.

Moreover, CBT instruction programme includes some elements that Burke (1989:11) mentions:

- It is derived from and linked to instruct specified competencies.
- It has to be organized and divided into units of manageable size.
- The unit of progress within learners is their demonstration abilities.
- The extent of learner progress is made public to him/her.
- Instruction is organized to accommodate learners' style, preference, pacing and perceived needs.
- Instruction specifications are reviewed and revised on feedback.

These elements play a role within the teacher/learner relationship. The learning process and objective become explicit to learners, as to which competencies to be learnt and how they are going to be instructed. De-fragmenting competencies into smaller units of instruction may help both the learning and teaching processes as competencies blend many aspects related to the individual behaviour, traits, skills and abilities. In CBT, the learners' needs and learning preferences constitute the centre of the instruction.

CBT programmes are designed differently by starting from the distinctive point of selecting competencies as framework, then moving to the teaching process. The teaching progress is measured by the students' ability to perform those learnt competencies in which they are asked to demonstrate specific skills and/or accomplish a specific work-related function.

CBT assessment is based on the interaction between learners and the teacher. Occupational standards shape the competencies and are therefore the basis of competency measurements. In addition, these selected standards are made public to students for two purposes: instruction and performance measurement.

The completed CBT programme is a combination of the students' desires and the workplace criteria. Assembling both of these elements is beneficial to:

- *Students*: to help them develop the professional and social skills. Many of the professional skills require a basis of social skills mastery e.g. a communication skill requires an individual who is able to establish good relationships with others.
- *Companies*: professional job requirements are incorporated in CBT concepts. It takes considerable time for a labour market to find good job candidates which match their needs. However, training individuals to perform specific job tasks can create an opportunity to match supply and demand.

## **2.8 Characteristics of CBT Programme for Language Teaching**

Richards (2006:38), in his comprehensive review of language teaching methodology, introduces Auerbach's view of the features involved in a CBT programme for language teaching. According to Auerbach (1986), any Competency-Based programme which is destined to language teaching should be characterized to:

- *Help learners cope successfully with the demands of the world*: through being independently thinking and behaving individuals.
- *Focus on life skills*: through instructing language as a means of communication about concrete tasks rather than teaching language in isolation of the intended application.
- *Focus on what learners can do as a result of instruction*: learners' behaviours; their performance is assessed.
- *Make objectives clear to learners and teachers*: by narrowing them into sub-objectives. This can help the learning process in both feasibility and progression.

- *Make outcomes public:* known and agreed upon by both learners and teachers. The objectives are presented in terms of behaviours that learners are expected to perform.
- *Pre-test and post test of learners:* if they still face difficulties in performing those required skills, they continue to work on them and are re-tested accordingly.
- *Assess tasks are done through performance:* learners demonstrate their abilities to accomplish special tasks using their acquired skills.
- *Learner-centred instruction based upon competency needs:* learners' success is measured in their abilities to perform those required skills.

Competency-Based programme aims at developing skills to match the labour market expectations. In addition, the life skills are typically integrated in this type of language teaching since it focuses on language as a means to communicate in real-world environments.

## **2.9 CBT Specific to ESP**

Richards (2006:40) identifies CBT to language teaching as likely similar to an ESP approach and to some versions of a task-based approach as both methods focus on learners with very specific needs. It also matches ESP in some other versions of skill-based approach in syllabus design since the starting point for an ESP and CBT course planning is the identification of tasks that learners need to accomplish. Unlike the common language teaching approaches, CBT to language teaching seeks to target occupational tasks and builds upon relative courses.

Observations are made when implementing CBT as it seeks to reach specific objectives in education by describing what courses of instruction aim to accomplish. CBT to language teaching aims to teach specific skills to learners to meet occupational

competencies. In parallel, ESP aims to teach special language skills to learners for a specific purpose, to communicate in a special context.

CBT shifts attention away from methodology as the starting point for any course design is identifying the learners' needs and what type of target professional competencies they are expected to perform. It, then, starts to assemble the relevant teaching materials and adopting one of many teaching methods to reach the already set objective. Based on collecting this information, the teacher decides to design the relevant courses that develop these needs into acquired competencies. ESP is also mostly criticized for lacking a specific methodology of teaching. On the other hand, both ESP and CBT focus on learners with specific language needs. These needs, once being identified and determined, constitute the framework for a syllabus design.

CBT is often used in programmes that focus on learners with specific language needs. Such is the case of ESP teaching as this latter relies mostly on specifying the language skills to function in a specific context. In addition, CBT reinforces the mastery of performance competencies which is also common in some ESP workplace trainings. Learners who are already established in their professions are likely to be more focused and motivated for this type of programme training.

The starting point within CBT course planning is the identification of the professional tasks learners will perform in a workplace environment. In parallel, ESP course planning starts with identifying the learners' needs to function in a specific context. Consequently, both specific task competencies and special language skills are combined as a basis for a successful course planning.

CBT is being introduced as a key for integration in ESP teaching, specifically, business English teaching. The result of mixing up the common elements of these teaching approaches would lead to a more focused outcome. This output is a form of syllabus specifically designed to meet the learners' needs and aims to develop the students' language competencies to function correctly in a specific workplace setting.

## 2.10 Advantages of Implementing CBT

CBT is generally acknowledged to serve two complementary objectives:

- It is directed to the accomplishment of the organization's goals e.g. Particular companies' objectives.
- It aims at developing the individual's competencies, life and job-related skills.

Richards and Rodgers (2001:142) present a plethora of language teaching approaches but emphasize on how advantageous CBT teaching approach is. They quote Docking's view of CBT for language teaching as a “*positive agent of change*”:

*Competency based approach to teaching and assessment offer teachers an opportunity to revitalize their education and training programs. Not only will the quality of assessment improve, but the quality of teaching and student learning will be enhanced by the clear specification of expected outcomes and the continuous feedback that competency-based assessment can offer.*

*(Docking, 1994:15, in Richards and Rodgers, 2001:142)*

Richards and Rodgers (2001:142) mention the traditional teaching approaches and switch to the current communicative teaching trends in which CBT plays a remarkable role. The authors emphasize on the idea that Competency-Based courses require careful design and instructors may require new teaching skills.

This language teaching approach is advantageous as several authors like Richard (2006) have mentioned some of its positive outcomes. Therefore, we attempt to list some of these advantages as follows:

- It is a learner-centred approach and is more likely to meet learners' needs.
- It takes into account the learners' experience and their existing skill level.
- It is more participative and enjoyable experience for learners - they learn on their own pace - as it facilitates learning rather than pushes in information.

- It emphasises skills progression, which is why it is stimulating further learning and improved performance.
- Training can be designed and redesigned to reflect the context of workplace. It is an ongoing process.

### **2.11 Key Issues to Consider in CBT Programme**

CBT has proven its credibility in management organizational trainings. Furthermore, it has generally resulted positively in some English teaching programmes worldwide, e.g. Australia, the UK and the USA. Emerging countries like Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand also apply CBT to English language teaching especially for technical and vocational teaching (Richards 2006).

Many writers like Burke (1989), Klingstedt (1973) and Richards (2006) agree on steps to be considered once CBT is put into motion. Some of these steps - considered as key issues in a CBT teaching programme - are listed below:

- Attention must be given to identifying target competencies by analysing the target jobs and their related competency analysis.
- An accurate and clear analysis of competencies is needed to help both design and assessment of an adequate programme.
- Activities, choosing materials, learning guides for participants and assessment check lists for trainers are developed through time and required resources.
- The trainer or teacher acts as a coach, a mediator and a facilitator, supporting participants as they practise and master skills. Coaching and feedback skills are vital.
- Assessment criteria, nature and the means of assessment should also be published to trainees and should therefore go with the nature of instruction. As a matter of fact, instructing the selected competencies require a specific method of

testing. Written tests, for example, can be irrelevant for developing spoken skills of trainees.

The above key issues are salient when considering CBT programme. The first thing is to step back and start within elements of the learners and the labour market needs and expectations. Designing relevant materials, choosing appropriate skills to develop and assessment nature come all after having conducted a thorough analysis of both the learners' as well as job-related situations.

As CBT is learner-centred, pre-work competencies and job analysis is predominant. Teachers and/or curriculum designers take considerable time to gather evidence on target competencies and job criteria. The following step is mostly devoted to choose the appropriate teaching materials and design what goes with the nature of instructing selected competencies. Therefore specific assessment methods come at the final step to measure the pacing and progress made by trainees over these competencies.

## **2.12 Competency-Based Curriculum**

There is often confusion between the terms “*curriculum*” and “*syllabus*”. This confusion is lifted in Shaw’s (1977:217) article “Foreign-Language syllabus Development: Some recent approaches” in which he quotes Robertson's definition:

*The curriculum includes the goals, objectives, content, processes, resources, and a means of evaluation of all the learning experiences planned for pupils both in and out of the school and community through classroom instruction and related programs.*

*(Robertson, 1971:564 in Shaw, 1977:8)*

The term “*curriculum*” encompasses elements of goals, content, processes and mainly assessment criteria. It gathers the widest guidelines of the teaching process, unlike

*“syllabus” which is regarded as “a statement of the plan for any part of the curriculum, excluding the element of curriculum evaluation itself.” (Shaw, 1975:74)*

On the other hand, the term “*syllabus*”, then, is limited in nature to only a teaching material implicitly reflecting certain teaching ideas. It is said that two teachers applying the same syllabus does not mean that they teach the same courses as syllabus traces the line of what to teach, but not necessarily the exact courses to instruct.

As the relationship between “*curriculum*” and “*syllabus*” is made clearer, “*curriculum*” has wider nature and function in language teaching. Various elements are embedded within its development, whereas “*syllabus*” takes smaller part and is viewed in the context of an ongoing curriculum development.

For a functional Competency-Based curriculum, Burns and Kingstedt (1973:80) suggest a basis of “*continuous progress education*” as a continuum of CBT application is essential for measuring the progress of this teaching approach at all levels. For example, an elementary school applying CBT approach requires a continuous CBT approach implementation at secondary school. As a result, continuum in CBT is highly regarded for this teaching approach efficiency.

Historically, this approach has been inhibited by high school teaching programmes mostly in the USA. It was primarily applied at the elementary level where elementary teachers professed commitment to continuous progress education. However, this resulted in a mismatch with the outdated secondary schools expectations. The gap characterized mostly in the hindrance of elementary school outcomes with secondary school expectations as they did not match.

For these reasons, Burns and Kingstedt (1973) emphasize the following idea:

*It can be assumed if a competency based curriculum to be established, a change in a student grading and placement must become a reality.*

*(Burns and Kingstedt, 1973:80)*



The authors appeal to define the objectives for the curriculum before arriving at its design. These objectives have to be specific and fewer in number so that to be managed and to help the instructor focusing more on the taught subject.

Therefore, the authors refer to four fundamental questions to be answered by any curriculum developer:

- What educational purpose a school, institute or university aims to attain?

Defining the teaching objectives is the first step to be done. Making objectives clear and public facilitates other succeeding procedures of choosing the teaching materials and methods.

- What educational experiences can be provided that are likely to attain these purposes?

This step calls for a more qualified teacher whose language knowledge is no more important than his/her knowledge of the specific topic to teach. Both the teacher's experience in ESP together and his/her ability to cope with CBT nature of teaching is important.

- How can these educational experiences be effectively organized?

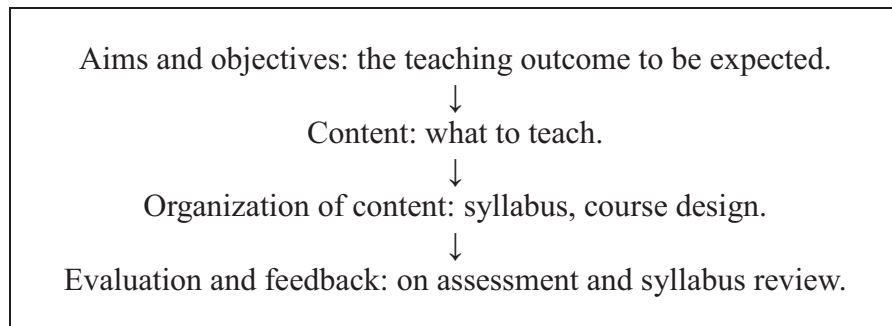
These educational experiences have to be gathered to serve the instructing/learning processes.

- How can we determine that these purposes have been attained?

Feedback on teaching methods, syllabus review and incorporating learners' opinions are likely some ideas of purpose measurements.

The starting point in CBT is not about how successful this curriculum is, but rather to what degree it can be. This is the basis for curriculum accountability inspired by

different authors like Burns and Kingstedt (1973) and Richards (2006), mingled and fused in an even simpler model of illustration:



**Table 2.1: The Different Sources for Curriculum Accountability**

Burns and Kingstedt (1973:81) question the nature of any Competency-Based curriculum design. Among these questions we find:

- What behaviours are to be produced?
- What has to be put in a learner to be able to produce that behaviour?
- What kind of teaching materials has the logistic capability of developing it?
- How does a teacher use them to bring about the formation of these behaviours?
- How should these materials be programmed for the most efficient input?

These questions remain ideal in the sense that answering them alone may not necessarily lead to a successful curriculum design. Instead, a curriculum has to be tested and the result of applying it gives more adequate measurement.

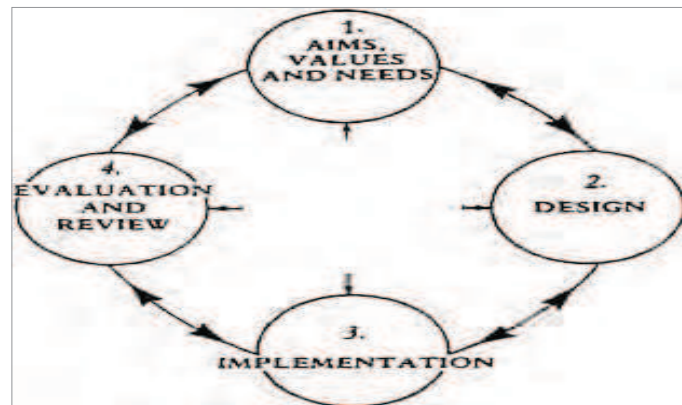
On the basis of the above questions, teachers come closely to know the job to be done, to select strategies to achieve these objectives and set out a methodology to run the curriculum. Yet, some teachers may show lack of understanding to the nature of such a curriculum. For this reason, Burns and Kingstedt (1973) advocate that:

*The question of implementing a competency-based curriculum is one which must be faced. Since the success of any design rests with the teachers who implement it.*

*(Burns and Kingstedt 1973:82)*

Moreover, they suggest a CBT education programme for teachers to enhance their teaching skill. These programmes aim to train teachers to understand the underlying plan of such specific teaching curriculum.

Thus, Burke (1989) suggests a diagram to implement Competency-Based curriculum the following page:



**Diagram 2.2: Model of Curriculum Development. (Burke, 1989:86)**

The model indicates how the four stages are interrelated and connected. The first stage is concerned with identifying students' needs, classifying them and building around relevant learning objectives to serve them. Designing relevant courses is what comes right after these needs are made known to students and instructors.

Feedback and evaluation characterize CBT programme as progress has to be made public to learners. Implementing such a curriculum comes when the above elements are successfully combined. Once carefully identified, the learners' needs play a fundamental role in implementing curricula.

It has to be clear, for a satisfactory curriculum development, that an ongoing progress always takes place and also time. This diagram is designed in a way to show how the needs are changeable and how they influence directly the resulted curriculum. Therefore, this constant change of needs affects directly all the succeeding stages.

When competencies are set as objectives of learning, educational programmes can be built properly to relate both the students' intentions and workplace requirements. Such an approach to teaching, which is mainly built around the demonstrated competencies, would allow students to be placed in special learning situations based on their needs. They would be instructed individually until they succeed at performing the target competencies. It is a reassuring method to instruct the learner with what he/she must have to perform correctly in the specific working environment.

