

**THE PROVISION OF BUSINESS ENGLISH LANGUAGE
COURSES FOR STUDENTS IN ISRAELI HIGHER
EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS**

**An Investigation of the Needs of the Providers, the Students and the
Business Community Regarding Business English Courses**

Francine N. Robinson

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Doctor of Philosophy**

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ABSTRACT

THE PROVISION OF BUSINESS ENGLISH LANGUAGE COURSES FOR STUDENTS IN ISRAELI HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

An Investigation of the Needs of the Providers, the Students and the Business Community Regarding Business English Courses

Francine N. Robinson

This study investigates business English courses in Israeli institutions of higher education regarding the needs of the three stakeholders involved in these courses: the teachers (representing the institutions), the students and the business community. Initially, the importance of English in Israel is explored, specifically within the Israeli business community, in order to establish the necessity for studying English in Israeli institutions of higher education. Subsequently, the accountability, responsibility and responsiveness of higher education to its students and the community at large in the provision of relevant courses are examined.

This study has both a theoretical and a practical aim. Theoretically, it examines existing concepts of English language teaching suited to present academic and future professional needs of Israeli business administration students; practically, it suggests future directions for the design of business English courses.

The main objective of the study is to investigate whether Israeli institutions of higher education are accountable to the Israeli business community and their students regarding the teaching of business English courses. This study includes data, both qualitative (interviews) and quantitative (questionnaires), from the three stakeholders involved in academic business English courses. Critical action research is the methodological tradition employed as this research is a reflective inquiry with the possibility of instituting conscious changes in course design.

Results illustrate that, although English is taught in every academic institution, and English for Specific Purposes courses are offered in most institutions, business English courses fail to provide the necessary tools, such as needs analysis and evaluation, for the success of these courses. Many of these courses also fail to provide for the future professional and career needs of students. Moreover, although these courses are geared to students' present academic needs, students seem to express dissatisfaction with the courses. Findings also show evidence of a lack of communication between the stakeholders involved in business English courses.

Hopefully, as a result of this study, Israeli academic institutions will include more stakeholder suggestions in the planning of business English courses, administrators will offer teacher training, and students will be made more aware of academic and professional demands.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CLT – Communicative Language Teaching

CNP – Communicative Needs Processor

EAP – English for Academic Purposes

EEP – English for Educational Purposes

EFL – English as a Foreign Language

EGAP – English for General Academic Purposes

EGBP – English for General Business Purposes

EGP – English for General Purposes

ELT – English Language Teaching

EOP – English for Occupational Purposes

ESAP – English for Specific Academic Purposes

ESP-B – English for Specific Purposes - Business

ESP – English for Specific Purposes

ESP-B – Business English for Special Purposes

L2 – Second language

PSA – Present Situation Analysis

Significant Level = 0.05

SP-LT – Special Purpose Language Teaching

SPSS - Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

TENOR – Teaching English for No Obvious Reason

TSA – Target Situation Analysis

χ^2 - Chi-Square

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SECTION I

This section introduces the research. The first chapter will present the objectives of the research and will discuss the stakeholders involved in this study. A brief discussion of the position of the Council for Higher Education will ensue, documenting why they are not included among the stakeholders investigated.

Chapter two will provide the context of English within Israel, historically, educationally, socially and professionally. The importance of English will be documented, serving to validate the importance of teaching English in institutions of higher education so as to provide the necessary skills to cope in Israeli society.

The third chapter will offer an outline of business English in general terms, academically and within Israeli society. The significance of knowing English for business purposes in Israel will be discussed to provide a rationale for studying English skills for future employment needs. The importance of supplying students with these necessary skills in order to guarantee a degree of success in the business community is the motivating reason for this study.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

“In teaching any language, we are imparting information and therefore power; in teaching English we can impart to learners not only the present perfect, but also the power of knowing and caring more about the world they live in. English is at the center of international and global culture. It is a cultural activity; it is an important activity.” (Prodromou, 1992, p.49)

1.1 Introduction

This research addresses the question of whether academic English courses for business purposes fulfil the needs and demands of the students for both present academic and future business purposes and are accountable to stakeholders involved in these courses. This chapter will provide background for the study and introduce the three stakeholders involved.

The following chapters in this section will establish the importance of the use of the English language, in a historical context, in present society and in the business community within Israel. Business English acumen in Israel provides the context for teaching English both in school and in institutions of higher education. Consequently, the need to know English in Israel will be discussed, to better understand its importance for the Israeli business community.

This study investigates and evaluates academic business English courses in Israeli institutions of higher education and their responsiveness to the stakeholders' needs. The stakeholders, the providers or academic institutions (represented by the teachers), the students, and the future employers, have needs that will be examined in the context of the Israeli academic and business communities. The accountability of the providers of English language courses in higher education to the other two stakeholders, and higher education's responsiveness to the stakeholders, will be considered. A central aim of this study therefore is to propose business English courses that will be more accountable to both present academic and future professional needs.

1.2 Objectives

This study's main objective is formulated through the central research question:

Are the institutions of higher education in Israel accountable to their students and the Israeli business community as regards the teaching of business English courses?

Research questions were devised in order to determine accountability to stakeholders involved in business English courses. These questions first determined the importance to the three stakeholders of the need for English. Thereafter, skills for future employment needs were established in order to resolve whether these skills were being taught in business English courses. Finally, the three stakeholders were questioned as to whether they felt business English courses provided them with the necessary skills for both present academic and future professional needs.

In order to determine accountability to stakeholders the following areas were researched:

- The need for English within the Israeli business community.
- The need to study English in Israeli institutions of higher education.
- The English skills that meet present and future employment needs.
- The institutions that teach English skills for present and future employment needs.
- The requirements of the students, teachers and business people regarding business English courses in Israeli institutions of higher education.
- Cross analysis of teachers and students regarding business English courses and current academic needs.
- Cross analysis of the three stakeholders regarding business English courses and future employment.

The perceptions of the stakeholders regarding course content and stakeholder needs are discussed in the research findings. The expectations of students and the business community regarding business English courses, the perceptions of stakeholders regarding whether needs are being met, the accountability and responsiveness of institutions of higher education to the stakeholders, and the inclusion of stakeholders in course design are all examined.

1.3 The Stakeholders in Business English Academic Courses

There are three stakeholders involved in academic business English courses in institutions of higher education: the institutions of higher education, the students and the business community. The first stakeholder, the Israeli institutions of higher education, are granted accreditation from the Council of Higher Education when they meet prescribed academic criteria, including the proficiency requirement in a foreign language. All accredited Israeli institutions have unanimously chosen English for their foreign language requirement and demand that students reach an exit level of English proficiency. The rationale for the English requirement is the abundance of required subject specific content material written in English. Most students, however, do not have the required English proficiency to receive an exemption from attending English as a Foreign Language (EFL) courses.

Many of the teachers in the institutions of higher education lack a business background and are not aware of the business English skills needed in future employment. However, the teachers are the most capable of the three stakeholders in pedagogical matters.

The second stakeholder, students who have not yet entered the business world (pre-experienced learners), and will gain their knowledge of business English from books and articles, and will have theoretical rather than practical knowledge. In addition, many of them are first year academic students and are not completely aware of their academic needs. As a result, they will probably be less aware of their language needs in terms of academia and real-life situations, since their expectations of the needs for business English are based on experiences in school, hearsay about what is actually needed, and perhaps their own limited business experience. Their expectations are also shaped by Israeli educational policies, which view English as a major subject.

The third stakeholder, the business community, presumably has a clear view of what it expects employees to know. The professional business community expects value for money, high quality performance, and courses that suit their purposes, taught by experienced teachers. The business community ideally would like their employees to be able to read professional articles, to make expert presentations, to communicate by e-mail and write reports, to be able to compose their own correspondence and, when necessary, to negotiate in English. The Israeli business community values English

language proficiency that allows confident interaction with business counterparts overseas.

1.3.1 The Council for Higher Education in Israel

The above three stakeholders are directly concerned with academic business English courses. Although the Council for Higher Education is not a direct stakeholder, it is necessary to understand why they are not involved in any way with these courses.

The Council for Higher Education is the licensing and accrediting authority for higher education in Israel. This independent statutory body is composed of 19 to 25 academics and community leaders appointed by the President of Israel on the recommendation of the government. The Council is completely independent of the Ministry of Education and is empowered by law to advise the government on the development and financing of higher education and scientific research. The Council encourages efficiency in higher education institutions and coordinates between them even though all institutions of higher education have complete freedom in academic affairs.

The Council for Higher Education in Israel is not involved in determining academic policy for academic English courses and is therefore not viewed as an 'official' stakeholder in this study. As Ms. Atiyah, a member of the Council for Higher Education writes, "According to the Council for Higher Education Law the universities are autonomous academically. This includes degree and language requirements. The Council does not issue any directives in this matter" (see Appendix 1). Ms. Atiyah further writes:

"The Council for Higher Education does not specify any requirements for English. I would assume that each university concluded by itself (this is, after all, a very reasonable and common academic requirement) that proficiency at a certain level of English must be demonstrated or proven by university graduates. To the best of my knowledge, there are no institutions of higher education that do not require proficiency in English for graduation." (see Appendix 1)

Consequently, the Council for Higher Education does not specifically require English for the completion of the B.A.

Thus, although English is not a specific requirement of the Council for Higher Education, all the institutions have adopted an unwritten policy to teach English. What is debatable is not the significance of English, but whether the skills learned are the skills needed. English will always be essential; what is taught in English is disputable.

1.4 Outline of Study

Section II focuses on a review of literature pertaining to educational accountability, particularly in institutions of higher education. The changing role of institutions of higher education will be explored to show how these institutions have had to become more accountable to the needs of the outside community as professional needs have changed. Business English courses accountable to stakeholders involved in these courses should provide the content and skills necessary for present academic and future professional needs. Therefore, English for Specific Purposes courses, furnishing the particular requirements for business English courses, and the Communicative Language Teaching Approach, providing academic and business language skills, will be investigated. A chapter on needs analysis, the essential tool to determine the needs of the stakeholders in course design, will be included. Finally, a chapter on course evaluation discusses the significance of evaluating courses for the success of future courses.

Section III examines the research performed in business English courses in Israeli institutions of higher education concerning their accountability to stakeholders involved in these courses. The methodology used in this research will be discussed, following which there will be a chapter detailing the research results. Thereafter, a chapter discussing the research results will be presented.

The final chapter will discuss implications for current and future business courses in Israel and possible ideas for future projects and research. This will include recommendations for more dynamic courses, which answer immediate academic and future business needs. Thus, the goal of this research will not only encompass the exploration of accountability regarding English academic business courses, but the proposal of courses that are more accountable and responsive to the ongoing needs and demands of those who are involved.

CHAPTER TWO

CONTEXTUALIZATION OF ENGLISH IN ISRAEL

“English is now well established as the first foreign language in Israel for both Jews and Arabs. It is the main language for international communication and for overcoming barriers to the flow of information and goods and people across national boundaries, and the language for which there is strongest local demand.” (Spolsky and Shohamy, 1997, p. 9)

2.1 Introduction

Mandarin, Hindi and Spanish are spoken by more native speakers than English; however, English is unquestionably the most popular language studied as a second or foreign language in the world. This is probably due to the economic strength of the Western, Americanized world and America's leadership in all facets of business and technology. Thus, English is not only popular but has become a necessary business skill around the world and in Israel in particular.

This chapter outlines the importance of English within Israel and illustrates why English is the most important second language in Israel today. In Israel, English is, in effect, the second language of speakers of both Hebrew and Arabic, and is a required subject in all Jewish and Arab schools, as well as in Israeli universities (Hallel and Spolsky, 1993). English is also the language of foreign commerce and tourism. The importance of English for Israeli business interests derives from Israel's historical and political ties to the Anglo-Saxon world. This need for English language competence dates back to pre-state Israel.

2.2 The Importance of English in Israel

In Israel, Hebrew is the first official language, the symbol of Israeli identity and unity. However, Israel may be viewed as a multi-lingual society, a land of immigrants where only sixty percent of the current Jewish population was born in Israel. Therefore, the State of Israel has had to learn to accommodate to its multi-lingual population (Spolsky and Shohamy, 1997).

The importance of English in Israel has grown because of two major external factors, namely: the immigration of a significant number of English speakers after 1967 and the close political, economic and personal ties with the United States and the citizens

of the world. The increase in the use of English within the Israeli community can also be attributed to several factors in the world of communication, for example, the introduction of television in the late 1960s and, later, the introduction of the video industry, which allowed greater access to English language movies. Surprisingly, English daily newspapers did not experience as rapid an increase as television broadcasting and viewing. To date, there are only two English language dailies available: 'The Jerusalem Post' and 'The International Herald Tribune'.

Another factor in the increased growth of the English language is the computer and hi-tech industries. Most internet sites are in English, most e-mail is written in English, most computer software is in English (even though Hebrew written software is available, most users prefer English programs), many computer magazines appear in English, most hi-tech companies have strong ties to international companies and frequently speak English in their offices, and most children learn basic computer English even before they enter the first grade.

Thus, several major factors have led to the increase of the use of English within Israeli society. Whether this increase stems from immigration, economic and political ties with the United States, mass communication or hi-technology, the astonishing spread of English has led to the belief that success and socio-economic status is intertwined with the knowledge of the English language.

2.3 English Language Teaching in Pre-State Israel

Although missionaries and consuls first introduced English into Ottoman ruled Palestine, the history of English language learning in Israel officially dates back to the time of the British Mandate in Palestine after World War I, when the control of Palestine was passed from the Ottoman Empire to the British Empire. Hebrew and Arabic were the two languages spoken in Israel at the time; however, the language of the rulers of occupation was English. Consequently, in Israel, English became the language of government, education and mass communication.

In 1920, the British authorities terminated the instruction of Turkish and introduced English as part of an educational reform. English was the language used for entertainment, a means of disseminating culture, colonial command and control in Palestine. Article 22 of the League of Nations established English, along with Arabic

and Hebrew, as a co-equal national language of Palestine. By the mid-1920s, business English proficiency in Mandatory Palestine granted access to the commonwealth market. English became the key to modernity and economic success.

The importance of English as an essential tool for advancement in the business community was evident in the early years of the Mandate. In Palestine, this was the beginning of the connection between occupational upward mobility, social status and the English language. In fact, lack of English was seen as an impediment to economic development and people could not hold government jobs without the knowledge of English. The British were also convinced that knowledge of English would reduce the tensions between Arabs and Jews, as is stated in a 1933 memo from the Chief Secretary: " ...a knowledge of the languages may save the country from bloodshed or disaffection, and from an increased payment for military or police forces" (Lockard, 1998, p.7).

Concurrently, the British educational system in Palestine introduced English into education and society. The Department of Education of Palestine emphasized reading English literature to provide the students with a cultural outlook since 'practical English' meant low-quality general language skills. Statistics show that at the beginning of the twentieth century, under Ottoman rule, one in a thousand local residents in Palestine spoke English. However, during the 1920s, under British rule, when English was instituted into the educational system, some secondary schools gave more hours to English than to Arabic; English thus became the most important subject in the syllabus (Lockard, 1998). In fact, in 1935 the first English matriculation exam or English *bagrut*, was administered to 653 candidates; 514 passed.

2.4 English Language Teaching in the Israeli School System

With independence in 1948, English, Arabic and Hebrew were recognized by law as Israel's official languages. Post-1948 (after the establishment of the State of Israel) the emphasis on English language learning in Israel continued. However, there was a shift from British to American culture; a shift that corresponded with the political shift of the post-World War II reality and that is continuing. The preference for American English may also be interpreted as an alignment with American culture and

ideology and an acceptance into the cultural, educational and business world of the United States.

In the 1950s, English was regarded as access to culture and literature. This was illustrated, in an extreme example, by a member of the English language committee in the Ministry of Education who stated that English was taught to give Israeli children access to English literature, since he felt there was no worthwhile literature in Hebrew (Spolsky and Shohamy, 1999).

Even though World War II brought a significant change in global English language teaching from teaching mainly writing skills to teaching other language skills such as speaking, listening and reading, in Israel, until 1967, the use of spoken English and English in the business community was minimal. Due to increased immigration from English-speaking countries, improved tourism from and to Israel, and stronger economic and political ties to the United States, 1967 became the turning point for English. This led to the opening of economic borders to foreign companies. English speaking immigrants also led to a greater awareness that the knowledge of English was closely linked to socio-economic mobility.

In the early 1970s a change in the educational curriculum occurred, when English was identified as a functional rather than just a cultural means of communication. Rafael Gefen, the Chief Inspector for English, wrote in 1973:

“Henceforth, every text to be read, every lexical item or grammatical structure to be taught, every didactic technique to be used and every classroom activity to be undertaken must be selected and evaluated according to the following criterion – does it help provide the pupils with a means of communication?” (quoted in Spolsky and Shohamy, 1999, p. 174)

English was now perceived as an important global communicative tool. The Ministry of Education stated: “[English is] the principal means of international communication today... a World Language” (Ministry of Education, 1988, pp. 5-6). In 1996, The Policy for Language Education in Israel decreed that English was Israel’s first foreign language.

In September 2001, a new English curriculum was introduced in the Israeli school system. "This curriculum not only affirms the national need to set standards in order to equip pupils with the knowledge of English that the modern world demands, but it also serves as the basis for quality education" (Ministry of Education, 2001, p. 10). The goals of this curriculum are to set standards in four domains of English language learning: social interaction, access to information, presentation, and appreciation of literature, culture and language. By the end of high school, pupils should achieve the following:

- Interact effectively in a variety of situations.
- Obtain and make use of information from a variety of sources and media.
- Present information in an organized manner.
- Appreciate literature and other cultures and the nature of language.

The goal is to produce speakers of other languages who can communicate comfortably in English; it does not presume to create near native English speakers.

At the end of high school, matriculation exams, which include an English exam, are administered. These exams are compulsory for graduation and acceptance into institutions of higher education. A psychometric exam that tests general ability, mathematics and English has been compulsory for entrance into universities, but is currently being re-examined.

Nevertheless, in spite of major progress in English language teaching, most pupils do not reach the level of proficiency required for exemption from the EFL courses in institutions of higher education. Exemption of students from EFL academic courses is dependent upon test scores in the matriculation and/or psychometric exams, depending upon the policy of the particular institution of higher education. If the student is not exempted, s/he must take an additional one to three courses (beginner, intermediate, advanced) in college/university in order to graduate. These courses, ironically, may not meet the future needs of students in their professional world, since they emphasize reading comprehension. Thus, the demands of high school English do not meet the demands of English in academic institutions, and the English taught in these institutions do not meet the needs for future professions. The institutions may

take into account students' present needs but are not accountable to the future needs of the stakeholders.

2.5 English Language Teaching in Institutions of Higher Education in Israel

Currently, the higher educational system in Israel consists of eight universities, approximately twenty academic institutions that are not universities, nineteen institutions for the training of teachers and several academic programmes at eight regional colleges for which the universities are academically responsible. All of these institutions require English for graduation.

The student population of these institutions of higher education has expanded rapidly over the years. In 1948, there were approximately 1,600 students. The last decade of the twentieth century saw a tremendous increase in the student body and by 1998 there was a total of 160,000 students at all levels of degrees (B.A., M.A., Ph.D.). This represents 85 percent in universities, eight percent in colleges and seven percent in teacher training institutions (The Council for Higher Education in Israel, 2001).

Although Israeli students have studied approximately nine years of intensive English in the school system and are constantly exposed to English, there is a considerable gap between the exit reading level required for high school and the requirements for academic reading in the university/college. Therefore, reading courses in institutions of higher education are compulsory for the majority of students. Moreover, since Israeli students are older than their counterparts in other countries, due to mandatory military service, the nature of the courses, including English, are more goal oriented to professional needs, since students demand immediate relevancy to their studies (Spector-Cohen *et al*, 2001).

English has become the second language of academia as emphasized by the fact that all institutions of higher education require an entry level of English competence. Entering students must pass their matriculation exam and also, in some cases, must have a psychometric exam that includes English. Although most teaching is done in Hebrew, most courses demand a large quantity of textbook reading in English. Furthermore, academic conferences are often conducted in English and lecturers from overseas tend to lecture and converse in English even when their mother tongue is not English.

Therefore, the institutions of higher education have unanimously decided to make English a requirement, even though the Council for Higher Education does not. No institution will grant a degree without students fulfilling an English language requirement. This means that the student must either enter with an acceptable score in English on either the psychometric exam and/or the *bagrut* exam (depending on the institution) and receive an exemption, or study English in the institution. Some institutions require their students to take English regardless of their psychometric or *bagrut*/matriculation scores.

The majority of teachers in institutions of higher education are native speakers of English whose field of expertise is English language and linguistics and not the specific subject for which the courses are designed (Spector-Cohen *et al*, 2001). For example, in Netanya Academic College, only two teachers in the department also have a degree in the particular field they are teaching, law.

2.6 The Importance of English in the Israeli Business World

English has long been the language of, or associated with, the West. Its recent growth stems from the military power, media and wealth of the United States. English is also one of the most widely used languages in the world today, with official or special status in at least seventy-five countries. It is spoken as a first language by approximately 375, million speakers and as a second language by approximately 375 million speakers in the world. Approximately 750 million people are believed to speak English as a foreign language and one out of four of the world's population speak English to some level of competence (Crystal, 1995; Crystal, 1997, Graddol, 1997). English is the language used to discuss and argue in the United Nations, it is the official language of aviation, and the unofficial language of sports and MTV. In Israel, poor English skills on the part of the Israeli negotiators were blamed for the difficulties in negotiation over Hebron in 1998.

In Israel, English holds a prominent place within the Israeli society and culture. Israel, being surrounded by divergent cultures and situated in an area of several under-developed and developing countries, is anxious to link itself with the developed world and be associated with Western culture, symbolized and signified by the United States. Speaking English is part of a status symbol, bearing connotations to American

culture, power and dominance. The belief in English as status leads to a promotion of English language studies and an impression that with the knowledge of English, there is social advancement, technical and national progress and integration into an English centred community. Thus, the teaching of English can be seen as much as an ideology as a language practice. This ideology strives to separate Israel from the Arabic speaking geopolitical region, bestows an international orientation on the State and offers a language bridge to another historical destination (Lockard, 1998). Hence, English is not only a necessary language for communication with the outside world, it is also a language that confers legitimacy and status on its users; it is a connection with the business community, the world of hi-tech, the belief in globalization, the West. English, therefore, is not only a need; it is a requirement for acceptance.

Examples of prolific English usage are seen on the streets of Israel, where shops advertise their names in both Hebrew and English. Furthermore, Hebrew vocabulary has been anglicised to the extent that many words such as telephone, TV, video, and more have been entirely borrowed from English, even though there may be comparable words in Hebrew. Other words are corrupted so as to maintain their grammatical Hebrew root structure while evolving into grammatically correct Hebrew words. An example of this is 'we discuss', which developed into 'discussnu' in Hebrew. English is also used as 'neutral territory' in debates, discussions, forums and cultural activities between Arabs and Jews. Evidence of this is observed constantly in the news, where both Israeli and Palestinian politicians converse with each other and with the moderator in English. Another example took place several years ago when an Israeli-Palestinian women's theatre group performed in English, even though many of the women could speak both Hebrew and Arabic. Currently, an Israeli women's support group for Palestinian women with breast cancer is being conducted in English and all guest lecturers are asked to speak in English.

The past several years have witnessed an influx of multinational companies into Israel. The influence of international business has made English an important asset, if not a necessity, for the Israeli businessperson. Many, if not most, of these companies prefer employees with English reading, writing and conversational skills. As evidence, one only has to glance at the career advertisements in a daily Israeli newspaper, such as 'Yediot Aharonot' of January 12, 2001, and note the various

companies that demand English. Companies such as **Pilot Projects, Israel Ports Organization, Solel Boneh, Aharon Yosef, Bank Leumi, Sigma Aldrich, Galilon and Dr. Fisher**, to name just a few, all list fluent English as part of their requirements. Business people must travel abroad to maintain business ties and communications, and they, therefore, need both business English skills and social English skills to communicate with their business counterparts overseas.

For all of the above reasons students in academic institutions should be aware of the demand for English skills when they enter the professional market. Although many students have passed advanced English in their place of study they realize that they lack the necessary skills in business English for positions they desire. Institutions of higher education therefore must be made accountable to the demands and needs of both the business community and the students to teach academic as well as employment needs. In today's recession in Israel, the knowledge of English (specifically English skills necessary for employment) may make the difference between being hired or fired.

2.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, English retains a prominent place in Israeli society, specifically within the business community. Future employees are more aware of the necessity to communicate in English and acquire the essential English skills for communication. Therefore, academic business English courses should include the required skills needed to meet these needs.

CHAPTER THREE

BUSINESS ENGLISH

"Business is competitive: competition exists between companies and also within companies, between employees striving to better their career. It follows that performance objectives take priority over educational objectives or language learning for its own sake." (Ellis and Johnson, 1994, p. 7)

3.1 Introduction

Although the concept of business English was first documented in a book entitled *A Treatise for to Learn to Speak French and English* (1553) written by Meurier for commercial students in Antwerp (Pickett, 1989), the teaching of business English courses became popular in the last part of the twentieth century. Today, business English has become a necessity in most companies due to the use of English as a global mediating language by most foreign companies. Specifically in Israel, English has become paramount to success in the business community with the influx of multinationals and the opening of Israeli business to foreign investors.

Although English has always been included in the Israeli academic curriculum, the importance of business English has necessitated re-evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of these courses concerning the academic and future professional needs of the students. This chapter will provide various definitions of business English and the role of academic English courses in order to provide a contextual background for the examination of these courses in Israel as relates to the accountability of the institutions of higher education.

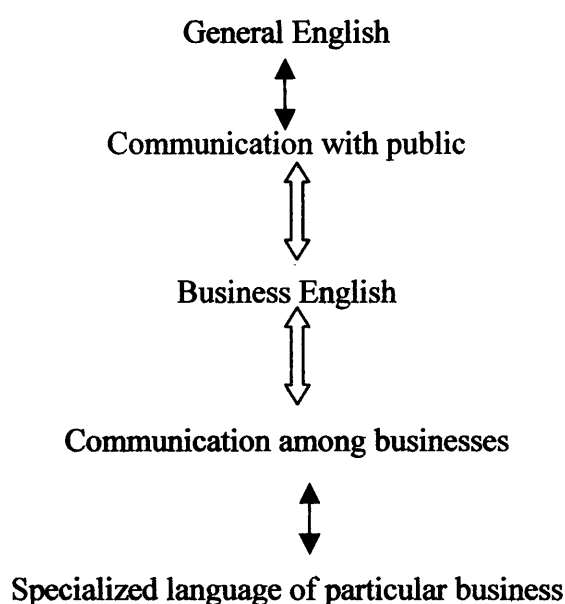
3.2 Business English Defined

Business English is far from a uniform language, used solely in business communication, since "it displays that creativity and sensitivity in response to real life and to other language that characterises language in general" (Pickett, 1989, p. 5). However, business English does fall into the category of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), even though it is quite distinct from other ESP courses, not by virtue of its specialization, but on account of a lack of it. Unlike law or medicine, business English is not based on arcane languages or terms from languages that exist to make the layman's understanding difficult, if not impossible. It is, however, the language of

everyman, since everyman, in one sense or another, must conduct some kind of business. It is a language that must be understood by everyone, both native and non-native speakers alike, and, out of necessity, borrows from other fields in order to be self-understood. According to Pickett (1989) it is a "mediating language between the technicalities of particular businesses - insurance, pharmaceuticals, fashion, firearms, fertilizers, jewelry, construction, etc - and the language of the general public. It is not purely intra-group communications" (p. 6). It is "a lot nearer to everyday language spoken by the general public than many other segments of ESP" (p. 16). However, business English does have a particular discourse and genre when it deals with specific business demands such as marketing, advertising and so on.

Figure 3.1 illustrates the two-way correlation and progression between general English and business English and between communication with the public and communication within (intra) a company or between (inter) companies.

Figure 3.1: General English and Business English



(Pickett, 1986, p. 16)

Business English courses are English language courses that emphasize business vocabulary, readings, simulations, role-plays and other business activities. However, since business management studies inter-relate with many other disciplines, such as finance, sociology and computers, business English courses should also take into

consideration the inter- and multi-disciplinary connection with these courses (Bhatia, 1999). These courses should prepare students to cope in an academic (immediate needs) and business (delayed needs) setting. "The main goal of ESP-B [Business English for Special Purposes] is not to teach students how *to think* like business managers, but rather how *to communicate* like business managers in English. This narrower focus on communicative skills arises naturally from the needs of the population for business English" (Boyd, 1991, p. 731). According to Pickett (1989) there is lexis of business where words in a business environment take on new meanings. The language of business is determined by subject matter, situation, social roles and means used (speaking or writing) to express oneself. All these factors influence the final choice of language output.

Business English should incorporate goals, objectives, content, processes, resources, and means of evaluation, both for academic studies and business. Classroom instruction and/or related programmes, such as out-of-school tasks and activities designed to foster learning and using spoken and written training, should teach skills that students will be expected to acquire in-class and professionally, skills that are relevant and can effectively be put into practice (Robertson, 1971; Stenhouse, 1975; Finocchiaro and Brumfit, 1983). De Beaugrande (2000) urges that language programmes should be the centre of academic studies and the teaching of business English should raise the sensitivity of students to the ways in which business English can be more accessible through practical strategies as well as helping students gain access to business English skills. If this is done effectively, business English will be a "... meeting point of a perspective upon language itself, upon using language and upon teaching and learning which is a contemporary and commonly accepted interpretation of the harmonious links between theory, research and classroom practice" (Breen, 1987, p. 8).

Seven core events have been identified as key communicative events of business. They are telephoning, socializing, making presentations and taking part in meetings and negotiations, which primarily belong to speaking and listening. The remaining two events, corresponding and reporting, require the writing (Dudley-Evans and St. John, 1998, St. John, 1996). Ellis and Johnson (1994) mention meetings, giving information, telephoning, business correspondence and socialising as being the key

communicative business events. However, the names used by business communities to describe their activities may overlap. For instance, negotiations may take place in the conference room, the office or during dinner, and bargaining may be done in person, over the telephone or by e-mail (Dudley-Evans and St. John, 1998).

Business English courses should distinguish between pre-experienced and job-experienced learners. Pre-experienced learners are usually learners still within the academic community who have yet to enter the job market. Job-experienced learners are usually learners within the business community who are interested in learning or improving their English. The needs of the pre-experienced learners are both present academic and future professional needs, while job-experienced learners only have to focus on their professional needs related to their current job. (Ellis and Johnson, 1994). Thus, although speaking, listening, reading and writing skills will probably be needed for the learners' professions, not all skills may be needed for pre-experienced learners' studies, depending upon the needs of the academic institutions. However, institutions accountable to both the present academic needs and the future professional needs of their students must be aware of all the skills needed in both these situations.