### **2.13 Conclusion**

This chapter has covered CBT's overall aspects, terminology, origins, developments and characteristics. Discussing terminology related to CBT has constituted the basis of this chapter. Assessment was another aspect that this chapter has thoroughly dealt with. Trying to narrow the focus on CBT for language teaching, the chapter suggested CBT as the most satisfactory response to ESP teaching. This latter has constituted an important component of CBT implementation; the purpose of this emphasis was to link both approaches for a better presentation of the aimed syllabus. After disambiguating the terms syllabus/curriculum, this chapter is concluded with some insights of Competency-Based curriculum, trying to gather the necessary literature for the target situation analysis and the (learners'/companies') needs analysis that the following chapter will discuss thoroughly.

# **CHAPTER THREE**

**INSIM and Business Companies**

**Data Analysis and Interpretation**

## CHAPTER THREE

### **INSIM and Business Companies Data Analysis and Interpretation**

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## CHAPTER THREE

### INSIM and Business Companies Data Analysis and Interpretation

#### 3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we introduce the environment under study - INSIM Institute. By emphasizing the status of Business English teaching, we illustrate its focal role within this type of training. Moreover, we attempt to give an accurate analysis of the learners' as well as the manager's questionnaires respectively. We carry on this chapter by interpreting data in order to gather the necessary information that will be used for the designed syllabus type. Furthermore, the data analysis is used as a prelude of the chosen approach to Business English teaching.

#### 3.2 INSIM Institute Training Environment

INSIM which stands for "Institut International de Management" or International School of Management, was created in 1994. Within few years, INSIM was certified under ISO - 9000 and became the first Algerian private school that accordingly submitted to international standards. Moreover, it succeeded to gain more foreign partners to strengthen its status, and collaborated successfully with Montréal University, Sherbrooke College of Quebec, and Paris Graduate School of Management (PGSM). It also carries out trainings for important organisations like: the European Union, the International Bank, Algerian ministries, Sonatrach Company, Sonelgaz Company, Royal Hotel and others.

Today, INSIM is the largest private educational institute in Algeria which is due to:

- The large number of trainees.
- The number of foreign educational institutions which collaborate and offer international degrees.
- The number of companies that choose INSIM to train its employees.

INSIM Institute has a number of subsidiaries that exist throughout the national territory, in Tizi Ouzou, Bejaia, Hassi Messaoud and Oran, where more than 6000 trainees carry out different trainings. Besides, INSIM main activities focus on trainings and also counselling, thus, a wide array of trainings can be found within INSIM institute such as:

- Audit finance.
- Market research.
- Strategy of commercial communication.
- Diagnostics of marketing, distribution and sale.
- Export, counselling and others.

In addition to that, INSIM offers in sight trainings for some of the Algerian companies. These trainings are held in specific domains like: management, marketing, human resources, internal and external communication, finance, accountancy and computing.

### **3.2.1 INSIM Oran**

INSIM Oran was created in 2005, a subsidiary of INSIM group of Hydra/Algiers. It dispenses various trainings in different fields. The goal of this diversity is to allow variation and to provide, accordingly, the market with the maximum of qualified human resources. This institute counts over 300 students in various domains, for the degree of TS (Techniciens Supérieurs) and DESSG (Diplômes d'Etudes Supérieures Spécialisées en Gestion des Entreprises) degrees.

INSIM has at the students' disposal a training department which helps students improve their performances and skills, so as to be easily integrated in the professional milieu. One of its main objectives is competency-based, since it targets to adjust its training outcomes with job offers. INSIM therefore, tries, through strengthening its high position within the educational private sector, to offer trainings which meet the increasing demand of the labour market.

The Institute seeks to adopt changes in the language teaching that match the overall educational reforms in Algeria, especially the ones related to the teaching of English



language by including Competency-Based Approach to the secondary educational level. These elements of change have been presented in dichotomies by Miliani (2010)<sup>1</sup> :

- Knowledge and competency.
- Autonomy (whether total or partial) of individuals and activities of/in groups.
- Tasks and activities selected.

Reforms in education have touched the public as well as the private educational sectors in Algeria. However, when it comes to private educational environment, the emphasis is stressed on what educational quality this particular institute provides to its clients – learners. As a consequence to these reforms in the educational outcomes, the private educational policy has prompted to offer trainings that satisfy both the learners and the market exigencies and which has adopted Competency-based Approach as a key to satisfy the target parties – learners and the labour market.

### **3.2.2 The Role of ESP Teaching within INSIM Institute**

English has imposed itself as a de facto language of communication within the new global system for political and economic reasons. English has introduced itself as the dominant language of Technology and Science as well as the language of international organizations.

The learning of English in Algeria, as a fact, has recently captured the attention of the public and private educational institutions and the industrial sector in which the recruitment criteria are established based on English proficiency. The number of job advertisements in media, especially in newspapers, gives importance to English proficiency.

---

1. “.....que nous présentons de manière dichotomique:  
\* savoir et compétence,  
\* autonomie (totale ou partielle) des apprenants et activités de/en groupes,  
\* tâches et activités sélectionnées.” (Miliani, M. 2010 :2) at :

[http://www.um.edu.mt/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/.../6-MJES-15-2Miliani.pdf](http://www.um.edu.mt/_data/assets/pdf_file/.../6-MJES-15-2Miliani.pdf)

It has been evident that the role of English is entrenching everywhere and in every field. Thus, in this specific learning environment, various training cannot be efficient without the existence of English. As a matter of fact, English teaching is not as a complementary component but a key to economic and management sciences. For this reason, English has been implemented in the teaching of all the existing fields within this institute.

Furthermore, there are potential careers – due to the openness of the labour market to foreign companies – open in front of the users of English whatever the field they specialise in. This is a fact for the users of English in general, so trainees, who possess specialised degrees with ESP training, also possess specific communicative competencies that allow them to fit in the target field successfully. They are more likely to be welcomed by the existing domestic, foreign and multinational companies.

On the other hand, the labour market is becoming so demanding. Thus, offers are more and more specified and the market of Business English courses is, consequently, being described as *booming*. The need to communicate domestically and internationally has set new rules in the recruitment process; where Business English finds its appropriate place. For these reasons, the importance to instruct ESP imposes itself as a door to knowledge, and as a key to have access to an effective professional life.

### **3.3 Business English Teaching**

Business English (henceforth BE) is described to be the most demanding course within ESP (Thomas, 2002). It lies under ESP vast umbrella which counts English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP). The latter contains different fields in which business English plays a crucial role.

It becomes fundamental – at INSIM institute – to instruct Business English for Marketing and International Trade classes. When observing the various modules, the role of English is more than just a means to communicate the main subjects of study. It is also a means to acquire knowledge and other skills. Learners, then, use English to

interact in the classroom, using their previously acquired knowledge in business. Therefore, Business English course communicates other taught disciplines, when the course includes the different components of marketing and business.

The present taught syllabus at INSIM is composed of two main parts: grammar lessons and technical vocabulary lessons (texts).

- In grammar courses, the teacher aims at rebuilding a grammar knowledge these learners lack. Hence, this part aims at providing them with the necessary grammar rules for correct written English. For this, the grammar lessons are mainly based on tenses, in a basic presentation and they tend to become more complex gradually.
- Technical vocabulary lessons, Reading Comprehension texts, are composed of economic texts, some business, marketing, financial, and management definitions. What is notable is the nature of tasks within these lessons; the objective of these tasks is to improve the writing and the reading skills. Nevertheless, it does not help to improve the speaking and listening skills. Reading economic texts only improves the reading skill, but it does not foster the focus on reading techniques of the necessary information.

Basically, the programme is designed to improve reading skills of learners as it is mainly composed of texts for reading, accompanied with some “fill in the gaps exercises” with the newly acquired vocabulary. Moreover, these “technical” vocabulary lessons appeal to feed the learner with the specific concepts of business; however it does not assist them to interact using the same vocabulary, except for specific tasks as: answering reading comprehension questions, or answering a lesson given exercise.

It has to be mentioned that no homework tasks are given, nor do lessons compel learners to do further research in the business field. Consequently, learners may unconsciously isolate the learning of English as non relevant to their training. Notably,

what is required within the lesson is to acquire new vocabulary that may be used in future situations while they are unable to reproduce the same acquired vocabulary when answering the teacher's questions.

On the other hand, the present syllabus is a combination of structure and skill-based syllabus which aims at developing some basic skills for the use of language. Yet, it does not consider learners as the centre of this training. The basic approach to ESP syllabus design is to match between the learner's needs with the teaching material - the appropriate syllabus.

### 3.3.1 The Learner-Centred Syllabus

It is stated by Sinor and Kaplan that:

*Before you actually begin constructing the syllabus, take some time to think about what you expect your students to learn over the course of the semester? What knowledge do you expect students to acquire? What skills (e.g. critical thinking, analytic ability, mathematical or computational skills, forming and testing hypotheses) do you expect students to gain?*

*(Sinor and Kaplan, 2004:2)*

Therefore, when designing such a syllabus which is centred on learners, some points have to be illustrated:

- a) The goal of the course.
  - b) The choice of teaching methods.
  - c) Material selection.
  - d) The choice of activities that serve the teaching method.
  - e) Time allocation.
- a) *The goal of the course:* is to define the purpose behind teaching such a text or giving this particular grammar lesson; in the sense to be directed towards a final

objective. What learners are supposed to do with this lesson is the basic issue for each language learner.

Linking grammar lessons to speaking and specific topic writing skills may appear as the best suitable technique to apply. This could be a report summary writing, attending a meeting, negotiating with a client and so on. These “specific” situations enhance the learning motivation and yield to better results on both. The shorter term is when assessing, and on the longer term, when communicating a language. It should aim thereby at preparing candidates to meet the standard knowledge requirement of the workplace. Actually, this is the very missing aspect within the present syllabus.

Obviously, the sample of grammar course illustrates the nature of such a lesson which tends to offer elementary grammar knowledge. Consequently, it aims at presenting basic forms of tenses and verbs. Yet, it does not cope with business corpus in a way to foster the use of a chosen tense within a business context. Grammar lessons are presented independently and are not related to technical vocabulary teaching. On this basis, it could be more relevant if grammar teaching was associated with the teaching of vocabulary lessons. As a result to these associations, learners can link the use of the sentence patterns to communicate a set of specific vocabulary in a given situation. Thus, this linking aspect of both is absent.

- b) *The choice of certain teaching methods:* which are appropriate to the nature of the course and its implication on learners. Interaction, communication, role play, chairing discussion of some current business issues such as “the latest economic crisis” could be of great motivation to learners who basically seek to communicate their knowledge of the field.

Furthermore, English is absent as a means of communication within the classroom. Learners, as it will be shown in the questionnaire results, and who already possess some skills disabilities, may fail to communicate in English. Therefore, the least to do in this situation is to encourage them to take a risk to speak the language i.e. English.

For that, some useful methods are welcome to link the use of English with some of the workplace tasks. Among them, negotiations and meetings may be of a good use as a ground for spoken English performance. One of the major keys for a better method selection cannot be done without knowing the nature of tasks within the target profession. In this case under study, it is Marketing and Trade. However, the professional competencies have to be determined for a better implementation of the syllabus.

- c) *Materials selection*: is to choose what to teach. For example: when it is a reading skill lesson, what teaching materials can accompany this lesson e.g. a listening comprehension lesson can appeal to the use of CD's and videos. This facilitates both the learning and teaching procedures when introducing technology as a tool which can be better exploited by learners in the learning processes. This could be successfully done within INSIM institute as the number of learners is very limited. Fifteen students per group. Then, the institute already disposes of some good materials which can be used for English teaching lessons, such as videos, data shows and computers. Up to now, teachers' handouts are mostly the only presented material to learners.
- d) *The choice of activities that serve the teaching method*: these are some activities that may assist in a better acquisition; they are role play and simulation of business most common situations. Those simulated situations are creative as learners will feel the importance of what they are learning through producing it. A major issue within language learners in general that is the fact that they lack awareness about how to use a language in a business context and this is the lacking part within the present syllabus.
- e) *Time allocation*: is a crucial element which is devoted to each teaching skill and course accordingly. Actually, the time allocated to English lessons causes a serious handicap for the teacher first and foremost as she is guided by limited

time per week. A 90 minute course weekly may not allow the teacher to focus on developing some skills, essentially, the speaking and writing skills.

This syllabus nature and its main guidelines are very narrowed as time does not allow for further time-consuming activities such as: writing reports, doing research and presenting them orally. Nor does it allow the teacher to check out every student's skill development. On the other hand, today's market places seek more what candidates can do with the acquired knowledge than what they know, as employers expect job applicants to come with competencies, in other words, what is supposed to be done in some of the workplace tasks.

Consequently, a central point arises when the input - this syllabus under study - does not meet the learners' needs. Thus, it does not respond to the requirements of the labour market, when a newly graduate cannot find an appropriate job. In other words, when these acquired skills, competencies and knowledge do not meet the demand of the actual labour market, it is necessary to review this input and to adjust it to the needs of supply and demand.

### **3.3.2 INSIM English Taught Syllabus**

Even if INSIM training policy favours the teaching of English language stressing all four skills, the teacher may switch to the use of more reading and listening skills depending on the teacher's work style and the interpersonal relationship with the learners in the classroom. Therefore, the teacher has designed a set of grammatical and vocabulary focus lessons for the purpose of developing general English skills.

To illustrate this point, a sample of a grammar lesson is presented in the following page:

# UNIT 1

## Present continuous (I am doing)

**a** Study this example situation:

Ann is in her car. She is on her way to work.

She **is driving** to work.

This means: She is driving now, at the time of speaking.

This is the *present continuous* tense:

I	<b>am</b>	(= I'm)	} <b>driving</b>
he/she/(it)	<b>is</b>	(= he's, etc.)	
we/they/you	<b>are</b>	(= we're, etc.)	



We use the present continuous when we talk about something that is happening at the time of speaking:

- Please don't make so much noise. **I'm studying.** (*not I study*)
- "Where is Peggy?" "She's **taking** a bath." (*not she takes*)
- Let's go out now. It **isn't raining** anymore.
- (*at a party*) Hello, Ann. **Are you enjoying** the party? (*not do you enjoy*)

**b** We also use the present continuous when we talk about something that is happening around the time of speaking, but not necessarily exactly at the time of speaking. Study this example situation:

- Tom and Ann are talking and having coffee in a cafe. Tom says: "**I'm reading** an interesting book at the moment. I'll lend it to you when I've finished it."

Tom is not reading the book at the time of speaking. He means that he has begun the book and hasn't finished it yet. He is in the middle of reading it. Here are some more examples:

- Maria **is studying** English at a language school. (*not studies*)
- Have you heard about Brian? He **is building** his own house. (*not builds*)

But perhaps Maria and Brian are not doing these things exactly at the time of speaking.

**c** We often use the present continuous when we talk about a period around the present. For example: **today, this week, this season**, etc.:

- "You're **working** hard **today**." "Yes, I have a lot to do."
- Tom **isn't playing** football **this season**. He wants to concentrate on his studies.

**d** We use the present continuous when we talk about changing situations:

- The population of the world **is rising** very fast. (*not rises*)
- **Is your English getting** better? (*not does . . . get*)



The content of this lesson must be inherently of interest to the English level of learners. The sample reflects the grammar-based teaching which is based on presenting a basic grammatical structure and which invites learners to practise it through exercises. This illustrated sample teaches grammar in isolation which is broader in function and does not invite the business context to take part of the lesson. Obviously, the lacking element in the teaching of grammar and vocabulary lies in cohesion.

The learners, having different learning backgrounds, may develop an indifferent, if not, a negative attitude towards the general learning of English. There is a common feeling within foreign language learners of a sense of difficulty in the learning of a language which interferes in the learning process as we often hear learners giving statements about the complexity of the English grammar. That is why, we find the implication of business-related grammar lessons as better substitutes.

Theoretically, an ESP teaching combines the language systems and the specific content that target developing specific skills for a specific purpose. Practically, grammar lessons dissociate, in content, from the overall context of business, and then the question lies in their purpose. The teacher could have possibly overlooked the importance of linking grammar with the vocabulary lessons, therefore, we suggest a text sample for technical vocabulary teaching in the following page:

## ECONOMICS

Economics as a science developed in the eighteenth century. The writers who elaborated and transformed sporadic economic discussions into a set of scientific economic theories were Cantillon, Quesnay and Smith.

Cantillon's "*Essai sur la Nature du Commerce en General*" is considered as the cradle of political economy. Cantillon regarded wealth as the comfort of life. It is the result of the combination of land and labour. Land is the origin or source of wealth and labour or the work of man is the means which produces it. In other words, labour transforms potential wealth into real wealth.

As far as the social structure is concerned, Cantillon divided the community into three distinct classes: landlords, entrepreneurs or undertakers and wage-earners.

Cantillon's *Essai* influenced a group of French thinkers known as the "Economists", and later the "Physiocrats". These economists believed in the idea that land and agriculture was the only source of wealth. The leader of the Physiocrats was Quesnay. They were against the interference of the state in the economic framework.

According to them, the role the state is to ensure security, property and liberty. Thus, the Physiocrats may be regarded as the first political economists who put forward the concepts of "laissez-faire" principle.

On the other hand, Smith's "*Wealth of Nations*" became the foundations of classified economics. He rejected the Physiocrats' theories about land; he recognized the contribution of manufacturing.

Believing that language varies according to registers, an observation is made about the text sample "Economics" which appears to be introductory to the Economic Sciences. It, then, should aim to provide learners with technical English vocabulary. Specific to Business, this text looks broader in nature and very informative. For instance, it does not establish the relationship between the knowledge that this text provides and the

desired output to describe a business transaction. In addition to that, as learners are pre-knowledgeable in business, the transfer of an English version to basic concepts comes with feasibility. Yet, the text does not enhance the knowledge of the necessary business jargon for learners to communicate a special topic.

The first analysis is made at the level of the text presentation. This text appears to be useful for reading comprehension and which only reproduces the theory and history of the economist movements. Thus, the transfer of terms like “*agriculture*”, “*entrepreneurs*”, “*land*” and “*labour*” maybe easier if we consider the pre-requisite knowledge of learners about Economic sciences. Back to Dudley-Evans and St. John's (1998) concept of core business vocabulary, (in Chapter One of this thesis / page 19), the comprehensive vocabulary is what this text provides and which may serve as additional input for business English teaching, but may not benefit the far-sighted role of business English into the general training of INSIM learners.

The second analysis applies discourse analysis to this sample of “*written discourse*”. This latter communicates a special meaning of “Economics” in this selected text since in “*discourse*” (*whether spoken or written*), it is meaning which should play an important role and that should be focused on (Belkhenchir, 2006:63). In this scientific communicative setting – Marketing and Trade classes – the teaching of technical vocabulary weighs on presenting verbal “*scientific discourse*” which this text represents. This text communicates – through the use of the verbal discourse only – economic-related knowledge, however, the same text does not invite students to “*negotiate*” meanings of what information has been *narrated*.

For example, the text goes on *narrating* scientific facts and time events about the development of “Economics” as a science and the emergence and role of the “Physiocrats”, yet, the same piece of “*written discourse*” does not provide a platform of meaning that students may debate and discuss. This truth does not match the goal behind including the teaching of Business vocabulary to students at this particular learning setting - INSIM.

What is observed is the narrative nature of this text which could serve as a supportive theoretical material that helps students understand the historical background of Economics. In addition to that, we do not observe any clear teaching method, except the Grammar Translation Method which is previously discussed (in Chapter One / page 25 of the present research). Yet, we wonder if these lessons improve any of the learners' skills for a more adequate Business English use, as we assume that BE learning starts with the learning of terminology of the target field.

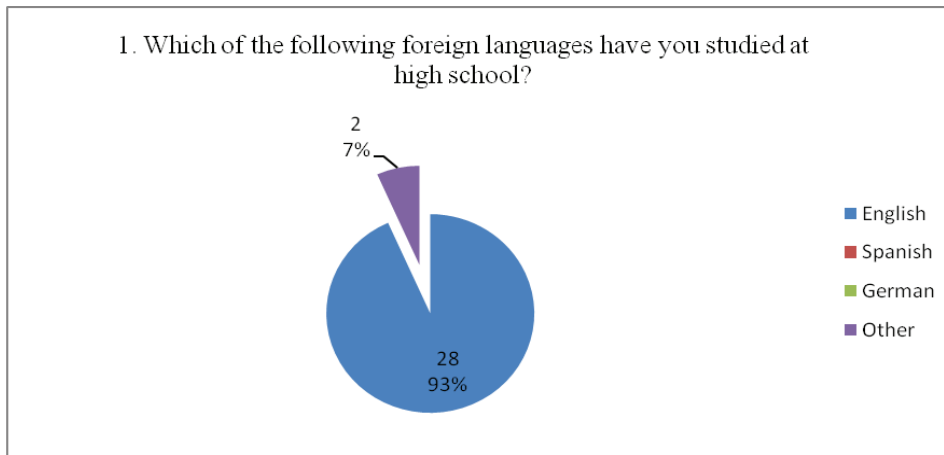
Analysing samples of the taught syllabus at INSIM is important to us, to study and compare, based on the theories we are using in this research, yet, discussions and analysis of this syllabus alone may not lead us to suggest a more reliable syllabus without identifying the students' needs, weaknesses and learning objectives.

### **3.4 Learners' Questionnaire Results and Analysis**

For an effective syllabus design, the data "learners/workplace" collection process requires a number of steps, conducting questionnaires and in-field investigations. They help to present a syllabus that fulfills both students' needs and meet the labour market expectations quest.

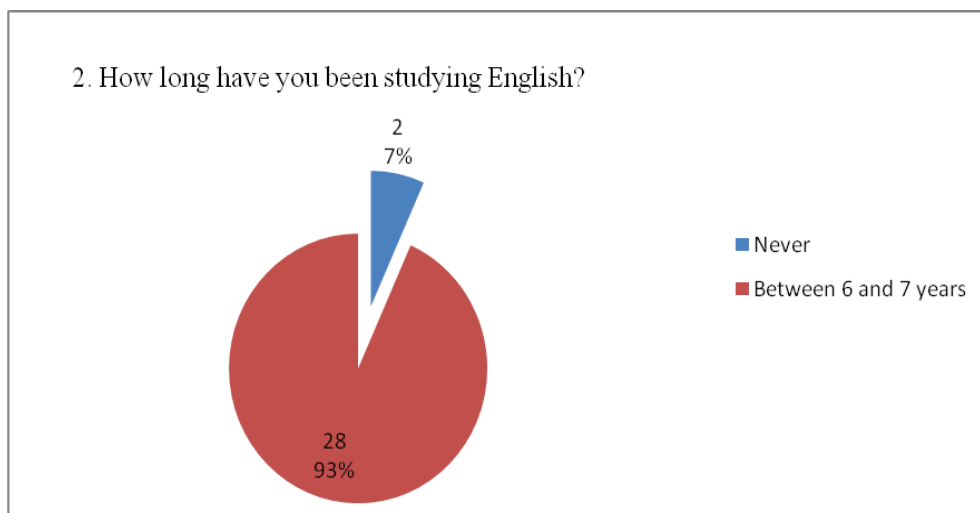
#### **1) General Questions' Analysis**

This questionnaire addressed thirty students divided into two groups: marketing and international trade groups. Thus, the data collected was the following:



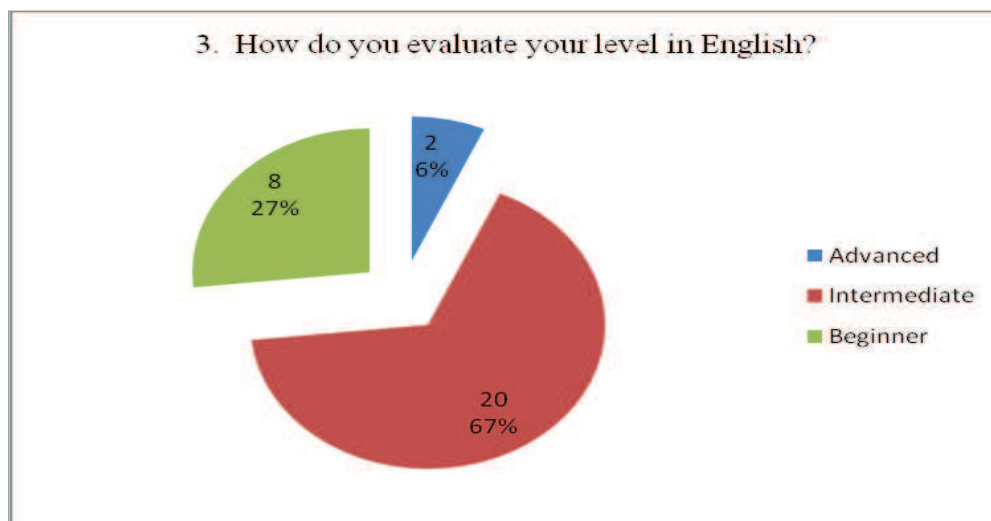
**Figure 3.1: Learners' Foreign Language Background**

In addition to the national language – Arabic – and French as a first foreign language, Figure 3.1 shows that 28 out of 30 students have picked up English as the foreign language learned at high school, and that 2 out of 30 students have studied other foreign languages e.g. Spanish, German and Italian. In percentages, we find out that 93% of the population under study is familiar with the English language. This latter information enables us to classify the target population within ESP learners' category as discussed in (Chapter One/ page 8). It is important for an ESP syllabus designer to know whether the target population is familiar with English or not. Yet, we needed extra questions to build up clearer ideas about the degree of familiarity with English.



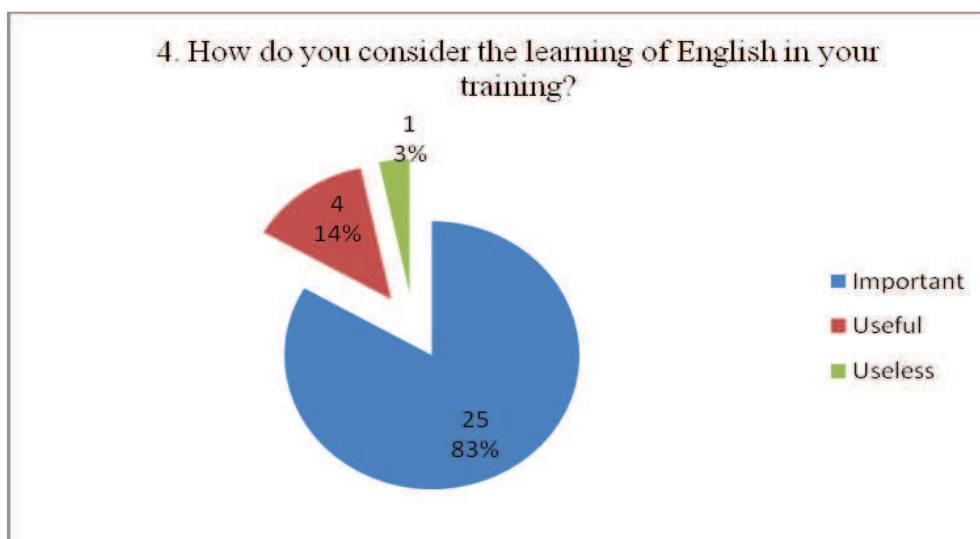
**Figure 3.2: The Level of English Proficiency**

The aim of this question, in [Figure 3.2](#), is to know the level of English proficiency. This consequently leads to set a framework upon which the syllabus design proceeds. The optimal goal is to introduce a syllabus adequate to the students' level as most of them may face difficulties in following a course which exceeds their level of comprehension. So, in order to overcome this missing point between the students' level and syllabus design, it was fundamental to arrive at well positioning the level of students in English.



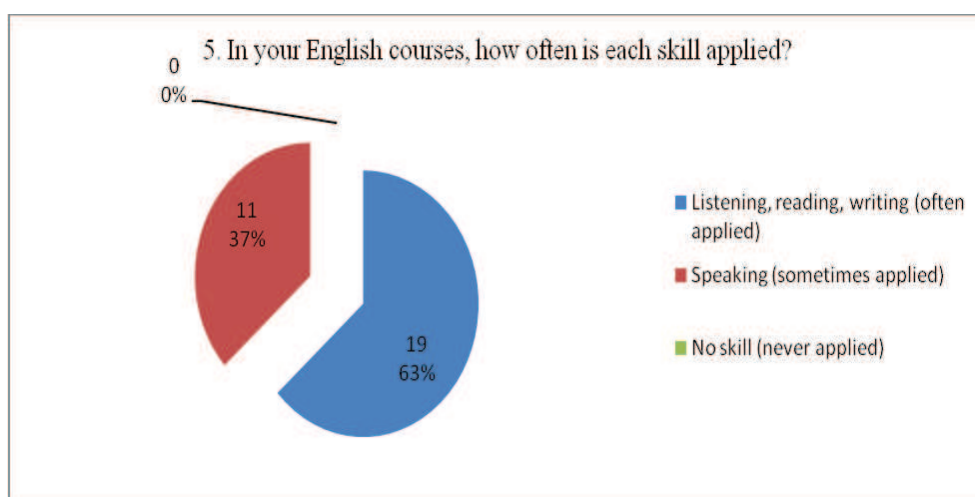
**Figure 3.3: Self Evaluation of English Proficiency**

The aim – in the above figure – is to give students a chance to evaluate their level in language proficiency. The point to be taken into account is how far learners, potentially ESP users, are aware of their language learning success, through choosing “advanced” and “intermediate” levels. Otherwise, they lack self-awareness as well as not having studied English by choosing “beginner” level. The figures read that 67% are intermediate. A must-ask question is needed to interpret this intermediate level students, which is presented in the following diagram.



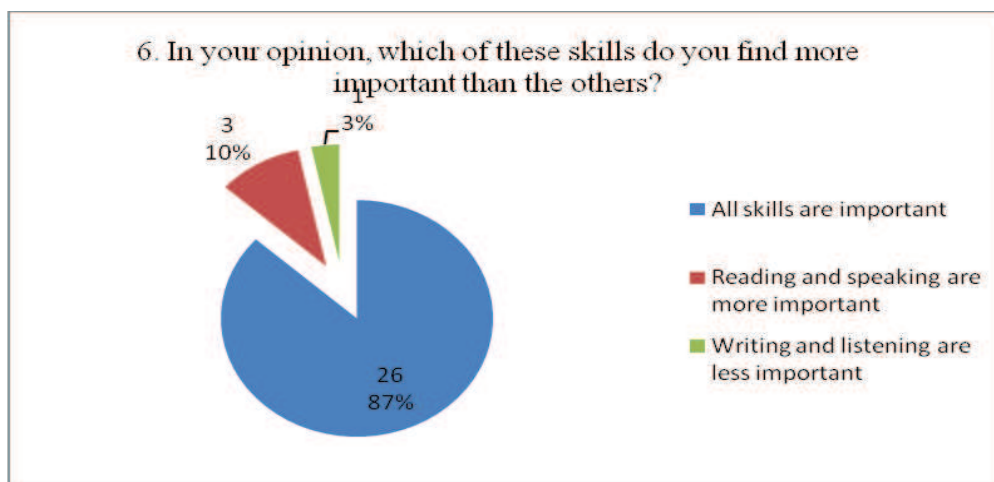
**Figure 3.4: The Importance of English in Learners' Training**

The aim of this question in [Figure 3.4](#) is to observe whether students are aware of the relationship between learning Business English and the nature of their training. Figures read that 83 % are aware of this relationship. Choosing “important” interprets how learners are able, or at least, can easily establish the link between English learning with other taught subjects. On the other hand, 13 % find that English is “useful” to their training. This fact compels the researcher to wonder if this category of learners knows the impact of English on this special training. The aim is to allow students think of establishing the link between English and marketing and trade studies respectively.