Bridging the gap between theory, research and classroom practice will make both business English and business discourse in English more comprehensible to students (de Beaugrande, 2000). Meaningful and comprehensible materials that emphasize the learning skill to be taught rather than the language forms used, and focusing on real life problems with the teaching of authentic material rather than concentrating on speaking drills and memorization, should be implemented (Knowles *et al*, 1991; Schleppegrell and Royster, 1990). Forey (2004) observes that in many countries there is a gap between English taught in schools and universities and English used at the workplace, which leads to misinterpretation between what teachers perceive they teach and what the business community needs. Thus, providing students with both the appropriate business English academic and professional skills during their academic studies will better prepare them to encounter the professional business world after their academic careers.

3.3 Business English Academic Courses in Israel

Academic institutions of higher education in Israel all require their students to read academic literature in English. Although some academic business textbooks are written by Israeli authors in Hebrew, and others are translated into Hebrew, there is a proportion of textbook and journal reading that is in English. Therefore, one of the academic target needs of the students is the ability to read and understand academic material in English.

In addition, one of the five higher education institutions requires all business students to take two business courses in English. These are not business English courses, but content specific courses given in English. The lecturer lectures in English, the class is conducted in English, readings are in English and exams are in English. No students may graduate without attending these two courses. No other institution requires their students to attend courses in English, although from time to time courses are offered in English and students may choose to attend if they have already completed their English academic requirements and received an eighty percent or higher as a course grade. In addition, guest lecturers speaking in English are frequently invited to academic campuses and students attend these lectures.

Most Israeli business English academic courses are mainly reading comprehension courses that do not include listening, speaking and writing skills. In these courses the students are required to read academic texts and answer follow-up questions. If the courses are subject specific courses, the texts deal with the particular subject being taught, in this case business. Otherwise, texts are general academic texts (as is the case in one institution participating in this study). During class, most teachers try to communicate orally with the students in English as much as possible. However, course emphasis is not on conversation or listening skills. All exam questions are in English; however one institution allows the students to answer in Hebrew, while the other institutions participating in this study insist that students answer in English. The exams consist of true/false questions, multiple choice questions, cloze questions (choosing a word from a given list), and/or questions asking for specific details from the text. As a result, the students do not have to write laborious answers in English. In fact, their need to write English is minimal, and may consist of copying statements from the text given. They are expected, however, to fully comprehend academic texts

in English. The exit level exam is usually an 'unseen' (an article and questions not given to the students previously) of between two to three hours.

In many institutions in Israel, as documented in this study, few, if any, speaking, listening or writing skills are taught or tested. The emphasis is on reading skills. On the other hand, most companies prefer candidates who have mastered a full range of English language skills, such as conversation, presentation, negotiation, and correspondence abilities, which include speaking, listening and writing as well as reading skills, as will be documented. Although a student may complete the obligatory English academic course with the highest of scores, s/he may lack the English skills that are indispensable in the business community and may need to attend more specific courses after college which will teach the language skills not taught in academic institutions (Badger, 1994). Consequently, companies may be forced to supply their employees with English courses to teach the skills they need for effective business transactions. For example, a major Israeli credit card company, Isracard, required several of its upper management personnel to participate in a thirty-hour business English language course that emphasized the speaking and listening skills they lacked. A similar course was offered to several banks and marketing companies. Thus, there is a discrepancy between the requirements of the academic institutions and the demands of the business community. The real-world language needs of the students may not be the same as their academic language needs, or their professional language needs may not be necessary for academic language needs (West, 1994). However, if academic institutions are obligated not only to educate for present academic needs, but also for future professional needs, then these institutions should take into account all English needs needed for academia as well as professional needs.

In Israel, there will always be a demand for English academic courses since every institution of higher education obligates its students to graduate with an advanced level of English. However, English occupational courses, offered to learners already in the professional market, are not mandatory and can be closely related to economic fluctuations. When profit margins are high companies can afford to send employees to these courses, and when learners can afford the extra expense, then they can pay for these courses themselves. However, currently, in Israel, due to the economic recession

and lack of funds, language schools are forced to close courses since private clients and businesses are reluctant to pay for extra courses. Thus, students are turning to the academic institutions to provide them with business English skills both for immediate academic and future professional needs. An amalgamation of reading skills and speaking, listening and writing skills (immediate and delayed needs) in an academic course will provide the business management student with the optimal business English course during his/her academic studies and perhaps avoid the necessity of further English courses.

The problem facing most English departments in Israel is how to combine present and future needs into one course in the allotted time. Some institutions have begun including language skills for professional needs, other than reading, such as CV writing, correspondence skills, presentation and negotiation skills and/or conversation skills. Some institutions combine these skills with the current business English courses while others offer a separate course that mostly includes speaking activities such as conversation and presentation. The ultimate decision is usually with the Head of the English Department and the Dean of the Business Department and may depend on whether the institution deems the course profitable, and not whether the course will benefit and enhance the students' future needs.

3.4 Business English Academic Students in Israel

Students studying in Israeli institutions of higher education are placed in either beginner, intermediate or advanced courses, depending on matriculation or psychometric exam results. If they are beginner or intermediate level they are unable to cope with subject specific material, and may still need to review basic reading, vocabulary and grammar skills. Therefore, pre-advanced courses teach and review general English skills so that students entering advanced courses can start emphasizing subject specific skills and vocabulary. These subject specific skills include reading business articles and building up familiarity with business vocabulary, business theories and authors who write specifically on business subjects.

All institutions offer intermediate courses, however the students have to pay an additional fee for the intermediate course which is not included in their tuition fees, while the advanced courses are included as part of tuition fees. Beginners' courses are

offered in certain academic institutions as non-academic courses. This means that if a student wants to register in an institutions of higher education but his/her English matriculation or psychometric scores are below what is demanded, the institution will provide a beginner course before the student is fully registered, or the student will be accepted on condition that s/he passes this course in order to continue with the studies. Students must pay extra fees for these courses.

Although advanced courses emphasize business subjects, students attending business English academic courses are usually pre-experienced learners who "may need study skills together with specialist lexis, in addition to a less well-defined need to develop skills for their future working life" (Ellis and Johnson, 1994, pp. 17-18). As pre-experienced learners the students may not be entirely cognizant of their particular needs, since their knowledge of the business world is minimal. Therefore, the determination of who establishes course content will be a basic question concerning this research.

As the demands of the business community become greater, and competition for jobs becomes stiffer, Israeli students will be turning to the academic institutions to provide them with the necessary tools in order to succeed or become 'employable'. The institutions must therefore become aware of the demands of the business community in order to provide the students with the effective courses. Students' demands and, alongside them, business demands will become a primary factor in business English course design, and will lead to institutions that are accountable to those benefiting from courses and not only those that administer them.

3.5 Conclusion

Academic business English courses should meet relevant business needs along with immediate academic demands. Accomplishing this in Israel may entail re-evaluating and revising business English courses so as to include a broader range of language skills as demanded in the business community. Since students may not be aware of their future needs, a broadening of the stakeholders involved in determining course content may be advisable. Accountability of the institutions of higher education to the stakeholders involved in these courses may entail re-examining current business English course design to make courses more effective and efficient in order to answer both immediate and delayed needs.

The following section will examine the issue of academic accountability to the stakeholders of business English courses.

SECTION II

Section II discusses relevant literature concerned with this study. Section I demonstrated the necessity of gaining business English skills in institutions of higher education because of the importance of English within the Israeli business community. For this reason, these institutions should be accountable to those involved in business English courses. The implications of accountability, along with the responsibility and the responsiveness to the various stakeholders, will be examined in the following chapter.

Devising and designing accountable courses involves investigating approaches that answer stakeholders' demands, while providing skills for both present academic and future professional needs. This entails courses that deal with specific business English requirements and provide all language skills that meet future business specifications. English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses attempt to provide relevant English skills for subject specific courses. Utilizing this approach in business English classrooms will provide both teachers and students with material relevant to their current and future needs. Student motivation will increase and courses will be more accountable to stakeholders, since the courses deal with language specific to the needs of these stakeholders. An approach closely associated with English for Specific Purposes is Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), since the basis of course design for CLT courses is the identification of the learners' specific communication needs (Van Ek, 1975). CLT courses provide English language skills through various tasks in specific subject areas, and since the emphasis is on how to communicate in a specific subject, this approach is well suited to the future needs of the business employee.

Employing English for Specific Purposes and Communicative Language Teaching will help implement courses that answer the specific needs of both students and their future employers. Needs analysis will determine and establish which stakeholders' needs should be satisfied by course inclusions, and evaluation will ascertain whether courses have fulfilled targets and expectations either during or on completion of courses. Both are essential in designing, defining and determining courses and their degree of accountability.

Thus, business English courses can be more accountable if they are English for Specific Purposes courses with an emphasis on Communicative Language Teaching. Needs analysis will guarantee that the pertinent needs will be included in course design and evaluation will provide analysis of course implementation with suggestions for future improvements.

CHAPTER FOUR

ACCOUNTABILITY

"Our obligations to our employers are contractual, while the professional ethos urges responsibility to students (our clients), colleagues, and the vague but strong principles of intellectual conduct that obtain in our disciplines. The professional ideal calls for responsibility to society as well: we earn our privileges not just by guarding and augmenting our special bodies of knowledge, but also by undertaking to put knowledge to work for the good of all." (Ohmann, 2000, p. 24)

"In such an economy – one in which ideas, and the ability to manipulate them, count far more than the traditional factors of production – the university has come to look like an increasingly useful asset." (David, 1997, p. 4)

4.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature pertaining to accountability of higher education regarding stakeholders affected by English business academic course policy since a stakeholder is "any group or individual who is affected by or can affect the future of the organization, programme or activity" (Aspinwall *et al*, 1992, p. 84). In this study stakeholders include the institutions, represented by the teachers, the students, and the business community. The teachers are involved in course design and/or implementation and are concerned with academic needs. The students are the individuals who stand to reap the benefits from the course, whether for immediate academic needs or future professional needs. The business people will eventually determine whether their employees have the English skills needed for employment.

Included in this chapter is a discussion of the role of higher education and its responsibility and responsiveness to the stakeholders. The role of the student as a consumer with power of course determination will be analysed. Means of monitoring accountability will be examined. Finally, accountability will be directly linked to Israeli institutions of higher education.

4.2 Definition of Accountability

Accountability implies "a statement of explanation of one's conduct; a statement or exposition of reasons, causes, grounds or motive [and] being obligated or subject to giving an account" (Wagner, 1989, p. 138). According to Wagner (1989), there are two conditions necessary to establish obligations of accountability. The first, a

responsibility by the party involved to matters in which s/he is answerable, which establishes who is accountable. The second is a clear entitlement to some form of accounting, which will establish which parties receive an account that validates the agent's obligation to give it. These two conditions should be part of the accountability of higher education to the other stakeholders.

In Hebrew, until recently, there was no precise definition for accountability, although accountability is a common term in English. The Alcalay Hebrew-English Dictionary (p. 28) defines 'accountability' as 'אחריות' (*achrayut*). However, the Hebrew word אחריות (*achrayut*) (p. 63) is defined in English as 'surety, warranty, guarantee, responsibility, liability, insurance'. In this definition the word accountability does not appear. Recently the word 'דיווחית' (*divuchit*), from the Hebrew root 'דווח' (*divuach*), meaning 'reporting', began to connote accountability. Does the lexical void in Hebrew imply a lack of awareness of accountability? Does the lack of the word imply the lack of the act? Does the coinage of a new lexeme imply a new awareness in Israel? Can we now expect more attention to be paid to accountability? If so, have institutions of higher education in Israel been affected by this change? Do Israeli academic institutions fulfil Wagner's condition for accountability? Before specifically focusing on Israeli institutions of higher education, accountability in education will be discussed.

4.3 Accountability in Education

Accountability of an educational system is closely linked to the economy and the demands made upon it, as witnessed several times in the United Kingdom and the United States. For example, accountability was an issue in the United Kingdom in the 1920s, when literacy standards were slipping because of a lack of funds (Davis, 1998). Again, at the end of the twentieth century, the United Kingdom's industrial base as well as its standard of living was in decline. However, the cost of higher education was increasing, to the extent that Shirley Williams, Minister for Higher Education in 1969, asked universities to consider several reforms in order to reduce costs (Bligh *et al*, 1999). Under the Conservative Government in 1979, higher education suffered financially because of the poor performance of the British economy (Bligh *et al*, 1999). Consequently, there were recommendations for

financial management and increased public accountability of the educational system (Davis, 1998; Scott, 1989).

In the United States, the development and increase in educational accountability was first noted in the 1960s and 1970s. This concern was a reaction against the social movements and the economic situation of those years: the dollar weakened against stronger currencies, unemployment rose, real wages and productivity declined, productivity and America became less economically secure than it had been since World War II. As a consequence, there was a strong demand for colleges and universities to justify what they did and prove their effectiveness and efficiency (Scott, 1989).

Although the clamour for accountability is the current trend in both the United Kingdom and the United States, a report released by Columbia University cites that a lack of accountability is not the problem in the educational system, but too much of the wrong kind is at the base of the troubles (Aldridge, 1996). Accountability, to be effective, must be coordinated, executed and properly monitored.

Educational accountability involves legal requirements, societal values, guidelines or requirements set by the local authority (national or local council for higher education), the professional code of conduct within the institution, and the rights and interests of the students. In addition, educational accountability implies that educators' actions should satisfy stakeholders' interests. The influence of each stakeholder in the educational process is of great importance and never far removed from questions concerning authority, control and power. Educators must be aware that they are answerable to those they serve, and these stakeholders have legitimate expectations and requirements that should, and must, be satisfied (Halstead, 1994 p. 147).

According to Halstead (1994) educational accountability should satisfy six conditions:

- "The person who is accountable is the holder of a defined role.
- The role holder's accountability relates to action carried out in connection with the requirements of the role, actions for which the holder carries responsibility.
- The role holder's accountability is to one or more specific audiences – those who have delegated the responsibilities of his/her role to him/her, and/or those who are on the receiving end of his/her actions.

- The audience has certain legitimate expectations which the role holder should take into account, and has grounds for insisting that those expectations be satisfied.
- The role holder should be willing to accept that some account, explanation or justification of how the expectations are being satisfied and should be prepared if the audience requires it, or at least that evidence should be made available to the audience so that some assessment of how the expectations are being satisfied can be made.
- Sanctions or other forms of appropriate action are available if the account or assessment indicates that the legitimate expectations are not being satisfied.” (pp. 147-148)

Halstead (1994) raises two questions concerning his six conditions. Firstly, who defines the responsibilities of the specific role? It may be the role holder (the institution and its teachers) or the audience (those who pay or those who receive the service; students or the business community) or all three. Secondly, should the role holder merely be responsive to the expectations and requirements of those s/he serves, or is s/he legally or morally answerable to them? One possible answer is that institutions of higher education should regard student tuition fees as a form of legal payment for fulfilling academic obligations, which includes being accountable to the students through relevant academic courses. Furthermore, accountability should also be considered as a moral obligation to uphold the academic standards and criteria of the institution and answer stakeholder needs concerning course content.

4.4 The Role of Higher Education

In the past, the University had three main responsibilities towards society: to transmit knowledge to the younger generation, to advance fundamental knowledge, and to socialize those who were later to hold elite positions in society (Neave, 2000). Today, higher education should inspire and enable individuals to develop their capabilities to the highest level, increase knowledge and understanding, serve the needs of the community and shape a democratic and civilized society (Scott, 2000).

The past fifty years has seen a rapid expansion of higher education throughout the world. This has led to an increasing ambiguity between higher education and vocational education. Until the mid 1950s, many Western governments respected the traditional autonomy of the universities as places for pure learning and culture. Over

the past fifty years, however, higher education has been expected to contribute to the development of society. As a result, both government and employers were interested not only in the 'how' but also the 'what' of education. Educational institutions were now expected to be accountable and justify their funding by training future employees (Penington, 1998).

Education has also been forced to meet the needs of the globalized business world. Since the success of any enterprise depends upon its employees being knowledgeable, higher education must become accountable and responsive to its students, as future employees, as well as accountable to the business community. "An essential part of the University's mandate is the development of human resources – the supply of high level manpower. The universities must produce graduates who are creative, who are capable of generating ideas" (Kamba, 2000, p. 194).

According to Wagner (1989), education should be practical in our ever-globalized community, and recognize the fact that giving students the necessary tools in order to communicate and compete ensures their education will be effective. This will not only enhance the individual but the community and state at large. As Kearney (2000) adds: "Education should foster *self reliance for living and working in a post-industrial society* where knowledge plays a crucial role" (pp.131-137). Alexander (2000) emphasizes the role of education as a national investment: "Universities, once portrayed as cultural training grounds for young minds, have become major agents for government investment in human development" (p. 415). It is predicted that, by the end of the twenty-first century, 75 percent living in the developed world and 50 percent living in the developing world will have some sort of higher education qualifications (Robertson, 2000). However, there is a "general allegation by governmental leaders that higher education is simply not responsive to societal and economic demands. The disconnect between higher education and the external community has only increased as demand for greater equality through access and economic productivity have received more emphasis" (Alexander, 2000, p. 414). Thus, education must assume accountability to society as well as to the individual.

4.4.1 Accountability in higher education

Accountability in higher education has become essential for several reasons. The first is a change in employee qualification requirements. Employment and success in one's

profession depends on higher education since, in many countries, employers have come to expect their employees to be university graduates. This shift occurred in the 1980s and, as a result, the overall number of students in higher education increased; not in the arts and pure sciences, but in academic fields that are more saleable and profitable such as business administration (Toohey, 1999). For instance, in the United States, between 1980 and 1992 enrollment increased approximately twenty percent, from 12.1 million to 14.6 million students. The number of degrees conferred in business and management rose by nineteen percent between 1980-1981 and 1985-1986. Engineering and engineering technologies rose twenty-eight percent between 1980-1981 and 1985-1986 (Archived Information). Higher education became a status symbol concentrating on practical training to give graduates immediate and effective skills for employment in their workplace and furnish an economic advantage (Toohey, 1999). This change means that higher education must anticipate the job market and its future needs and offer flexible choices to the students that can be provided in concurrence with the business community (Elbaz, 2000).

A second reason is the close relationship between the institutions of higher education, the state and modernization. The implementation of higher education for the service of the state grants a means of providing knowledge essential for citizenship and administrative responsibilities (Neave, 2000). Having established English as a priority for employment in Israel, and applying Neave's principles, higher education should be responsible in supplying its students with the qualifications necessary for both citizenship and employment.

Other reasons for accountability in higher education include the transformation from elite to mass higher education systems, the internalization of the workforce, the impact of new teaching technologies, the flourishing vocational and educational training sector, and the increasing costs of higher education and decreasing public investment in universities (Hamilton, 2000). Thus, the implementation of accountability in institutions of higher education is directly related to the responsibility of these institutions to their students' future professional needs. As Nakamura (2000) writes, "If universities are unable to meet the demands of industry for manpower training and retraining in the labor market ... higher education will be unable to meet its social responsibility" (p. 86).

However, while these institutions serve as providers to the specific demands of students' future business needs and are accountable to fulfil these needs, they should not lose sight of academic needs. As Pearson (1985) states: "Part of higher education provision should and can be determined by manpower needs criteria. . . . Such a policy need not, however, exclude or override all other objectives for higher education, be they social demand, academic excellence or education opportunity" (p.193). Thus institutions should be responsible to provide for both academic and professional needs, and one should not be at the exclusion of the other.

4.5 Accountability and Responsibility

Accountability is dependent upon who is responsible for the accounting. The success of accountability requires that institutions of higher education must be aware of their responsibility. "Being accountable and being responsible are verisimilar if not synonymous" (Aldridge, 1996, p. 1). Institutions of higher education are responsible to students for the quality and relevancy of the students' education and the use of their tuition fees, which implies moral obligation (Winch, 1996). The institutions are also responsible to the business community for the quality of their courses and how they spend their tax money.

Other criteria for responsibility are that information from the institutions must be provided to the stakeholders. This information must report levels of accomplishment and be provided through reliable channels. This opens a direct link between the institutions and the public they serve (Aldridge, 1996).

The link between accountability and responsibility is also a means of measuring performance improvement (Goddard, 1989). If the performance is not positive and indicates a need for change, there may be academic resistance (Ohmann, 2000). This information regarding performance improvement, even when negative, must be made available to all stakeholders so as to instigate change (Popham, 1973). To date, Israeli institutions of higher education do not feel responsible for providing any information concerning business English course design to any of the other stakeholders.

4.6 Accountability and Responsiveness

Accountability not only relates to responsibility but also to responsiveness, the "willingness of an institution – or indeed, an individual – to respond on its or their

own initiative" (Scott, 1989, p. 17). Responsiveness is directed towards the involvement and interaction between the decision makers and those whom the decisions affect. Responsiveness must take into account the requirements of stakeholders in decision-making (Halstead, 1994).

In business English courses responsiveness implies that courses should be accountable to the academic institutions, the students and the business community. A balance should be struck between accountability, responsibility and responsiveness and the stakeholders involved, and they should be longstanding, or even permanent, preoccupations within business English courses in Israeli institutions of higher education.

4.7 Accountability and the Stakeholders

Accountability in higher education requires participation of the various stakeholders. The institution is no longer solely accountable to itself but, as Neave (2000) states, [The institution] "is engaged upon a policy of extending the range of 'partners' with which (it) ought to deal and to which it is answerable" (p. 18). This widening of the stakeholders means that there must be a willingness to negotiate with all of them and to fulfil their various needs. A stakeholder approach tries to satisfy all, or at least most, of the needs of the various stakeholders and is an essential means of achieving successful, relevant, quality courses and adapting to the needs and demands of all those involved within the academic community. It is crucial that all stakeholders are included and participate in accountability in order to include knowledge and the skills needed both for current and future needs (Ramaswamy, 1992, quoted in Heinfeldt and Wolf, 1998). This stakeholder approach has been successfully adopted in many Fortune 100 companies (Heinfeldt and Wolf, 1998).

White (1998) claims that in educational accountability there are two sets of stakeholders – the customer and the supplier. However, in business English courses there are three stakeholders: the educator, those that employ the educator, and those for whom the course is designed - or the institutions of higher education, the students and the business community. The supplier is the institution of higher education and the customers are the students and the business community.

Stakeholders must be able to trust, and accountability should secure the continued renewal of that trust without the concept of legality. This broadens the idea of accountability to a feeling of faith and confidence in those with whom you have entrusted your objective (Becher and Eraut, 1977). Higher education must determine accountability to itself and other stakeholders through fulfilment of the following intentions, as suggested by Neave (2000, p. 4), Bligh *et al* (1999, p. 37) and Nakamura (2000, p. 81).

- Accountability of higher education to itself depends upon whether the institution's objectives are being fulfilled, whether these objectives are suitable to the course of study, whether effective action is taken to achieve these objectives and how objectives are being measured.
- Accountability of higher education to its students depends upon how the institutions perceive the student community, whether the institutions answer the students' future employment needs, whether students participate in determining course study and whether the knowledge transmitted and generated by the institutions serve the student body.
- Accountability of higher education to the business community depends upon priorities imposed by the business community on higher education and how they affect business English, elements of collaboration between the business community and the institutions, and business community's expectations from higher education.

An examination of the four parameters will attempt to answer some key aspects of the accountability of higher education concerning business English courses. These are:

- Accountability: how can institutions answer stakeholders' needs?
- Needs Analysis: what are the needs of the stakeholders?
- Evaluation: have the institutions fulfilled these needs?
- Improvement: how can the institutions improve courses?

The 1996 UNESCO debate entitled *The Changing Nature of Work* (Kearney, 2000, pp. 131-137) gave an example of student stakeholder participation when students offered recommendations concerning future needs in the professional world. These

included greater student participation, more interactive teaching and student consultation, teaching of social and communication skills, collaboration between higher education and the business community, and a closer interface between study and work environments.

These student recommendations demonstrate concern about skills for future employment and higher education's obligation to provide future professional skills which signifies a sense of responsibility (Goddard, 1989). For higher education to be responsible and accountable the following accommodations should be made: resource oriented education, individual centred and open learning systems, user focused curricula, selected provisions, performance-based contexts, networked interactive learning environments and the encouragement of global perspectives and anticipatory educational management (Kearney, 2000). This study also advocates consultations with the other two stakeholders and evaluation of business English courses with recommendation for future improvement. These recommendations require responsibility on the part of higher education to accountability and responsiveness to the stakeholders.

Popham (1973) classifies three types of accountability to stakeholders. Personal accountability is represented by the instructor who is accountable for the course and its outcome. Professional accountability is represented by professionals, colleagues, and the heads of the departments, the institutions or the business communities who ask for an accounting of the course. Public accountability occurs when the public asks for accounting. Depending upon who is responsible and who receives the accounting, outcomes may be different.

Therefore, it is important to ensure a system of checks and balances to mitigate the authority of the stakeholders. When the power to determine course design of business English courses was solely in the realm of institutions of higher education, courses rarely took into consideration the needs of the students and the business community. However, students and the business community can only serve to broaden the scope of the courses. While higher education may be ultimately responsible for course content, they should be responsive to the contributions of the other two stakeholders, the students and the business community.

4.7.1 Stakeholder power

The dilemma concerning who holds the knowledge, who imparts the knowledge, who receives the knowledge, who benefits from the knowledge, to what use this knowledge will be put and, most of all, which knowledge are we dealing with, is important in discussing the role of the stakeholders. The stakeholder in power primarily determines course design and subject matter. When there is more than one stakeholder, then there is the question of who decides policy. Accountability "implies a definition of the relationship between actors. To talk about accountability is to define who can call for an account, and who owes a duty of explanation" (Day and Klein, 1987 p. 26).

State support of higher education may justify accounting to the paymaster (Davis, 1998). In Israel the Council of Higher Education represents the State. The institutions of higher education, students and the business community, all voters and taxpayers, are thus part of the State. However, although many higher educational institutions are State supported, the Council of Higher Education, a State run governing body, has relinquished the power to determine the standards for any English course in higher education, and therefore has also relinquished its right to accountability.

The question then arises as to whether higher education, as the pedagogical authority with its academic credentials, can or should impose its standards on the other two stakeholders. Higher education has assumed a great deal of responsibility and influence over academic decisions, including business English courses. Subsequently, does higher education render accountability to the other two stakeholders? Furthermore, does higher education demonstrate its contractual responsibility by satisfying stakeholders' expectations in teaching what students should be learning for present and future needs? If institutions are responsive they must involve all stakeholders when making decisions, they will then be more accountable to students and the business community (Goddard, 1989).

"Accountability and authority are responsibility and power converted into institutional entities. Internalized feelings of responsibility linked to the use of undefined power take on institutional force when authority is added" (Kogan, 1986, p. 30). Authority

can be viewed in this perspective as the legitimate right to affect the behaviour of others. Who is doing the accounting and who receives the accounting will affect the outcome, which is part of the concept of power. Accountability may be to a head of department, to colleagues, an academic board or governing body, students or the business community. Accounting may occur to several bodies at once; it may be a formal accounting, a legal one or a moral responsibility; it may be expected or demanded (Popham, 1973).

Course design is usually in the hands of the institution of higher education. However, teachers in these institutions rarely have the business knowledge needed to know what to include concerning future professional skills. In addition to institutions of higher education, which offer the courses, power and authority may be in the hands of those that are paying for the course or those ultimately benefiting from the course. However, students, despite the tuition fees they generate, may have minimal authority due to their lack of professional and pedagogical knowledge regarding business English. Moreover, students' relationships with teaching staff are relationships where the teachers have the power of knowledge and grade assessment.

The business community, the ultimate end user of business English courses, does not have access to those designing these courses. This may be due to the fact that they do not have the pedagogical knowledge necessary to help in course design and teachers do not feel the need to consult or involve the business community. In addition, the business community chooses not to actively (or passively) involve itself.

However, there has been a recent shift in the power hierarchy, which is a consequence of student empowerment by the faculty. This is reflected in greater emphasis on the needs and demands of the students, student-centred courses, more student responsibility for their own learning and more flexible assessment of students. As a consequence, student/staff relationships are likely to change. As Bligh (1982) writes, "A significant proportion of students are indeed adults, with experience to bring to their learning not possessed by their teachers; students *morally* have rights, duties and responsibilities ..." (p. 127). He adds that the paternalistic, authoritarian norms of higher education in the past have become inappropriate. Bligh's solution is to involve the students in course design, which will better motivate them.

Nevertheless, balancing the hierarchy of power in favour of any one of the stakeholders, and excluding the institutions of higher education, might lead to the teaching of only utilitarian subjects to promote economic development and career effectiveness. Davis (1998) states, "Education *should* be a great deal more than the servant of competitive economies" (p. 28). Knowledge should be inter-connected, relying on various areas of knowledge that the students should have acquired; it should not emphasize only one area. Future business people must have reading ability, social skills and general knowledge for the sake of business interaction. Thus, a total shift in the power structure, one that will entirely favour the demands of one stakeholder over another, may lead to inferior courses and inferior business people.

One suggestion in discussing the stakeholder power struggle is decision making through a process of discussion and consensus, called collegiality. Participation of all stakeholders means their continuous and ongoing involvement, their expert pedagogical and content knowledge, and a willingness to work together on an equal footing. Such consensus would equalize the power of the stakeholders in course design. However, involving everyone in decision-making may conflict with economic accountability. The involvement of more stakeholders on an equal and constant basis may mean more funding for courses and salaries for the added personnel involved in course design. So, although collegiality may contribute to a course which is pedagogically and professionally more accountable, the involvement of numerous parties may make it unfeasible, logistically and economically (Bush, 1995).

4.7.2 Student stakeholders as consumers

The students of the twenty-first century accept greater responsibility for decisions concerning higher education and they will demand that they extract the maximum benefits from the experience. Students, as consumers, have greater purchasing power and therefore have a greater impact on the structure of learning. This will place a responsibility on the institutions to provide information that is optimal for their needs (Robertson, 2000).

However, there is a problem with treating students exclusively as consumers. The consumer/student of higher education is not buying a commodity where an immediate

and knowledgeable judgment of quality can be made and will not have the professional knowledge to assess his/her course needs. In addition, the paying student, often not the end user of the service, may not be able to ascertain the relevance of the course for future needs. Finally, in the economic marketplace, when a customer is dissatisfied s/he may complain, negotiate the price, refuse the product, or exit. When a student is dissatisfied, the only option available is exiting, leaving the course or the institution and perhaps forfeiting an educational opportunity. The consumer/student has far less autonomy than the other commodity consumers. Thus, students are cast in an inferior role because they do not have the knowledge, or the negotiating leverage, that consumers of other goods possess. In market consumerism, the consumer clearly holds an advantage while education consumerism may be detrimental to the ultimate consumer, the student (Winch, 1996).

In the past two to three years in Israel the consumerist attitude of the student has become somewhat detrimental to the learning community. Students feel that since they 'pay' tuition fees, they are entitled to the product without having to study. Some have even voiced (as witnessed by several colleagues) the opinion that students pay their teachers' salaries, therefore the teachers are obliged to supply the 'goods'. This demand includes passing a student even with failing grades. Many educators in Israel feel that student consumerism may have provided the student with the status, without supplying the knowledge of how to be a good consumer.

This view is supported by Delucchi and Smith (1997a) who maintain that "educating students is more important than coddling them and treating them as customers" (p. 322). The term 'student' implies educational purposes and intellectual pursuits, whereas 'customers', as Barrett (1996) writes, "involves no implication of engaging in the life of the mind" (p. 70). Student consumerism and the postmodern era are "not easily amenable to 'ethical teaching' or the use of 'responsible authority' " (p. 71). When students assume the role of the consumer, higher education may lose control of knowledge to non-academic agencies or institutions (Shepperd, 1997).

Delucchi and Smith (1997b) also maintain that viewing students as consumers inverts and reverses the traditional hierarchy of authority. Higher education has become a business in which education is a marketplace where educators maintain satisfied customers. Teachers are no longer the expert, facilitator and ego ideal since students,

as the ultimate consumers, eventually determine what course content should be. Although meeting students' needs is appealing, it is "pedagogically suspect . . . Equating good teaching with a widespread feeling among students that you have done what they wanted ignores the dynamics of teaching and prevents significant learning" (Brookfield 1995, quoted in Delucchi and Smith, 1997b, p. 336).

Thus, while Delucchi and Smith (1997b) agree that there is a partnership between the faculty and the students, they maintain that the authority of the expert teaching community should be maintained over the subject matter. They write, "Are students a part of this enterprise? Absolutely, but not as customers" (p.337). They also reassert "the belief in professors as experts and authorities on the subjects they teach is unlikely to stem the tide of pedagogical challenges that accompanies student consumerism" (p. 325). So, although they accept the inevitability of student consumerism, they reject its positive effects on education. As Zemsky (1993 quoted in Delucchi and Smith, 1997a) states: "Students today want technical knowledge, useful knowledge, labor-related knowledge in convenient, digestible packages" (p. 325).

Refuting Delucchi and Smith, Eisenberg (1997) feels students passively receive information and educators shape every aspect of their learning experience. However, today, with students as consumers, there is a shift which encourages student action and participation in what they are learning, creating a more equitable power structure where both students and teachers are participants in the learning process. "The academy supposedly teaches people to engage in life-long learning. When this happens instructors should be pleased that their former students are now producing new, useful, or simply different knowledge" (Shepperd, 1997, p. 334). This might prevent students from spending hours studying theories most of which are useless, and, once 'out on the street', will have no practical use.

To meet the needs of students as consumers, Shepperd (1997) offers two suggestions. The first is to adopt the model of professional/client where the student/client can approach the institution/professional and 'buy' the expertise. This may lead, however, to a blurred distinction between the student as a learner and the student as a client. The second suggestion is to change the power hierarchy so that students are partners

and no longer juniors to faculty. The implementation of both these suggestion views the student as a 'doer'. Shepperd (1997) concludes:

"Postmodernism is here to stay and it is forcing college faculty members to address some issues that we, in most likelihood, would prefer to ignore. However, if, as the authors [Delucchi and Smith] state, the world is indeed moving into another historical era, we have no choice: we must address these issues or become irrelevant." (p. 335)

Addressing the issue of students as consumers may mean educating students not only in their specific areas of interest, but also in the art of consumerism. However, this may not be feasible. This study will illustrate that students not only lack the knowledge to make pedagogical decisions, but they also lack professional business knowledge. However, students are able to contribute creative ideas and opinions as this study illustrates. Academia can turn to the students as sources of information, as interested stakeholders who can contribute to business course design. This does not necessarily give full authority to the students, nor does it give them the final say in course design, but it views students as constructive and dynamic consultants.

4.8 Monitoring of Accountability

Having discussed the issues of accountability between the stakeholders, possible monitoring systems to assure its implementation will be discussed. Quality assurance is one such method of assuring educational accountability that involves self-evaluation on the part of the institution, together with external quality control. Quality assurance should be aided by external agencies that act as mediators by bringing the representatives of institutions together with representatives of the two other stakeholders for feedback and opinion gathering. According to Frazer (1994) quality assurance of educational institutions has three components: inputs, process and outputs. Inputs with students, staff and administration take into account physical facilities, and the intentions and planning of the courses. Processes include the monitoring of courses including student feedback and self-evaluation. Outputs include examination results, graduate employment placement, graduates' course assessment after several years of employment and external examiners reports. Frazer (1994) concludes that these factors will lead to better quality assurance and, consequently, better accountability.

The Open University in England provides an example of quality assurance through resource-based courses. These courses provide course teams of academics and professionals who bring specific expertise and quality learning materials. Both academics and professional experts give detailed feedback on the institution's course and the professional's practical contribution. This feedback allows for evaluation by both the academic staff and the outside professional staff (Laurillard, 2000).

One way to ensure quality assurance is through entitlement. Entitlement provides a party with the authority to decide whether institutions of higher education are fulfilling their educational obligations. The entitled party may be an internal agent, such as students, the head of the institution or an external agent hired by the institution. An external agent should be capable and knowledgeable enough to make decisions concerning both academic and business content along with relevancy and stakeholders needs and demands. The decision as to whether this external agent is entitled to offer guidance, give instructions and finally control the course must be taken by the stakeholders involved and should be made before the external agent is engaged (Wagner, 1989).

The entitled parties should be knowledgeable in the subject under account. In each case, this party may have the final word as to whether the institution is fulfilling its obligation and responsibility. The question of who these entitled parties are may be a source of conflict regarding business English courses in institutions of higher education since the implementation of entitlement may result in the firing of teachers, or the revamping of the English programme.

Accrediting organizations (in Israel – The Council of Higher Education) should be the ones to monitor the institutions and to specify what must be taught in business English courses. However, these accrediting organizations usually rely solely on departmental self-report to ensure that standards are met (LeBlanc, 1996). In Israel the Council of Higher Education does not impose any requirements concerning English language courses. Monitoring and assurance of accountability is left to the individual institutions and/or heads of department without any involvement of an external auditor or accrediting body. Quality assurance then is solely dependent upon the moral responsibility of the institutions, which may be problematic. The lack of an

external agent entitled to review course programmes and provide criticism suggests that English departments design courses without guidance or knowledge of the overall needs of their stakeholders.

Another strategy for monitoring accountability is performance contracting. These are contracts, or agreements, which contractually oblige the institutions of higher education to fulfil their academic obligation towards the students and the business community. The contract is mutually binding and redress is possible when obligations are not met (Wagner, 1989). In an educational system, the contract is not deemed fulfilled if a great amount of effort has been made by the institutions to teach but student performance is poor, since the institutions have not lived up to their responsibility to the students and to their contract (Wagner, 1989). "During the last decade, performance-based policies have clearly emerged as the model of choice for resource allocation to public colleges and universities" (Alexander, 2000, p. 419).

If performance contracting were applied to business English courses, the contract between the institutions and the stakeholders would be to produce graduates who have learned both academic and professional English skills. If the institution did not satisfy this goal the contract would be breached. Performance contracting is not fulfilled to the students and the business community when business English students' grade point averages are high but their business English skills are very poor when tested in the place of business. Even when the academic performance indicators are high, the performance indicators for professional needs must be commensurate for the contract conditions to be met (Sizer, 1988). A way to measure whether or not the institutions have honoured this contract is to measure performance contracting through student and business community evaluations.

Student evaluation is another method of monitoring accountability and has been practiced in educational institutions for many years. For instance, the Open University, Britain's largest institution of higher education, has been conducting student questionnaire surveys for student opinion on course material over the past twenty years. If the right kinds of questions are asked at the right time, useful judgments can be made. However, useful and reliable surveying and questionnaires are difficult to conduct and the interests of all stakeholders are never identical.

Consumer assessment should be complementary to professional opinion since the former is more concerned with impact and the latter with process (Pollitt, 1987).

4.9 Theoretical Accountability Models

Models of accountability involve different stakeholders and stress different chains of action to solve problems of accountability. The power structure is shifted according to the structure of the model. Every shift in power will give different accountability results.

The managerial accountability model involves compelling the institutions to be answerable to the students/consumers. This model emphasizes that, since the student has paid for the courses, s/he can demand value for money and insist on accountability from the institutions. A neutral expert may carry out the accountability (Day and Klein, 1987).

Another model involves the integration of teaching and outside professional staff as implemented by the Open University in England. Academic work is closely linked with real-world professional experience and real business training is added to the traditional courses. The teaching staff are provided with in-service training programmes in order to meet the ever-growing demands of the courses and the complex needs of the students. The programme plan is written both by the teachers and the business community and includes ways of meeting the needs of students. Quality assurance is done through self-assessment, peer feedback and evidence of the teacher's instructional effectiveness. Some of the benefits are that teacher involvement means more teacher investment in teaching and more commitment to the students and to the programme. Also, since students are more involved with the actual improvement of the class, they are more satisfied and willing to learn and they see a direct link with their learning and their profession. Furthermore, the institution, by providing teachers with opportunities for exploring the needs of the students, satisfying them, and complying with the demands of the business community, avoids student dissatisfaction, sponsor complaints and teacher frustration caused by the lack of knowledge pertaining to the students' needs (England, 1998).

A third flexible model involves methods that are critical to achieving quality and productivity where the producer is accountable to the customer, the process is

productive, and the product is judged according to its quality (Goddard 1989). In each of the three examples presented below, the customer and producer are two different stakeholders involved in a process and a product (Shupe, 1999).

In the first example, the customer is the teacher, the producer is the student, the process is the completion of the course and the product is the work produced by the students. The teacher/customer is asking students: Why are you in this course? Are you using precise language? Do you do well on tests? Do you understand the course?

In the second example the customer is the student, the producer is the academic institution, the process is the delivery of the course and the product is the academic degree. The student/customer is asking the institutions: What is the aim of this course? What will this degree prepare me for? Are graduates placed in appropriate jobs? Are employers involved in the design of the programme? Are they involved in its evaluation? How many graduates have been placed in appropriate jobs? Does the institution respond to feedback from the profession? Have students been prepared for their profession?

In the third example, the customer is the business community, the producer is the academic institution, the process is the preparation of the student for future employment and the product is the student. The business community/customer is asking the students: Does the institution produce knowledgeable students? What knowledge do students actually gain? What evidence can the institution provide to show that it is successfully accomplishing its aim? How capable is the institution of continuously improving? Have the institutions acknowledged future employment needs?

Until recently, higher education only considered the first example, and was only accountable to those within the institution. In the second and third examples, the customers are the students and the business community respectively. In each case, the customer is demanding studies that will facilitate future employment. As education has become directly linked to professional capability, it is imperative that the second and third examples become part of the institution's accountability and responsibility.

Theoretical models can be made viable through the involvement and contribution of all the stakeholders. The more active the participants the more feasible the process of accountability and the more suitable and relevant to the present and future needs and demands of those involved in business English courses.

4.10 Practical Models of Accountability

After presenting the above theoretical models, the following two practical models of accountability should be considered for incorporation into educational accountability.

4.10.1 Cut and paste curriculum

The 'cut and paste' curriculum is a non-linear curriculum in which students design, combine, assemble and reassemble components of learning from various disciplines and from both local and global sources for their own purposes. They can cut various modules of learning from various sources and paste them into their own portfolios, using the Internet as a learning source. The demand for courses will arise from students' professional as well as academic needs. Courses and institutions will become accountable to commercial interests beyond the academic community. Knowledge will become application centred and a commodity to be traded by the providers/institutions. Therefore, courses will be developed with the promotion of student choice, flexibility and the students' future professional interest in mind (Robertson, 2000).

4.10.2 A model of accountability in an Israeli business corporation

Many Israeli business organizations are realizing that they must be accountable to their customers in order to succeed and profit. One such organization has designed, and is implementing, a model of accountability for its customers. This involves drastic organizational changes, along with a willingness of the employees to focus on customer satisfaction. The philosophy behind this change in conception is that a company must first take into account the needs of its customers.

The customer-focused model is based on the following precepts:

- The customer is at the heart of the organization.
- Involvement of all stakeholders.
- Effective evaluation of customer satisfaction.

- Ongoing communication between the stakeholders.
- Contractual agreement between the customer and the company.
- Organizational seminars focusing on providing customer satisfaction.

These precepts should not be confined to the Israeli business community and can be implemented in Israeli institutions of higher education. Courses should be designed according to the needs of the stakeholders/customers involved, rather than designing courses regardless of these needs, and then forcing students to attend. It would therefore be necessary to question students and the business community regarding these needs and course evaluation should be administered to assess the success of the course. Ongoing communication between the stakeholders would enable courses to be modified according to the changing needs of the student and business community. Workshops for teachers should be made available throughout the year to help guarantee that the teacher is constantly in touch with new ideas and methodologies. These workshops would also provide support for teachers who have questions or problems. If these steps are implemented, the higher education institutions will be more accountable to the other stakeholders.

4.11 Accountability in Institutions of Higher Education in Israel

Higher education is one of Israel's priorities. One indication is the amount of money expended on higher education in the national budget. For example, in the year 2000, the overall budget was 227,426,080,000 NIS (New Israeli Shekel) [approximately \$64,978,880,000]., of this 5,249,558,000 NIS (New Israeli Shekel) [approximately \$1,499,873,714]. went to higher education. In the years 1998-1999 there were a total of 8,259 students studying for business and management science compared to 3,825 students studying business and management science in 1990. These figures illustrate a marked increase in the numbers of students over the past years. The great influx of students into this field infers that many are seeking professions in the business area and are requiring the skills needed to successfully obtain jobs after their studies. (The figures were supplied by the Council of Higher Education.)

Since institutions of higher education are not held accountable by the Council for Higher Education regarding English language teaching, the institutions must turn to the stakeholders who are directly involved in the outcome of these courses. As the

population of students grows, and as the opportunities to choose between different institutions is growing, students will tend to choose the place that offers them the best skills to integrate successfully into their future jobs. Thus, accountability must be part of an institution's agenda.

Some institutions of higher education in Israel are amenable to the idea of accountability, whether it is to the students or to the business community. They realize that their courses must be more relevant in order to answer the demanding needs of the business world. Alternative educational programmes, incorporating formal and informal learning, as described by Vernon *et al* (1993), have been adopted in Israel. These alternative programmes allow students to concurrently work and study in intensive B.A. programmes with the students taking an active role in programme design in order to meet their specific needs. These programmes, often in partnership with business corporations, are designed according to the corporation's particular demands and needs. The administrators of these programmes also recognize that traditional methods of teaching and learning are less than effective and take a more learner-centred approach, using materials that are taken from the business experiences of the students. Examples of such programmes are the B.A. Executive Program at Netanya Academic College, Rupin College and Tel Aviv University.

By creating a productive partnership with business, higher education is able to have an ongoing dialogue with one of its major stakeholders. The business community expects students to perform well in their jobs and to play a role in the learning model. The students, also, become an important partner in the programme. These students not only have to meet the academic goals set for them, but they must also contribute and succeed in a continually changing programme that endeavours to meet their professional English needs. Academic institutions must meet learning needs as well as understand the business infrastructures that support these educational models. Communities and society at large hope that these new models will share the responsibility of producing effective employees. There is a great deal of trial and error involved in course development, however, positive outcomes will guarantee a more motivated student body and a more effective employee.

4.12 Conclusion

Accountability should deal with the question of responsibility for actions and responsiveness to the stakeholders, a more equal distribution of control and power and the need for quality assurance. There is responsibility for the use of resources, the need to produce results and the obligation to supply information concerning course design, implementation and results. Accountability also means that there is a requirement to act and a requirement to account for what was done. A report or evaluation should also be presented to evaluate the institution's actions (Laukkanen, 1998). Accountability, therefore, must encompass most, if not all, of these aspects in order to be efficient and successful and accomplish the goal of providing business English courses that are effective and relevant to the various stakeholders involved.

The following chapters will investigate ways in which institutions can become more accountable in the provision of business English courses. By adopting the methods suggested in the next chapters, these courses should become more accountable by answering the academic and professional language needs of institutions of higher education, students and the business community.

CHAPTER FIVE

ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES

“The goal of language curriculum development processes is to produce relevant, effective and efficient language teaching programs.” (Richards, 1984, p. 3)

5.1 Introduction

The accountability of institutions of higher education to the stakeholders involved in business English courses can be realized through courses that answer the present and future needs of these stakeholders. English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses, identifiable with applied linguistics, draws on subject specific material from the discipline being taught and meets the particular needs of learners in their specific field. The main concern of ESP is in teaching to the specific needs of the students' and preparing the learners for present academic or future professional specific needs.

This chapter reviews the literature pertaining to the teaching of ESP that has developed apart from English Language Teaching (ELT) (Dudley-Evans and St. John, 1998). The differences between English for General Purposes (EGP) courses and ESP courses, illustrating why ESP is best suited to answering learner's needs, will be discussed. Categories and models pertaining to ESP, specifically for English for Academic Purposes (EAP), will be explored, and ESP will be directly related to business English.

5.2 English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP) and English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP)

English Language Teaching (ELT) courses in academic institutions of higher education may be either English for General Academic Purpose (EGAP) courses or English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP) courses. EGAP courses, usually consisting of students from various academic faculties, teach common core language and discourse features common to all academic disciplines. ESAP courses, on the other hand, teach skills in the specific genre and are usually offered at an advanced level. General reading courses in academic institutions frequently contain variations between the different disciplines with only specific differences geared to the subject

specific discipline (Dudley-Evans and St. John, 1998). Johns and Dudley-Evans (1980) suggest that lower level learners will need an EGAP course, since they may not have the necessary skills to tackle the discipline specific language and tasks of an ESAP course. ESAP courses would be taught to advanced students after EGAP courses, with more specific subject language. In Israeli institutions of higher education beginner and intermediate courses are EGAP courses and advanced courses are ESAP courses.

However, EGAP courses for advanced students are advocated by Widdowson (1983), who contends that ESAP courses train in the development of specific skills and schemata, while EGAP courses are more concerned with education and developing a competence to cope with a wider range of requirements. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) have also argued against subject specific courses saying that it is more important to be competent in the skills rather than the language required in the target situation. Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) disagree however, stating: “. . . most ESAP courses are as much concerned with education and developing learners’ capacity as EGAP courses. The difference is that ESAP courses focus on the actual tasks that students have to carry out while EGAP courses select more general contexts” (p. 42). They further state: “if we are to meet students’ needs we must deal with subject specific matters” (p. 51). Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) also feel that ESAP can be cost and learning effective, since it is easier to track students in ESAP courses from the beginning, while teaching them basic skills through course specific material.

ESP courses are taught in most Israeli institutions of higher education. In fact, in this research, five out of six institutions offer ESP courses to their advanced students. These courses comprise subject specific vocabulary and texts and sometimes include tasks oriented to the subject being studied. The students read articles and increase their vocabulary directly related to their current studies and their future professional lives. This research will focus on ESAP courses, as a means of providing business students with relevant English courses directly related to their subject specific discipline. References to ESP will signify academic courses, unless otherwise specified.

5.3 The Emergence of English for Specific Purposes (ESP)

ESP has become an essential activity within EFL teaching (Howatt, 1984) and has emerged as part of a development within EFL. Since language is used for specific purposes, language programmes try to cater to the particular needs of the students. As a consequence, “English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has established itself as a viable and vigorous movement” (Johns and Dudley-Evans, 1991 p. 298).

EFL teaching was always concerned with ESP, although the term and concept of ESP was developed in the twentieth century. Traditionally, EFL methodologies were constantly developing to meet the ongoing needs of the students. As early as 1498, in *A Little Treatise for to Learn English and French* by Winkyn de Worde, learners were taught how to “merchandise in France and elsewhere in other lands” (Pickett, 1986 p. 89). Howatt (1984) cites sixteenth century books for teaching Huguenots in England business English and, also in the sixteenth century, there were popular courses for travellers/tourists going abroad and courses for science students that were subject specific (Strevens, 1977a).

In the twentieth century many specific purpose courses were documented. For example, in 1906, a course in spoken English and grammar was offered to foreign students at the University of London (Pickett, 1989). The influx of refugees from Central Europe to England and the United States in the 1930s, all needing practical spoken English, motivated the development of books and courses focusing on vocabulary that included basic words for daily life. These textbooks, which provided the tools for non-native speakers (in this case refugees) to function in an English-speaking environment, fulfilled a specific purpose (Pickett, 1989).

During World War II, in order to monitor enemy movements, Special Purpose Language Teaching (SP-LT) courses in Japanese, German and English were given to the armed forces (Strevens, 1977a). After World War II, technological developments enabled English teaching by gramophone, radio and eventually in the language laboratory. Since English is the international medium of technology, the unprecedented expansion of science and technology since World War II has created the need for English language teaching (Munby, 1978).

According to Howatt (1984), the term ESP was coined in 1969, in the conference report entitled *Language for Special Purposes*. Coffey (1984) cites 1967 as an arbitrary starting point for ESP. Thereafter, in the 1970s, ESP courses developed and increased in the oil rich countries due to the oil crisis and the massive flow of funds and expertise into these oil rich countries which increased their need for English (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987). In the 1980s, several international companies and foreign governments demanded English language skills. As a result, 'The Council of Europe' agreed upon six basic functions for threshold level competency. They are: imparting and seeking factual information, expressing and finding out intellectual attitudes, expressing and finding out emotional attitudes, expressing and finding out moral attitudes, getting things done and socializing (Pickett, 1989). The functional-notional syllabus (Wilkins, 1976) was concerned with and met the communicative needs of the students (Findley and Nathan, 1980) and satisfied these six basic functions as a successful and accountable model. According to Wilkins (1976) the notional syllabus takes the desired communicative ability (or what the learner wants to communicate) as the starting point of language teaching. General language functions (such as imparting and seeking information, getting things done and socializing) and specific language functions (such as identifying, reporting, correcting and asking for factual information) are taught, along with general notions (such as existential, spatial, temporal) and a list of specific notions (such as names, addresses, likes and dislikes) (Van Ek, 1975). The functional-notional syllabus was therefore used as an English syllabus for these international companies and foreign governments.

In recent years, since English has become the *lingua franca* of the business world, the demand for ESP courses for business has increased. The growth in international trade, multi-national companies and globalization has resulted in the business orientation of many of the ESP courses. These courses may include all skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening), or only specific skills to meet learner needs for a particular business task. The constantly growing demand for business English courses is documented by the proliferation of the amount of materials now published in business English (Dudley-Evans and St. John, 1998).

English foreign language learning has frequently been dictated and characterized by learner needs and demands as documented above, although the term ESP was only coined recently. As Hutchinson and Waters (1980a) emphasize, ESP is a means to an end and not an end in itself. In other words, students do not study English simply for the sake of learning a new language. Students participate in ESP courses in order to satisfy specific English language needs.

5.4 Defining ESP

ESP course development should consider various factors, as reflected in the literature. Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) believe ESP theory is based on learner specific needs and the texts they use, as well as teaching methodology. Coffey (1984), referring to learner specific needs, says the purpose of ESP to be “of clear and particular usefulness to the student, his actual needs having been the subject of careful analysis” (p. 3). ESP teaching, according to Allen and Widdowson (1974), should develop two abilities, the communicative and the lexical, or the ability to recognize how sentences are used in communication acts and the ability to recognize and manipulate grammatical devices in order to create coherent prose. Allen and Widdowson’s definition of ESP courses (1974) includes grammar, which many later definitions exclude.

Another factor of ESP courses is the purpose, or target, needed for the particular language proficiency, making ESP courses profession specific (Wilkins, 1976; Chambers and McDonough, 1981). Thus, language proficiency is no longer a means in itself but a tool leading to a clearly defined goal (Mackay and Mountford, 1978; Widdowson, 1983). ESP is also student-task oriented since it shifts the emphasis from language to the role of the student (Chambers, 1980).

Still another important factor in ESP courses is the authenticity of course materials. Authentic texts may imply unsimplified professional texts not adapted for English language teaching. Authentic texts are used in these courses to reflect real world use. As Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) write, “Authenticity of purpose is as important as genuineness of text” (p. 28).

The initials ESP originally represented English for Special Purposes. However, the ‘S’ in ESP now connotes ‘specific’. The reason, as Coffey (1984) explains, is that

“there is no special language, only a principle of selection from the language to meet the purposes defined” (p. 3). This principle of selection would consist of ‘special’ professional lexis which are strictly limited, as used for example, by lawyers or businesspeople (Mackay and Mountford, 1978).

Nevertheless, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) do not consider these ‘special’ languages as limited. “They are in no way analogous to restricted repertoires. What we have is the same language employed for similar and different uses employing similar and different usages” (p. 4). Their definition of ESP is as an *approach* rather than a *product*, thus ESP does not involve a particular category of language, teaching material or methodology. The distinction between ESP and General English courses:

“...is not the existence of a need as such but rather an awareness of the need. If learners, sponsors and teachers know why the learners need English, the awareness will have an influence on what will be acceptable as reasonable content in the language course, and, on the positive side, what potential can be exploited.” (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987, p. 6)

Hutchinson and Waters feel that the basis for ESP is the question: why does this learner need to learn a foreign language? The answer will establish the need for ESP that will define the specific reasons the student is learning English. Hutchinson and Waters (1980b) argue that ESP must be selective in order to serve the students' specific purposes "as efficiently as possible" (p. 57). Thus, when teaching courses for particular professions, these courses will not be restricted only to specific vocabulary, but will teach English with an emphasis on the specified profession since most people approach language learning with a special purpose, eventually using all language skills learned (Breen and Candlin, 1980). As Widdowson (1983) writes, “What distinguished them [ESP course designers] is the way in which purpose is defined and the manner of its implementation” (p. 5). Widdowson (1983) feels that ESP tries to provide learners with restricted competence so that they can cope with certain clearly defined tasks. According to Widdowson (1983) these tasks should meet the specific purpose for which the ESP course is designed. Widdowson's approach supports Robinson's (1991) contention that ESP is not about teaching English for specific purposes, but teaching English to specific people.

The following three definitions will explore factors for consideration in ESP courses. The first considers students' needs analysis, which should be goal directed for study or work, as the basis of ESP courses. **Strevens (1977a)** states that ESP occurs "whenever the content and aims of the teaching are determined by the requirement of the learner rather than by external factors such as general education and criteria" (p. 186). **Streven's definition (1988, quoted in St. John, 1996)** includes four absolute characteristics, two variable characteristics and four claims for ESP. The absolute characteristics are:

- ESP is designed to meet the specified needs of the learner.
- ESP is related in content to specific professions, disciplines or activities.
- ESP uses language appropriate in syntax, lexis, discourse, semantics, vocabulary, discourse analysis and so on to the specific language.
- ESP is in contrast to General English.

The variable characteristics are:

- ESP may be restricted as to the learning skills, such as writing or reading, to be learned.
- ESP does not have to be taught according to any exact methodology.

The claims for ESP are:

- ESP focuses on the learner's needs and thus wastes no time.
- ESP is relevant to the learner.
- ESP is successful in imparting learning.
- ESP is more cost-effective than general English.

In addition, **Strevens (1977b, quoted in Coffey, 1984)** calls for a process of restriction in ESP, to select language items and features relevant to the course designer's intentions and the students' needs. The restrictive process is defined by the purposes of the language. Suggestions for the three principles in choosing such purposes have been made by **Coffey (1984)**:

- Register analysis refers to formalities of style which tend to remain stable over fairly long stretches of time. It also categorizes language into distinct varieties which have characteristic features. However, register analysis is not used as a

principle of selection since there is no significant way the grammar of one language of a specific genre (i.e. science) differs from another (i.e. business).

- Discourse analysis deals with larger units than the sentence, as Widdowson (1973) writes, it “is the investigation into the way sentences are put to communicative use in the performing of social actions” (p. 52). Bhatia (1993) adds that “discourse meaning is not present in a piece of text ready to be consumed by the reader, but is negotiated by the interactive endeavour on the part of the participants” (p. 8). The importance of discourse analysis, according to Coffey (1984) is in the analysis of a text and its rhetorical features, such as description, definition, classification and so on together with how these functions are and sequenced in language.
- Needs analysis is the correlation between students’ needs (whether academic or vocational) with course design. (A more detailed analysis occurs in the section titled “Needs Analysis”.)

Coffey (1984) further states, "ESP is intended above all to be of clear and particular usefulness to the student, his actual needs having been the subject of careful analysis" (p. 3).

The second definition under consideration is that of Robinson (1991) based on defining criteria and characteristics true of ESP. Her defining criteria are:

- ESP is normally goal-directed.
- ESP courses are developed from a needs analysis that specifies what the learner has to do with English.
- Knowledge of English from previous general courses.

The characteristics are:

- ESP is generally constrained by a limited time period.
- ESP is taught to adults in homogeneous classes as far as work or specific studies are concerned.

Robinson (1991), in presenting these criteria, distinguishes ESP courses from general English language courses. Although some of the characteristics may be utilized in general English language courses, “what seems crucial, ultimately is that courses are designed with particular students in mind, whatever their work or study needs and their personal preferences” (p. 5). She also states that ESP is pluralistic, "because

many approaches to it are concurrently being followed around the world today" (p. 1); and protean, "as it is responsive to developments in all three realms of language, pedagogy and content studies" (p. 1). Therefore, an ESP course that is appropriate in one country may not be appropriate elsewhere and it may be impossible to devise a universal definition and course of ESP.

The third definition, as presented by Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998), includes absolute and variable characteristics. The absolute characteristics are:

- "ESP is designed to meet the specific needs of the learner.
- ESP uses the methodology and activities of the specific discipline or profession being taught.
- ESP is centered on the language, skills, discourse and genres appropriate to the subject specific activities.

The variable characteristics are:

- ESP may be related to or designed for specific disciplines.
- ESP may use a different methodology from General English.
- ESP is usually designed for adult learners, but may include pupils in secondary schools.
- ESP assumes basic knowledge of English and is therefore designed for intermediate or advanced English language students. However when necessary, ESP can be used with beginners." (pp. 4-5)

Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) believe that ESP is based on a common core of language skills shared by all academic disciplines. They believe that ESP is different to that of General English Purpose. They contend that in the ESP classroom, particularly in subject specific ESP classes (such as business marketing), the teacher is a language consultant enjoying equal status with the learners who are professionally adept in this subject.