**Figure 3.5: Skills Mostly Applied - Learners' Opinions**

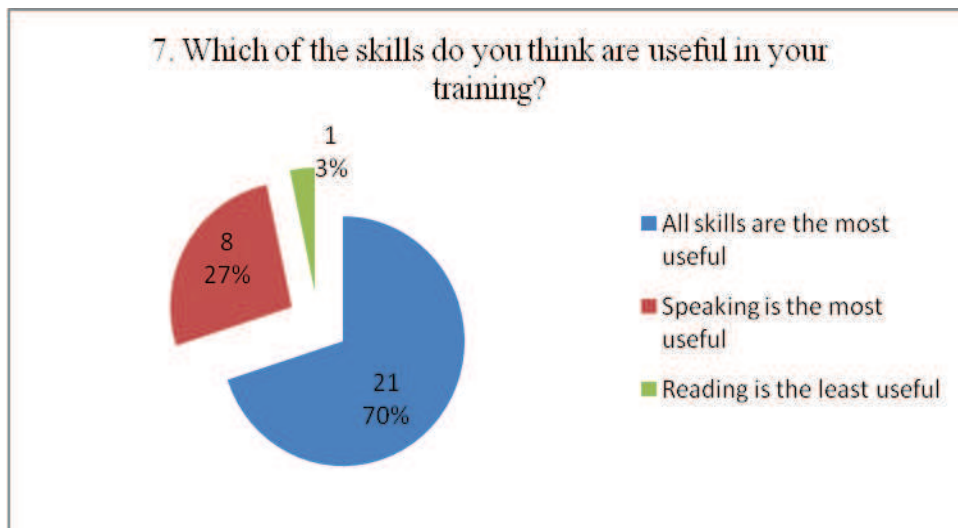
Here the questionnaire shifts attention towards the importance of the four skills. The aim of this question is to state, from the learners' answers, the skills that are mostly applied within the English course. The diagram shows that the speaking skill is seldom applied, whereas 63% classify listening, reading and writing skills in a frequent use. There is an evident lack in communication within the classroom. While taking a step backward and observing the taught syllabus, we notice that communication is missing. So this reality drives us to think of it as a possible key solution in improving this syllabus at hands.



**Figure 3.6: Importance of Skills - Learners' Opinions**

In this question, Figure 3.6, learners are asked to choose the skills they find more relevant to the nature of their training. 87% choose all of them; on the other hand, 10% find reading and speaking prominent skills. The result has a double sided interpretation; it is clear that speaking is lacking and that reading, as long as it is needed, causes a handicap to students whose level in English, mostly intermediate, may face difficulties in using the foreign language orally. The fear of using a foreign language remains in the use of grammar, pronunciation and the knowledge of the vocabulary needed to communicate effectively. Besides, reading in most of the situations, is communicating a written piece.

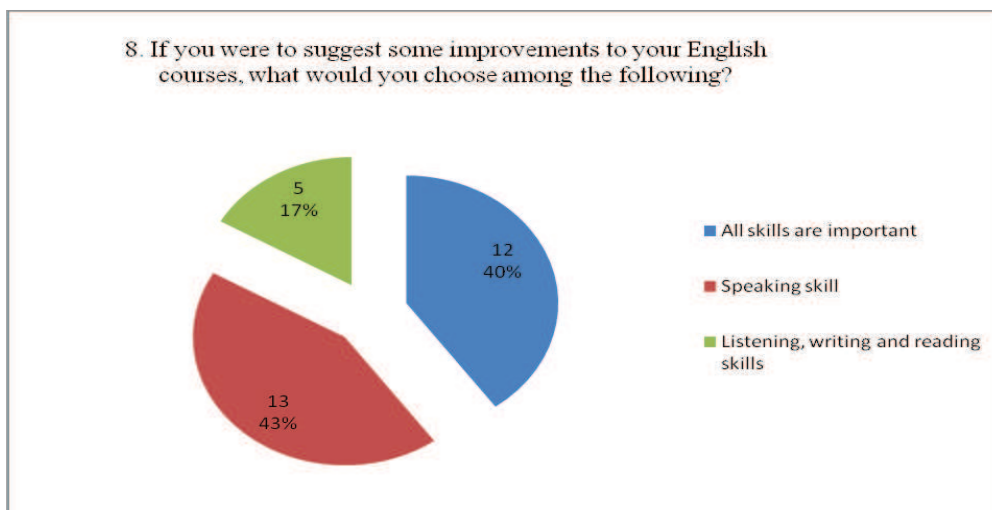




**Figure 3.7: Most Useful Skills - Learners' Opinions**

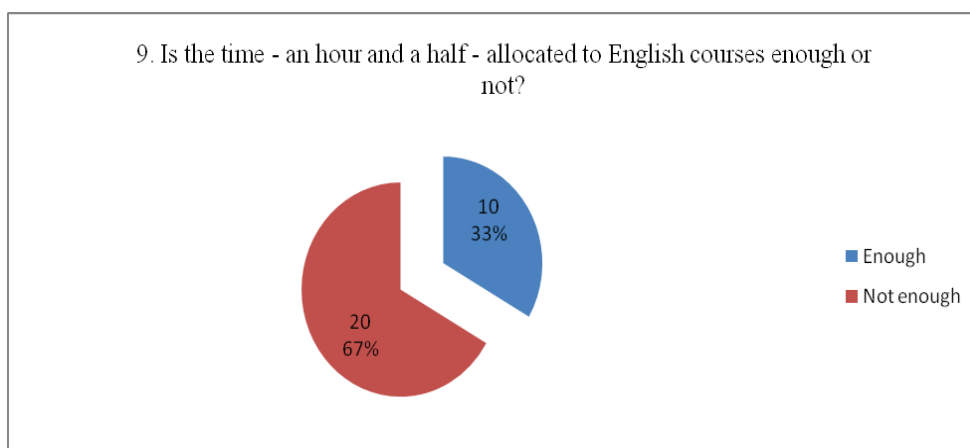
The aim of this question is to invite learners to relate some or all skills to their training. The results show that 70% find all of them relevant for their training, 27% request speaking and only 3 % choose reading skills. Although all skills are necessary, the speaking and reading skills alone are needed. This is due to the specificity of business and it can be read positively that learners seek communication. Thus it calls for strengthening the productive skills within students.

The difference between the questions 6 and 7 lies in distinguishing between the students' learning preferences and what seems to be important to the training itself. Knowing the students' learning preference only leads us to get to know about their learning motivations whilst it does not give us much evidence on what has to be taught, the reason why we offered another question related to the training at INSIM Institute.



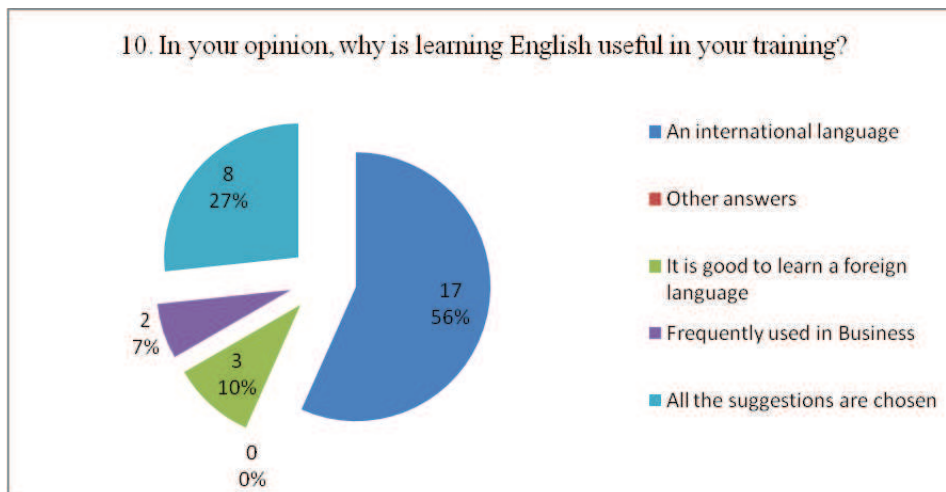
**Figure 3.8: Learners' Skill Suggestions**

In this question, the learners are asked to think of possible suggestions to improve their English courses according to what they need and expect. By finding out, we come to apply an effective change by bringing up a new solution for business English teaching. In figures, 43% choose speaking as the most needed skill to be learnt. Speaking is repeated in a series of questions. Therefore, it is crucial to implement it in the syllabus. Also, there is a considerable figure to take into account, 40% of the learners call for the implementation of all skills.



**Figure 3.9: Time Devoted to Business English Course**

67% of the students agree that an hour and a half is not sufficient to improve their level in English. They ask for more hours to be able to benefit from the course efficiently.



**Figure 3.10: The Importance of Business English Course**

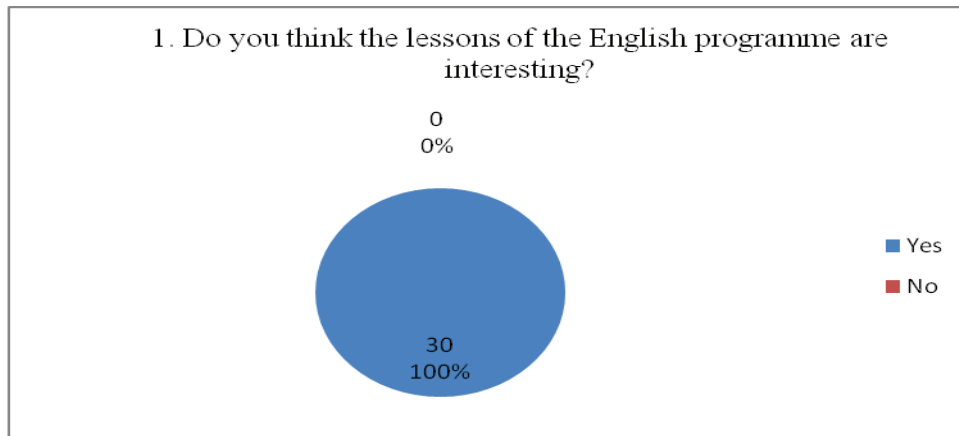
To end up with this first part of the questionnaire, it is important to know what learning English is associated with in the minds of students. Over 56% believe that English is useful because it is an international language. They show their need to communicate in an international scope, the fact which calls for English as one major key to a successful integration. 27% choose all the suggestions believing that learning English is for all these purposes which is true but the answer does not show for which specific purpose these students want to enhance their language competency (ies). We could also observe the lack of initiation from the learners to add up their personal opinions other than the ones this questionnaire provides, and that is what the percentage 0% refers to.

The teacher’s role is rather crucial to set goals for learning English. These goals have to be made clear to help students follow the sequencing of English acquisition. When the learning objectives are too broad, it becomes more challenging and difficult for the teacher to communicate the importance of learning specific English to the students.

## 2) Content Questions’ Analysis

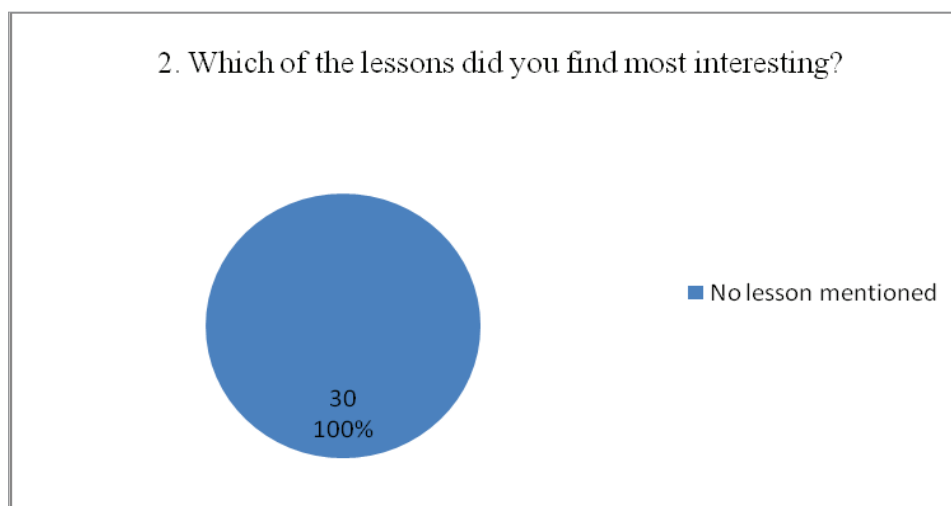
The second section of this questionnaire is mainly devoted to the present syllabus, its content and presentation, precisely where students are asked to answer a number of questions related to the syllabus they have been taught. All of the students find the materials in the present lessons interesting. When they are asked to justify their responses, the common reply was that lessons are about business which is the reason for

its importance. We wished to find other in-depth reasons, but this was all they mentioned.

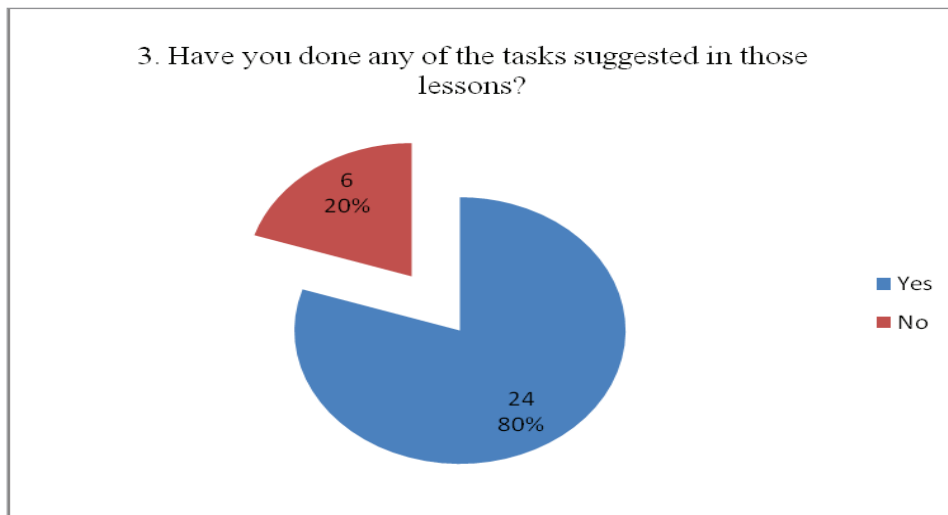


**Figure 3.11: the Quality of Business English Programme**

The answers, in Figures, 3.11, 3.12 and 3.14, were not satisfactory as it is clear in the following diagrams. An overall agreement is shown on the programme, its form and content. However, a striking observation was obviously made when no lesson was mentioned. This drives the researcher to wonder if learners are really aware of the taught programme, its sequencing, and above all, its purpose. In addition, 80% of the students confirm that they did some tasks of the presented course.

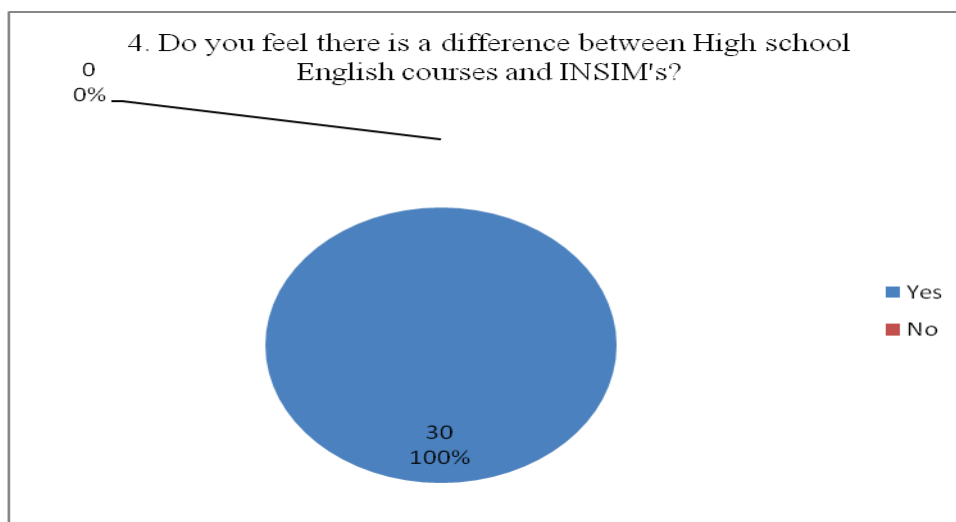


**Figure 3.12: The Most Interesting Lessons**



**Figure 3.13: Lessons' Activities**

80% of the students confirm that some or all tasks have been done. The nature of these tasks gets students to do further research on some commercial topics, and to discuss them orally. It would be beneficial if they were all done, and as such it solves the problem of communication absence. Moreover, other tasks invite students to apply some special business vocabulary in other contexts while other tasks are presented as puzzles and crossword games. Probably these types of tasks were done.