Although each of the three definitions has validity, they also have their limitations. Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) are critical of Strevens' (1988, quoted in Johns and Dudley-Evans 1991) definition. They state that although the definition is comprehensive, Strevens' reference to content (the second absolute characteristic) may lead ESP teachers to believe that ESP is exclusively related to subject content. Furthermore, Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) are also critical of Robinson's (1991) definition, particularly her reference to homogeneous classes as a characteristic, which may lead ESP teachers to believe that ESP is exclusively related to homogeneous classes.

In addition to the above criticism of the first two definitions, a criticism which can be lodged against all three definitions, based on the results of this study, is that designing ESP courses to meet the needs of the learner implies that the learner is aware of his/her needs. Most pre-experienced EAP business course learners are unaware of their future professional needs, and are also unaware of their current academic needs, especially in their first year of college. Therefore, the needs of the course should not be solely dependent on the pre-experienced learner. Rather, all three stakeholders should be involved in course design, each stakeholder contributing their own expertise. This may mean that relying on a needs analysis by pre-experienced learners may not produce the expected information needed for course design. As this study will show, the stakeholder most familiar with academic needs is the business English teacher. Moreover, the business administration department can also give valuable input concerning academic readings in English. The business community is the stakeholder most competent to provide information concerning future professional needs. The students, however, as pre-experienced learners, lack both academic and professional expertise, and may not have the experience needed to make a beneficial contribution to course design.

Another criticism concerns Strevens' (1988, quoted in Johns and Dudley-Evans, 1991) connotation of a contrast between ESP and general English courses, which suggests that ESP and general English courses do not share the same goal. However, in the institutions in which this study was conducted, academic ESP relies on, revises and reinforces reading skills and vocabulary learned in general English courses. Employing skills acquired in general English courses, ESP courses focus on topics such as subject specific vocabulary, syntax, lexis and discourse, along with methodology of the particular discipline. Thus, as Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) propose, the basis for ESP courses should combine general English principles with ESP course principles and subject specific activities. General English courses should not be in contrast to ESP courses, as Strevens suggests.

In summary, ESP should emphasize meeting the needs of students, as well as those of the other stakeholders. ESP should not only be concerned with language, but should address the specific skills needed for the particular discipline and the purpose for

which the language is needed. The course content should be determined by the present and target goals and the particular skills which best reflect these goals.

5.5 ESP Models

ESP cannot fit into a single, rigid clearly delineated model for teachers to follow step-by-step. ESP is the integration of several models that researchers such as Robinson (1991) and Long and Crookes (1992) have presented as summarized below.

1. Content/Product-based syllabus –
 - a. Language form – an ordered set of language items graded by difficulty.
 - b. Wilkins' notional/functional syllabus – basic units of the syllabus are notions or functions of language.
 - c. Situation organized syllabus – found mostly in English for business purposes. Situations are sequentially organized and taught. (This may be according to the order of a typical business day.)
 - d. Topic based syllabus – deploys the content of the student's work or study of speciality.
2. Skill-based syllabus – focuses on one or more traditional language skills or on professional or communication skills.
3. Method-based syllabus –
 - a. Process based syllabus – focus is on thinking and process and shows students how to identify and plan a solution and reach an appropriate conclusion to a rhetorical problem. Also, what happens in the classroom is a matter for negotiation between students and teachers, which may lead to a redefinition of authority.
 - b. Task based syllabus – tasks are performed and emphasis is on students' understanding of the task and performing it in a natural manner.
 - c. Procedural syllabus – two related tasks or two versions of the same task are given to the students. The first is a pre-task to present, demonstrate, assess difficulty and introduce relevant language. The second is the task proper for the students to work on followed by teacher feedback.

Another example is the problem-based learning syllabus that is group based, student centred, and motivates students to learn through problem solving situations. A case study, performed by Allen and Rooney (1998) for upper-level business courses, allowed both ESL and native English-speaking students the opportunity to improve communication abilities in cross-cultural work groups. The problem-based learning syllabus was also used in a case study teaching biomedical English in the University of Brunei Darussalam, Gadong (Wood and Head, 2004). In this study students participating in an EAP medical course were both prepared for their current academic studies and future professions by reading medical journal texts and applying them to the solution of medical cases. This course programme both fostered learner motivation and fulfilled academic and professional English needs.

The choice of a single ESP model may not be practical since no one syllabus comprises all the needed rhetorical and lexical information. Therefore, to motivate students' learning and answer present and future needs, the integration of several models into a viable course may be necessary. As Swan (1985) writes, "The real issue is... how to integrate eight or so syllabuses into a sensible teaching programme" (p. 80). The present study indicates that many teachers have misconceptions about the scope of ESP and models for its implementation.

5.6 ESP Categories

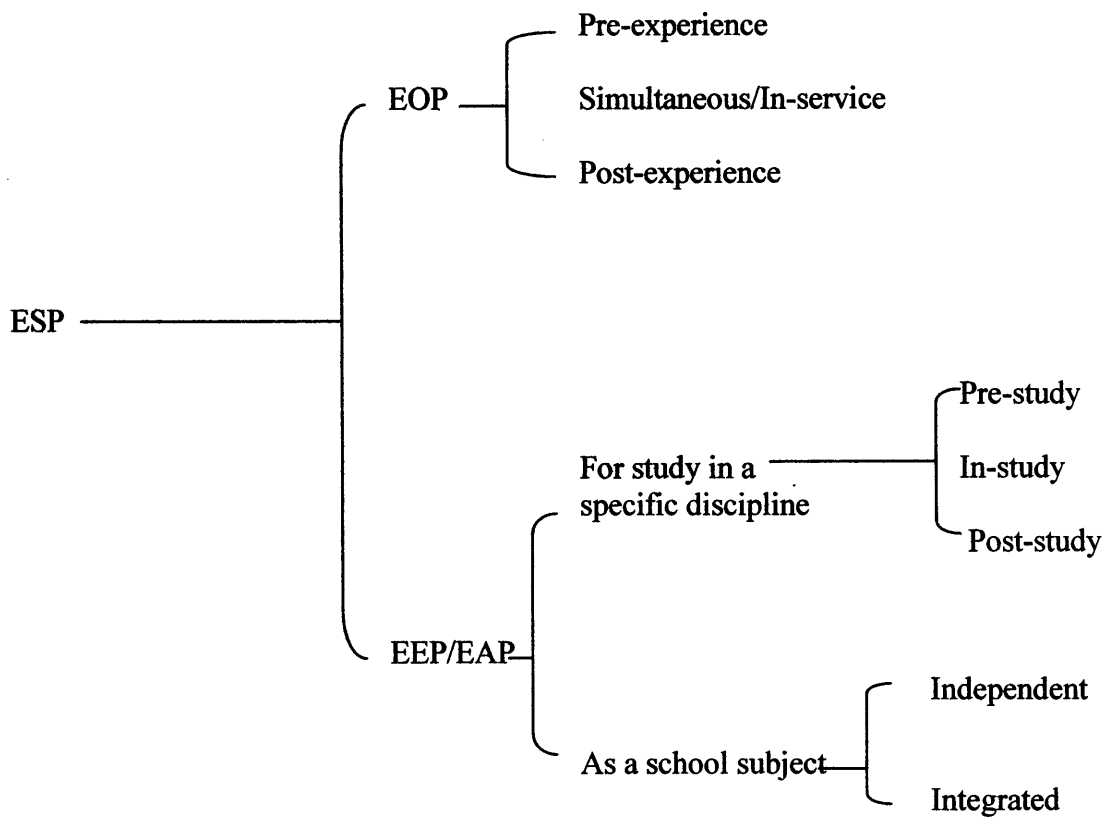
ESP can be divided into two categories, English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) and English for Academic Purposes (EAP). Hutchinson and Waters (1987) note that there is no clear-cut distinction between EAP and EOP, "... people can work and study simultaneously; it is also likely that in many cases the language learnt for immediate use in a study environment will be used later when the student takes up, or returns to, a job" (p. 16). Although Hutchinson and Waters (1980a) doubt the significance of these divisions, these categories can be useful since they satisfy a definitional need in the administration of these courses (Coffey, 1984; Swales, 1988).

Despite the differences in means (EAP's focus is on cognitive academic proficiency and EOP's focus is on basic interpersonal skills) both EAP and EOP have the same end purpose, employment. Thus, some researchers, such as Carver (1983), have not divided them into two separate ESP categories. However, as Gatehouse (2001) claims, even though the end purpose is identical, the means taken to achieve the end is very

different and they should, therefore, be two distinct courses. This difference is reflected in Israeli EAP and EOP business courses, while the former concentrate on academic reading skills, the latter focus on broader language skills such as conversation, listening and writing as well as reading skills for business.

In EOP courses "the participant needs English to perform all or part of his occupational duties" (Munby, 1978, p. 55) and in EAP courses "the participant needs English ... to pursue part or all of his studies" (ibid, p. 55). Thus, as seen in Figure 5.1, EAP courses are geared toward pre-occupational learners, presumably not fully aware of their situational needs, studying English for academic rather than occupational necessity. EOP courses include 'pre-experience', 'simultaneous/in-service' and 'post-experience' courses, and students' placement depends upon the learners' current employment position. EAP courses include 'pre-study', 'in-study' and 'post-study' courses (Strevens, 1977a).

Figure 5.1: ESP Categories



(Robinson, 1991, pp. 3-4)

EAP courses teach subject material, and prepare students to read textbooks, articles, journals, listen to lectures, take notes, write papers, conduct library research and take exams in their subject specific discipline. EOP courses, on the other hand, teach to target occupations. For instance, EAP courses concentrate on the study of economic and financial texts, while EOP courses train the students for target situations in banking. Although academic needs are seen as immediate needs and therefore may have more of a learning immediacy, materials that focus on delayed needs, or those needs that will arise in their future professional lives and deal with occupational requirements, may motivate students to a greater extent (Dudley-Evans and St. John, 1998).

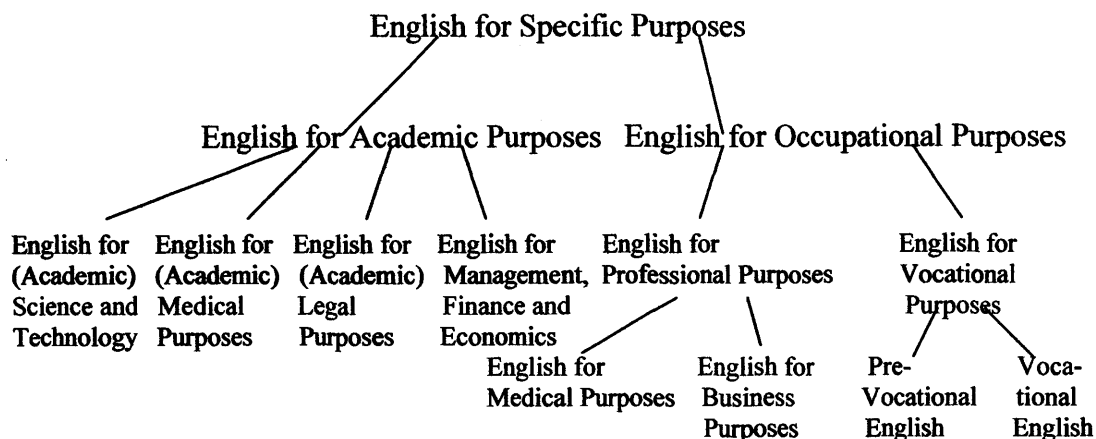
In Israel, EAP courses are mostly reading comprehension courses that satisfy present academic needs. Although most verbal communication in the classroom is done in English, the teacher will explain particular points in Hebrew, when the student finds it difficult to understand the English explanation. All exams are in English and in all

institutions except one, students must answer exam questions in English (most answers consist of no more than five words and may be directly quoted from the text. No points are deducted for grammar or spelling mistakes.

Although this research concentrates on EAP courses for business purposes, a brief definition of EOP courses will illustrate the differences between EOP and EAP courses and the learners that attend them. EOP students are purportedly situated in their professional lives and require exercises dealing with their current employment. Participants in EOP-B (business) courses are usually experienced learners employed in the business world and aware of their business course needs and consequently able to participate in the determination of the course outline. As Ellis and Johnson (1994) write, EOP-B learners are “experienced in the world of business and therefore often have clear skills objectives” (pp. 17-18). Thus, the EOP students’ needs are more specific than those of academic students, since they are more aware of their needs and can verbalize their demands. Since the EOP course concentrates on professional needs, courses often include a full range of language skills, including reading, writing, conversation and listening, with a needs analysis preceding the course. Learners are taught, through various activities, how to cope with business situations. These courses emphasize verbal, rather than, reading skills.

In Figure 5.2, EOP and EAP are sub-divided into specific purposes according to subject, discipline or type of profession to demonstrate the difference in course approach.

Figure 5.2: EAP and EOP Subdivisions



(Dudley-Evans and St. John, 1998, p. 6)

Whereas there seems to be more of a practical and functional need for EOP courses, internationally, EAP courses have dominated the field of ESP, as Johns and Dudley Evans (1991) state, “For most of its history, ESP has been dominated by English for Academic Purposes . . .” (p. 306). One possible reason for this is that, while EAP courses take place within academia, where research is published and a free exchange of theories and ideas is encouraged, EOP classes are generally situated in work places and are directed to the ‘bottom line’ (Flowerdew and Peacock, 2001). The distinctive differences between EAP and EOP should be recognized and applied to the setting and needs of the particular learners.

5.7 ESP for Academic Purposes

The context of this research is business English within academic institutions and the focus will be on business ESP courses as implemented in higher educational institutions, where students learn English for their academic studies. In the ESP courses, students are expected to acquire receptive and perceptive academic skills and develop learning strategies and study skills (Jordan, 1997).

Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) list four situations for determining the components of ESP courses. Israeli ESP courses can be included in the situation where most subject courses are taught in the national language, but English is important for ancillary reasons. In this situation Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) report that

deciding the students' real needs is difficult since, as mentioned previously, they are professionally pre-experienced with little English experience, particularly in their field of study. Their lack of needs awareness often leads to a lack of student motivation. The current research, consistent with Dudley-Evans and St. John's (1998) position based on student questionnaires and interviews, suggests that Israeli students cannot determine their academic or professional needs and are unaware of these needs. As a consequence the students consider EAP reading courses ineffective since they are not aware that these courses provide them with their immediate academic needs. The students probably do not take into account that they will be expected to read English texts for their course work, and the ease in which they read these texts may either help or hinder them in their course work and passing of the course.

One reason that the students deem their current courses ineffective may be that the reading of articles and taking of 'unseens' (tests that include articles and questions) do not seem as relevant, and thus motivating, as courses that include business centred conversation, problem solving, presentations and task-based activities. They criticize the institutions for not providing them with courses that they think will answer their future needs. As Hutchinson and Waters (1987) report, there is a mismatch between the institutions' perception of the students' needs and their actual needs and wants. This will inevitably lead to a lack of student motivation.

5.7.1 Business English categories

Business English falls within the category of ESP since it is subject specific to teaching business English. However, business integrates numerous subjects, such as marketing, advertising, investment and so on, within its discipline, as well as teaching general business topics. For this reason, business English, although belonging to ESP, may be further divided into English for General Business Purposes (EGBP) and English for Specific Business Purposes (ESBP). EGBP courses "although set in business contexts, follow EFL course designs and can largely be equated with pre-experience, open registration, extensive courses" (St. John, 1996, p. 4). ESBP courses, on the other hand, require "the careful research and design of pedagogical materials and activities for an identifiable group of adult learners within a specific learning context" (Johns and Dudley-Evans, 1991, p. 305) and are "designed to meet specified needs of the learner" (Stevens, 1988, quoted in St. John, 1996, p. 4).

EGBP courses are usually taught to the pre-experienced learner and the course is formed on the basis of language level rather than profession. These courses teach general business skills, such as negotiation, conversation, presentation and so on, and broad vocabulary skills. Academic institutions of higher education offer EGBP courses to its students since most students are pre-experienced, and it would be impractical to offer ESBP classes as students are unaware of their specific future needs. Israeli institutions focus ESP business courses on reading comprehension of subject specific material, frequently to the exclusion of all other skills. Thus, only the immediate academic needs of students are fulfilled and future professional needs are ignored.

ESBP classes are usually offered in language schools to job-experienced learners who contribute business knowledge and learning skills to the learning experience. The focus is on a specific business area, such as marketing, finance or advertising, and all activities and vocabulary are subject specific. For the purpose of this research we will concentrate on academic EGBP courses and further references to business English courses, unless otherwise stipulated, will refer to academic EGBP courses.

One of the difficulties in designing an academic business English course is that students are usually younger, less experienced (if at all), have little (if any) knowledge of professional needs, and little (if any) contact with native English speakers. Another difficulty is that teachers of academic courses have studied in, and are comfortable with, an academic environment and are unaware of the business environment and its demands. Therefore, both students and teachers may have little, if any knowledge of future professional needs. Students also may have little knowledge of their academic needs at the beginning of the course, if they are first year students. Thus, relying only on students for input concerning course design may be erroneous. Moreover, allowing the academic staff alone to design academic business English courses may lead to courses that only include present academic needs, while ignoring future professional needs. However, students are expected to be trained to deal with future professional situations and the teacher should have some knowledge of the business community and how it functions.

5.7.2 Skills for business English courses

Although Schleppegrell and Royster (1990) feel that business English academic courses should help develop reading, listening, speaking and writing proficiency relevant to the students' future professions, academic courses must also cater to students' immediate academic needs as well. The distinct feature of these courses, catering to both immediate and delayed needs, is "a thread which is interwoven in everything that happens in businesses. The thread ties the various activities, or social practices, together, but has no value of its own, independent of the business context" (Louhiala-Salminen, 1996, p. 50). Language activities, therefore, must cater to both needs, each demanding different learning skills, within the business context.

Dudley Evans and St. John (1998) discuss the different approach to academic and professional needs:

"EAP [English for Academic Purposes] operates within a world where the fundamental concern is the acquisition of knowledge by individuals, while in EOP [English for Occupational Purposes] the purpose is not centred on the learner as an individual but as a member of a transactional world where the fundamental concern is the exchange of goods or services... Thus there are different priorities: 'knowledge for its own sake' and 'knowledge for a profit margin'." (p. 72)

These different priorities signify different stakeholders, since EAP courses are only accountable to the institutions and the students, while EOP courses include the business community. However, if EAP courses teach for future professional needs, they must widen stakeholder inclusion and demands and include occupational as well as academic skills.

One problem with business English courses is that, to date, many of these courses have been designed through experience, intuition and materials with reported research lagging behind. What research has been conducted has been on written business documentation, and not on spoken transactions and material for reading comprehension courses (Dudley-Evans and St. John, 1998).

Another problem is the stress on particular skills. In business situations much of the language needed is transactional, much of the reading is journals and much of the writing is reports and e-mails. However, the emphasis in academic business English

courses is on academic readings (Ellis and Johnson, 1994). The gap between what is needed and what is given is ever present.

One of the difficulties in deciding course content is trying to combine both the academic and occupational needs of the students. Pre-experienced learners have two kinds of needs. The first, their academic environment, involves mostly reading textbooks and, at times, attending lectures and writing academic papers in English. Therefore, they will need mostly reading skills, and perhaps listening and academic writing skills (although in Israel EAP courses are mostly reading comprehension courses). The second, their occupational environment, requires subjects, such as presentation, negotiation, conversation and commercial correspondence, which requires speaking, listening and writing as well as reading skills to prepare them for their future employment (Ellis and Johnson, 1994).

Thus, business English courses should be “concerned that the learning goals and activities that their learners engage in are meaningful in relation to the specific purpose of their target discipline” (Flowerdew and Peacock, 2001, p. 183). Flowerdew and Peacock suggest teaching the following skills: reading, writing, listening, speaking and study skills. In Israel, a major shortcoming to this approach is the time element. Two institutions offer semester courses of three hours weekly per semester; two institutions offer semester courses of two hours bi-weekly per semester; one institution offers two hours weekly per academic year; the institution running EGAP courses offers two hours bi-weekly per academic year. It would be impossible to teach, or even gloss over, all these skills in the time allotted by the institutions for English language teaching. This does not mean, however, that all skills should be ignored in favour of reading.

Alexander (1988, quoted in Johnson, 1989) examined the needs of pre-experienced students in Germany studying European Business Studies. These students required English for academic studies and for occupational purposes. They were required to read textbooks and articles, write papers and follow lectures in English. Therefore, it was necessary to train the students in reading, writing and listening skills with a strong emphasis on business vocabulary. On the other hand, the skills that these students will need in their future employment will probably be conversation skills, business correspondence, reading of articles and reports, and negotiation and

presentation skills. As a result, the course incorporated a broad range of language skills for both the academic and professional needs. As Alexander (1988, quoted in Johnson, 1993) observes, these students need the “full gamut of skills to enable them to cope, but primarily, oral skills and the receptive skill of reading” (p. 204).

5.7.3 The role of the teacher in business English courses

ESP teaching faces two problems, the lack of teacher training programmes and the dissatisfaction with, and lack of, theory-into-practice training models (Chen, 2000). The lack of teacher training programmes may be a direct result of the latter problem since ESP theory is not easily generalized to apply to specific teaching contexts. As discussed previously, there is no specific ESP curriculum that corresponds to a particular teaching setting. Extensive theoretical knowledge studied in classroom situations often remains too abstract for teachers to put to practical use (Posteguillo and Palmer, 2000). For this reason, many teachers must develop their own ESP course plan according to given learners' needs and to given teaching conditions.

Business English teachers are usually English language teachers teaching business English. They, therefore, should have the pedagogical tools to teach language, but are lacking the subject specific tools of business. However, the business English teacher's role should be to teach English using business materials and they should be informed about the way the English language works in various business settings. The teachers should link English language teaching to business, so that the pertinent language areas can match. This requires the English teacher to learn about business and take an interest in it. It does not entail becoming a business specialist, but rather an English specialist who can relate and interact better in the business area (Dudley-Evans and St. John, 1998; Ellis and Johnson, 1994; Robinson, 1991).

Stevens (1980) refers to these teachers as ‘educated laymen’ (p. 42) who should become familiar with the subject language and content but need not major in the subject. In order for the teacher to become more familiar with content material, a system of either cooperation or collaboration with the business subject specialist is suggested. This would entail the business English teacher approaching one of the business administration department teachers and either asking for a syllabus and reading material to help them become familiar with the course, or actually integrating

English teaching with course content material. English teachers can also ask business administration teachers for comments and contributions to the English language syllabus. A final, and totally collaborative method, is to team teach the subject, where the business teacher teaches the content and the English teacher teaches language points and assignments are devised and corrected by both teachers, to cover both content and language (Dudley-Evans and St. John, 1998; Ellis and Johnson, 1994; Robinson, 1991).

Since the business English teacher may also be responsible for, or involved in, course design, the teacher must be familiar with business English materials, vocabulary, tasks, textbooks and content matter. Business is a dynamic subject, consequently course material is frequently changing or being added and teachers must be aware of new trends, new vocabulary and new theories. Therefore, departmental collaboration will enhance the teacher's business knowledge and help to keep him/her abreast of the latest literature, trends and theories.

Collaboration between the English and business administration departments also increases motivation and interest. Using subject specific material, in this case business material, in English gives more relevancy to the course and stimulates students to use more English than they normally would in a general English class. Thus, this collaboration allows students to experience a new dimension of language learning, to enhance the spirit of inquiry, and to have a more active, participatory classroom experience (Chamberlain, 1980).

Barron (2003) claims that there is low interaction cooperation between disciplines in collaborative teaching due to a lack of reciprocity between departments. In Israeli institutions this is usually the case, it is usually the language teacher's responsibility to approach the business administration department, and frequently information given is not useful in language teaching. Although team teaching may greatly enhance business English courses, the reality is that most business English teachers in Israel have minimal business departmental cooperation, as will be documented in this study.

Thus, business English academic courses rely on general business material and vocabulary and focus on reading comprehension skills of business articles. Teachers, many of them lacking in business skills, have little cooperation or collaboration from

the business administration department within their institutions. Perhaps including the business community as an active stakeholder will help business English teachers better cope with content material and enhance the courses.

5.8 ESP Parameters and Constraints

There are many parameters to be considered in ESP courses. Singh (1983) delineates the following: timetabling, size of the class, conventions of teaching and learning, availability and use of multi-media aids, the administration's attitude towards English language teaching, central and state government's language policy, society's attitude towards English studies in general, the immediacy of the demand for the language in other parts of the curriculum, the relationship of English to other subjects, the professional status of the teacher teaching it, the organization of the department, and the emphasis given to the target situation analysis as a curriculum design prerequisite. Aside from the availability and use of multi-media aids (which are not widely used in English academic courses) and central and state government's language policy (which, as previously mentioned, is not an issue) all other parameters are important to ESP courses in Israel.

One constraint of these courses is that students do not realize the importance of studying English. Many feel that they can pass their subject exams without knowing English, since the exams are always in their native language and not English. Contributing to this is the fact that English is offered in the first year of studies, when it is difficult for the students to understand their future professional target situation needs (Dudley-Evans and St. John, 1998; Robinson, 1991). Many students in Israeli institutions of higher education are also unaware of their present academic needs, and fail to see the importance in studying reading comprehension. This is reflected in the interviews where students see the course as "a waste of time" without mentioning the importance of studying reading comprehension both for present and future needs.

Hutchinson and Waters (1984) cite two other constraints of ESP. Firstly, the learner's capacity to communicate is neglected and, secondly, there is a failure to analyse and take into account the realities of the ESP learning situation. In addition to the above, this study demonstrates the following constraints: the needs of the students and the outside community are not taken into consideration, tasks may be boring and

inappropriate, teachers may not be knowledgeable in their content area, there may be a focus on immediate rather than target needs. These are all constraints that both the administration and the teacher should try to avoid while designing an ESP course and choosing a teacher.

ESP courses also present some logistic problems. According to Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998), one such problem is time slotting these courses into the academic schedule. In many Israeli institutions, English courses are perceived as service courses, and are time slotted only after subject courses have been scheduled. This may relegate English to evening hours when students are often tired and less motivated. In addition, the density of course requirements often does not allow for a sufficient number of hours for English studies.

Another logistics problem concerns scheduling English in the first academic year (Dudley-Evans and St. John, 1998). This research shows that, although students need English reading skills in their first year to facilitate their reading of English academic texts, they also need to be prepared for future professional needs towards the end of their academic careers. To meet both present and future needs academic institutions should consider that, in addition to the first year course to meet academic needs, another course for future employment needs should be offered towards the end of the academic programme.

Thus, although ESP courses have been implemented within institutions of higher education, the motivational and logistic factors cited above bear reconsideration, particularly in Israeli higher education. In trying to resolve the difficulties facing ESP courses institutions will only enhance them and make them more accountable to the stakeholders involved.

In spite of these constraints, ESP is a means of presenting learners with a viable course that will answer to their specific needs and present them with the vocabulary, exercises, reading and writing activities that are essential for both their academic and professional world. It is only through ongoing research and implementation that ESP courses will improve and provide the English tools that are necessary in the globalized world of today.

5.9 Conclusion

In conclusion, the various ESP factors combine to offer viable dynamic ways to cater to discipline specific needs in English language teaching. An examination of the various facets of ESP reveals that ESP is not a rigid, formalistic language theory, but a means toward an end to facilitate communication in the area of specialization of the learner. This can only lead to more motivated, satisfied students who are confident that they are gaining the specific skills required for present and future needs.

In order to further assist the learner in language acquisition that will promote better communication both in the target language and the target task, an approach that will include a broad range of language skills will be examined.

CHAPTER SIX

COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING

“The way a language is learnt should guide our approach to its teaching and to the techniques that most encourage learning.” (Robinson, 1991, p. 101)

6.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the Communicative Language Teaching approach (CLT) and its relevancy to business English course design. The purpose of teaching business English is to develop communicative competence for business settings (Boyd, 1991). Research of business employers proves that employees require a broad range of language skills and that a lack of all of these skills will be to the employees' disadvantage (Crosling and Ward, 2002). As was discussed previously, higher education should be accountable to provide their students with skills for both present academic needs and future professional needs (Elbaz, 2000; Alexander, 2000; Kearney, 2000; Kamba, 2000; Penington, 1998). If employees need a broad range of language skills then the institutions of higher education should provide these skills. Researchers (Dudley-Evans and St. John, 1998; Ellis and Johnson, 1994) include listening and writing skills along with speaking skills. Businesspeople interviewed for this study also include reading skills as necessary for employment. Thus, speaking, listening, writing and reading may be viewed as necessary for successful business communication in English, and they should be taught in institutions of higher education.

On the other hand, reading is seen as necessary for academic studies. Therefore, providing students with both present and future needs in a business English course necessitates the inclusion of all language skills.

CLT has become an important element of ESP, since CLT has been closely associated with the development of teaching English for specific purposes since the 1970s (Robinson, 1983; Hutchinson and Waters, 1984). In fact, some researchers feel that only through the integration of CLT has ESP reached its maturity (Coffey, 1984). Many researchers have helped develop theory and practice of the CLT approach (Brown, 1987; Brumfit 1979; Hymes, 1971; Nattinger, 1984; Nunan, 1987; 1989;

Richards and Rodgers, 1986; Rossner, 1988; Savignon, 1983; White, 1989; Yalden, 1983) where the underlying premise is communicative competence as a member of a particular socio-cultural or professional community with course focus on the learner and the way the learner learns (Hymes, 1971; Breen and Candlin, 1980; Bloor, 1984). In this approach, memorization and drilling are either abolished or used minimally, as are the linguistic structures and grammar rules (Munby, 1978). Specific subject needs are not taught through grammar, tasks. Rather real-life situations are simulated that necessitate communication (Bloor, 1984).

Thus, students are taught how to use the language as they would in real world situations. As Savignon (2002) writes, "The essence of CLT is the engagement of learners in communication to allow them to develop their communicative competence" (p. 22). CLT "proposes the necessity of providing relevant and purposeful language learning, in a meaningful context which reflects real world language use" (Clarke, 1989, p. 73).

Since business English stresses communication and real world language (Robertson, 1971; Stenhouse, 1975; Finocchiaro and Brumfit, 1983; de Beaugrande, 2000) various communicative theories and approaches to language teaching will be reviewed in this chapter. Principles and criteria needed for CLT will be noted along with an analysis of the constraints of this approach. The CLT approach to business English courses will also be investigated.

6.2 Criteria for Communicative Language Teaching Courses

The CLT approach refers to both processes and goals in teaching language. The central theoretical concept is communicative competence, which refers to expression, interpretation and negotiation of meaning. This is realized in the classroom through the learner's participation in the communicative events (Savignon, 2002).