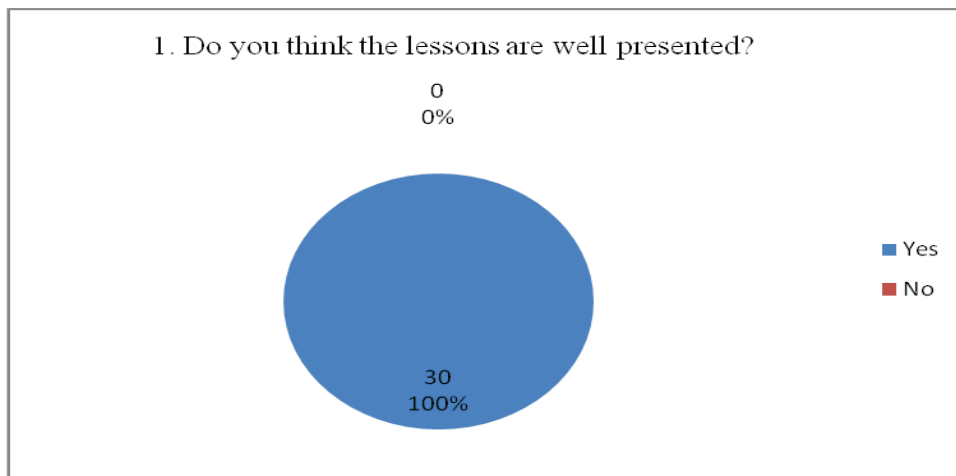


**Figure 3.14: The Difference between High School English and INSIM Courses**

Some comments are made to justify this difference of the taught texts; a shift from general topic texts to a more specialized topic reading. What concerns grammar lessons, students find those lessons as a continuity of high school grammar lessons.

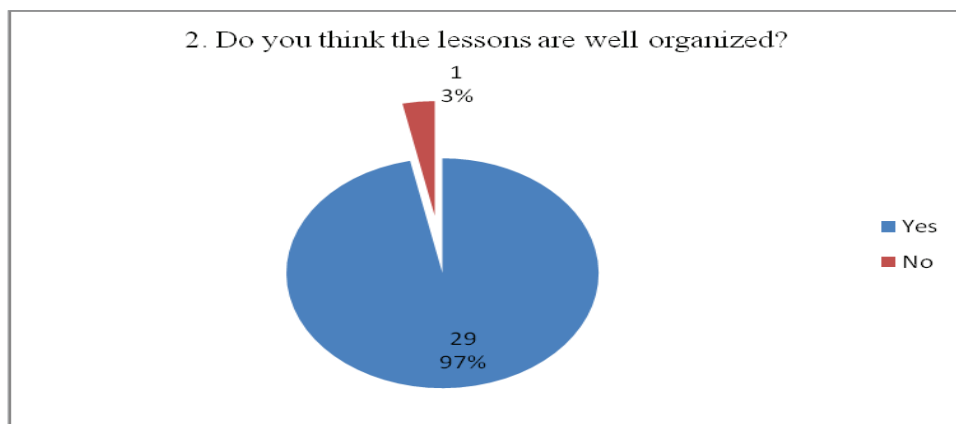
### 3) Lesson's Presentation Results

The final part within the questionnaire targets coherence and organization of these presented courses and whether they were followed as planned for or they were amended.



**Figure 3.15: the Quality of Lessons' Presentation**

The two Figures, 3.15 and 3.16, show a fully agreement on the way lessons are presented. Over the majority finds lessons well presented, and only 3% of them do not agree with the organization of lessons' organization.



**Figure 3.16: Lessons' Organization**

Lessons are divided into two parts: grammar and Business-related texts. Grammar lessons are presented in a very clear way. Generally, basic level grammar lessons are presented focusing mainly on tenses. On the other hand, texts deal with economy and business in general; they provide students with some theoretical notions in the field. Or, they present an English version of previously acquired business terminology in French and Arabic.

This questionnaire tried to gather elements of the learners' weaknesses and strengths in English learning. Then, it intended to offer to learners an opportunity to express their different learning styles. Pointing at which skills are taught, which are mostly needed and which have been picked up in these series of questions to allow the researcher collect the main elements for a syllabus design.

#### **3.4.1 Learners' Weaknesses**

There is a clear gap between the learners' present knowledge of the language and the one which is required for the target situation, that is, to be able to communicate the acquired knowledge by using business English language. The prominent point lies in learners' weakness in the pronunciation of some words, wrong spelling of words, lack of business vocabulary, and a number of serious grammatical mistakes.

Other lacks have been identified, such as:

- Teaching methodology varies from reading comprehension, some very basic grammar lessons, and some sessions of listening comprehension of different general topic stories.
- It is important to mention that the present syllabus was not taught as it was designed; some lessons were omitted and others were changed. Moreover, the teacher had to assess at the end of each semester, and she had, therefore, to finish the programme.

- The present syllabus, therefore, was designed without taking into consideration the needs and expectations of the target learners. As it is taken for granted that students' needs are the same, within the same teaching discipline, and that designing a syllabus for a group of learners in an institution may lead to the same educational outcome if applied in another learning setting.
- Learners moving from one institution, high government school, to another, private school, they would have developed a mixed feeling about the English language. Therefore, they need to regain interest in their learning abilities. This can be possible if the learning objectives become clearer to the learners.
- The lack of co-operation between the English teacher and the subject-specialist teachers is very clear. This step was not done which could have certainly helped in a fairer syllabus design.

#### **3.4.2 Learners' Suggestions for the Syllabus**

The majority of learners welcome, undoubtedly, the idea of learning Business English as being the most relevant communicative means. Students' main remark was done on developing their ability to speak, read and write specific English documents i.e. business letters, CVs, job applications, etc. Linking the acquired business vocabulary with their training nature is paramount since they request to use what they learn during their trainings.

#### **3.5 The Business Manager's Questionnaire**

The second questionnaire was devoted to companies, more precisely, to managers. Basically, it is composed of open-ended questions. After dispatching many samples on several companies, local and multinational, only one sample was given back. Unfortunately, a personal interview was difficult to arrange because of the nature of most managers who are frequently very busy arranging or chairing meetings.



Some other companies have shown less interest to provide us with the necessary information and to understand the impact of such an investigation on their own quest for the required competencies, assuming that business competitors would be the ones using those questionnaires. Culturally speaking, this type of data gathering is a borrowed western method and it is applied on the Algerian market. These were some of the difficulties that we faced when dealing with this part of the investigation, therefore, the only sample that was given back is presented in the table below.

The manager's questionnaire results give importance to three categories of competencies: job, personal and specific language competencies. We introduce the manager's questionnaire results as follows:

<b>Type of skills/competencies</b>	<b>The elements of the skills/competencies</b>
Job skills and competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Good performance of the job-related technical skills.</li> <li>- Good related-job knowledge i.e. related educational degree.</li> <li>- Good time management.</li> <li>- Team player ability.</li> </ul>
Personal skills/competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Social skills: positive attitude, eye-contact, good presentation.</li> </ul>
Language skills/ specific competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- English spoken English level is very important.</li> <li>- Writing skill depends on the nature of the target job-position.</li> </ul>

**Table 3.1: the Manager's Questionnaire Results**

The labour market, like any other market, is founded upon the law of supply and demand. Starting from this belief, we carried out a market research trying to gather special elements of "labour demand", their nature and content. Trying to decipher which best educational supply to come up with, this research identifies the required competencies as the final goal of this investigation. The main purpose of this questionnaire is to invite employers getting involved in curricula design whose

expectations constitute the basis. Thus, the labour market, having specific recruitment criteria, would find it more convenient when its expectations constitute the basis of such a syllabus. Therefore, the required elements are professional, social and personal competencies.

### 3.6 Questionnaires' Analysis

When combining both questionnaires' results, the mere observation is made for the language skills and their emphasis as it is shown in the following table:

Skills Selection	For INSIM Students	For business Companies
The importance of English language skills	Very important	Very essential
Skills instructed and required	Listening and reading skills instructed	Speaking and writing skills required.
The importance of skills	The four skills are important and Speaking is given priority.	Speaking and writing skills are highly recommended.

**Table 3.2: Students' and Manager's Questionnaires Analysis**

An empirical observation of this taught syllabus shows that the teaching of language skills do not meet the expectations of companies. Therefore, the focal point is to balance the labour market demand and students' expectations which may lead to a more relevant syllabus design.

From data analysis, these English courses do not seem to meet the learners' needs that courses with special professional focus should take place. Learners do not have a strong English proficiency which rises as a major problem for those future job applicants. English proficiency is undoubtedly one of the essential criteria upon which a job

interview may proceed. Consequently, many good applicants, unfortunately, fail to get a job due to this lack of English competency.

Therefore, business English courses are presented as part of the students' degree programme and it is taught alongside with the other subjects' courses. A Competency-Based Approach is introduced as a key to integrate the professional skills in the acquisition of English. Both the learners' needs and workplaces' expectations all together can inevitably create motivation in learning. Moreover, it also fosters the teaching process in establishing link between the input "what to teach" and the final output "what to do with it". The resulted syllabus may better serve the needs of students and cater for the labour market with the needed criteria. This can only be achieved through implementing a Competency- Based Approach to ESP teaching at INSIM.

### **3.7 Conclusion**

In this chapter, syllabus design and data analysis i.e. the questionnaires' results are discussed. In light of this investigation, the hindrance was detected that the syllabus does not really meet the learners' needs nor does it match the market criteria for employment. We also attempted to highlight the learners' needs and expectations, to interpret companies' recruitment criteria and to observe the many lacking elements within the present syllabus. Consequently, the data results might serve as a background for an ESP syllabus design. Finally, we concluded that Competency-Based Approach is a suitable solution to balance the demand of the market with the teaching of business English to INSIM learners.

# **CHAPTER FOUR**

## **A Suggested Competency-Based Syllabus for ESP Learners**

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### A Suggested Competency-Based Syllabus for ESP Learners

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## CHAPTER FOUR

### A Suggested Competency-Based Syllabus for ESP Learners

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter is concerned with syllabus design. It aims to fuse the essential elements of INSIM learners' needs with the diverse expectations of companies, in order to reach a mutual satisfaction. This part of the thesis proposes a Competency-Based Approach as a suitable approach to language teaching as a key point to achieve. The purpose behind this proposal is to design a business English syllabus for INSIM institute that helps develop students' language competencies which fit targeted job-related requirements. Finally, the chapter ends by presenting the proposed syllabus which can be used as a starting point for future implementation.

#### 4.2 Syllabus Definition

At the root of the concept “*syllabus*” comes the idea of the most important road map in the teaching process. It is an official paper that combines the teacher, learners and administrative staff of the educational environment. It has a primary objective of establishing the route of teaching a specific discipline when it outlines clearly what is to be taught and which methods of presentation will serve the learners' needs.

In his book, White (1988:45) shares Prabhu's view that:

*The syllabus is a form of support for the teaching activity that is planned in the classroom and a form of guidance in the construction of appropriate teaching materials... It is concerned from, this point of view, with what is to be done in the classroom, not necessarily with what is perceived to be taught or learnt thereby; its role is essentially to make it possible for one teacher to draw on the experience of another.*

*(Prabhu, 1987:86 in White, 1988:45)*

Prabhu's quotation summarises what a syllabus can do, which is needed to consider for our suggested syllabus, by describing it as a tool to guide the teacher towards selecting what to teach during the current academic year. Accordingly, a syllabus is not supposed to offer tangible courses to teachers; it rather offers guidelines and outlines of the teaching topics that target specific objectives.

In language teaching, the terms “*course*” and “*syllabus*” design are often used interchangeably to refer to the same process, designing a concrete material to teach a special content for a special purpose. Yet, this study will distinguish the two terms to emphasize specific aspects.

The term “*course*” refers to the specific real series of lessons to be taught. On the other hand, the term “*syllabus*” means something broader and more abstract. Two teachers, for example, can use the same syllabus and deliver different courses that rely on different materials and aim to reach the goals of specific students in the classroom.

Richards and Rodgers (2001:25) refer to the basic traditional concept of the term “*syllabus*” and state that “*it has been used to refer to the form in which linguistic content is specified in a course or method*”. Syllabus combines the variables of:

- Demand of the course.
- The content to teach – language.
- Descriptions of the group of learners whose needs are identified.
- The time devoted to contribute in syllabus design.

Therefore, emphasis is put on designing a flexible syllabus which can be adapted to the specific learners’ needs. For example, language learners need to communicate using a foreign language and this fact has urged new trends in language teaching to emerge. Nowadays, language teaching priority gives attention to develop communicative competency.

### 4.3 Types of Syllabi

Many authors, like Richards and Rodgers (2001) and Hutchison and Waters (1987), have discussed types of syllabi and have accordingly named some. Therefore, Richards and Rodgers (2001:26) refer to seven types of syllabi: “Structural”, “Situational”, “Topical”, “Functional”, and “Notional”, “Skill-based and Task-based”. We include the “Topical Syllabus” in the “Task-based” and “Situational” syllabi. Then, we fuse “Notional” and “Functional” types of syllabi as they both meet in developing the communicative competency. Many of these types of syllabi can be combined to serve designing a specific syllabus, according to its specificity and purpose.

- *Structural syllabus*: according to Richards and Rodgers (2001:42), this type of syllabus is a collection of language forms and structures including grammar of the language being taught. The teaching of nouns, verbs, and subordinate clauses are all examples of this type of syllabus content.
- *Skill-based syllabus*: White (1988:68) discussed the content of this type of syllabus which is based on the language abilities that may play a role in language use. Skill-based syllabus groups both the linguistic and behaviour competencies. The main purpose of this type of syllabus is to teach a specific language skill and to develop competencies that occur naturally when using a language.
- *Task-based syllabus*: Hutchinson and Waters (1987:87) state that Task-based syllabus deals with tasks students want to perform with the language they are learning. These tasks are but activities performed in a way to be intended to develop second language ability. Task-based teaching has a goal of teaching specific language content that occurs in the situation. The students’ task is to draw on resources to complete some work. They draw on varieties of forms, functions, and skills which are individually driven like: analysing charts, commenting diagrams, etc.



- *Situational syllabus*: Hutchinson and Waters (1987:85) state that the content of this type of syllabus is the collection of real or imaginary situations in which language plays a role. The main objective of this type of syllabus is to provide learners with the language needed for some situations. The main situations these language learners generally face, e.g. buying, negotiating, promoting a product, seeing a dentist, etc.
  
- *Notional/Functional syllabus*: with reference to White (1988) discussions of syllabus, the notional/functional syllabus is concerned with the collection of notions and/or functions that are performed when a language is used. The functions include: informing, agreeing, arguing, debating, and notions are about: comparison, time, size, age, and colour. This type of syllabus focuses on the learners' vocational and social communicative needs i.e. what meanings/notions that learners want to convey and what skills can be analysed and highlighted that help this given communication to be successful. The taught language is built around functions like what learners want to do with the language e.g. arguing, informing, requesting, expressing emotions, and notions which include time, location, size, age.

Like the “*Situational*” syllabus, the “*Functional/Notional*” syllabus starts from determining a given situation. It, then, builds around the situation all the linguistic functions that the speaker (learner) will use to convey a given message. This includes variables of time, place, personal constituents of expressing feelings like joy, hunger and anger, etc. in addition to many notions like expressing time by using specific grammatical patterns e.g. past vs. present actions.

As a matter of fact, ESP combines the subject-matter and language learning which often proves to be highly motivating to students. Students' motivation becomes obvious when the language teaching relates to significant contexts i.e. business contexts in the situation under study. This specific teaching technique will reinforce what is taught and

will increase students' motivation. In ESP classes, students are taught how the subject matter content is expressed in English.

#### **4.4 ESP Teacher's Responsibility**

In ESP teaching, we often talk of clients as being adult learners seeking to communicate a set of professional skills and to perform particular job-related functions. Their needs and expectations constitute the framework for syllabus and course design. ESP teacher, also called practitioner, is the one responsible to decide whether the teaching falls under EAP or EOP category. The next stage determines whether the language teaching precedes, follows or goes with a specific content training.

The final stage then is concerned with applying the targeted syllabus and choosing the appropriate training materials. As ESP is learner-centred, time and effort are focused on the learners' needs, designing specific syllabus and selecting appropriate teaching materials. ESP teaching needs collaboration between the teacher and learners, and innovation skills in the classroom management, preparation of syllabi, material selection and tests.

ESP teacher plays various roles, not just a knowledge provider. As Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998:13) have put it, ESP teacher can be:

- *Teacher*: ESP teacher acts less of a teacher, knowledge provider and more of a collaborator and a partner in the learning process. ESP learners, in many cases, may know more about the content than the teacher, as they are previously familiar with the field ESP course is built on. That is how ESP teacher's role takes the shape of a partner, in the sense that he/she uses the learners' knowledge of the content to build genuine communication in the classroom which creates an atmosphere of exchange between the content knowledge, on the part of learners, and the language structures on the part of the teacher.

- *Course organizer*: the one who sets the learning goals and transforms them into instructional programme of activities. The main tasks will be: selecting, designing and organizing course materials, supporting learners in their efforts and providing them with feedback on their progress.
- *Goals and objective setter*: when arranging conditions for learning in the classroom and set long and short term goals to attain, the students' potential is central in syllabus design with more real goals which take into account the students' learning concerns.
- *Learning environment creator*: communicative skills that an ESP teacher basically possesses create an atmosphere within the classroom. Interaction within the classroom is a good opportunity for learners to speak English. ESP teacher creates a positive atmosphere for learners to support taking risks of using foreign language to communicate. Exploiting the student's personal confidence is a key task of ESP practitioners.
- *Learners' evaluator*: the teacher is able to guide the learners depicting their own problems in the language learning process. He/she best serves students by being a source of information about the skills on which students need to focus and about how well or poorly they are progressing in the language learning.

ESP is mostly centred on learners and their purposes for learning English. An ESP programme, therefore, is built on an assessment of purposes and needs. Obviously, ESP teaches a special jargon which is used for special communication situations. Professionally, one can rather comfortably communicate with other members of similar fields by using the skills gained from ESP courses.

In his oral lecture at the Eselan Institute in California, USA, Campbell (1969) discusses the philosophy of cultures in which he believes that the nature of teachers in the western academic ideal is:

*..communicators of information, for the most part, and you can take that information and use it in your own way. In class, one expects a student to criticize, and we ask for essays in reply which will develop the ideas presented in terms of the student's own thinking.*

*(Campbell 1969: video track 10)*

Campbell<sup>1</sup> (1969) emphasised the idea of communication and exchange between the learners and the teacher. He also invited learners to be critical of their teachers in the sense to develop a skill of evaluating values the teacher have inherited, innovated, changed and transformed to teach students. The role of a teacher as communicator matches an ESP teacher's nature and role. Furthermore, this idea helps to go beyond communication within the classroom to create a healthy relationship between both partners in education, learners and teachers. This relationship gives students the ability to work on their learning weaknesses.

The communicative aspect goes two ways in teaching and learning. Furthermore, communication serves both partners in education and strengthens the relationship between learners and teachers. The key of communication is effective to enhance the learners/teacher relationship on the one hand, and it allows the teacher to draw guidelines about the learners' expectations and concerns in language learning on the other hand. Designing an ESP course requires additional focus and attention on the choice of the content. Strevens (1980) outlines five stages for designing a particular ESP course, business English course specifically:

1. Needs analysis of learners.
2. Content analysis: this is based on the analysis of the field in question.

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1. CAMPBELL, J. (1969) *The Function of Mythology*, video conference, the Eselan Institute, U.S.A. Location: Big Sur, CA. Archive number L267. Track10: "*Validate a Social Order. Mythology's Third Function.*"

3. Determining whether the field targeted falls under EAP or EOP.
4. Checking if the training precedes, follows or is concurrent with the content-specific training.
5. Preparing a targeted syllabus and choosing the appropriate teaching materials.

INSIM Institute provides trainings that fall under EOP and the students carry out trainings in some professional settings e.g. in banks as accountants, while pursuing theoretical training within the institute. Obviously, they are more motivated and demanding as they seek to fulfill their fundamental need to communicate the subject matter. These learners require to mostly improve a repertoire of expressions to communicate so as to develop their competencies that fit the target professional situations. For this reason, the students' goal is to use the knowledge acquired within a specific context – business setting.

At a different scale, not only do students need to know language patterns, words, phrases and grammar patterns, but they also need to establish good social relationships: answering phone calls, writing report summaries; these are activities related to the professional fields. Yet, these performance objectives are non transferable if the students lack the language to express them. For this reason, it is prominent to integrate basic linguistic knowledge required for the future workplace communication to be able finally to combine the two objectives: language skills acquisition and specific field knowledge i.e. business.

Focusing on what learners need to learn is what characterizes both ESP environment and CBT approach to teaching. For this reason, both approaches can be integrated in a syllabus design for INSIM clients i.e. students. It is agreed that when designing a syllabus for English for Occupational Purposes (EOP), the learning tasks and activities are immediately used to perform specific workplace tasks. Designing such a syllabus increases the students' intrinsic motivation.

#### **4.5 Employers' Expectations of Foreign Language Users**

At a different level, the labour market sets its own criteria for foreign language proficiency among other professional qualifications. In Chapter Three of this thesis, data findings, collection and analysis on one hand and job advertisements on media on the other hand, point towards the following requirements:

- Good level of general language proficiency.
- Good level of vocational language knowledge i.e. specific technical vocabulary.
- Good negotiating skills (communication competency).
- Inter-cultural communication competency.
- Confidence and initiative in using a foreign language.

Through examining the needs for the skills above, vocational language knowledge is mostly needed in education since technical language of these professions is part of the general language knowledge. In commercial areas, especially in foreign trade, language knowledge is not sufficient without possessing special technical terms and being aware of the meaning of phrases and expressions which are frequently used to express the commercial situations.

#### **4.6 The Importance of Material Selection**

As ESP courses are related to specific learners, their needs and purpose of learning, they are, therefore, based on the demand of the learning-related situation. ESP material developers are not provided with time for Needs Analysis, material selection and development. In ESP teaching, teachers generally find themselves in situations to develop their own courses and to select materials to respond exactly to the needs of the specific learners.

The important point to consider for any teaching material selection is to specify the field of teaching: business, medicine or tourism as examples of illustration. Once the context

is defined so will the course content be e.g. Business and medical contexts differ greatly.

St. John (1996:14) discusses many types of business English teaching materials. Some are verbal like textbooks, others non verbal: case studies, simulations, diagrams including charts for comprehension tasks, word building charts, publications providing models for written documents as letters and reports. Supplementary materials are also included: grammar and vocabulary, in addition to technological tools: software applications, CD-ROMs, videotapes and internet allowing access to virtual job situations.

There are two methods to evaluate the existing textbooks:

1. Objective method implies that ESP teachers choose authentic materials to teach to meet the students' needs, but this method of personal effort to select material is time consuming.
2. Subjective method instructs teachers to set out a list of criteria for material selection. Later, this list is discussed by ESP practitioner and other speciality teachers and it effectively leads to clearer ideas about selecting materials for teaching special topics.

This work tries to adopt the objective method as it encourages collaboration between the ESP teacher and learners, their needs and ideas for a better learning outcome. The exchange of ideas and experiences may lead to better results related to the choice of adequate teaching materials.

#### **4.6.1 Authentic Materials for Business English Teaching**

Selecting, evaluating, designing and applying materials are all the proper mission of the ESP teacher. Specific to ESP, where possible, the teacher decides to use both motivating and challenging materials. In order to instruct new information, materials should mix

familiar input to learners with new information. This creates communicative atmosphere in the classroom as logically new topics encourage discussions among learners. The mixing up idea originates from the spiral philosophy of teaching, i.e. courses are all interrelated and thus the teacher starts from known information to build on a new unknown one.

Hutchinson and Waters (1987:106) point at a number of reasons that encourage ESP teachers design their own materials:

- To tailor a course to the requirements of the group.
- Non availability of materials.
- Poor quality of materials which already exist.
- Material design is a lot of time and is best done by experienced teachers.
- There is a lot of common ground between learners of apparently different subject specialism.
- Learners' needs are significantly different from those of other groups in each institution.
- To consider choosing one course and supplementing/adapting.
- To consider using two, three or more courses selectively.

In an ESP specific teaching situation, materials need to project the job-related common situations. Learners are supposed to successfully communicate a set of professional situations using a special jargon. Material design then is determined by the communicative skills related to workplace communicative situations. Therefore, they are essential for a satisfactory result of both, learning and teaching.

Authentic materials are generally viewed as the teaching textbooks. However, ESP teaching materials adhere to the specificity of the teaching situation; they differ from, reading texts, to audio/visual tools. Selecting authentic materials for business courses imply that the teacher thinks and/or possesses answers to the following inquiries that have been discussed by syllabus designers. Ellis and Johnson (1994:117) suggest inquiries for Business English material selection:



- What business skills are taught by which the teacher comes to target specific language skills to teach.
- Which content is taught: it is the sphere in which lie all language and target-field skills.

Authenticity and relevance of materials are important for teachers to instruct and for learners to gain motivation and positive attitude towards the presented lessons. According to Jackson (1998), business cases are mostly mentioned as assets for developing the teaching materials as they appear to provide an ideal source of material to support business communicative practice.

*Business cases are records of problematic business situations that a manager or organization has actually faced. In business administration programs, they are presented at students to analyse, discuss, and determine possible courses of action and their consequences.*

*(Jackson, 1998:152)*

The teacher/learner interaction is another powerful material. Teachers are requested to chair discussions in the special field of study by asking open-ended questions which invite students to communicate. Or, the teacher, possessing basic knowledge about business topics, can also take effective part in the discussions.

While most discussions in the classroom may take very basic format of oral discussions, some learners may not participate and remain very quiet. In this case, the teacher may integrate writing to be an alternative method of communication. Learners may write down suggestions, opinions and viewpoints and present them orally. It is up to the teacher and the atmosphere of the classroom to consider instigating substitutes to encourage communication of all kinds to take place.

This idea allows a considerable space of communication to take place. Students, while responding to the teacher's questions, are given the opportunity to express business knowledge using a foreign language. Consequently, the use of technical vocabulary and

grammar patterns create an authentic context. In this case, business knowledge is exposed and business English is the means of expression.

Teaching materials, then, are pieced together, some can be borrowed from general English teaching textbooks and others designed specifically. Other serving materials can be geared to targeted objectives. We suggest naming some of them:

- The use of Internet sources.
- The use of video documentaries: Microsoft, Coca-Cola Company.
- Reading business: teaching students how to read for information and not necessarily for comprehension as will be explained in page 120.
- Classroom discussions on current issues, e.g. financial crisis.
- Engage students in real authentic tasks e.g. giving oral presentations. Assisting them to expose knowledge of what they already know.

#### **4.6.2 Material Evaluation**

If selecting teaching materials is done by analysing the learners' needs and gathering the appropriate tools to meet these needs, evaluating these teaching materials is the second step to take place. On this basis, Hutchinson and Waters (1987:96) define basic steps to evaluate the chosen teaching materials:

- Evaluation is basically a matching process: matching needs to available solutions. Ultimately, the decision is subjective.
- It helps to know what teachers are looking for, and to set their teaching priorities.
- It helps to have a check-list: a list of features which give priority ratings to the features of selecting materials.
- It helps if two or more teachers do the work. Feedback and result comparison are important in this case.
- Actively compare how two or more books deal with a language point/skill/topic.
- Distinguish between global appraisal of the overall teaching approach, related content, and detailed evaluation of one unit of a book i.e. to distinguish between

the teaching material that is used for the overall teaching; from the one used in teaching a single unit of the general programme.

It may better help if business texts are segmented into smaller units and exploited as material for interaction within the classroom activities. The teacher only serves as a coach and/or a language consultant. Other materials tailor business communication within the classroom and using activities like: commenting charts, tables, statistical summaries, reporting financial and commercial events, may also be useful and helpful.

Some teaching aids such as short newspaper articles, magazines and video recordings of television world business reports specific to the topic of learning, help learners to see authenticity and relevance in the presented courses. Teachers are free to combine these materials with the selected business textbooks. Choosing the exact special teaching material has several advantages:

- Improving the quality level in students' classroom interaction, results and expectations.
- Improving the teaching quality and the level of exchange between the teacher and learners.
- Improving the relationship teacher/learner that facilitates learning and practice within the classroom.

In general, the more teachers expand materials within the field of students-driven topic, the more engaging the students should find the course and the more diverse the gained vocabulary and understanding. Selecting, evaluating and implementing authentic teaching materials serve the purpose of ESP teaching method. In addition, it also affects the teacher's gained experience and understanding to the special type of ESP teaching. Basturkmen (2006:146) discusses the nature of ESP teacher as being generally knowledgeable about the target workplace environment. Also, an ESP teacher preferably possesses additional skills of innovative and class-management skills, especially when developing the workplace competencies that this study tries to reach.

#### **4.7 Competency-Based Initiative in Business English Course Design**

There is not much information about integrating Competency-based teaching in the existing ESP teaching. However, this study makes efforts to link ESP teaching to CBT approach and to gather elements for business English course that may result in:

- The course needs to fit into the student’s overall education programme.
- Targeted competency (ies) to take part in the course.
- Linking these courses - business courses - with others, i.e. other speciality courses contributing to develop the same competencies e.g. targeting computer technology using English for technology.
- Prerequisites for this course: any relevance of this course for the ESP student which is based on his need.
- The presented course gives students the opportunity to develop skills related to the identified competencies i.e. as for the spoken skill, the opportunity of learning a special jargon and special expressions can help in developing the spoken skill of the learner.
- Learning purpose: tasks that would be done by students at the end of the course which are related to the target competency e.g. commenting a chart at the end of a word building course can be an effective task.

Specific to CBT, learners go through the stages that measure their own pacing. Progressive stages show the logical learning sequence for the students in order to reach the course objective. As previously illustrated (in Chapter Two/pages 58-63), Competency-Based curriculum encompasses stages of learning which specify:

- The learning objectives.
- The essential course contents.
- The teaching and learning strategies.
- The relative time length of the teaching stage.

The research findings (in Chapter Three/pages 79-91), have shown that the already existing ESP syllabus has not met the students' needs at INSIM Institute, nor has it met the companies' expectations. For this reason, applying CBT to ESP teaching has been a shifting paradigm that this work proposes. The existing syllabus to business English teaching has overlooked learners' needs.

The result of incorporating CBT to ESP to business English teaching emphasizes on:

- Identifying the context and situations in which learners will communicate. As an example: business communication is the context in which lie many communicative situations, functions and notions.
- Specifying the communicative events that learners will engage in Business negotiations involve learners into a different communicative event than only giving an oral presentation for a product.
- Listing key linguistic elements that the learners need in order to achieve the fundamental goals. Sequencing and integrating these elements gradually. This point illustrates the importance of integrating language structures and grammar to this specific type of language teaching and it helps develop the communicative competency of learners.