A useful summary of principles that characterize the communicative approach includes features listed by several researchers (Canale and Swain, 1980; Xiaoju, 1990; Nunan, 1991).

- An emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language.

- The introduction of authentic texts into the learning situation, not tied to any specific textbook.
- The provision of opportunities for learners to focus, not only on language, but also on the learning process, itself.
- An enhancement of the learner's own personal experiences as important contributing elements to classroom learning.
- An attempt to link classroom language learning with language activation outside the classroom.
- A balanced approach to grammatical competence, socio-linguistic competence and communication strategies for the learner.
- Meaningful communicative interaction with highly competent speakers of the language.
- Optimal use of those aspects of communicative competence that the learner has developed through acquisition and use of the native language and that are common to those communication skills required in the second language.
- A gradation of tasks to evaluate the students' skills and capabilities.
- The teacher's role as a provider, observer, guide, analyst and evaluator, rather than a central figure in the imparting of knowledge.

The above principles should serve as a guide since their application may be difficult to realize. One difficulty would be the retraining of teachers, which would entail educating teachers as business specialists. Teachers would also have to understand the meta-cognitive learning process in order to make students more aware of how they learn so that they can contribute to the learning process. The English departments may be forced to re-evaluate their goals and re-educate their teachers, which may be unrealistic. Courses would require more time in order to focus on the learning process as well as language learning. However, adopting and adapting certain principles and approaches may be more feasible. Course design should include communicating through the target language, learning through authentic texts (which is currently applied in Israel), linking language learning with future professions, having a more balanced approach to grammatical competence, socio-linguistic competence and communication strategies for the learner, using native language communicative

competencies in teaching target language communication, and applying graded tasks to measure competency. A discussion of various approaches and theories within CLT will clarify the above criteria.

6.3 Communicative Approaches

CLT is a development in the gradual shift of focus from form to meaning and language use, a shift that is a reflection of theoretical modifications in the concept of language teaching. Some approaches are more structured, while others, such as abandoning conventional syllabuses and allowing the students to determine course content, are more flexible and radical. Savignon (2002) notes that: "CLT cannot be found in any one textbook or set of curricular materials" (p. 22) but is a combination of theories and approaches appropriately chosen by the teacher to fit the classroom situation.

The CLT approach views language learning as learning how to communicate as a member of a particular socio-cultural group. Teaching is done through the use of real-life situations that necessitate communication in context. (Breen and Candlin, 1980) In this way CLT seeks to avoid any artificial contrivances for language teaching. This approach is considered to be the product of the dissatisfaction of educators and linguists with structural syllabuses such as the audio lingual approach (courses consisting of short dialogues and sets of recorded drills based on the assumption that foreign language is basically a mechanical process and it is more effective if the spoken form precedes the written form) and the grammar-translation method (analysing and studying the grammatical rules of the language and then practising manipulating grammatical structures through the means of translation both into and from the mother tongue) (Herron, 1982; Sheen, 1994). A reason for this dissatisfaction is given in an example of the grammar-translation method where a student completes a grammar exercise on a certain theme and is able to use each grammatical item separately. However, although the student may have a feeling of progress, knowledge of individual grammar exercises does not equal grammar competence as a whole, nor does it teach language competence. In general, structural syllabuses, such as the above, force students to acquire out-dated language models from Latin, instead of preparing students for future language competencies (Lewis, 1986).

The beginning of the communicative approach occurred in the 1970s, when Wilkins' 'functional-notional syllabus' (1976) became an alternative to the structurally graded syllabuses. This syllabus is based more on the purposes for which language is used and on the meanings the speaker wanted to express than on the forms used to express them. Van Ek (1975) supplies a list of general language functions (such as imparting and seeking information, getting things done and socializing) and specific language functions (such as identifying, reporting, correcting and asking for factual information). He also supplies a list of general notions (such as existential, spatial, temporal) and a list of specific notions (such as names, addresses, likes and dislikes).

However, although Wilkins' syllabus is based on communicative skills, the syllabus still employs structural grammar functions (Brumfit, 1979, Morrow, 1981). Widdowson (1983) notes that Wilkins' syllabus reduces vibrant language communication to a set of static items to be learned because inventories of functions in 'functional-notional' syllabuses are not different from inventories of grammar items and performing a certain function does not equal language competence as a whole. Maley (1999) adds that functions themselves are often trivialised, and do not reflect real-life problems. However, the radical innovation in the 'functional-notional' approach is not in the shift of focus from form to meaning and language use, but rather in the avoidance of any artificial contrivances for language teaching (Herron, 1982).

Thereafter, Munby's *Communicative Syllabus Design* (1978), one of the first books on communicative language teaching, recognized a wide applicability of the communicative approach. Munby compiled a taxonomy of target situations called the Communicative Needs Processor (CNP) which consists of questions about key communication variables and contains fifty-four language skills. Munby's approach to defining objectives in a communicative language syllabus is very complex, although this very complexity makes Munby's syllabus complicated and unrealistic for English language programmes. Furthermore, although Munby's communicative syllabus, according to Nunan (1988) "starts with the person (a language participant or a category of participants) and investigates his particular communication needs" (p. 24) it was not a learner-centred approach, even though Munby claimed that he started

with 'the person'. What Munby failed to realize was that he was collecting data **about** the learner, rather than **from** the learner (Nunan, 1988).

In 1987, Hutchinson and Waters introduced the 'learning centred approach', which emphasized meaningful and appropriate content and communication within the classroom.

"A learning-centred classroom carries learners toward the ability to make critical pedagogical decisions by systematically training them in the skills they need to make such decisions. . . . Whereas one set of aims focuses on language content, the other focuses on the learning process. Learners therefore systematically are educated in the skills and knowledge they will need in order to make informed choices about what they want to learn and how they want to learn." (Nunan, 1995, p. 134)

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) believe in learner competence, or the ability to isolate "how someone acquires that competence" (p.72) and claim that a 'learning centred approach':

"...can and should be seen in the context in which it takes place. Learning is not just a mental process; it is a process of negotiation between individuals and society. Society sets the target . . . The target still has a determining influence on the possible route . . . The learner is one factor to consider in the learning process, but not the only one." (p. 73)

Thus, this approach advocates considering the process of learning and student motivation together with deciding what is needed to enable students to reach their end targets. For example, students may only need to learn how to read subject specific academic texts for their academic studies, but speaking practice may help enhance and motivate their studies, so speaking tasks should be included in course design. Secondly, the 'learning centred approach' promotes exploiting skills that have been learned in either academic or work experience, such as problem solving or group work. Finally, the 'learning centred approach' believes that different students learn in different ways (Dudley-Evans and St. John, 1998).

Since the 'learning-centred approach' is based on the belief that students should be trained in making significant learning decisions, this approach may not be feasible in practice. The 'learning-centred' approach assumes that students are interested in taking part in and making decisions about the learning process, and that teachers have

the time and the ability to educate students in this process. To date, business English courses are time limited and concentrate on teaching material rather than teaching the process of learning. However, by using relevant, authentic material and exploiting skills that students will need for their future professions, students will be more motivated to study. Examples of approaches that combine relevant material and future professional skills are given below.

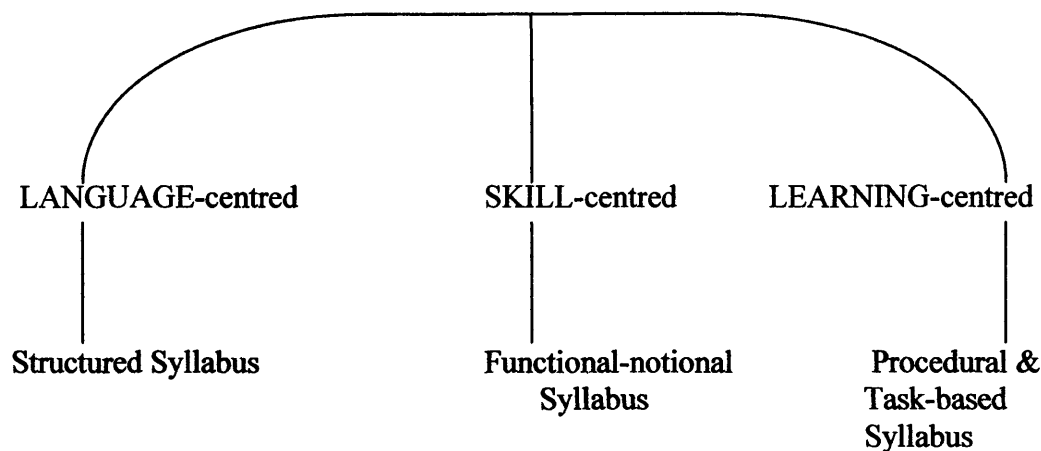
The 'genre-based approach' using materials based on authentic linguistic data, is applied in most institutions of higher education in Israel. Authentic reading passages motivate students, reinforce relevant vocabulary and stimulate student discussion. Other approaches include the 'skills-based approach' focusing on skills, the 'content-based approach' focusing on language teaching relating to future uses of the language, and the procedural 'task-based approach' focusing on classroom activities that stimulate internal learning processes. Although these approaches should be integrated into classroom activities they are only employed when academic business English courses include skills needed for future professional situations (speaking, listening and writing, together with reading) as well as present academic skills (reading). (Howatt, 1984; Flowerdew and Peacock, 2001).

Another approach, 'community based learning', combines communicative competence with real-life experience, where learners engage in activities both at school and in other community based contexts to provide real-life experiences with English learning. In a case study involving community based learning, Overfield (1997) linked foreign language (English) learning with community experiences so that the students were better able to understand the functions of the language they were learning, increase interaction with English speakers and integrate sub-competencies that they would never have used solely in the classroom situation.

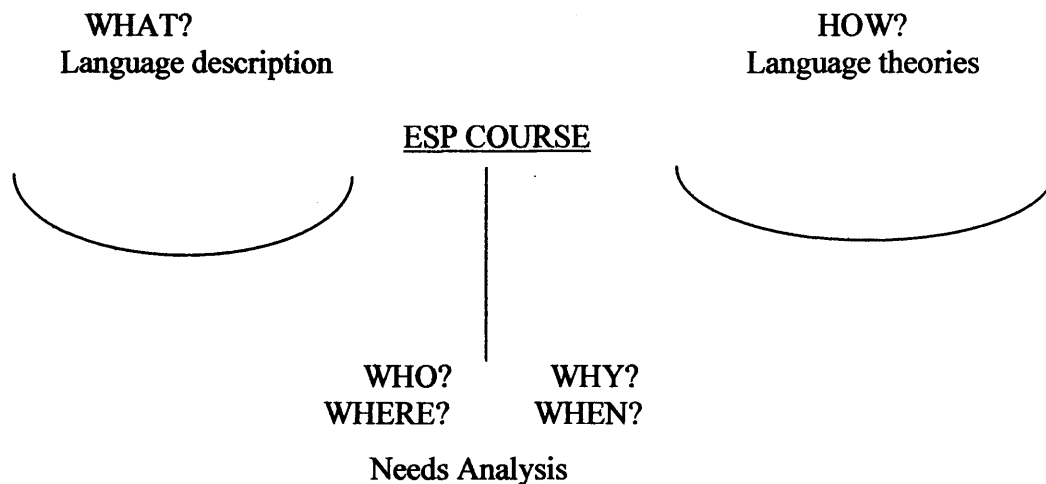
Israeli institutions of higher education do not offer 'community based learning' programmes. However, some institutions have instituted an overseas exchange programme, where students spend a semester in a foreign university, studying in English and sometimes working in a company as an intern. This promotes the learning of business English skills, increases interaction with English speakers and provides the students with real-life business situations in which English is used.

Figure 6.1 demonstrates how the focus in approach has changed to reflect modifications in the concept of language teaching from a more structured approach to a more learning centred approach, as discussed above.

Figure 6.1: Approaches to Language Learning



Syllabus design should cover three factors: language description, learning theories and needs analysis.



(after Hutchinson and Waters, 1987, p.23)

A final approach, the ‘learner-centred approach’, is flexible and student oriented where the learner is at the core of learning. This approach is based on the progressivist curriculum, which provides students with experiences from which they can later learn on their own. It views the learner as a whole person with intellectual and emotional

needs, where course design is a negotiated process between students and teachers (Clark, 1987).

A 'learner centred approach' is closely related to CLT since CLT presupposes that students take the central role of learning. The communicative syllabus can be learner-centred because its objectives are aligned with and focus on what students actually need. Furthermore, the students are given a chance to do the learning themselves instead of having a teacher-centred classroom (Xiaoju, 1990). The 'learner centred approach', similarly, advocates that the learner is central in the learning process. Learners are active recipients of knowledge and may assume decision-making roles in the classroom, even deciding what is to be learned, through what activities and at what pace. Teachers, on the other hand, occupy a decentralized role, becoming facilitators, helpers and resources (Campbell and Kryszewska, 1992). The emphasis on the active participation of the student is central to both CLT and the 'learner centred approach'.

Nunan (1988), an advocate of the 'learner-centred approach', says that the essential question is "why don't teachers teach what learners learn?" (p. 3). Ideally, in a 'learner-centred' classroom, content should be derived through a process of consultation and negotiation with the learners, the principal consideration being the communicative needs of the learners (Nunan, 1988). The learner becomes the main reference point in decision making for both content and form, and making decisions is a shared process between teacher and learner. These two elements, the constructive acceptance of learner diversity and the pursuit of learner empowerment by means of language education, are essential to the 'learner-centred' method (Tudor, 1996).

This shift away from an emphasis on the subject to be learned towards the learning process and the learner as the centre of the learning process is diagrammed in figure 6.2.

Figure 6.2: Differences in Learning Between Subject and Process Emphasis

What is to be learnt?	How is it to be learnt?
Subject emphasis External to the learner Determined by the authority Teacher as decision-maker Content=what the subject is to the expert Objectives defined in advance Assessment by achievement or by mastery Doing things to the learner	Process emphasis Internal to the learner Negotiated between learners and teachers Learner and teacher as joint decision makers Content=what the subject is to the learner Objectives described afterwards Achievement in relation to learners' criteria of success Doing things for and with the learner

(Gray, 1990, p. 262)

An example of a 'learner-centred' course was designed by Cotteral (2000). Twenty learners enrolled on a twelve-week intensive English language course at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. The students attended for three hours every morning with their class teacher and for two hours one afternoon each week for five weeks in their area of special interest. The course aimed to promote learner autonomy at the same time as teaching English. Five principles that emerged from the course design related to learner goals, the language learning process, tasks, learner strategies and reflection on learning. By adopting these principles Cotteral was freed from meeting the needs of twenty students, and, instead, presented the students with a means of meeting their own needs. By including tasks related to the learners' goals and encouraging learner autonomy Cotteral was able to motivate the students while at the same time encouraging them to assess their own performance and modify their learning behaviour when needed. Thus, the students were encouraged to make decisions about their own language learning and were capable of doing so.

The 'learner-centred approach', which advocates learner autonomy and encourages learners taking responsibility for their learning, may be ideologically the best method of teaching business English courses. However, this study reinforces Thanasoulas' theory (2000) which states that turning the course design totally over to learners would be impractical since it is absurd to think that learners possess the knowledge to plan, monitor and evaluate their own learning. One reason is that most students are unaware of their needs since they are not employed in their professions. Also, students are unfamiliar with teaching methodology, and they may not be able to make

informed decisions until almost the end of the course, if ever. Furthermore, students' initiation of topics of study may only happen towards the end of the course, if at all. What learner autonomy should encompass is awareness of and identifying one's strategies, needs and goals as a learner, not immediately calling for teacher abdication and totally learner autonomous classes.

Another difficulty with the 'learner-centred approach' is that it implies a producer/customer relationship, where the former are the institutions and the latter the learners. As Delucchi and Smith (1997a and b) argue, allowing students to determine course content and trying to satisfy them as customers may ignore sound pedagogical methods and prevent significant learning. Learner-centredness also promotes student consumerism, where institutions are marketplaces trying to satisfy customers at the expense of professional expertise. The dilemma is not whether students play a role in course determination; the question is how much authority they should be awarded (Delucchi and Smith, 1997b).

Brindley (1989) observes that: "many teachers expressed skepticism about the feasibility of designing a language program in consultation with the learners. The view frequently expressed was that there can be no real conflict since learners cannot generally state what they want or need to learn" (p. 73). Richterich (1980) confirms this stating, "A person learning or on the point of learning a foreign language has only a vague idea, if any, of his future needs" (p. 47). Similarly, Kennedy (1980) warns, "that a learner's notion of proficiency in English may be naïve or based on inadequate experience" (p. 120). Brindley (1989), who is a strong advocate of the learner-centred approach, admits that both teachers and students encounter many difficulties in putting this model into practice.

Through questionnaires or discussions students can be involved in voicing their opinions and suggesting relevant topics for study. However, questioning students concerning subjects to be studied may not yield information that can be included in course design. These students are pre-experienced learners with little, if any, knowledge and experience concerning the business community and its needs and demands. Furthermore, as mentioned, many of the students are in their first year of studies and have little knowledge concerning what is required in the academic community as well. Therefore, designing a needs analysis that will define the range of

general and specialist language knowledge together with general and professional skills needed to communicate in the business world, as Brieger (1997) suggests, will probably be impossible for pre-experienced learners. Thus, although discovering learners' needs is seen as essential to teaching, learners are not always able to identify their future (and even present) needs. In addition, the variability of language situations, even within specific subjects, is almost unlimited and will largely depend on the situation. Therefore, student questionnaires should be only one component in determining course design and should be designed to ask information which students can answer. Students should, however, be encouraged to contribute suggestions for materials such as case studies, business topics and activities, and current readings. They can also offer suggestions concerning ways in which to motivate, as was seen in suggestions made by students in this study. This involvement will not only make the course more relevant, but also more stimulating and motivating for the students.

6.3.1 Communicative approaches applied to business English courses

In CLT the target language, as well as the target use of the language, is crucial to learning. As Widdowson (1978) observes, targets are important influences in promoting a communicative approach to language teaching. The targets for business English academic courses are both the present academic learning situation as well as the future business community. Courses should advocate activities that will enhance both these targets. One suggestion for making the students more aware of their future professional needs, and widening the scope of skills that are taught so that it includes more than reading comprehension, is to invite lecturers in the field of business to address the English business classes in English. The students will be introduced to both speaking/listening English skills (through listening to the lecture and question/answer) This will provide more content-based courses and more interesting and motivating material for the students in the second language (L2) (Hewings and Nickerson, 1999).

Variations and adaptation of the CLT approach can be applied to business English courses so that they are more viable, motivating and relevant to the students' academic and professional needs. One example, presented by Kysilka's integrated approach (1998), applies learners' needs, relevant knowledge and cooperation between departments, students and teachers. Student involvement is advocated and

class activities are directly related to students' academic and professional needs and interests. Real world knowledge is integrated into learning, which consists of how to think and not memorize. Subject matter is a means and not a goal to learning. Furthermore, there is an inter-disciplinary connection between English and business administration teachers using team teaching.

Another example is provided by Kessels and Plomp's systematic approach (1999), which involves conducting both a needs analysis and a job and task analysis. Although conducting a job and task analysis may be difficult with pre-experienced academic students, it is possible to gain a general idea of professional business demands from the business community. Kessels and Plomp believe that it is important to state instructional objectives, which include specifying instructional strategies. It is also important to develop relevant performance measurements and sequence performance objectives to the needs of the students.

A further example of a CLT business English approach, the relational approach, involves management and teamwork of all stakeholders in both the design and implementation processes. Also, only teachers with business experience, or at least business familiarity, should be employed (Eisner, 1992).

A fourth example involves a multi-layered approach that includes functions, topics and vocabulary. This approach focuses on meaning rather than form, on communicating in meaningful contexts and drawing on the background and knowledge of the students. Exercises consist of information gap or open gap exercises along with vocabulary cloze tests (a test of reading comprehension in which the test taker is asked to supply words that have been systematically deleted from a text) and short quizzes. Although textbooks and workbooks are recommended, much discussion can evolve from students' interests and knowledge (Edwards, 2000).

The above four examples are based on CLT theories and design. A combination and integration of these four approaches will provide realistic and viable business English courses that involve all three stakeholders, respond to students' present and future needs and integrate meaningful, authentic real world knowledge. Furthermore, course objectives will be explained to students and relevant performance measurements will be administered, either through short exercises or sequenced real-life activities. In

order to include the necessary skills, tools and activities it is important to have inter-departmental consultation, team teaching (if possible) and academic and business community consultations.

6.3.2 Communicative skills included in business English courses

According to Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) there are seven communicative business events: telephoning, socialising, making presentations, taking parting in meetings and negotiations, corresponding and reporting. Ellis and Johnson (1994) mention five: meetings and discussion, giving information, telephoning, business correspondence and socialising. As a result of discussions with teachers and students and recommendations from the business community this study added the following subjects to the above lists, when questioning the stakeholders: problem solving, vocabulary, reading and grammar. Business correspondence was separated from writing on suggestions from several teachers in the business administration department, since they felt that students, as pre-experienced learners would not need business correspondence while studying, but they will be familiar with writing a paper. (It was explained to the students that this category could include report writing as well as writing a paper.)

Inclusion of all subjects included in the questionnaire within course design is dependent upon course time allotment. For instance, writing, which can include reports and CVs, as well as academic papers and business correspondence (which includes memos, business letters, e-mails), can involve many class hours. If a mini-course (possibly an elective) were not offered it would be difficult to include this within the allotted time. However, teachers can make students aware of the various computer sites that can help them with these particular topics, and inform them of the computer spell-check and word-check.

Although some proponents of CLT support learner self-expression without regard to grammatical form (Bloor, 1984), there should be an optimum combination of both form-focused and meaning-focused classroom activities, as Savignon (2002) suggests. Research findings, according to Savignon (2002), overwhelmingly illustrate that grammar is important and that form-focused exercises should be integrated with meaning-focused exercises and tasks. In fact, a grammar-translation book can be used to focus on communication, and, conversely, activities and materials focusing on

communication can be used to teach grammar. What is important is the integration of these activities to promote language communication (Savignon, 2002).

Certain grammar areas to be included in business English courses are noted by Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998). They place an emphasis on the verb form, modals, and verbs of *saying, reporting* and the difference between *made* and *do, have, have got* and *got*. The functions to be studied include such as *ability and inability, agreeing and disagreeing, assertion and downtowning* and *checking and confirming*. These exercises can be integrated into the teaching of language use.

Presentations are possible if they are not too long (2-5 minutes) and if the class size allows it. Presentations include reading skills (the student must research the material to be presented), writing skills (the student must take notes or write a complete presentation), speaking skills (the student must present to the class) and listening skills (the other students must listen, and the student must listen to feedback/questions). The teacher can rigidly control presentation topics, where the students are given a topic and presentation format. The advantage of presentations is that the student must read (for research), write (for presentations) and talk (for delivery).

Meetings and discussions require small groups and pair work and classrooms that lend themselves to student movement. Meetings can be role-plays where students are given specific roles to play. Students are encouraged to investigate the topic and/or role at hand (reading and possibly writing/note taking skills), and carry on discussions (speaking and listening skills). General class discussions should be encouraged, with focus points and decision-making processes involved.

Telephoning, socializing and general conversation can utilize pair work and short role-plays. This can help develop speaking skills. It is sometimes an excellent stopgap after a difficult or tedious reading comprehension (Brooks, 2003; Ellis and Johnson, 1994).

Case studies are used to show students how to analyse actual or simulated business problems by teaching language through content, using authentic materials, and requiring the students to use critical reasoning and problem solving techniques. Many

institutions in Israel use case studies in their business administration courses in order to analyze specific business problems and have the students take part in creative problem solving methods. In English this will also enhance their reading, speaking, listening and writing skills and the learner-centred approach is utilized, since the students take responsibility for the direction of class discussion and problem solution. Integrating case studies into course design will lead to higher learner motivation and improved attitudes towards English language study. The disadvantages are that case studies can only be used with students who have a mastery of the language, teachers must be thoroughly prepared and understand professional as well as language aspects, and there is a lack of exercises associated with case studies (Uber Grosse, 1988; Johns, 1986). However, if students' language skills are advanced, case studies have proven to be an interesting, thought provoking, relevant and motivating method of learning business English.

Although negotiations are an important skill in the business community, teaching proper negotiation skills is usually a mini-course in itself. Many companies have their own method of negotiating in which only upper management participates, therefore, many companies offer this course in-house to designated employees. However, a general overview of negotiating skills should be discussed in a business English class, accompanied by relevant reading material. This may motivate students to read the appropriate material since they may feel that it will help them in their future professions.

Although business language is not seen as a uniform genre, there is still a vocabulary that is specific to business. This may include the different types of businesses (multinationals, sole proprietor etc.), the way the business was created (merger, takeover, raid etc.), the products, markets and marketing (brand, SWOT chart, market challenger etc.), the corporate structure (hierarchy, decentralization etc.), finance (depression, recession, etc.) and many other areas. Since all these areas have their particular vocabulary it is important to teach this vocabulary in context. This may be done through the reading of texts and testing through vocabulary in context.

Reading is an important academic need, and all institutions in Israel require their students to deal with academic business texts. Authentic texts are recommended and students are required to pass a reading comprehension test upon completion of the

course. Readings are taken from business journals, such as Harvard Business Review, and professional and academic texts. Businesspeople have also expressed the need for their employees to be able to deal with business texts at work.

The above discussion has endeavoured to present various communicative approaches and skills relevant to business English course design. Their proper application is dependent upon teacher motivation and methodological knowledge and proper choice of skills and approaches.

6.4 CLT Constraints

Not all theorists agree with the CLT approach. For instance, Swan (1985) assumes that language will retain its value across language boundaries, since its precise value is given by the interaction of its structural and lexical meaning within the situation in which it is used. Therefore, even though the communicative approach may have some new insights, one does not need to adopt a whole new approach to the teaching of meaning. Swan feels that students can transfer normal language skills from their mother tongue to a foreign language, a theory that the communicative approach denies.

In addition, Thompson (1996) believes that many teachers are confused about the nature of CLT. The teachers feel that CLT means teaching only speaking and not teaching grammar. They do not understand that, if effective communication is to take place, a minimal knowledge of grammar must be taught through the communicative activity. Teachers also believe that CLT means only pair work, although other methods should be used, opening up a realm of possibilities in teaching methodology.

Thompson (1996) realizes that CLT involves a change in teaching methodology and language perception, and therefore teachers must create more classroom tasks and be more involved in stimulating rather than frontal teaching. Thus, teachers may be able to take this opportunity to re-evaluate their teaching methods, develop their skills and participate in dynamic classroom activities.

Another problem is that many teachers are committed to CLT but they do not know how to create genuine communication in their classroom. Although teachers may be aware of the CLT approach and its benefits, they may be unaware of how to apply this

approach within the classroom. As Kumaravadivelu (1993) mentions, theories abound but strategies are sparse. Thus, an emphasis on methodology and strategies may be more useful, along with in-house workshops. Kumaravadivelu (1993) also feels that ambiguity on the part of the teachers could stem from a mismatch between teacher intention and learner interpretation and presents five possible strategies to help the teachers. They include creating learning opportunities in the class, utilizing learning opportunities created by learners, facilitating negotiated interaction between participants whether between learner-learner or learner-teacher, activating the conscious and unconscious cognitive process of inquiry of the learner, and contextualizing linguistic input by presenting linguistic input in units of discourse so that the learners can benefit from it.

Nunan (1987) believes in the importance of conducting classroom-based research to determine the extent to which theory is practised in the classroom. In a study he conducted in five communicative based classrooms he concluded that interactions in communicative classes are not communicative even though teachers were aware of the theoretical basis of CLT and thought they were teaching communicative activities.

A final CLT constraint is mentioned by Bax (2003), who claims that CLT is only concerned with communication and methodology, at the expense of context. This will lead to identical CLT methodology no matter what context the course is being given in, be it Israel or Vietnam. Bax advocates emphasizing the learning context and including learner variables for different contexts for successful language learning, while relegating communication and methodology to second place. Savignon (2002), on the other hand, argues that CLT does recognize culture as instrumental in shaping speakers' communicative competence, and does not prescribe one single methodology or fixed set of techniques. Thus, CLT takes context into consideration by way of differing cultures and modifies the methodology to fit the culture/context.

An example of a case study illustrating successful CLT teaching within a specific cultural context occurred in the first and second year at Miyazaki International College, Japan. ESP language reform, using the CLT approach, taught students to learn how to learn rather than memorize. Small classes, teachers advising rather than lecturing, and co-operative learning techniques were employed. The innovators of this programme focused on 'why' innovative ELT courses are important to the Japanese,

since Japan is a monolingual society that has little need for spoken English, rather than on the 'what' and 'how' usually stressed in cultures where English is a second language. This modification of approach for context led to challenging, highly student motivated courses. Although there was resistance from the influential stakeholders, the national universities, who wanted to maintain a scholastic, teacher-centred approach, this programme was successful at teaching English language skills with the CLT approach (Hadley, 1999).

Whatever criticism has been levelled against CLT, no one can deny that many methods of this approach are being adopted throughout educational systems today. In Israel this is evidenced by an attempt to introduce all language skills, including speaking, listening and writing as well as reading, into business English courses in Inter-Disciplinary College, Rupin College and Tel-Aviv University. The institutions of higher education in Israel are becoming more aware of the needs and demands of the other stakeholders for courses that will provide the proper tools for future professions by providing all skills necessary for success in the business community.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to illustrate how CLT courses have gradually shifted from a fairly rigid course design to a more flexible and adaptable approach to teaching. By providing broad language skills that will answer both immediate and future needs of the students, these courses will help bridge the gap between academic business English courses and the delayed employment needs of the students.

However, it is important to incorporate these courses only after teachers have been properly trained and are aware of future business needs as well as academic demands. Therefore, it is incumbent upon the teacher to critically evaluate and be familiar with this approach, as well as being aware of the limitations of learner involvement and learner centredness, and the limitations of the students as far as decision-making is concerned. CLT, being flexible, allows the teacher to choose the aspects that best suit teaching goals and the skills that are most appropriate to business needs. Academic business English courses will be accountable to stakeholders only when they offer the broad language skills necessary to succeed in both academic studies and the business community. Through a needs analysis the institutions will be able to recognize the needs of the stakeholders and better adapt the course to these needs.