#### **4.7.1 Evaluation of the Acquired Skills and Knowledge**

By taking into account the students' needs, expectations and objectives, the ESP practitioner determines which aspects of language to emphasize and integrate. Learners develop language skills to express content of workplace situations. All aspects of language are interwoven in a real communication which is tailored to business events and communicative situations. Therefore, these language aspects are treated, taught and tested as one inseparable unit.

Both formative and summative evaluations during the course prepare students for the final examinations, in all the teaching evaluations, there exist established testing criteria. In ESP, these criteria also exist but they include additional points. The nature and description of these evaluations have to be detailed and they include:

- Date of evaluations.
- Grades awarded.
- Evaluation nature: performance of targeted skills, both language communicative competency and content knowledge awareness.
- Time required per student: each student will be given an amount of time to design and perform the target competency.

#### **4.7.2 Business English Course Improvement**

Improving the English course for business purposes entails reviewing issues related to business communication. Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998:53) state that most of business English communications are between non-native speakers using *international language*. According to them, communicative key issues include:

- Discourse communities including all the actors that can affect business relationships.
- Business genre such as letters, meetings, and negotiations.
- Communicative events like telephoning, socializing, making presentations and so on.
- Functions, grammar and lexis.
- Cross-cultural issues.

At a larger scope, Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998:53) try to extend the principle of communication to an international scale. This can be applied to Business English course as this latter is essentially concerned with international language of trade and mutual interest. Referencing inter-cultural - the cultural difference that may affect business - and discourse community - where the language structure changes to serve the target situation - are evidences to the aim behind establishing business communication as St. John (1996:3) describes the market for business English courses as *booming*.

To design business courses for INSIM business English classes, authenticity within the presented courses comes from reflecting the background of learners' speciality – business, and the professional environment they will work for – target jobs. Accordingly, the main focus of this specific type of syllabus is to develop communicative competency. It is essentially designed to enhance:

- Communicative competency.
- Inter-cultural competency.
- Special vocabulary awareness.

In addition to that, all the follow up activities related to the presented course are organized in terms of pre-activity, activity and follow up. Strevens' (1988) discussions on classifying criteria for syllabus design include the specific classroom activities according to participants' concurrent trainings. This organization of sequence has been previously referred to in this chapter/ page 103 which put learners' needs analysis as the first step; then it targets the field in which English courses take place and which ends with the decisions upon selecting the appropriate teaching materials that go along with the designed syllabus.

#### **4.7.3 Course Objectives**

Language syllabi are prepared with the specification of a particular situation in mind, e.g. interactive syllabus, grammar and language structure syllabus, etc. It is difficult to define the linguistic outcomes precisely for learners of different age groups, different social backgrounds, and different learning experiences. Clearly, the teacher needs overall goals within which specific objectives can be set. There are objectives to attain when designing a syllabus. These objectives collected from language teaching theories can be summarized as follows:

- *Develop the ability to present lessons effectively*: this is done by planning the instructional and performance objectives in which learners take part. Segmented

activities are exposed to them to acquire and perform. The overall objective is to meet, through organizing these instructional processes, the learners' needs.

- *Develop classroom management skills:* by establishing rules and procedures to follow e.g. the teacher at this stage is aware of what teaching materials to incorporate and how, therefore, the teacher establishes regulations to the use of these materials that serve each course separately. These rules may best be explained to the learners as partners in the learning process. Furthermore, managing learners' behaviours can help in a way to create a positive atmosphere conducted to learning.

- *Develop different instructional techniques and methods:* by showing the sequence of lessons and using extra materials for teaching: media, computers and other resources. By creating a variety of learning activities, learners contribute in integrating their previously acquired knowledge business English learning.

- *Develop evaluation and assessment skills showing student progress and growth:* by developing different assessing styles e.g. simulations, role plays, to assess the students' achievements - performance.

Most of all, teachers need to be flexible in syllabus and course design so that they can adjust and make slight changes while teaching. Flexibility allows teachers to better address the students' needs and interests. A more important step is to evaluate the course since many teaching methods encourage syllabus designers to assess the syllabus by the end of the teaching semester or year.

Evaluating a syllabus can be done in different ways. Here are some suggested starting points:

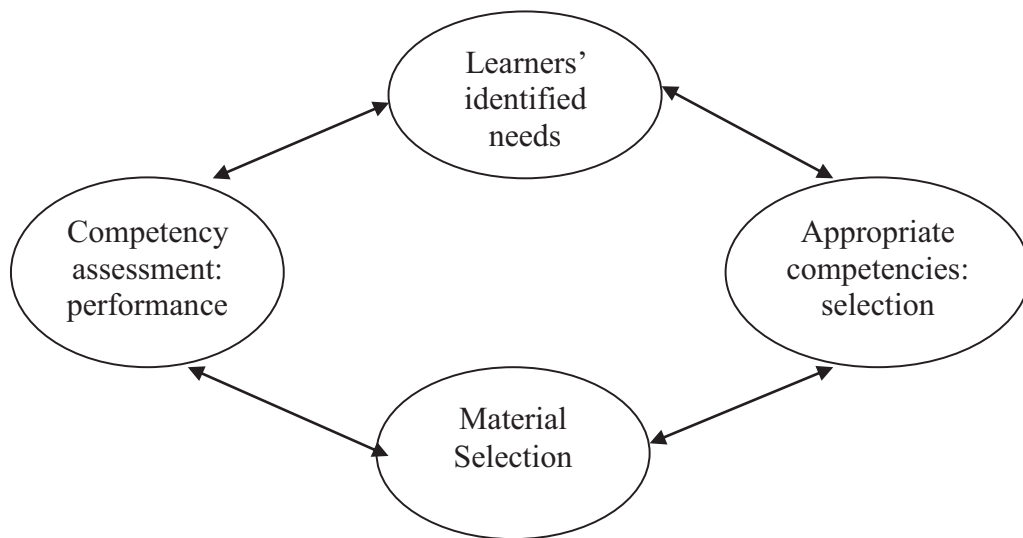
- Evaluation that takes place implicitly during the semester, when learners' grades give clue to the teacher of his/her teaching effectiveness.
- Asking ongoing feedbacks from students, emphasizing on giving opinions on the quality, the method and the content of these courses.



- Evaluation that takes place at the end of the semester. It is basically done with surveys and questionnaires as forms of learners’ feedback. Open-minded discussions also take part. This is a brave step for the teacher to take, to listen openly to students' criticism as previously mentioned by Campbell’s (1969) quote in this chapter/ page 103.

#### 4.8 Suggestions for Syllabus Design

Both INSIM learners’ and companies’ questionnaires, their study and analyses have revealed that the communicative competency is what companies aim for a foreign language user. The need to communicate in business is what INSIM learners expect from the ESP course. Since Competency-Based Approach is relatively new in ESP teaching, this work suggests a Competency-Based syllabus. We suggest the following diagram:



**Diagram 4.1: Stages to Design a Syllabus Using a Competency-Based Approach**

- *Learners’ identified needs*: the primary need of learners is to be able to communicate a set of professional situations using a specific topic related jargon - business. Communication means speaking and listening and it is highly recommended to enable learners listen to proper business conversations: negotiations and meetings. If developed, the learners’ listening ability and so

their familiarity with business activities is then well enriched. The point is to narrow course contents to business, whether oral or written taught materials should be preferably commerce-oriented.

- *Material selection:* in a Competency-Based teaching, materials are closely related to the near-future job requirements. In this specific case, both marketing and commerce job-related situations are used as assets that enable the teacher to select authentic materials for a more relevant instruction.
- *Appropriate competencies: selection:* what competencies characterize a marketer and a salesperson? Answering this question leads to select specific skills to emphasize when teaching. The role of an ESP practitioner is to create authentic situations that encourage learners to develop the problem-solving skills they are more likely to encounter in the professional life. The notion of performance is of best use, simulations are better answers too. Learners are more motivated to learn in an environment that simulates the work place; role plays and performing the exact professional tasks under which skills are demonstrated.
- *Competency assessment: performance:* unlike the traditional instruction and away from written tests, assessing a competency is done through performance. In order to make it more authentic, it is suitable, when possible, to assess students at a workplace. Creating similar workplace situations is a good alternative since all the INSIM learners carry out trainings in different professional settings.

#### **4.8.1 Steps for Business English Syllabus**

In order to design a business English syllabus, there are two approaches to use:

- a) The outlining stage which presents the skeleton of the entire syllabus.
- b) The detailing stage which presents the units of teaching.

This research suggests an intensive, non-assessed syllabus that aims at developing communicative competencies for INSIM Marketing and International Trade learners. The devoted time for English courses at INSIM does not exceed 90 minutes per week; yet, teaching this type of intensive course requires more time. For this English syllabus, we recommend two or three sessions per week, each session is one and a half hours; since this syllabus aims at developing skills rather than teaching the language structures in isolation.

#### **4.8.2 Description of Steps**

The selection of courses needs to reflect authentic workplace situations. Thus, the focus of the proposed courses enables students to communicate the daily job tasks e.g. answering phones, writing reports. Functional/notional, skill-based and task-based types of syllabi are used at the level of performing the target competencies. The nature of Competency-Based Approach matches the second year Marketing and International Trade students who are about to graduate and embark on a professional life. The list below represents the outline for the proposed syllabus:

1. Introduction to Business.
2. Hosting business visitors.
3. Business communication.
  - Telephoning: answering, transferring calls, taking messages, etc.
  - Customer service: customer support, answering calls to deal with product usage.
4. Outsourcing in business.
  - Representing a company.
  - Placing business orders.
5. Describing business Activity.

## 6. Business presentations.

- Products/services descriptions.
- Promoting a product/service.
- Presenting a product/service promotion campaign.
- Launching a new product/service.

## 7. Business meetings.

- Organizing a meeting within a company.
- Organizing a meeting with foreign business people/partners.
- Chairing a meeting.
- Giving an oral presentation.

## 8. Business negotiations.

- Cross-cultural aspect.

Authentic materials include specific language structures. From these materials, useful language can be presented with activities for learners to build on grammatical patterns. For example: “*telephoning*” invokes a number of communicative functions packed together to serve this special function, the choice of skills components, grammatical constituents and language functions, but also the choice of vocabulary and language structures.

These courses should be based on content conceptualisation, that is to say, to plan a course that focuses on the teaching of key business concepts, instruction and relevant real work tasks. For example, a business meeting course involves students to complete tasks in a meeting format then this meeting would be evaluated and compared to transcripts or records of real meetings. The used language skills and competency demonstration are what teachers mostly have to assess.

The course design begins with the structural syllabus to teach language structures, and then functional/notional syllabus allows students to link language to specific functions and notions that are generally encountered in communication but not as easy to deal

with, then followed by skill/task-based syllabus. Skill/task-based and functional/notional syllabi help the course to be more structured and more challenging to demonstrate the learners' skills.

Initial observation of both INSIM learners and companies' needs and expectations calls for a communicative business English course. The purpose is to give students the opportunity to communicate a set of business tasks, and to use communicative skills. Furthermore, learners are faced with situations which require them to deal with foreign business people. It is stipulated that each lesson deals with one area of business English: meetings, business correspondence, business presentations, etc.

### **4.8.3 Integrating Receptive and Productive Skills**

Language is a combination of grammar, lexis, language structures and pronunciation. The implication of listening, reading and writing skills aims to support developing the speaking skill of learners and is much needed in most of the course activities. Grammar and vocabulary teaching is also embedded within each unit of the course. The proposed syllabus is designed to focus on the most common business situations and by giving students a real opportunity to practise language for typical business use.

These workplace situations are presented in the form of units. They can be introduced through listening activity and/or discussion of topics, photographs, graphs, charts, videos or reading short articles. Such a simple introduction enables learners to establish the link between the topic of discussion with their knowledge and experience of the business field.

Language patterns, precisely grammar and vocabulary play a role in these courses and are eventually introduced as linguistic support to serve communication. Special language forms are recommended in practising specific tasks and it is the syllabus designer's decision to select them. Technical vocabulary is closely related to the topic under study.

Additionally, pronunciations, common expressions, the use of idioms are all welcomed to take part of the course as supportive tools. These tools contribute in developing the inter-cultural awareness besides the language structure knowledge. The overall course is intensive, tutored carefully by the practitioner and focuses more on specific business communicative events. Other language skills teaching also help the completion of English language acquisition:

a) The reading skill

For a course design, it is inevitable to link the four skills with the different taught subjects. Thus, the main point is to switch attention to:

- Reading for information, rather than comprehension.
- Reading business-related texts and articles using the internet means if not available.
- Reading announcements, short notes which constitute the basis for another topic of discussion: interpreting abbreviations of special contexts.

Reading in a specific field and for a special purpose yields two advantages:

1. To allow learners to read on their field of study.
2. To update learners' knowledge on the ongoing business world activities.

Yet, the teacher, at this stage, emphasizes that reading business English texts seeks getting information rather than reading for comprehension through teaching reading techniques that serve this purpose. Learners may spend longer time trying to read a whole article and depict each word or idea meaning. Instead, they work on grasping the general meaning and get the information they need. Reading for information is a skill which can also be developed.

Merchandising, negotiating, competing, and promoting are common roles for a sales person. The role of a teacher is to allow learners to read correctly, for example, to interpret loudly the abbreviations in a piece of writing to develop the speaking skills. Business texts, which are very specified in nature, can cause a serious handicap for

learners because of special figures, percentages, graphs and other mathematical symbols.

#### b) The writing skill

Introducing the writing skill in a business English course requires progressive planning. First, business English learners are asked to comment on the texts they read. Basically, they are asked to write simple and complete sentences. Progressively, they are encouraged to start with small and mere comments, then moving gradually to reporting.

An observation is made at the level of learners' needs is that ESP learners primarily ask for CV and Job application writing sessions. Yet, they can also learn how to write, from non-verbal to verbal texts, through reading a graph or a chart, for instance, to interpret symbols into words using simple and complete sentences. This training is not limited by time, and is advisable within each lesson as a leisure or extra task.

#### c) The listening skill

Listening is a receptive skill. The choice of using supplementary materials like: CD-ROM s, videotapes and other software applications helps enhancing the learners' acquisition. Listening to native speakers' pronunciation is another option to improve learners' receptive skills. Internet is also a good tool to develop this skill. The video documents can be supplied by the Institute itself since it has international ties with Canadian and French educational institutes. In addition, inviting businessmen to give presentations to learners also seems possible. The institute organizes occasional conferences and workshops which can be scheduled with business English course.

### **4.9 The Suggested Syllabus**

After having conducted a survey on INSIM learners' needs, and having done a market research to depict the criteria behind recruiting English graduates, the results contribute to present this final proposed syllabus. It is the result of combining English

communicative skills with Business studies. The outcome has been a form of business English syllabus, intensely focused on developing the essential communicative skills needed for professional life. This syllabus is divided into stages of training which are subdivided into eight units. They are presented and detailed as follows:

## **Competency-Based Syllabus for ESP learners**

### ***Unit One: Introduction to Business***

***Teaching Objective:***

To get students acquainted with the principles of Business English.

***This unit components:***

- Using video lessons: introducing the corporations' history.
- Logical sequence (from known to new information) of creating relevant discussions on the video lesson.
- Scheduling tasks: watching, listening, discussing.
- Emphasizing on special vocabulary use.
- Tracking progress within discussion.
- Inviting students to report what has been discussed.



## Competency-Based Syllabus for ESP learners

### *Unit Two: Hosting Business Visitors*

#### *Teaching Objective:*

To learn the principles of opening topics of interests with business people.

#### *This unit components:*

- Introducing and discussing contents e.g. nature and purposes of these types of business visits.
- Means of hosting business people, e.g. organizing receptions, introducing oneself, etc.
- Opening a topic of discussion with business people.
- Integrating local culture in these talks.
- Researching tasks on inter-cultural awareness within the business world.
- Presenting special inter-cultural cases orally e.g. discussing particularities of the Algerian market in contrast to the American.

## Competency-Based Syllabus for ESP learners

### *Unit Three: Business Communication*

#### *Teaching Objective:*

To use the acquired knowledge in the previous two units to communicate.