CHAPTER SEVEN

NEEDS ANALYSIS

“Needs analysis is neither unique to language teaching - . . . – nor, within language training, is it unique to LSP and thus to ESP. However, needs analysis is the corner stone of ESP and leads to a very focused course.” (Dudley-Evans and St. John, 1998, p. 122)

“Needs analysis is about understanding learners and also about understanding the communication events which the learners will participate in.” (St. John, 1996, p. 6)

7.1 Introduction

Needs analysis is seen as the basis for ESP and CLT (Strevens, 1977a; Munby, 1978; Coffey, 1984; Hutchinson and Waters, 1987; Johns, 1991; Robinson, 1991; Ellis and Johnson, 1994; Nunan, 1988). A needs analysis enables teachers to determine potential educational needs and design a programme responsive to the requirements of stakeholders that can maximize student participation and motivation (Knox, 1986). The teachers, or course designers, however, must take responsibility for administering needs analysis in order to discover and respond to stakeholders’ needs (Johns and Dudley-Evans, 1991).

Given the diversity and complexity of EAP objectives, it is crucial to conduct an in-depth needs analysis before planning and implementing an EAP course (Johns, 1991; Robinson, 1991). When a needs analysis accurately discovers, evaluates and implements stakeholders’ needs it becomes an essential part of the process of accountability and relevancy in EAP courses (Richards, 1984; Basturkmen, 1998). Needs analysis also ensures that content and methodology are personally relevant to participants, theory is derived from practice, stakeholders are involved in the structuring of the course and students are encouraged to observe, analyse and evaluate their own communicative behaviour and learning (Holden, 1993). Thus, needs analysis should be part of course planning and design in order to improve courses by adapting them to the type of learning and training the students need at the time of course implementation (West, 1994).

This chapter will review various definitions of ‘needs’ in needs analysis and will discuss the structure and administration of needs analysis. Relevancy, motivation and

stakeholder involvement will be addressed, as will various limitations of needs analysis. Discussion of needs analysis will be directly related to business English courses. A brief outline of the beginnings of needs analysis illustrates its association with ESP and CLT.

7.2 Introduction of Needs Analysis

Before the advent of ESP and needs analysis, languages were taught without defining targets or identifying learners' real-world communicative purposes, thus the acronym **TENOR** - Teaching English for No Obvious Reason (Abbott, 1980, p. 22) was coined. As Schultz and Derwig (1981) write, "most language planners in the past have bypassed a logically necessary first step: they have presumed to set about going somewhere without first determining whether or not their planned destination was reasonable or proper" (p. 30).

Although the term 'analysis of needs' was first introduced by Michael West in India in the 1920's, it was only fifty years later, with the advent of ESP, that needs analysis expressly came to the forefront. Hymes' proposal of communicative competence (1971) in the early 1970s stated that learners' needs could not be ignored or defined in purely linguistic terms. The importance of needs analysis was stressed by Wilkins (1976), who wrote that:

"...the first step in the construction of any language syllabus or course is to define objectives. Wherever possible these will be based on an analysis of the needs of the learners and these needs, in turn, will be expressed in terms of the particular types of communication in which the learner will need to engage."
(p. 5)

Needs analysis was also reinforced by Munby, who advocated the use of this tool in *Communicative Syllabus Design* (1978). The introduction of CLT further emphasized needs analysis since this approach emphasized the learner's intended purpose for the target language.

7.3 Definition of Needs

Although the term 'needs analysis' has been widely applied, there is a great deal of controversy surrounding the definition of the term 'needs' in needs analysis. Richterich (1983) states, "the very concept of language needs has never been clearly defined and remains at best ambiguous" (p. 2). Chambers (1980) remarks that needs

can encompass anything from necessities to desires, “This terminological inexactitude has permitted a profusion of related but not identical items being commonly referred to as needs” (p. 25). According to dictionary explanations 'need' can cover anything from obligation, desire, demand and necessity, and needs are concerned with who and how needs are determined.

An ‘analysis’ can be more precisely defined as “an establishment of the elements of which the whole is composed and...their thorough examination” (Chambers, 1980, p. 28). An analysis does not only consist of collating information, but also of being categorized, which will help in evaluating and “implies a degree of scientific exactitude” (Chambers, 1980, p. 25). Thus, if the needs cannot be accurately established, they cannot be analysed.

“A course which lacks clearly determined objectives runs the risk of satisfying neither the organization, nor the course participants: one which is based on an adequate survey of the factors which will militate for and against success has a much better chance of rewarding everyone concerned.” (Holden, 1993, p. 6)

Therefore, it is essential to explore the various interpretations concerning ‘needs’ in order to determine why and how needs analysis should be administered. For instance, ‘needs’ may be considered as ‘perceived needs’ when educators form opinions concerning learners’ experiences. However, ‘felt needs’ are the needs, desires and wishes of the learners (Brookfield, 1988; Berwick, 1989). ‘Objective needs’ are factual information about the learner, such as language proficiency, language difficulties and use of language in real life, and ‘subjective needs’ are perceived as confidence, attitudes and expectations of the learner (Brindley, 1989; Robinson, 1991). Breiger (1997) suggests that needs analysis will identify general and specialist language and communication skills.

Needs may also be understood as necessities, deficiencies and/or wants (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987) as seen below.

7.3.1 Needs as necessities

Needs as necessities are an analysis of the target situation and the present situation, which Pilbeam (1979) terms a ‘language audit’.

Target Situation Analysis (TSA) –

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) define necessities as “the type of needs determined by the demand of the target situation that is what the learner has to know in order to function effectively in the target situation” (p. 55). Chambers (1980) agrees, writing that, “needs analysis should be concerned primarily with the establishment of communicative needs and their realization, resulting from an analysis of the communication in the target situation” (p. 29). This type of analysis is called a Target Situation Analysis (TSA), which is the accurate specification of learners' target uses of the language. It was included in Wilkins' (1976) *Notional/Functional Approach* and Munby's (1978) *Communicative Syllabus Design*.

Tarone and Yule (1989, quoted in Tudor, 1996) propose four levels for TSA:

- The global level – specifies the situation in which the language will be used and the linguistic activities required in these situations.
- The rhetorical level – the typical ways in which information is organized in the activities defined by the global approach.
- The grammatical/rhetorical level – investigates the linguistic forms to be used.
- The grammatical level – frequency counting of grammatical forms in specific registers.

It has been argued by Greenall (1981) that the importance and bearing on needs of the last two levels is questionable, since language is multi-functional and impossible to dissect into discrete functional categories. It would therefore seem to be more reasonable to administer a TSA needs analysis based on the global and rhetorical levels, allowing a more integrated examination of the target situation and its needs.

Using the performance-based model of the TSA developed by Munby (1978), a feasible needs analysis can be constructed for academic business English courses as follows:

- Participant – basic information about the learner.
- Purposive domain – purpose for which the language is being learned.
- Setting – the environment in which the target language will be used.
- Interaction – people with whom the target interaction will take place.

- Instrumentality – medium of communication (spoken or written), mode of communication (spoken to be written or written to be spoken), and channel (face-to-face interaction, written exchange, telephone).
- Dialect of English language.
- Target level – level of command of English the learner needs to attain.
- Communicative event – what the learner will have to do with English.
- Communicative key – attitudinal tone in which the activities will need to be carried out (agreement, negotiation, courteous).

The TSA may entail a description of the language needs in real situations, a description of the activities the learners will be engaged in and a description of the groups and individuals who function in these situations. This may indicate observing the places of work and using questionnaires and interviews to determine the skills and level of language proficiency the course should aim to deliver (Richards, 1984).

There are two target situations in this study: the student's present academic studies and the student's future business community. Gathering information concerning present academic needs would mean questioning the academic community, which would include both the English and business administration departments. The English language department is knowledgeable concerning language teaching and the business administration department can offer readings and content matter concerning what students will be responsible for in their content courses. Gathering information concerning future professional needs would entail questioning several business companies concerning overall English language needs, proficiency levels and skills needed in the business community. Gathering all this information would offer a broad framework for course design that includes general business needs. Questioning students concerning academic and professional needs may not yield accurate results since many students studying business English are first year students, and are probably not be familiar with their academic needs. Furthermore, students as pre-experienced learners, generally do not have business experience.

An example showing the necessity of a TSA occurred when English teachers in the Building Department in Ngee Ann Polytechnic in Singapore trained students for their academic needs in writing and ignored their professional needs in writing and

conversation by not performing a TSA. Both students and the business community complained. The Building Department finally decided to offer a course catering to present academic needs in the first year and a course catering to professional needs in the third year (Dudley-Evans, 1984).

Present Situation Analysis (PSA) –

Present Situation Analysis (PSA) involves establishing students' knowledge of English at the beginning of the course and investigating their strengths and weaknesses. For "if language institutes and service courses are to prepare students for their university study, they must concentrate on those skills which are considered most important by the academic faculty" (Johns, 1981, p. 56). This can be a collaborative exploration by student and teacher that is based on conceptual knowledge, which includes what learners know about events and people, and pragmatic knowledge, which is what learners know about language structure and the way it is used to achieve communication.

According to Richterich (1983) the three participants who should establish PSA are the students, the institution and the place of work. In the case of academic business English courses it would probably be impossible to obtain information concerning the place of work since most students are not employed.

Although no uniform PSA is administered in Israeli academic institutions, students' English level is determined by the *bagrut* (matriculation) tests and/or by the psychometric exams. If students feel they were misplaced, in spite of their *bagrut* and/or psychometric tests, they can take the *Amir* exam, which is a national English exam given several times a year through the Israeli Department of Education. Thus, there are three options to determine the level of English. However, although these tests determine students level, teachers can only discover specific strengths and weaknesses of students after the start of class. Some teachers may conduct a brief introductory discussion on the first day of class, questioning students as to their prior English studies and others may give a short reading comprehension text. Nevertheless, no institution actually conducts formal English testing of students upon registration.

An example of PSA was undertaken at the College of Petroleum and Engineering, Kuwait University in 1996. English is the medium of instruction in the College, although the students are mostly Arab speaking. In the mid-1990s the courses had a notional/functional approach, since this was seen as relevant to engineering texts and to writing a limited range of text types. In 1996 a needs analysis was conducted to determine whether the language demands of the students were being met and if the English Language Unit needed to re-evaluate its courses. Both qualitative (interviews, class observation, examination of student materials and samples) and quantitative (questionnaires) methods were used. The results indicated a difference between student and faculty perceptions concerning the importance of certain skills. Students and faculty also differed in their perception of the adequacy of students (the students perceiving themselves as more adequate than the faculty). Furthermore, the faculty perceived student English language proficiency as below expectations, although students were unaware of the level of proficiency expected. This needs analysis project was a process of learning about the present situation of the students and helped refine and redefine procedures and concepts (Basturkmen, 1998).

Both PSA and TSA are complementary since they are both used in conjunction in order to establish and give priority to learning objectives. Therefore, in academic settings, it is important to investigate students' knowledge of English, while at the same time establishing their future professional needs, even if it is in general business applications.

7.3.2 Needs as deficiencies

Deficiency analysis, pioneered by Allwright and Allwright (1977), examines the differences between where students are ability wise and where they want to be. Robinson (1991) describes the process as "combined target situation and present situation analyses" (p. 9). This approach to analysing students' needs is thought to be more learner-centred, since it deals with the learners' demands of the course in terms of their perception of goals (Mountford, 1988; Nunan, 1988).

Deficiencies may include both linguistic and subject matter deficiencies. When discussing an advanced ESP programme, students attending the course are expected to have a minimum linguistic capacity acquired in previous courses (Allen and Widdowson, 1974). Subject matter deficiencies can be based both on subject matter

being learned within the academic institution and subject matter for the professional target situation. As Chamberlain (1980) notes, “It is useful if the English syllabus can be linked broadly if not in parallel to subject syllabuses as they are taught” (p. 103). This, of course, entails close teamwork between the language teacher and the content teacher.

7.3.3 Needs as wants

Students’ wants may be parallel to students’ deficiencies or needs, whether in the academic or professional situation. These wants will not be pertinent if students are unaware of what is expected in academic and/or professional situations, do not have language awareness, and goals are not realistic, obtainable and affordable within the business English courses. Even so, it is important to take these wants into consideration since all student wants, analysis and opinions will help and guide the teacher in formulating goals and objectives, conceptualizing course content and selecting pertinent course material (Sysoyev, 2000). Hence, it is vital to make students more aware of language and professional needs. This will create a more positive learning atmosphere and respond to students’ wants (Bowers, 1980, 1980; Pinot dos Santos, 1994).

These various perspectives and interpretations of needs must be considered before devising and administering a needs analysis. The objective of the course should be determined beforehand, and, as this study will demonstrate, it is important to advise the learners of these objectives. Once this is established, a needs analysis should identify only the needs that can be satisfied within the course design. For example, if the course is meant to deal only with present academic needs, a TSA should be conducted that only investigates the academic needs of the students. Furthermore, it is essential to establish objective needs since they are always useful, if not necessary, and felt and subjective needs may be obtained through discussion and negotiation. It is also necessary, as mentioned above, to differentiate between the students’ needs, wants and desires, since time limitation will not allow the teaching of all subjects.

7.4 The Structure of a Needs Analysis

The teacher/course designer must devise a suitable needs analysis that will provide the necessary information for needs determination. When the course aims at satisfying both present academic and future professional needs it is important to gain as much

information about both these targets. Therefore a needs analysis should include the following, as suggested by Robinson (1991):

1. Students' study or job requirement. This is a goal-oriented definition and may be described as objectives.
2. What the business community regards as necessary to be learnt from the language course.
3. What the learner needs to do to acquire the language. This is a process-oriented definition.
4. What the students themselves would like to gain from the language course.
5. Lacks, or what the students do not know or cannot do in English.

In addition, it is also important to determine academic needs.

Since most students are unaware of their future job prospects, it would be impossible for them to supply information regarding job requirement. However, it is advisable to contact the business community and obtain general information concerning business needs. Other information can be obtained through questions, English placement scores, and classroom discussions.

West (1994) includes several other parameters and stakeholders in his needs analysis.

- What and why:
 - Necessities – the type of need determined by the demands of the target situation.
 - Lacks – in order to determine what the learner lacks, you must determine what the learner already knows, and these lacks will help determine the course design.
 - Wants – what the learners want or feel they need.
 - Learning strategies – the learner's preferred learning strategies for progressing from where they are to where they want to go.
 - Constraints – the potential and constraints of the learning situation.
- When: it is significant to determine at what point in the course the needs analysis should be carried out. The possibilities are before the start of the course, at the beginning of the course, and during the course.

- Who: there are three primary parties who should be involved – the institution/teacher, the student and the business community.
- For whom: the assumption is that the analysis is devised for the student, however it must also take into consideration the business community.
- How: pre-course placement/diagnostic tests, entry tests on arrival, interview, self placement/diagnostic tests, observation of classes, survey based on questionnaires, structured interviews, learner diaries, case studies, final evaluation/feedback.

West (1994) has included the learner's opinion when asking for learners' wants and preferred learning strategies. This study shows that the students are not cognizant of their wants at the beginning of the course and may not be more aware towards course conclusion. However, during interviews some students made positive contributions concerning preferred learning strategies. The teacher, as voiced by all three stakeholders, should make final decisions concerning course design. West also takes into consideration the constraints of the learning situation, such as time limit and class size, which are influential concerning the extent of material that can be taught.

Determination of the time of administration of the needs analysis and to whom and for whom the needs analysis should be given will be discussed below. Determination of how to administer the needs analysis is usually decided by the individual institution.

It may be impossible to include all the parameters noted by Robinson (1991) and West (1994) into one needs analysis, however, understanding the objectives of the students, the academic institutions and the business community will lead to a more goal oriented course. Furthermore, being familiar with students' abilities and capabilities may lead to less frustration and more motivation by enabling the teaching of material that students can comprehend. One parameter that both Robinson and West have not discussed is the relationship between subject related material and motivation. Although West mentions learning strategies, he does so within the context of goals, rather than motivation. Both West and Robinson do not take into account that more relevant material and stimulating courses will lead to a more motivated course.

7.5 Methods of Obtaining Information

In order to obtain the proper information questionnaires, interviews, tests, participatory needs analysis (learners engage in an open-ended discussion of their needs), and case studies (shadowing the learner as s/he is using the target language in target situations) can be used. Although Robinson (1991) and Prince (1984) propose consultation with future employers, checking job advertisements to know the level of foreign language competency that is demanded of the applicants, and studying authentic material used on the job, this is impossible when teaching academic courses, since students are usually pre-experienced learners. However, if several business companies are questioned and a general outline is formulated as to business needs, then the prospect of a successful course will be more feasible.

7.6 Stakeholder Involvement in Needs Analysis

Ideally, the stakeholders should be "occupants of a level playing field rather than [as] players whose differing access to power must be considered" (Benesch, 1996, p. 724). The domination of institutional requirements and of traditional outlooks, as far as business English courses are concerned, has minimalized the needs of the students and of the business community. Thus, many institutions may not implement needs analysis or the needs analysis may only ask questions pertinent to academic requirements.

The three sources of pre-course needs indicators, as cited by Richterich and Chancerel (1987), are students, academic organizations and employers. West (1992) states, "Needs as interpreted by the sponsors may indeed conflict with the needs felt by the learner" (p. 12). Hutchinson and Waters (1993) maintain that the relationship between necessities as perceived by a teacher and what the learners want or feel can be contradictory. Nevertheless, they believe that learners' perceived wants should be considered carefully.

If only one stakeholder participates in needs analysis, then the information received will be biased. However, Robinson (1991) believes that needs analysts should be cautious in collecting information from various sources due to the multiplicity and diversity of the views held by stakeholders. Therefore, the needs analysis should consist of questions suited to the particular domain of expertise of each stakeholder. Forey (2004) believes that business people familiar with course content should be

consulted and their input should be reported and compared with those of the language teachers. A comparison of input may aid in keeping the needs analysis non-biased.

If the student, alone, makes decisions concerning course design, even though they are aware at some level of their overall needs, they cannot be expected to make pedagogical, linguistic and content decisions concerning their studies. Students, as pre-experienced learners, may also not be fully aware of their professional needs, as well as their academic needs, and may, as noted above, confuse needs with wants.

The employer may be best able to determine the future needs of the student/employee in terms of business English and may arguably be interested in achieving the best results for future employability. However, the employer is not an expert in pedagogy.

The teacher should be the pedagogical expert but may not be aware of the needs of the business community. Moreover, the teacher may not be versed in the professional content material and find it difficult to transform the needed business skills into a language course. A needs analysis limited to input from teachers is incomplete, as noted in a case study performed by Jackson (2003), since, in this case, the students' views helped provide important and essential feedback that was useful for both teachers and students. For example, students' input revealed the benefits of using grouping techniques to more actively engage students in the learning process and allow them to talk more freely.

All of the stakeholders are going to have their own needs in mind and, at times, these needs will be contradictory. For instance, the academic institution may not be able to offer speaking, listening and writing skills as well as reading skills due to a lack of time and money. The students, on the other hand, may want more speaking skills, (and perhaps writing and listening skills) but may not be willing to pay for an extra course, and the business community may only want specific skills pertinent to their business, but may be unwilling to sponsor a course for these specific skills. Therefore, it is necessary to compose a needs analysis for each particular participant, and evaluate who should finally determine what should be included in the course. As Chambers (1980) contends, "Whoever determines needs largely determines which needs are determined" (p. 27).

Triangulation

Determination of the needs of the students and who administers the needs analysis – the institutions/teachers, the students and/or the business community - is traditionally known as the ‘needs analysis triangle’ (Benesch, 1996). In order to ensure that needs analysis is effective, a system of triangulation, a systematic comparison of interim findings from all stakeholders involved, and an attempt to validate the researcher's interim findings by presenting them to the informants and seeking confirmation of the current analysis, should be used. By using this method one can compare and contrast the varied information received so that no course can be manipulated to the needs of one source alone. This allows all the stakeholders to participate in course assessment and its modification, if needed (Jasso-Aguilar, 1999). However, as this study shows, all stakeholders prefer that the teachers make the final decision.

Academic needs can only be determined by those who are involved and familiar with academic requirements. As mentioned previously, students are unaware of these requirements, especially at the start of the course. Therefore, a needs analysis should be given to the business administration department, and they should be made aware of the importance of their participation. (To date, as mentioned, most business administration departments did not feel the necessity of being involved in business English courses.) Professional needs should be determined by the business community. Recommendations on how to gather information will be discussed in chapter twelve. The teachers should be responsible for course design after having collected all the necessary information. They should be responsible for pedagogic decisions, as recommended by all stakeholders in this study. Student input is also valuable and it is important to determine how the students can best offer positive information regarding courses, as will be discussed. In this way, all three stakeholders will be involved in course contribution.

7.7 Administration of Needs Analysis

A needs analysis can be administered before (Johns, 1986), during (West, 1994) or after the course. The administration after the course may be viewed as more of an evaluation than a declaration of needs. Since needs analysis requires formulating questionnaires, evaluating needs against deficiencies, and then designing a course syllabus, it is logical to administer it at the beginning of the course (Robinson, 1991).

However, the learner-centred theory argues that needs analysis undertaken at the beginning of the course does not properly reflect the changing needs of the learner during the course and it is recommended that a needs analysis should be carried out all through the course (Richterich and Chancerel, 1987), because “as students become more involved with the course, their attitudes and approach may change” (Robinson, 1991, p. 15). The identification and analysis of needs becomes a continuous process (Richterich and Chancerel, 1987; Knox, 1987) which helps administrators and teachers to introduce necessary changes, if deemed necessary, so as to promote learners’ progress throughout the course (White, 1988).

This entails establishing short-term, medium-term and long-term needs in order to cope with learners’ needs that emerge over time as they come to understand how to express themselves and what their needs are. The pre-course needs analysis only sets a framework in which to begin the course. Further needs analyses will be administered during the course. This may take the form of formal questionnaires, with open-ended questions, requiring respondents to answer in their own words, or multiple choice questions, requiring them to choose one or more answers from among those given. The students may also be provided with checklists or rating scales. Needs analysis may also take the form of individual or group interviews. Answers obtained from interviews may include more information and allow the interviewer more insight, but interviews are usually more time-consuming to administer. Whatever form these needs analyses take, course design should take into consideration the systematic consultation between teacher and student (Brindley, 1989). Systematic consultation may be once a week, once a month, or at whatever time determined by both students and the teacher. Of importance is that it should be negotiated between students and the teacher (Brindley, 1989).

Students’ needs will modify and vary as the course proceeds. Thus, the teacher must be capable of, and willing to, conduct needs analyses throughout the course and adjust or redesign the course to the ongoing needs of the students (Richards, 1984). Nunan (1988), an advocate of this approach, feels that this subjective needs analysis (needs are seen in terms of the learner as an individual in the learning situation) is as important as an objective needs analysis (needs analysis focused on identifying learners’ real world communicative requirements).

One problem with Nunan's approach, from the researcher's point of view as a teacher, is that the teacher can never design a course from the outset, and must be capable of modifying the course from lesson to lesson, adapting to the changing needs of the students. Another problem is that the teacher is dependent upon the students, and the students must be totally aware of what their needs are and what they would like to learn. The students, however, are rarely knowledgeable enough to be able to do this, and the teacher may find that the course lacks any continuity, design or goals. Thus, relying on the learners' constant change of needs, where the learners may not be aware of their actual needs, may lead to a course that fails to satisfy any needs.

A more realistic approach to needs analysis is the continuous analysis, or assessment. Needs will be determined before the start of the course by those with the expertise to determine these needs and various methods will be used to ensure that the initial needs are being met. This entails that students are made aware of course expectations from the beginning, and class discussions, questionnaires and tests ensure that these expectations are fulfilled. This method does not advocate constant change of course design to meet constant change of needs, but systems of checks to ensure that the original needs are satisfied (Chambers, 1980). Thus, needs are determined before the start of the course and thereafter the teacher devises a system to ensure these initial needs are being met.

7.8 Needs Analysis in Business English

Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) maintain that needs analysis is more vital in business English than in other specific English language areas, since business learners' needs are more varied and the language skills less predictable. A business English needs analysis may adopt any of the techniques previously discussed, however, it is essential to include a tabulation of information through which target language needs are identified, an interview or questionnaire to establish the learner's perceptions, and a questionnaire to establish preferred learning styles (Holden, 1993). I would also include a questionnaire or interview with various business corporations and an interview with representatives of the Business Administration Department in the institution. It is also necessary to advise students that not all suggestions will be implemented in course design.

An example of a needs analysis, developed in 1976 for a large Swedish company, SKF, can be adapted for business English courses as well. The needs analysis comprised 27 business skill areas, which were closely tied to a set of grammatical and lexical language specifications. Since this performance scale is very detailed and complicated, more refined and simpler scales have been developed, analysing four or five main skills such as speaking, listening, reading and writing or a combination of these (Ellis and Johnson, 1994). Using these performance scales, questionnaires can be developed for stakeholders in business English courses.

A business English needs analysis should comprise gathering information from all stakeholders concerning course content. Methods of gathering information and the timing of the needs analysis can be personal interviews before the course, questionnaires, general questions given on the first day of class asking about past learning experiences and future objectives, general questions given to businesses and ongoing discussion and/or questionnaires concerning expectations (Edwards, 2000).

De Beaugrande (2000) conducted a needs analysis for all stakeholders involved in a business English course in the University of Botswana. He questioned three stakeholders in order to establish appropriate needs and provide an effective business English course design. By using the bottom-up approach and collecting authentic samples of the business English his students will encounter, de Beaugrande examined specific needs of three discourse domains used in business English: public discourse, the way business represents itself in society; academic discourse, a mode of communication where students are trained for future business careers; professional discourse, a mode of communication within the actual business world.

De Beaugrande's research illustrates that these three domains do not interact with each other. A needs analysis devised from different domains identifies the disparities in perception between stakeholders (Robinson, 1991) and possible confusion as to language styles, communication, needs, wants and demands of the stakeholders. De Beaugrande's solution is to open discussions and negotiations between the English and the Business Administration departments in order to identify the skills needed and bridge the gap between these domains. Students will then be able to identify the different domains, whether it be academic, public or business, and will use them more properly. He feels that " a new orientation is urgently demanded that would be

comprehensive, integrative, democratic and socially aware” (de Beaugrande, 2000, p. 335).

In order to be able to devise the most constructive and productive business English course the most effective time to administer a needs analysis should be before the beginning of the course, so that the course designer will have enough time to create the course best suited to the learners’ needs. Administering ongoing needs analyses may only confuse the students who are not totally aware of their professional and academic needs. Students may also find constantly filling out questionnaires or being interviewed for course needs tedious and bothersome. This researcher believes that academic needs should be determined by those with the expertise, namely the English department with the help of the business administration, before course onset. A continuous analysis questioning whether objectives are being met should take place within the classroom, provided that students are thoroughly aware of course objectives.

7.9 Relevancy and Motivation in Needs Analysis

Needs analysis should lead to course relevancy and a high degree of learner motivation and success in learning. Kennedy (1980) has identified two reasons for lack of student motivation. Firstly, English is a mandatory course, which many students resent studying. Secondly, students may approach the course with negative attitudes caused by previous English courses that were either irrelevant or boring. However, if the courses are relevant, students will be more motivated (Kennedy, 1980). A needs analysis can determine what material is pertinent, not only to the institutions of higher education, but also to the students and the business community. If students feel a direct involvement with the course, as well as understanding the relevancy to their present academic and future profession, they will be more motivated to learn.

7.10 Limitations of the Needs Analysis

Needs analysis is not without its limitations. Firstly, it is difficult to predict with any degree of accuracy just what learners' needs will be in their future profession since they are pre-experienced learners. Furthermore, most learners are taught in groups, and groups are not always homogeneous. In spite of the fact that there are models, such as Munby's (1978), for defining individual needs, it is difficult to adapt them for

group requirements. In addition, there is no foolproof method of collecting and analysing data on needs. Much depends upon subjective judgment and some of the information necessary for carrying out the analysis may be inaccurate or missing.

In addition, a description of needs is static rather than dynamic since there is a difference between the analysed needs of the learners and their needs as perceived by themselves that evolves during the course. Finally, a needs analysis may involve a range of functions and concepts which, when turned into language forms, cannot be organized into a coherent teaching sequence. The needs analysis tends to reinforce the product view of learning rather than the process view (Cunningsworth, 1983; Maley, 1999).

Transience, or change during the time the course is being taught, is also a limitation. These transient factors are those that are extraneous to language learning, those inherent in the learner, and those resulting from error or mismanagement of the TSA (Chambers, 1980).

Bearing in mind these limitations, it is still important to determine stakeholders needs in order to achieve effective instructional outcomes. Since educators traditionally rely on their perceived academic needs in specifying learners' felt academic needs, an empirical validation of all stakeholders needs is essential in order to get a more objective view of course design. The determination of the how, what, when and who of needs analysis will establish the effectiveness of the needs analysis and eventually the course.

7.11 Conclusion

Needs analysis helps course designers determine what to incorporate in the course to make it more relevant and accountable to the stakeholders. A constant and ongoing analysis of both academic and business community needs, along with institutional and departmental needs, may result in greater demands being put on both the teachers and administration. However, it may also result in constant modification in order to meet these needs, and awareness of business community demands on the part of the teachers, which will lead to more motivating courses.

The most important function of the needs analysis is to create awareness of stakeholder needs for incorporation into course design. An important outcome of the needs analysis is a greater sensitivity to the requests and requirements of students, academic institutions and the business community which would lead to successful courses.

It is essential to determine course success through course evaluation. The following chapter will examine evaluation as a necessary tool for determining accountability.

CHAPTER EIGHT

EVALUATION

“While evaluations may be objective, they are never neutral. Evaluations will always have audiences and the original audience seldom remains the sole audience.”
(Hudson, 1989, p. 259)

8.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the importance of needs analysis for business English courses, devising relevant, motivated and viable academic courses that will answer stakeholder needs. At course conclusion, it is necessary to establish if these courses have actually answered course requisites and expectations as stipulated in the needs analysis and integrated in the course design. This should be done through course evaluation, which determines whether the aims of courses are met, the goals of the students are recognized, and the stakeholders are satisfied. Ongoing evaluations are a means of assuring accountability, assessing and appraising what has taken place within the classroom, making decisions and taking action when necessary. Evaluations should help improve courses to better equip the business administration student with the essential tools for coping, both in college and in the Israeli business environment.

This chapter will present definitions, and then discuss the various guidelines and categories of evaluation. Methods of improving courses through evaluation will be examined as well as the constraints to be taken into consideration. An investigation of evaluation as it is directly related to business English academic courses and its utilization in Israel will be presented.

8.2 Evaluation Defined

The term ‘evaluation’ describes the systematic analysis, interpreting and reporting of data used to provide information for decision-making (Goddard, 1989). Within this systematic analysis there is a formal appraisal and a determination of the worth of the course in order to enable educators to make better decisions so that they can improve educational programmes. This is the difference between research and evaluation, researchers are content to describe and perhaps analyse existing situations, whereas evaluators are determined to improve, modify and alter (Popham, 1988).

Until the 1960s, educational evaluations were sporadic and were product and goal oriented concerning education objectives. These evaluations did not take into account the appraisal of the students or the evaluation of the process. Specifically, second language evaluation concentrated on evaluating language-learning theories as reflected in specific teaching methods (Rea-Dickins, 1994). During the 1960s, policymakers started to view evaluation as a definitive procedure for determining the success of a programme and, consequently, whether the programme would receive governmental funding. However, the emphasis of evaluation still remained on the product not the process (Popham, 1988).

Currently, the concern with educational quality and with teaching and learning processes has led to a broadening in scope in the field of evaluation. Educational evaluation is concerned with materials, methodology, teaching teachers, projects, programmes, materials and courses, as well as the final outcome or product. It is viewed as part of a cyclical process, rather than a linear model, which includes design, implementation and evaluation. Each element is dependent on the others and upon completion of the evaluation the design of the programme takes place again, in a modified and improved version (Johnson, 1989).

Nevertheless, evaluation is not an easy task to accomplish, as Morgan (1986) notes:

“Many organizations have become proficient at single loop learning, developing an ability to scan the environment, to set objectives, and to monitor the general performance of the system in relation to its objectives . . . However, the ability to achieve proficiency at double loop learning has often proved more elusive.” (p. 89)

Double loop learning involves constantly questioning and challenging the objectives of educational policy and courses.

8.2.1 Language course evaluation

Educational evaluation is usually undertaken for a particular client with an explicit interest, responding to the needs of the stakeholders, and is usually related to the effectiveness of the programme. Evaluation should be a reaction to the demands of accountability by supporting or criticizing institutional curriculum and teaching methodology (Rea-Dickins, 1994).

Language course evaluation determines whether the goals and objectives of the language programme are being attained and whether the language programme is accountable to all the stakeholders involved. This can only enhance language programmes and allow them to either have a longer life span and not be hastily discarded, or be modified as a result of being outdated (Richards, 1990). Evaluation would necessitate modifications and changes to existing programmes in order to adapt to the ongoing demands of all the stakeholders involved.

ESP evaluation seeks to establish the effectiveness and efficiency of teaching programmes by determining whether learning has been maximized and resources optimally employed. Every successful ESP course must contain a continuous process of evaluation including questions pertaining to course design, course management, validity of answers and effectiveness of course outcome. This will determine course success and failure (Dudley-Evans and St. John, 1998). The teacher's unbiased position in evaluating students' comments and implementing them in order to improve the course will also aid in course success (Sysoyev, 2000). The success of future courses may depend on the professionalism and objectivity of the teacher and their willingness to modify course design following evaluation.

8.3 Evaluation Guidelines

Before designing an evaluation, determination of several factors should be investigated to serve as guidelines for the evaluation. These factors vary from course to course, thus, evaluations change depending on what and for whom the evaluation is being carried out.

Firstly, it is important to establish the purpose and criteria of the evaluation in order to judge the success or effectiveness of a project. Next, it is important to determine the subject of the evaluation, since an evaluation may have one or more foci and it may either be formative or summative, depending upon what aspect of the course is evaluated. Then, one must determine who manages the evaluation, makes the decisions, decides on the terms of reference, selects the methodology, collects the information, analyses, interprets and reports, and who finally acts on the decisions (Robinson, 1991). External or internal evaluators and the role of the evaluator and the practitioner (especially if they are the same) may influence the type of evaluation. This is closely linked with the political dimension of evaluation since it raises the

issues of objectivity and subjectivity, power relationships and the value of outsider and insider information (Rea-Dickens, 1994).

The next step is to determine evaluation methodology. This may be quantitative, qualitative, formative, summative, process-oriented or product-oriented. (These will be discussed below.) The evaluator may use questionnaires, interviews, observations, videotapes, or any number of other methods. It is important to choose the best method for the specific purpose (Robinson, 1991). Procedures for evaluation have changed over the years, in the past, testing was a primary tool for evaluation and today the options are innumerable (Rea-Dickens, 1994).

Methodology also includes *a priori* methods, which involve assessment of an aspect, product or other part of the project by experts in the field in terms of global and/or relative criteria, and *empirical* methods, which involve a comparison of a situation before and after in order to measure and analyse the changes that have taken place. Often both methods are involved (Hargreaves, 1989).

A final factor deals with determination of results. All stakeholders involved at the initial stage should agree upon findings and their status. The final presentation of results is critical in evaluation and may be a deciding factor in whether to take action or not. If the evaluation is to have any value, a follow-up must take place.

Triangulation, a way of crosschecking results by targeting the same point with two or more techniques such as questionnaires and interviews, is advised when administering an evaluation. Triangulation allows for the same point of information to be investigated through different sources/stakeholders, such as teachers and students.

These factors should answer the following questions: Why carry out an evaluation? What is the subject of the evaluation? Who carries out the evaluation? How is the evaluation carried out? What will happen to the results? When these questions have been answered and the teacher/course designer has established which stakeholders should be questioned, both for evaluation and triangulation purposes, appropriate questions can be formulated for the evaluation itself. The evaluation will be more pertinent and valid if the above factors are addressed before preparing the evaluation.

Other factors involve the time and resources available to evaluation designers. The time it takes to analyse the data, take action, make decisions, set deadlines, communicate the data efficiently and revise or modify according to the information obtained, must be considered. Resources involve the funding and the source of funding for the evaluation, which can take on a political aspect. Therefore, it is important to be familiar with the funding agent, and the biases, if any, of this agent. Proper funding may determine whether further evaluation will take place, and whether improvement in programmes evaluated will be allowed. Institutions conducting proper evaluations that recommend course improvements may be unable to improve courses due to a lack of funding.

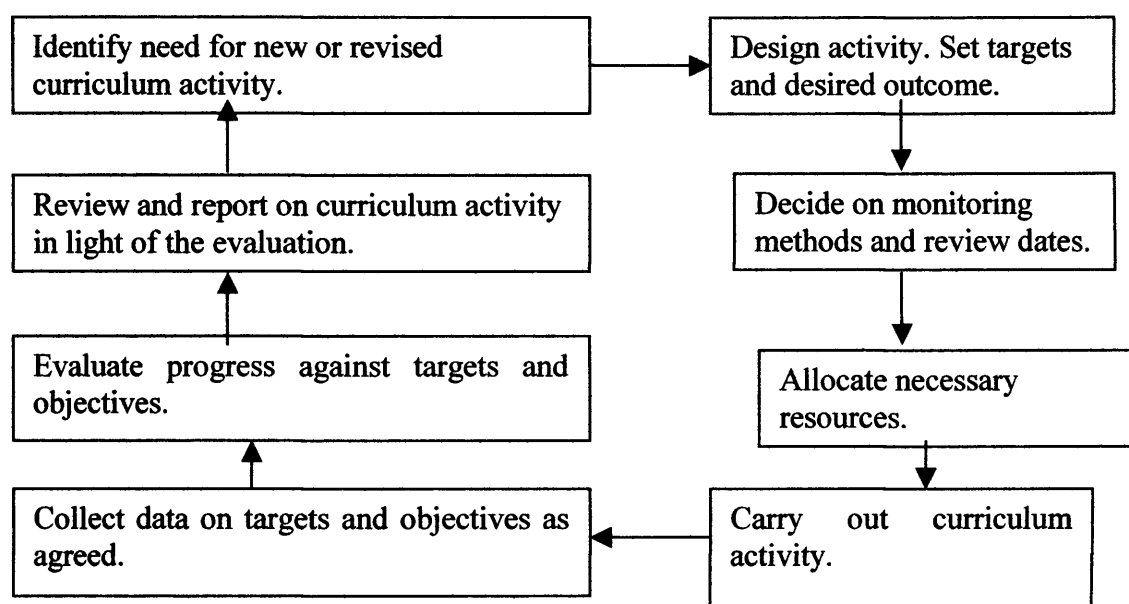
Subjective factors include the motivation of the inquirer, which can bias the solutions as well as the autonomy of the project. Client identity and the purpose of the evaluation may determine what the results will, or should, be. Value questions may also determine what kind of information is sought, according to the way they are worded and what is asked (or not asked) (Norris, 1990). Client expectations are also a crucial factor, since the client, as the consumer, must choose the best evaluator and evaluation to suit the purpose. In choosing, the client should take into consideration the evaluator's expertise and experience, the comprehension of the environmental setting in which the evaluation is to take place, the expected roles and functions of the evaluator, the sensitivity to the client's needs, the standardization or tailoring of the evaluation to the client's needs, the credibility of the information, and the sources of the information (Braskamp *et al*, 1987). Evaluation must be examined carefully for any political, social, gender or economic implications as these may lead to the empowerment of certain individuals or parties during decision-making and are likely to affect the outcome of the evaluation.

Many of the above factors may also be used as guidelines in designing and administering a needs analysis. Both needs analysis and evaluations are important tools in designing, administering and ascertaining the success of business English courses and appropriate guidelines will guarantee their effectiveness, reliability and the accuracy of results.

Following determination of the suitable factors to be used as evaluation guidelines, the actual process of administration should be considered. The process of

administering an evaluation is not a one-step application of a questionnaire at course termination, but several inter-related, inter-connected and continuous tasks. An example of the evaluation process is presented in Figure 8.1.

Figure 8.1: The Evaluation Process



(Briggs, 2002, pp. 170-184)

As this diagram indicates, evaluation is an ongoing, cyclical process that must be repeated continuously in order to assure results. The functions discussed previously should be applied to each step in the diagram in order to assure the success of the evaluation.

8.4 Categories of Evaluation

There are several categories of evaluation to choose from. The decision as to which to use should be based on purpose, subject and management of the evaluation along with familiarity of each category. Choice of evaluation may also depend upon the resources and time available to the teacher/course designer/institution.

8.4.1 Formative and summative evaluation

‘Formative’, or ‘implicit’, evaluation addresses the questions of appropriateness of the programme’s objectives, the teacher’s professionalism and competence, the usefulness of the syllabus, text and materials, the effectiveness of the organization of the course,

and the use of test instruments. 'Formative' evaluation is an ongoing process focusing on courses that are still capable of being modified. The 'formative' evaluator gathers empirical evidence in order to advise course developers and teachers how they can best improve the course and the instruction, indicate deficiencies, and suggest course modifications. This may include needs analysis, class observation, analysis of teaching methodology, review of class material, and test scores. The evaluator may be involved with the course while advising and recommending and the audience may consist of the designers and developers of the course. The evaluation's goal is to improve the instructional programme (Sysoyev, 2000).

'Summative', or 'explicit' evaluation focuses on the completed course or instructional programme. The 'summative' evaluator considers the overall instructional sequence so that a decision can be reached on whether to maintain the programme. The evaluation may take place at the end of a specific course, at the end of a lengthy instructional programme or over the course of several years. The evaluator may conduct interviews with graduates or dropouts of the programme, employers who have contact with the learners, as well as administrators, course designers, teachers and current students. 'Summative' evaluators should be non-partisan concerning the gathering of data and the final outcome, avoiding any bias towards those involved in the course. The consumers of the course or programme, or those responsible for the course, are the 'summative' audience. The evaluation is essentially a final judgment concerning the course's future (Sysoyev, 2000).

Students, as stakeholders in business English courses, can be directly involved in formative and summative evaluations. Formative evaluations involve questioning students on an ongoing basis and can contribute valuable information concerning course implementation. This may be done through discussions or questionnaires, which would focus on whether goal objectives are being fulfilled, texts used in class are helping with their academic readings, and tests reflect both course goal objectives and competence of students in these course goals.

Summative evaluations directly involve students in voicing their opinion regarding as to whether the course provided them with their necessary needs. However, students must be made aware of course goals, since if the course only catered to academic needs, then the course should be solely evaluated as a course providing these needs.

The business administration department and the business community can also be involved in summative evaluations. The business administration department can be questioned concerning whether courses satisfy the English needs of the students in their business classes. Institutions can question previous students to determine whether academic courses helped them in their professions. Through the process of triangulation, where all stakeholders are questioned, a compilation of the answers will help determine whether courses are accountable by fulfilling the stated needs and whether their should be course modification.

8.4.2 Product and process evaluation

‘Process’ and ‘product’ evaluation are two more dimensions of the evaluative approach. ‘Product’ evaluation focuses on whether the goals of the programme, such as examination results and essays, were achieved. ‘Process’ evaluation concentrates on the activities within the programme (process), such as teaching and learning strategies, and whether these activities are constructive in reaching the programme's goals (product).

According the Rea-Dickens (1994), summative evaluation will tend to focus on the product, since the purpose of gathering information is to make decisions about whether the goals of the course or programme have been achieved, and formative evaluation will concentrate on the process, since the purpose for gathering information for formative evaluation is to improve on the processes within the programme. However, Brown (1989, quoted in Robinson, 1991) suggests that all three dimensions of evaluation: formative vs. summative, process vs. product, qualitative vs. quantitative, are "complementary rather than mutually exclusive" (p. 66) and that they will all be valuable. Lynch (1988, quoted in Robinson, 1991) adopts the policy of including as many methods, qualitative and quantitative, as necessary, as long as they are necessary to the evaluation and the improvement of the programme, a policy that should be adopted in Israeli academic institutions.

8.4.3 Decision facilitation approach

The ‘decision facilitation approach’ allows the evaluator to be more objective and unbiased, since any decisive act is left to other parties, as evaluators are wary of making their own judgments. Evaluators adopting this approach prefer to gather information, arrange and present it and then allow either those who requested the

evaluation, or any other party in a position to make a decision, to come to a final conclusion (Brown, 1989, quoted in Robinson, 1991).

8.4.4 Responsive evaluation

‘Responsive’ evaluation takes into account the questions, concerns, issues and information needs of the stakeholders. Therefore, evaluation methodology must be matched to specific evaluation situations of the client, as the purpose of the evaluation is to respond to the stakeholder’s requirements for information. As a consequence, evaluation no longer espouses a single methodology but matches a methodology to a situational response. This leads to moral and political questions concerning whose definition of the situation the evaluator should respond to; whose concerns and issues the evaluator should respond to; the boundaries of the programme and who should draw them; to which audience should the outcome be directed (Norris, 1990). The evaluator must be aware of these questions and the problems that may arise.

8.5 Course Improvement and Evaluation

One of the purposes of evaluation is to modify and improve courses. However, evaluation can be both the instigator and the measurement of course improvement. There are three ways of way of approaching evaluation and course improvement. Evaluation of course improvement is concerned with the outcome of the course. Therefore, the evaluation will be product oriented, dealing with quantitative statistical data such as test and final grade evaluation.

Evaluation for course improvement is formative, and is conducted to bring about improvement. Change means an alteration in structure, use of new materials, acquisition of new knowledge, introduction of new teaching styles and internalization of new beliefs. When these activities focus on stakeholder issues and involve the stakeholders in the process, stakeholders feel more responsibility toward the course.

Evaluation as course improvement implies that the evaluation has an explicit purpose for course improvement, and people who are involved in development are also part of evaluation. In this case evaluation and course improvement are the same and this can only happen when the evaluation is free from accountability implications, utilizes a systematic methodology, relates to the perceived needs of the students, has a clear definition of process and roles, is integrated into continuous course improvement, and

receives external support. These three approaches involve evaluation that improves existing standards and contributes to course improvement (Hopkins *et al*, 1997).

8.6 Constraints Concerning Evaluation

Some of the constraints mentioned by Briggs (2002) may impede the administration of a viable and trustworthy evaluation. The first problem concerns the lack of skills associated with evaluation and the evaluator. If the evaluator is not adept at writing and administering evaluations the questions may not be relevant, or they may be biased. They may also not evaluate what is necessary, such as course objectives, but rather teacher likeability or other parameters not relevant to the specific evaluation.

Another problem is teacher concentration on quantitative measures, such as examination results, to prove course success. This may not be a true measure of course success since examinations may test only certain skills, students may cheat and they may not be objective.

A third problem is the lack of time to write and administer the evaluation. If an evaluation is given at the end of a lesson, students may not thoroughly read it or answer the questions asked. Teachers may also feel that they do not have the time to write up and administer a valid evaluation.

A fourth and final problem is that many educators concentrate on future courses rather than analysing what was done, both positive and negative, in the past; for this reason many courses may include past mistakes.

8.7 Business English Course Evaluation

Schleppegrell and Royster (1990) developed six criteria for evaluating business English programmes. First, there should be an ESP focus of evaluation, specifically in English communication skills that help develop the reading, listening, speaking and writing proficiency that students will eventually need in their professional lives. Second, course goals should be stated in terms of specific skills that students will learn, so that students will be aware of the objectives of the course. Third, teachers should motivate the students with a variety of instructional activities. Fourth, only certified English teachers with a business focus should be employed. Fifth, there

should be placement and achievement testing. And finally, there should be a series of sequenced courses.

The first three criteria can only be evaluated at the end of the course, or, perhaps, at some point during the course study. However, the last three criteria can be evaluated before the start of the course. It is important to circulate the results to future students so that they can be aware of the professional and academic level of the course, which may be a deciding point in choosing the institution they wish to attend.

The criteria for this evaluation are dependent upon proper design, administration and response to needs analysis and course design. If appropriate needs analysis and course design took place, then these criteria will be met, and course evaluation will be positive. Thus, evaluation is part of a process that includes needs analysis and course design, which will create business English courses accountable to all stakeholders. The final process, evaluation, will determine the accountability of these courses.

Another criterion, according to this researcher, is the pertinence of the evaluation. If course evaluation is administered after the academic course, then students will possibly judge the course's success according to the grade they received. Furthermore, English business courses should satisfy two needs, the immediate academic needs and the professional needs. If business English courses are given during the first year of studies, then the students will not be able to evaluate the course properly, since the tools learned will not yet have been used in the course of the academic studies. In addition, and perhaps even more important, the target situation skills that the students acquired cannot be evaluated until the students are actually employed professionally. It is for this reason that any immediate evaluation may not show true results as to course benefits.

To date, an ongoing process of evaluation in academic business English courses in Israel has not been implemented. Institutions tend to modify and adapt through discussion on the administrative or teaching level and through the sharing of materials. As an example, one institution decided to adopt a business English course in the third year that included language skills other than reading comprehension, hearing that another institution had acted similarly. No previous research was conducted, materials were borrowed, needs analysis was not performed and no

formative or summative evaluation was carried out. At the end of the course, the head of the department did not assess or evaluate the course. When this researcher asked if the course would be offered the following semester, the department head replied in the affirmative, admitting, however, that there was no way of knowing if the course content was satisfactory or if any of the language skills had been taught properly. No modification, improvement or adaptation of the course was performed, and there was no measure of stakeholder satisfaction. It is possible, given the lack of evaluation, that the course may have been a complete failure and will continue to be so in the future.

In Lebanon, however, the approach to evaluation was different. A theme-based English as a Foreign Language curriculum was developed to be used nationwide in Lebanon. Evaluation was considered an integral part of the curriculum process. It was seen as a continuous operation that includes assessment, peer evaluation, self-evaluation, portfolios, observations, interviews and conferences. The procedures for the evaluative process were suggestive and not definitive since the curriculum is piloted and modified, which is another form of evaluation in itself (Shaaban and Ghaith, 1997).

8.8 Conclusion

An analysis of evaluation reveals that it is not a singular act that is 'done', but rather a developing process that is meant to offer insights, criticism and tools for change. It is a debate between all the stakeholders involved, meant to improve the quality of courses through critical reflection and experience. It allows the teaching staff, the students and the business community to take responsibility and work toward a common goal of improvement. When Israeli institutions of higher education establish the process of an ongoing evaluation of business English courses, turning to the students the business community and the business administration department courses will be better adapted to the essential needs of those involved and institutions will find that they must be more accountable. Without evaluation there is no way, at present, to measure accountability or stakeholder satisfaction. The combination of input from all the stakeholders and the constant improvement as a result of evaluations of said courses will only enhance student attitude and consumer satisfaction.

CONCLUSION OF SECTION II

This section discussed the issue of the accountability of higher education regarding implementation, responsibility, responsiveness and monitoring. Accountability has become essential to the efficient functioning of higher education, particularly since students hold their educational institutions responsible for their employment skills. Thus, this chapter explored effective models of accountability that can be implemented in institutions of higher education.

One of the dilemmas discussed concerning accountability was the problem of stakeholder power, particularly in relation to students. The issue of student consumerism affects the issue of accountability and the students' role within the process of accountability. Although most researchers advocate the inclusion of student opinion, the degree of decision-making should be measured against the ability to make these decisions. Thus, for institutions of higher education to be more accountable, more stakeholder inclusion is necessary. However, the amount of professionalism of each stakeholder is important in determining the amount of power the stakeholder should wield in decision-making.

This section also explored ESP courses and the CLT teaching approach as the most suitable and beneficial to business English. ESP offers courses that cater to the specific subject needs of the students, instructing them in specific business vocabulary and content material. Including a broader range of language skills in business English and teaching these skills in a more communicative approach will help students meet the necessary needs of both their academic studies and their future employment. These chapters investigated models and applications of these approaches.

The last two chapters presented tools for preparing and evaluating business English courses. Before designing a business English course it is essential to administer a needs analysis so that items deemed necessary by all stakeholders will be included. The inclusion of stakeholders in needs analysis, along with the decision making power given to each stakeholder, was considered. Various categories and structures of needs analysis were discussed, together with the place of needs analysis within business English courses.

Finally, the use of evaluation to determine the effectiveness of the course was examined. Various methods of administering evaluation and evaluation categories were presented. The importance of course evaluation for the purpose of accountability and course continuance, modification or removal, was emphasized.

A discussion of the above subjects illustrates how more accountable courses can be implemented in Israeli institutions of higher education. This section also examined the role of stakeholders in these courses, an important element in course design, implementation and evaluation. Although each stakeholder can make an important contribution to business English courses, the status and role of each stakeholder must be carefully considered, so that stakeholder expertise can be properly utilized. Each stakeholder can positively contribute to course design and implementation; however, specific expertise and pedagogical and content knowledge will determine stakeholder status.

The next section will examine the research methodology applied in this research and present and discuss research results. The research will attempt to determine the accountability of business English courses in Israel to the stakeholders involved, the employment of ESP courses and the CLT approach, and the administration of needs analysis and evaluation. Research questions will also take into consideration the role of each stakeholder within course design and implementation.

SECTION III

Following a discussion of the literature review pertaining to business English courses, Section III will examine methodology, research findings, research discussion and conclusion of the results. Subjects discussed in the literature review will be related to the qualitative and quantitative research.

The chapter on methodology will consider various methodological tools used in this study and will explore ethical research issues. Thereafter, qualitative and quantitative research findings will be explored. Questionnaires and interviews of the three stakeholders will be presented using the methodological tools discussed in the previous chapter. An analysis and discussion of the findings will ensue and accountability of institutions of higher education will be discussed with reference to research findings.

The final chapter will offer several recommendations for course improvement, and new directions for further research regarding both students and teachers within the ESP area. Limitations of the research will also be examined.

CHAPTER NINE

METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

9.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodological framework for the research analysis in this study. After a brief overview of the study, data and research design will be presented along with the methodological tradition and tools used in this research. Finally, ethical issues will be raised and explored.

9.2 Overview of the Study

This study focuses on the appropriateness of content and fulfilment of objectives in business English courses since if both objectives and content meet the needs of stakeholder, then courses are accountable (Akst and Hecht, 1980). In order to determine the appropriateness of business English courses, and thus accountability, courses must demonstrate fulfilment of stated objectives, measure effectiveness and impact on students and the business community, improve course practices and procedures, and adjust strategies and techniques to fulfil new demands, changes and modifications (Anderson and Arsenault, 1998). This study is based on critical action research and will utilize quantitative and qualitative methods to obtain information from stakeholders to determine course accountability, as recommended by Nunan (1992).

9.3 The Data

In order to fulfil the above parameters for course accountability, the following must be taken into consideration: the stakeholders involved, the courses being evaluated, and the need for programme modification (Dudley-Evans and St. John, 1998).

This study includes data from three stakeholders: students, teachers and members of the business community. The students include Israeli business administration students attending six institutions who are enrolled on advanced English courses. The institutions participating in the research are Bar-Ilan University, Inter-Disciplinary College, Netanya Academic College, Open University, Rupin College, and Tel-Aviv University with the teachers representing the institutions. The business community

consists of representatives of banks, hi-tech companies, investment companies, marketing companies, non-profit organizations and pharmaceutical companies.

The courses being evaluated are advanced English courses offered in institutions of higher education. The average class size in each institution is approximately twenty to twenty-five students. The hours of the courses are as follows: two institutions offer semester courses of three hours weekly per semester; two institutions offer semester courses of two hours bi-weekly per semester; one institution offers two hours weekly per academic year; the institution running EGAP courses offers two hours bi-weekly per academic year. The final exam, depending upon the institution, is either two to three hours. The final exam includes a text not previously seen by the students, with accompanying questions. Five out of the six institutions participating in this study offer ESP business courses, and students studying in these courses are business administration students. One course is a general English course for students from various disciplines.

The need for course modification stemmed from the researcher's observation of several business companies who felt that employees lacked the English skills in order to function in the Israeli business community. Also, students frequently voiced the opinion that academic business English courses were training grounds for the taking of 'unseens' (tests using texts and questions that students have not seen before), and ill-prepared students for future professional needs, and even for current academic needs.

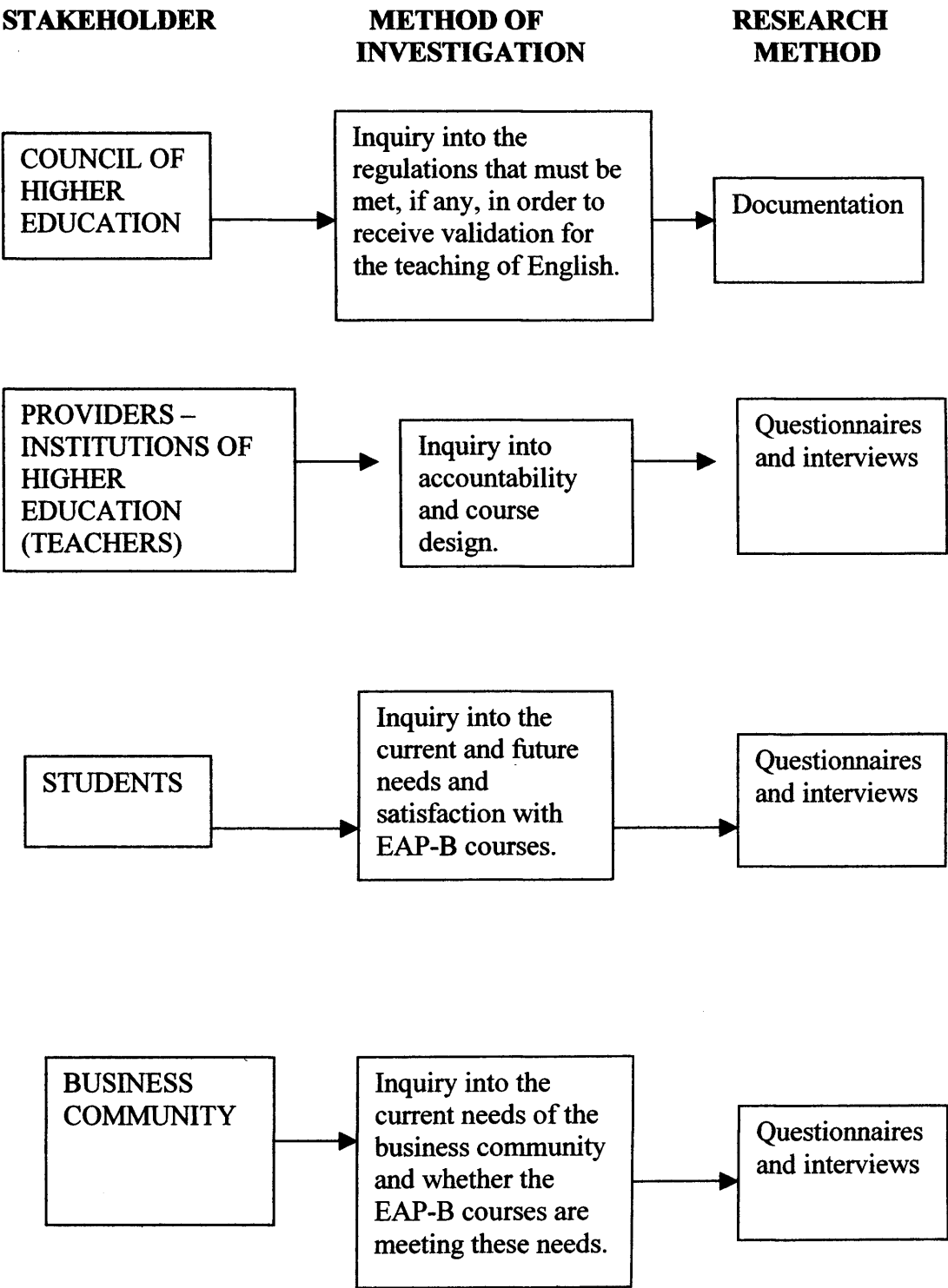
9.4 Research Design

The research design involves the three stakeholders mentioned above and also includes the Council of Higher Education. Given that the Council of Higher Education is not a stakeholder, active or passive, inclusion in the research design is solely to document the Council's lack of participation. This was done through inquiry into documentation and regulations and questioning of Council personnel as to their official position regarding English language courses in institutions of higher education.

Teachers, students and the business community were given questionnaires and were interviewed regarding the appropriateness of objectives and content in business

English courses. Figure 9.1 represents the procedure used to elicit information from the necessary sources.

Figure 9.1: Research Procedure



9.4.1 Data collection

The interviews were all conducted by the researcher since the researcher was the only one who could administer interviews with open-ended questions and answer questions or solve problems arising from the interview. However, questionnaires were administered by both the researcher and other teachers teaching the courses, since, once the questionnaires were piloted and modified, no extraneous problems or questions seemed to arise. Outside researchers were not used since, as Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) note, they are usually employed only when there is a large-scale project with external funding.

9.5 Methodological Tradition - Critical Action Research

This reflective inquiry into the accountability of the institutions regarding business English courses and the possibility of instituting a conscious change of course design, is based upon critical action research as explained by Carr and Kemmis (1986), Cohen *et al*, (2000) and Kemmis and McTaggart (1988, quoted in Nunan, 1992). The notion of a spiral of self-reflection that begins with planning, and then proceeds to acting, observing and reflecting was used in this study (Kemmis, 1993). This study also relied on the eight stages of critical action research outlined by Cohen *et al*, (2000).

- Identification, evaluation and formulation of the problem.
- Preliminary discussion and negotiations among interested parties.
- Review of research literature.
- Modification of initial statement.
- Selection of research procedures.
- Choice of evaluation procedures.
- Implementation of the project itself.
- Interpretation of data.