#### *This unit components:*

- Case study: telephoning and business correspondence.
- Answering a business phone call.
- Emphasizing on pronunciation: spelling, correcting confusing sounds, e.g. final /s/ and /z/.
- Practising the language in role plays.
- Formal language to express an apology and/or a request for repetition.
- Working on grammatical patterns.
- Trainings on using simple non-verbal notes.

## Competency-Based Syllabus for ESP learners

### *Unit Four: Outsourcing In Business*

#### *Teaching Objective:*

To talk of business activities and to use some language skills.

#### *This unit components:*

- Learn scientific language patterns: precision and consistency in description.
- Grammar focus: the choice of the simple tense, technical terms use, etc.
- Simulate real job-related tasks e.g. organizing business meetings in the classroom.
- Persuasive talk i.e. how to use the language to make the listener believes and/or act.
- Trainings on writing non-verbal summaries or giving oral feedback on discussions.

## Competency-Based Syllabus for ESP learners

### *Unit Five: Describing Business Activity*

#### ***Teaching Objective:***

To learn how to describe non-verbal texts like charts using the exact vocabulary, suitable action verbs, and adequate grammatical patterns.

#### ***This unit components:***

- Presenting graphs, charts, diagrams to comment on.
- Special grammar integrated e.g. passive voice.
- Reading a graph, chart for information.
- Reporting from non-verbal to verbal information i.e. transfer of information from graphs and charts to written texts e.g. the use of passive voice to emphasize on the action itself.

## Competency-Based Syllabus for ESP learners

### *Unit Six: Business Presentations*

#### *Teaching Objective:*

To invite learners to use the language orally. To teach the principles of business presentations.

#### *This unit components:*

- Oral presentation techniques to sue emotions; focus on persuasion, attracting attention, answering questions, and resolving conflicts and/or disagreements.
- Sharing video presentations for successful business people, e.g. Steve Job's conference on I Pad presentation.
- Persuasion: puts more important ideas first to attract the audience.
- Use of visuals to clarify a point or to convince the audience.
- Managing time and questions during the presentation.

## Competency-Based Syllabus for ESP learners

### *Unit Seven: Business Meetings*

#### ***Teaching Objective:***

To introduce etiquettes and mannerisms of meetings.

#### ***This unit components:***

- Opening, chairing, checking and listing the discussed points within a meeting.
- Introducing the inter-cultural differences, and working on some common cross-cultural communication skills. Listing and discussing comparative examples: British and German meeting natures. Inviting students to look for other examples e.g. Algerian and French, etc.
- Using concise language to avoid discomfort, misunderstanding within attendees.
- Making meanings clear within a meeting, avoiding generic, vague words and expressions.
- Applying the already taught oral presentation techniques.
- Role play and simulation take a considerable share during the lecture.

## Competency-Based Syllabus for ESP learners

### *Unit Eight: Business Negotiations*

#### *Teaching Objective:*

To introduce the inter-cultural aspect that interferes in business.

#### *This unit components:*

- Introduction to negotiations.
- Building up scenarios of real negotiation situations e.g. one learner represents an Algerian company while the other acts like a foreign representative. The scenario is built on the cultural difference and examines what cultural orientations are going to affect the negotiation.
- Opening and closing a negotiation.
- Reaching a compromise, politely disagreeing.
- Giving suggestions: the use of relevant grammatical patterns, e.g. “If” clauses.
- Simulating negotiations based on what learners have acquired in other speciality courses.  
E.g. negotiations about simple business transactions vs. negotiations at a higher level e.g. Apple Company negotiates the possibility to implant in the Algerian Market.

Units *One* and *Two* are introductory. They should aim at getting students to conceptualize business English as they already possess a business knowledge background. The listed teaching tools are introduced as means of learning; students can learn the principles of business English using these tools. The teacher may use all or none of these tools, but we recommend involving authentic materials that serve both the nature and the purpose of these special intense courses.

On the other hand, students, getting familiar with the traditional teaching materials, may express some rejection to this type of objective-centred courses. Instead, the teacher needs to invest time clarifying, why and how this very specific type of English teaching requires specific teaching materials. Clarity is recommended. For many students, speaking a language represents risk taking. In addition, most communication hindrances occur at the level of language ambiguity, misspellings and mispronouncing words. When it comes down to business communication, the emphasis is generally put on being aware of certain customs and etiquettes to deal with and that is the point of emphasis.

Units, *Three, Four, Five* and *Six* target the very nature of ESP course at INSIM institute, business communication. Having already worked with learners on grammar and business jargon in English in units, *one, two* and *three*, the succeeding units put the learner at the centre of a likely real business communication. Discussions, simulations and oral presentations constitute the suitable tools that serve the purpose of these teaching units.

Units *Seven* and *Eight* represent the fruit of a successful teaching delivery. Students, at this advanced stage, are able to use business English to communicate specific business functions. Meetings and negotiations are all simulated, discussed and expressed in English. The teacher, at this stage of learning, focuses on two aspects of meetings and negotiations: domestic and international. A multi-cultural business meeting challenges the different cultural values and etiquettes and a good understanding, thus awareness of these differences is a better key for an effective communication.



#### **4.10 Conclusion**

This research concluding chapter has presented specific ideas using CBT for ESP courses at INSIM. It has discussed core elements of CBT and ESP, definitions, types and characteristics. The overall purpose was to successfully bring about ESP teaching and Competency-based Approach to syllabus design implementation. It also aimed at evoking the ESP practitioner responsibility in considering all these discussed elements and to design specific courses for this specific training. The syllabus was proposed after having analysed the learners' needs and companies' expectations. Data analysis and results discussed in “Chapter Three” have constituted the framework for the present syllabus which includes eight teaching units. The organization as well as the content of the suggested syllabus was presented to gradually enhance both the speaking skill and the job-related competencies. The suggested syllabus segmented the teaching of business communication into introducing business and describing the different business activities to reach the stage of real business situations like arranging meetings and involving learners in real negotiations situations.

# **GENERAL CONCLUSION**

## **General Conclusion**

Language acquisition is a process that evolves through time. It requires continuous effort on the part of the learner. Effective language teaching results from combining an effective syllabus, teacher, attentive learners, methods of teaching, and the chosen instructional materials. As far as foreign language learners are concerned, specifically adult learners, they generally face difficulties acquiring a foreign language in relation with more basic life skills. Some learners show mastery of non-verbal communicative skills, others can do well at language structures while lacking the skills to communicate effectively.

ESP teaching is approached as a dynamic process that teaches special genre of language to reach specific purposes. It does not teach general language in isolation; instead, it includes special field, business in this case, and builds on the expected language structures that serve the targeted communicative situations. ESP syllabus is designed to serve as a guide in courses based on targeted competency development. The language content of these courses reflects the particular linguistic features of these specific discourses and descriptive situations.

Educational institutions have advocated innovation and progression in English teaching, related syllabus and instructional materials. The growing demand for special English users has influenced English teaching methods to become more dynamic, interactive and more engaging in different business topics. This raising awareness of the changing needs of learners and the market demand has shifted the attention to teaching more focused content, technical jargon and relevant language structures.

As in business, most business activities require the mastery of a certain level of English, ESP adult learners are exposed to both language and special content learning which require additional learning efforts. Primarily, business English teaching implies the use of a special language, specific structures and technical vocabulary to deliver specific functional activities. Only an appropriate syllabus, that combines the teaching of special

language content and developing related skills, can meet the specificity of ESP teaching. CBA is also approached to help develop the social and behavioural skills that go along with instructing language for special purposes. Thus, CBA seemed to serve the objectives behind instructing special language forms.

Following the growing demand for technical English users, private educational institutions have adopted more competitive and varied trainings. English learning constituted the centre of these emerging educational changes. As for INSIM, CBA is applied in other teaching modules than ESP to match the learners and labour market needs. Specific to English teaching, the purpose of implementing CBA would foster the level of interaction between the learners and the teacher to decide upon the teaching content. It would also improve the quality of the presented courses and enable learners to get involved in the decision making of the course content. As a modern approach to education, CBA encourages more dynamic teaching methods that result in a better level of interaction within the classroom.

In order to improve English teaching approach, this dissertation incorporated CBA to ESP. Creating interactive atmosphere facilitates the transfer of knowledge and linguistic teaching as CBA joins ESP in the teaching of language skills with special underlying knowledge. Thanks to the dynamic atmosphere, learners become partners in the teaching process by proposing their visions and opinions. It also encourages the teacher to act on an objective basis to design courses to instruct, where the teacher becomes less as a traditional authority and more as a modern example of coordinator and language consultant.

This study suggested progression in English teaching by proposing a modern syllabus type that focuses on developing language structures besides the verbal communicative skills. Designing an appropriate syllabus improves instruction as well as learning. This thesis invited CBA to be implemented in teaching ESP to answer the learners' needs and the labour market expectations. Data results have helped this dissertation to introduce a modern syllabus that encompasses many progressions: Analysis of the learners' needs,

incorporation of business companies' expectations, and study of the nature of INSIM special training - International Trade and Marketing classes.

Under the vast umbrella of ESP lie a myriad of elements, sub-notions and trends that is why ESP was thoroughly discussed. We attempted to encapsulate the diverse elements of ESP that are linked to the general theme of this thesis. From the outset the term ESP was discussed and explained. Then, ESP teaching objectives have been included to compile ESP features related to CBA. At a different level, observations revealed that there was sometimes a lack of connection between the main actors: the institute policy, the teacher, learners and the field of study.

Learners were introduced to Business English, whereas the existing syllabus lacked the efficiency and effectiveness that might have improved its content and assessment format. This could better meet the learners' specialism, needs and expectations but less effort was taken to consider the learners' learning preferences. Furthermore, the delivery of the previously fixed courses regardless of learners' needs was not a relevant means to develop specific competencies and skills. Because of these inadequacies, this thesis empirically presented facts for analysis then suggested implementing a modern approach to teaching – CBA which was introduced as a key of integration to design Business English syllabus. Propositions were made to incorporate the relevant teaching materials with a dynamic and a more interactive teaching method. However, difficulties have been encountered as permission was not given to observe the teaching classes within the institute. Instead, INSIM institute offered a syllabus copy for analysis, and helped in conducting questionnaires to students.

Proposing the alternative syllabus constituted the central idea as well, attention was mostly put on involving CBA to ESP for a more engaging Business English syllabus. Yet, measuring the success of this proposed syllabus involved the teacher and learners through examining the learners' acquired knowledge and abilities to grasp its different components. This research recommended using this syllabus for experimenting on how learners will respond to a modern approach to English learning. As part of the suggested

syllabus, developing specific skills, performing and assessing competencies may have an impact on the learners' intrinsic motivation and may therefore influence their abilities to learn English. On a larger scope, harmonizing the educational outcomes with the growing demand of the labour market constituted another objective of this research.

By introducing a modern approach to the purpose of syllabus for special teaching purpose, this research integrated key elements for a more updated teaching material. Not only did this research investigate, analyse and propose solutions, but it also enriched the very nature of syllabus to include specific content and an original means of assessment - performance. The teaching road map is proposed as an interesting experience to live and coach to redirect the learners' attention towards both language and content learning. Many language learners conceptualize English course in terms of new structure and lexis lessons adding up to their language background. However, this syllabus becomes a means to teach special jargon and to perform related communicative competencies.

This syllabus also requires an experienced, dynamic and flexible teacher who is open to the changing needs of learners, and ready to innovate and create the best possible learning atmosphere. In addition, involving learners to know the learning objectives yields to growing their awareness and motivation. Most importantly, the learning process is time consuming. It is an evolutionary change that requires time. The traditional teaching method that depends on the end of semester and/or year to assess seems no longer fashioned for the special training offered by INSIM Institute.

For this reason, this syllabus attempted to offer pacing the learning progress through performance assessment and it is open to future amendments, as experiencing CBA for ESP teaching may require other additions and thorough investigations and research in the future. This syllabus implementation should be open to future amendments as well as new changes in the teaching of ESP. It also should be flexible to the changing variables of learners, the field of study - Business - and the ongoing changes in education that keep adapting to the emerging exigencies of the labour market laws.

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## Appendix 1

### Learners' Questionnaire

The purpose of this survey is to determine your needs in English language acquisition and to find out your propositions concerning your English programme. We will appreciate if you kindly answer these questions.

#### 1. General Questions

1. Which of the following foreign languages have you studied at high school?

English     Spanish     German     Other (specify)

2. How long have you been studying English?

.....years

3. How do you evaluate your level in English?

Advanced                   Intermediate                   Beginner

4. How do you consider the learning of English in your training?

Important                   Useful                   Useless

5. In your English courses, how often is each skill applied?

Skills	Often	Sometimes	Never
Reading Writing Listening Speaking			

6. In your opinion, which of these skills do you find more important than the others?

Skills	More important	Less important
Reading Writing Listening Speaking		

7. Which of the skills do you think are useful in your training?

Skills	More useful	Least useful
Reading Writing Listening Speaking		

8. If you were to suggest some improvements to your English courses, what would you choose among the followings?

- Reading texts: economic, commercial, etc.
- Writing: reports, business letters, CVs, etc.
- Listening comprehension: meetings, negotiations, etc.
- Participating in discussions: commenting, arguing, etc.

9. Is the time - an hour and a half - allocated to English courses enough or not?

- Enough  Not enough

Why?.....  
.....

10. In your opinion, why is learning English useful in your training?

- Because it is an international language.
- Because it is frequently used in business.
- Because it is good to learn a foreign language.
- Other (specify) .....

**2. Course Contents**

1. Do you think the English programme lessons are interesting?

Yes  No

Justify.....  
.....  
.....

2. Which of the lessons did you find most interesting? Name four lessons.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

3. Have you done any of the tasks suggested in these lessons?

Yes  No

Why?.....  
.....  
.....

4. Do you feel there is a difference between High school English courses and INSIM's?

Yes  No

What is this difference?  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....



### 3. Presentation Of the Lessons

1. Do you think the lessons are well presented?

Yes

No

– Do you think the lessons are well organized?

Yes

No

If you wish to give specific feedback on some of these questions, please feel free to mention any further detail on the back of the questionnaire.

Finally, we thank you so much for the time devoted to answer these questions.

## Appendix 2

### Manager's Questionnaire

As competencies are not standard, each work position requires skills which impact positively on the individual working outcome. Therefore, our survey aims at collecting desired skills that will help the educational sector better identify topics to teach. In light of this, the result will help in supplying the labour market with the exact demand.

We will be grateful if you answer the following questions:

1. How is English literacy ranked in importance for your agency job recruitment?

- Essential.
- Useful.
- Occasional in use.
- Unnecessary.

2. Which of the professional competencies are important for an accepted candidate?

.....  
.....  
.....

3. Which of the interpersonal (behavioural) competencies do you seek in a newly accepted candidate?

.....  
.....  
.....

4. How do you evaluate those required competencies, under which criteria?

- Personal interviews.
- Evaluation of previous work.
- Written tests.
- Other (please specify).....

5. If you were to recruit a marketer, which of the competencies would you wish to find in an employee, and do you take into consideration English competency?

.....  
.....  
.....

6. If you were to post a job opening, which of the criteria will you emphasize on, technical standards or social ones?

.....  
.....  
.....

7. Which additional skills do you look for in a new employee?

.....  
.....  
.....

Thank you for answering this questionnaire and for your co-operation.

## Appendix 3

### INSIM English Syllabus

**Academic Years:** 2009-2011

**Specialty field:** BTS Marketing/Commerce International

<b>1<sup>st</sup> Semester</b>
1. RC: Economics
2. Grammar: Present Simple
3. RC: Business
4. Part One: Work and Leisure
5. Part Two: Work and Leisure
6. Grammar: Present Continuous
7. RC: Import and Export
8. Part One: Travel
9. Part Two: Travel
<b><i>Revision for the examination</i></b>

<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Semester</b>
Grammar: Past Simple
Part One: Sales
Part Two: Sales
Grammar: Past Continuous
RC: The Concept of Production
Part One: People
Part Two: People
RC: Labour and Capital
Part One: Markets
Part Two: Markets
<b><i>Revision for the examination</i></b>