The first step was identification of the gap between courses offered in higher education and the needs of academia and the business community. Discussion with the various stakeholders was followed by a key literature review. Observation and reflection were key actions that took place before the start of the study, since the researcher, as teacher and coordinator, had access to both academic and occupational courses in various institutions in Israel. The actual research, the five remaining stages,

was the act that led to more relevant business English courses answering to current and future needs and will hopefully lead to more in the future.

Critical action research empowers the researcher to take action in order to institute change within the framework of the study. This study, therefore, will attempt to critically analyse the findings and fuse theory and informed, committed action, or *praxis*, in order to modify business English courses so that the role of each stakeholder in design and implementation of business English courses is considered (Cohen *et al*, 2000; Gitlin *et al*, 1993). This will hopefully promote more accountable courses that consider present academic and future professional student needs.

The concern with, and the evaluation of, business English courses in Israeli institutions of higher education results from the researcher's reflective investigation into these courses during many years of teaching. English has become an essential tool in the business community and business English courses should provide the students with the necessary knowledge needed for their present course studies and future employment. This researcher/teacher has also taught EOP business courses, where it became evident that many, if not most, of the students attending EOP courses had previously studied academic business English courses. Many employees decide to participate in additional EOP courses, mainly for speaking and writing skills, during their time of employment because the academic English courses do not equip students with the English skills needed in their places of work,

9.6 Methodological Tools - Triangulation

This research employs both qualitative and quantitative research methods in order to strengthen the conclusions reached. It strives to incorporate the positive aspects of the empirically based, scientific approach of the quantitative paradigm and the participative, reflective, social approach of the qualitative paradigm. Phillips (1993) states that there is little difference in quantitative and qualitative research. He feels that "the good work in both cases will be objective, in the sense that it has been opened up to criticism, and the reasons and evidence offered in both cases will have withstood serious scrutiny". Thus, what is crucial for the objectivity of any inquiry, according to Phillips, "is the critical spirit in which it has been carried out" (p. 71).

Furthermore, McDonough and McDonough (1997) state, “. . . there is no necessity for research to use only one method. In fact, there are good reasons to incorporate several techniques in data gathering” (p. 71). This will allow greater credibility and greater plausibility of interpretation.

The advantage of a simultaneous triangulation, or multi-method approach, is that there is a stronger research design, more valid and reliable findings are incorporated, balance between an empirical and a reflective method is offered, and the researcher’s view of the study is expanded. Reliance on one method may distort, or not fully report, the particular field of research and if only one method is employed the data generated may be biased according to the methodology. The use of contrasting methods will only serve to reinforce the fact that similar findings are not due to similarities of method (Cohen *et al*, 2000).

Methodological triangulation, using both quantitative (questionnaires) and qualitative (interviews) methodology in this study, serves to check the validity of each method, and aids in expanding on the information gathered from each specific method. It also establishes the validity of any results that are concluded. The qualitative research will reinforce or refute quantitative data. The interviews will expand on the data collected through the questionnaires and allow the participants to add information that a questionnaire may not include. While the questionnaires offer a broader sampling of results, with more opportunity for generalization, the interviews are able to delve more deeply into the subject matter and elicit more comprehensive answers. If, when using these different approaches, they provide the same results, then there is corroboration and the results of this study are more valid.

9.6.1 Quantitative research

Quantitative research is designed to reveal the social world as the objective natural world is displayed. In so doing it uses scientific investigation and a positivist approach to research that claims that science provides us with the clearest ideal of knowledge. It is empiricist, based on observation, experimentation and verification. The end product of the investigation can be expressed in terms of laws that will provide us with the most comprehensible view of knowledge (Cohen *et al*, 2000). Objectivity and generalizability are essential features in traditional quantitative research (McDonough and McDonough, 1997) which is “obtrusive, controlled,

outcome oriented and assumes the existence of ‘facts’ which are somehow external to and independent of the observer or researcher” (Nunan, 1992, p. 3).

The characteristics of the quantitative method used in this research consist of making empirical observations, generating and testing hypotheses, generating and testing the theory, and attempting to influence or change the existing status. The fourth stage will be ongoing and will require constant revision and modification as demands and needs of both students and the business community change (Cohen *et al*, 2000).

In choosing questionnaires as a research procedure this researcher formulated a system of developing, administering and analysing the data from the questionnaires based upon a quantitative model from Cohen *et al* (2000) as follows:

- Hypotheses formulated regarding business English courses and the stakeholders involved.
- Questionnaires designed where samples were taken.
- Further formation of the hypotheses.
- Questionnaires administered.
- Data analysed.
- Development or disproving of hypotheses.
- Generalizations made regarding business English courses in Israel.
- Existing courses modified or changed.

The modification or changing of existing courses is related to the researcher’s role in critical action research. Depending on data analysis, the original hypothesis regarding the accountability of institutions of higher education to stakeholders will be reconsidered and an effort will be made to redesign courses to better meet stakeholder needs.

9.6.1.1 Questionnaires

The aim of the questionnaires is to measure stakeholders’ satisfaction with business English courses regarding present and future needs. A comparison of the three stakeholders should present the differing demands (if any) of all three stakeholders and the possible need to modify the courses to satisfy these demands.

The first student questionnaire was administered in October, 2002 and the second questionnaire was administered in May, 2003, however the data was not statistically analysed until the summer of 2003, so that the interview questions would not be biased because of the statistical findings. The questionnaires were written in English and not translated into Hebrew for the sake of language neutrality. The premise was that all students in advanced courses should be able to cope with a written English questionnaire.

Teachers, as representatives of the institutions of higher education, were also given questionnaires in English, the first language of the majority of these teachers. These questionnaires were administered from October, 2002 until January, 2004. Most teachers were business English teachers, however, teachers from one institution taught general English courses which included business administration students.

Members of the business community, who use English for their multinational transactions, consented to complete the questionnaires. Even though an offer was made to translate the questionnaires into Hebrew these participants insisted on answering them in English. Questionnaires were administered in October and November, 2002.

9.6.1.2 Advantages and disadvantages of questionnaires

The positive characteristics of quantitative data, in the form of questionnaires in this research, are that information gathered is controlled, precise and measurable. It also allows for a fairly large-scale student population in different geographical areas, studying at different times, to be questioned. Another advantage was the fact that the various course teachers could administer the questionnaires, rather than the researcher. Questionnaires also allow for anonymity on the part of the respondent with little or no distortion of meaning. Furthermore, the researcher was able to record the views of those who were directly involved in this research, but in a way that could lead to generalization and reproduction of the testing hypothesis, if need be. Lastly, questionnaires are reliable, predictable, honest, objective, anonymous, and economical in terms of money and time (Munn and Drever, 1995; Ellis, 1997; McDonough and McDonough, 1997; Cohen *et al*, 2000).

The disadvantages of questionnaires are that, although they are seen as objective, those being researched inevitably bring their own understanding of the courses when answering the questionnaires. Also, even though the questionnaires and their implications are explained to the participants, some, particularly the students, may not totally comprehend these implications and not answer seriously. Furthermore, although questionnaires quantify that which is capable of being statistically measured and which can be fitted into a scientific/mathematical paradigm, it is inappropriate to an understanding of human emotions. Therefore, there should be no ambiguity in the questions, particularly where personal beliefs are likely to change the significance of the question (Pring, 2000). The questionnaires in this research have tried to minimize issues concerning questions about interpretations and facts.

Another problem is that questionnaires are descriptive rather than explanatory, and information can be superficial since all data consists of ticks in boxes or brief answers (Munn and Drever, 1995). Consequently, the interviewer is not able to clear up any misunderstandings with the questions and questionnaires are often filled in hurriedly.

Moreover, there can be a low percentage of return (which did not occur in the present case), because questionnaires are often impersonal, and therefore may not be returned to the researcher (Low, 1991). However, this researcher took care to contact each teacher personally and explain the importance of the research before sending the questionnaires. Questionnaires were photocopied and sent with a letter of explanation and thank you; a pre-stamped, self-addressed envelope was included for the return of completed questionnaires. In this way the teachers were willing to take the time from the class to administer the questionnaires and send them back. There was a 100 per cent rate of return.

9.6.1.3 Research population

Two sets of questionnaires were administered to 150 students from six institutions of higher education, before and after courses. The same population of students questioned before the course was questioned after the course. A questionnaire was administered to 31 teachers from six institutions and a further questionnaire was administered to 31 business people. The research population of students and business

people comprised both males and females. However, only one teacher answering the questionnaire was male, since the majority of teachers in Israel are women.

9.6.1.4 Piloting the questionnaires

Piloting questionnaires is essential to increase the reliability, validity and practicability of the questionnaire, as well as to guarantee that wording is understandable and questions are pertinent. Piloting will reveal questions that are irrelevant or incomprehensible to the respondent, and help the researcher focus on questions germane to the study. Piloting can also detect whether the questionnaire is too long or too short, the wording is ambiguous, the types of questions and general format are easy to follow, the questionnaire is aesthetically pleasing, the questions are not redundant and the directions are easy to follow (Cohen *et al*, 2000). When the researcher is amenable to feedback and criticism, the questionnaire can be modified and revised to obtain the optimal amount of data needed for the research.

In this research, small-scale piloting was conducted before the questionnaires were administered. Questionnaires were originally sampled on 27 students (one class). These questionnaires were then collected and revised since they were too long and many questions were deemed irrelevant or ambiguous. The questionnaires were redistributed to a different class of students in order to measure their understanding of the questions, the time it took them to complete the questionnaire, and the overall interpretation and relevancy of the questions. This time, fewer modifications were needed, mostly related to question wording. After the final revision the questionnaire was administered to 150 students from six institutions of higher education.

A pilot of the questionnaire was distributed to two teachers and two business people. The same process as above was repeated, however, less revision was needed. The final draft was administered to 31 teachers and 31 business people.

9.6.1.5 Structure of the questionnaires

Student questionnaires (both before and after the course) and teacher questionnaires comprised factual information, present situation analysis questions, and target situation analysis questions. Questionnaires for the business community comprised questions regarding employment needs and present situation analysis questions.

Questions were structured according to the following criteria: the first section of the questionnaire for students (before the course), teachers and business people dealt with personal statistics. Students were questioned as to age and gender, teachers as to gender and business people as to gender and profession.

Only teachers were questioned concerning course data. All three stakeholders answered questions concerning the importance of English, course design and course satisfaction. Most questions were identical for the three stakeholders in order to compare and contrast answers.

9.6.1.6 Types of questions

Questionnaires were based on Mackay's (1978) study identifying provision of ESP courses in English language teaching programmes and Basturkmen's (1998) questionnaires for the College of Petroleum and Engineering in Kuwait University (see Appendix 2). Basturkmen's study included questions dealing with background information, English use, language needs in college and opinions regarding English language teaching while Mackay's study included job needs and course specifications (such as ESP employment). The current questionnaires were based on Mackay's and Basturkmen's questionnaires since both sets of questionnaires complemented each other, included essential information needed for this research, and could be modified to meet the requirements of business English courses. Moreover, the questionnaires had been pre-tested and successfully administered and findings were relevant to the study and implications for future course modification.

The questionnaires prepared for this research were highly structured requiring only basic English skills, and enabled the respondents to tick answers without formulating answers in English. This was done in order to avoid any misinterpretation of answers, since both the student and business populations were non-native English speakers. All questions were closed and included factual, dichotomous questions requiring yes/no responses and Likert-scaled questions (Cohen *et al*, 2000; McDonough and McDonough, 1997). Dichotomous questions were used to gain personal data and opinions. Likert-scaled questions provided more of a range of responses concerning stakeholder needs than dichotomous questions, and were used specifically for these questions. As recommended by Cohen *et al* (2000), open-ended questions were not used. This was not only because they may be ambiguous and may take too much time

to answer, but also because most of the respondents were not English speakers and could have had more difficulty with open-ended questions than with closed questions.

Following guidelines suggested by Munn and Drever (1995), basic English was used so as not to create misunderstandings by non-native speakers. Opinion questions were based on the respondent's knowledge of, and concern with, business English courses. All teachers were instructed to review the questionnaires with students to make sure that students understood the language. The teachers were also instructed to review the categories of subjects to make sure the students understood these categories. Teachers were briefed by the researcher concerning the explanation of each category. All teachers decided to review the categories with the students in Hebrew for sake of clarity.

The student questionnaires included the same subjects for both questionnaires (at the beginning and towards the end of the course) in order to determine if learners are capable of assuming decision-making roles concerning inclusion of subjects in business English courses. (Campbell and Kryszewska, 1992). For this reason their responses concerning these subjects were important. The purpose of questioning them both at the beginning and towards the end of the course was to determine whether, after studying both English and business administration for practically two semesters, they are more capable of making decisions than at the beginning of the course.

In the pilot questionnaire explanations concerning the subjects were written, however students asked several questions while answering the questionnaire, disturbing others. It was therefore decided that the teachers should take one to two minutes to clarify certain points in the questionnaire, specifically concerning the subjects listed. This was more successful. Businesspeople and teachers were offered the same explanations.

The inclusion of the nine subjects (problem solving, business vocabulary, writing, conversation, presentation, business correspondence, business meetings and negotiations, reading and grammar) is a result of subjects recommended by Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998), Ellis and Johnson (1994), and consultations with teachers, students and the business community (as previously discussed in chapter six).

Several businesspeople recommended including the subject 'problem solving' since they felt that employees frequently were presented with business problems and had to either report their recommendations. In order to determine that students would understand the subject 'problem solving' in their first academic year, an examination of the syllabi of the institutions participating in this study revealed that students study psychology and management principles in their first year. The lecturers of these courses informed me that part of the course design was to present students, in Hebrew, with several business 'problems' where they must write solutions and present them to class. Thus all students were familiar with the term 'problem solving' towards the end of their first year.

As discussed previously, business English contains vocabulary specific to business subjects. Students encounter this vocabulary through their English readings during their course, and therefore are aware that there is a specific vocabulary.

Some teachers, as will be shown in the following chapter, include writing activities in their courses. This may take the form of CV writing, report writing and/or short presentations (as reported by the teachers). A formal writing class is not provided in any institution. Students were made aware of the fact that writing was separate from business correspondence.

In advanced English business classes most, if not all, exchange takes place in English. However, specific conversation activities are not taught by most of the teachers. Teachers explained to students that conversation refers to specific activities teaching conversation skills.

Students were informed that presentations should include reading skills (the student must research the material to be presented), writing skills (the student must take notes or write a complete presentation), speaking skills (the student must present to the class) and listening skills (the other students must listen, and the student must listen to feedback/questions).

Students were made aware that business correspondence includes e-mails, memos and formal business letters, and any other correspondence.

Students were told that business meetings include teaching how to prepare for a meeting, making your views heard, and clarifying action to be taken. Teaching negotiations includes teaching different styles of negotiating such as formal and informal, positional and co-operative. Teaching can cover a range of skills including active listening and responding.

Since reading is taught in all academic institutions students were aware of the requirements and the fact that reading was subject specific to business topics.

Students were told that grammar areas to be included would emphasize modals, agreeing and disagreeing, ability and inability, and other points related to business. It would not be a review of grammar taught in high school.

9.6.1.7 Scales of measurement

Nominal Scale (yes/no questions) was used to gain quick and easy responses to factual questions such as gender, course data and subjects included. Questions concerning opinion (such as the necessity to study English) used nominal scale for clarity reasons.

Ordinal scale measured variables which can be given ranking but where the actual score itself is not given. This was only used with student's age.

Interval scale provided information on the rankings of scores and indicated the distance between the scores. This was used to gain better perception of whether the course answered the needs of the stakeholders.

9.6.1.8 Research methods

SPSS - Statistical data was analysed using the statistical program SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), since it is easy to use, accurate and quite popular.

The data for the SPSS was encoded as follows:

Institutions: 1 – Bar-Ilan University; 2 – Tel-Aviv University; 3 – Open University; 4 – Inter-Disciplinary College; 5 – Ruppin College; 6 – Netanya College

Gender: Male – 1; Female – 2

Age: 20 to 25 – 1; 26 to 30 – 2; 31 to 40 – 3; 41 to 56 – 4

Every year – 1; Every two to five years – 2; Rarely – 3; Never – 4

Yes – 1; No – 2.

Strongly agree – 5; Agree – 4; Neither agree nor disagree – 3; Disagree – 2; Strongly disagree – 1

Check – 1; Empty – 2 (Teachers' questionnaire, question 12; Business questionnaire, question 6)

Questionnaires were numerically encoded: Students from one to one hundred and fifty; Teachers from one to thirty-one; Businesspeople from one to thirty-one.

Frequencies – The frequency table showed the distribution of answers between different categories of a variable, count and percentages where one stakeholder was questioned.

Cross tabulation – Since three stakeholders and four sets of questionnaires were tabulated, cross-tabulation calculated the responses of these groups and blocked them together, plotting one question against another. In this way different kinds of divisions in the block of responses were analysed. Cross-tabulation is a valuable tool since it can be used to look at complicated divisions of several questions, and intersections of several questions, although this level of complexity was not necessary in this research. However, in practice it is impossible to represent more than four levels and difficult to conceptualize on paper (McDonough and McDonough, 1997).

Chi-Square (χ^2) - This statistic is used to measure the difference between a statistically generated expected and an actual result to see if there is an actual difference between them. In this study, chi-square showed significant differences between stakeholders' preference of subject inclusion and opinion relating to course satisfaction. A significant level of 0.05 was used since this is commonly interpreted by social scientists as justification for rejecting the null hypothesis that the low variable is unrelated (that is, only randomly related) to the column variable.

It is important to note, however, that statistical significance on its own has been seen as an unacceptable index of effect because it depends on sample size. Information required with significance is *effect size* (how much difference they make rather than only in terms of whether or not the effects are statistically significant at some arbitrary level.) Effect size makes it easier to concentrate on the educational significance of a finding rather than trying to assess its importance by its statistical significance (Cohen *et al*, 2000).

t-test – This test measures the difference between the means of two samples on one occasion so as to decide which sample better complies with the statement under investigation. The disadvantage of the t-test is that it can compare only two samples. In this research a significance level of 0.05 was used.

The calculation of the mean was based on the numbers one through five (Strongly agree – 5; Agree – 4; Neither agree nor disagree – 3; Disagree – 2; Strongly disagree – 1). The mean closest to five represents the sample that better complies with the statement.

ANOVA – ANOVA is an acronym for "ANalysis Of VAriance," a statistical technique that separates the variation in an experiment into categories relating to the causes of the variation. ANOVA is used in this study in order to determine the difference in the mean of the question presented between three groups. The ability of ANOVA to test the significance of interaction between more than two variables is its great strength. In this research a significant level of 0.05 was used.

9.6.2 Qualitative research

According to Rea-Dickens and Germaine (1992) qualitative data gathering is descriptive and more beneficial to the teacher. Blue and Grundy (1996) and Murphy (1996) feel that a balance should exist between quantitative and qualitative research. The qualitative research conducted in this study aimed at eliciting personal perceptions of the stakeholders regarding business English courses (Anderson and Arsenault, 1998). Qualitative research methods were used in order to compare and contrast beliefs concerning business English courses and the importance of English in Israeli academia and the business community. Interviews provide a more in-depth accounting of the particular interviewee's subjective feelings. The emphasis is on observation and interpretation and reality is the perception of the interviewee along with the interpretation of the interviewer. Therefore, the results give a more focused, deep and rich outcome that will be used to enhance the quantitative results.

9.6.2.1 Interviews

Interviews were the qualitative tool used as a method of extracting more information from a select number of participants and enhancing the interpretation of the quantitative results, as mentioned in the description of triangulation. Interviews enable

the objects of the research to speak for themselves. Although the interviews were structured so that the answers were relevant to the research at hand, the interviewees were able to expound on their ideas and bring in relevant anecdotes to strengthen their positions. They were also able to bring a deeper significance to the researcher's questions, rather than draw on generalization. However, the number of people interviewed was on too small a scale to make broad generalizations for the future of business English courses, and, although there is a uniqueness to each participant, it is important to find the link that supports or denies the general hypothesis (Pring, 2000).

McDonough and McDonough (1997) state that since qualitative research relies on tools such as interviews, plausibility must be ensured through the following rules:

- "Evidence must be adequate in amount to support the interpretations.
- Evidence should come from a variety of data types.
- Data must have good 'interpretive status'. Researchers have to guard against misunderstanding features in the data.
- Disconfirming evidence should be included.
- Discrepant cases should be analyzed carefully." (p. 53)

The aim of the interviews is to let the objects of the research (the stakeholders) speak for themselves (Pring, 2000). The interviews in this research were used in an ancillary role in order to check, expand and triangulate the data gathered from the questionnaires. Interviews allow for an amount of trust and personal contact that the questionnaires do not. Even though interviews may at first elicit wariness and distrust, some respondents prefer the interview since it eventually allows for a free-flow of information that is more personalized than the questionnaire (McDonough and McDonough, 1997).

The type of interview chosen for this study was a semi-structured interview as described by McDonough and McDonough (1997) since it contains an overall structure but allows a great deal of flexibility. All interviewees of each group were asked the same basic questions in order to increase the comparability of responses. Although, as Cohen *et al* (2000) contend, this may constrain and limit the relevance of the questions and answers, this was not the case in this study, since each stakeholder group was asked particular questions that were relevant to their particular group. Although there were basic questions that were pre-determined, respondents

expounded on questions that were of interest to them, and questions and information were added where the respondent and the interviewer felt it was necessary.

9.6.2.2 Research population

Interviews were conducted with five students, five teachers and five business people chosen at random. The five students came from five different institutions of higher education, the five teachers came from five different institutions of higher education and the five businesspeople came from five different places of business.

The student population was composed of adults of both genders ranging in age from 23 to 30 years. The majority of the students were Israeli Hebrew speakers with one Arab-speaking student. The students, from five different institutions, were interviewed in May and June, 2003, after both questionnaires were administered but before the statistical data was analysed. All five interviews took place before the final exam, so that the students were not influenced by their grade. The interview was on a voluntary basis and the interviewer had no previous contact with the students as a teacher.

The teachers were all female English speakers, coming from the United States, United Kingdom and Australia. They were all professional teachers with many years teaching, and some had even taught EOP business courses in other institutions. The interviews took place during the course of the academic year, 2002 – 2003. Teachers were selected from five separate intuitions on a random basis.

The business people were either CEOs of their company, Human Resource Managers or Senior Executives. They were all familiar with their company policy concerning English and were also familiar with the level of English needed for business dealings and the level of English their employees possessed. The interviews took place from February to May, 2003. Businesspeople were chosen at random, and all those approached to be interviewed complied.

Nunan (1992) mentions the problem of rights and power in an oral interview and this became evident when interviewing different groups of stakeholders. Interviews with teachers were conducted as one colleague to another. The interview was usually conducted in an informal atmosphere and the interviewer and interviewee sat on

chairs or sofas next to, or facing, each other. There was a reciprocal relationship and an exchange of professional knowledge that was not impeded by any question of rights and power. This may be due to the fact that both the interviewer and the interviewee were conversing in their native tongue and both were on the same professional level.

The students, however, approached the interview as a favour to the interviewer. They were either interviewed at an academic institution or in the interviewee's house. Although the atmosphere was relaxed, it was apparent that the interviewer held the power. Four interviews were conducted in Hebrew and one in English, since most students felt that their communicative level in English was poor. They were aware of the fact that the interviewer was a teacher, not an equal. Many tried to discuss their former teachers or grades they received (even though they were told before the interview that this would not be discussed), but the conversation was quickly focused on the topic under discussion. Most did not feel the need to expand on their answers.

The business community presented an interesting case. Some made it very clear that they were busy executives and were granting the interviewer a favour by being interviewed. In all cases the interviewer sat on the other side of a desk, which immediately made the roles of interviewer and interviewee ambiguous. In some cases, the respondents insisted on answering phone calls in the middle of the interview. Before the formal interview the study was discussed, as was the reason for the interview. Some insisted on being interviewed in English (even though it was not their native language) and felt proud of this accomplishment; others spoke in Hebrew. The interviewer was allotted a 20-minute space of time, however, some of the respondents chose to elaborate on their answers and even touched on philosophical questions such as the place of academia and its relevance to today's world. After the interview many asked if they had responded the way the interviewer wanted them to (as if this were a test) and some said that they would complete the questionnaire when they had more free time, reminding the interviewer of their busy schedule.

Before all interviews the respondents were briefed as to the nature of the research and the reason for interviewing the particular respondent. Confidentiality was assured, although none of the respondents was worried about this item. All interviews were tape-recorded so that the interviewer would be free to make eye contact and

concentrate on the respondents rather than on paper and pencil. All questions were open-ended, except for data concerning the respondent.

9.6.2.3 Advantages and disadvantages of interviews

The advantage of the interview is that there is a greater insight and depth in the information obtained and opportunities for probing and asking further questions are available. If there are any ambiguities or questions, the interviewer is able to cope with the problem immediately and maximize the usefulness of the data. In this research, since the interview was one-to-one, the interviewer was sensitive to any individual nuances and emphases in the conversation. Normal conversational language, with all its freedom and sensitivity, was utilized. It was a more personal context for information exchange and allowed the respondent to feel more relaxed (McDonough and McDonough, 1997).

The advantage of the semi-structured interview, the form of interview chosen for this particular research, is that it gives the interviewer a degree of power and control over the interview. In this way the respondent cannot be sidetracked into areas that are irrelevant to the study (such as teacher evaluation, non-participation of the place of work in business courses, or teachers' inability to cope with material). The interviewer also had a great deal of flexibility to expand on certain subjects when necessary and limit other subjects that were irrelevant or of no interest to the particular respondent. Finally, in this research it allowed the interviewer to view a personal side of the respondent and his/her attitude toward the subject of business English courses and toward the concept of accountability and change within the academic community (Nunan, 1992).

On the other hand, the interview is prone to subjectivity and bias on the part of the interviewer and the interviewee may be influenced or led to answer the questions in a way they think the interviewer would like, thus the business peoples' question concerning whether they answered in the correct manner.

9.6.2.4 Piloting of interviews

Pilot interviews were conducted with one representative from each stakeholder group in order to guarantee that interviewees would understand the questions and answer them freely. Feedback from the stakeholders was an important factor in including or

discarding certain questions, and any ambiguous questions were redesigned. Redundant questions were removed, and timing, an important element in interviews, was carefully measured.

9.7 Ethics

Educational research should address certain ethical issues regarding collection, interpretation and publication of the research findings. This research has dealt with the following ethical issues based on those cited by McDonough and McDonough (1997) and Cohen *et al* (2000).

- **Access to the situation in which the research is to take place.** The researcher gained verbal permission from coordinators of the English Department in all institutions regarding administering questionnaires and conducting interviews of students and teachers. In addition, all teachers agreed to distribute the questionnaires to their students and allow students to be interviewed.

Since the business people approached were either CEOs of their own companies or senior management, the researcher needed their agreement alone, and did not have to gain permission from a higher authority.

Everyone approached to complete a questionnaire or be interviewed, agreed.

- **Protection of the clients who provide the data.** All participants in the research were guaranteed confidentiality.
- **Protection of the validity of the data collected.** All interviews were recorded and interviewees were asked if they would want to check the transcript of the interview before it was included in the research. All participants were assured that they had free access to read over the results.
- **Information provided in advance of the study.** All participants were provided a detailed explanation as to the nature of the study, and what types of questions would be asked where the interview was concerned.
- **Ownership of the data.** All participants were told that the data provided was considered their property. Everyone agreed that this data could be incorporated in this study.

- **Access to the data.** All those interested have access to the data. This was made clear to all participants.
- **Verification of the data.** All participants were allowed to verify the data they provided upon request, whether transcripts of interviews or final statistics of questionnaires.
- **Assurance of validity and reliability in the questionnaire.** All questionnaires were piloted and all results were analysed numerically and anonymously.
- **Types of questions asked.** All questions, both in the questionnaires and the interviews, were course related or related to the use and need of English both academically and professionally. No discussion took place concerning the institutions or places of business, or the effectiveness of the teachers.
- **Agreements about disclosure and publication.** All participants agreed that the data could be published. It must be noted that not only did they give permission for publication, but also they were hopeful that the publication of this research would lead to business English course modification.
- **Codes of practice about generalizability and application in other contexts.** The results of this study are applicable solely to business English courses in institutions of higher education in Israel. These results may be generalized within these specific courses; however, no claim can be made that these results can be applied to any other ESP courses or any courses in non-academic institutions.
- **Those that benefit from the research.** Participants were willing to partake in the research since they felt that all the stakeholders involved would benefit from the results. Participants were hopeful that this study would lead to more effective business English courses.
- **Place of distributing questionnaires and conducting interviews.** All questionnaires were distributed either in the classroom (where students were involved) or mailed to the participants to complete at their leisure and return by mail. Interviews were conducted at the convenience of the participants.

- **Results of research.** The results of the research will be distributed to coordinators of English Departments in institutions of higher education in Israel. The places of business that participated in this research will also receive a copy of the results.

9.8 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the methodology used in gathering information for research analysis, and provided explanations for the use of particular research methodology and tools. Critical action research provides the rationale for researcher involvement and the need to instigate change within business English courses, where necessary. Triangulation allows for the complementary research tools of quantitative questionnaires and qualitative interviews to guarantee stronger research design, more valid and reliable findings, and a balance between an empirical and a reflective method. Finally, ethical issues were explored within the context of this research.

The following chapters will present, analyse and discuss research results to determine accountability of institutions of higher education to the stakeholders involved in business English courses, and also to investigate the contribution of each stakeholder to course design and implementation.

CHAPTER TEN

RESEARCH FINDINGS

10.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present both quantitative and qualitative research findings. Data were collected from three parties that have a stake in business English courses in institutions of higher education: the students, the teachers (representing six institutions of higher education) and the business community. These three stakeholders participated both in the quantitative and qualitative research.

Quantitative data was collected through questionnaires administered to the three stakeholders. Qualitative data consisted of interviewing the three stakeholders. However, these interviews should not be analysed without analysis of the questionnaires, since there were not enough interviews to make broad generalizations.

10.2 The Research Questions

The central research question asks:

Are the institutions of higher education in Israel accountable to their students and the Israeli business community as regards the teaching of business English courses?

In order to determine accountability to stakeholders the following areas were researched:

- The need for English within the Israeli business community.
- The need to study English in Israeli institutions of higher education.
- The English skills that meet present and future employment needs.
- The institutions that teach English for present and future employment needs.
- The requirements of the students, teachers and business people regarding business English courses in Israeli institutions of higher education.
- Cross analysis of teachers and students regarding business English courses and current academic needs.

- Cross analysis of the three stakeholders regarding business English courses and future employment.

10.3 Background to Quantitative Data

The quantitative data, the questionnaires, were coded numerically to assure anonymity and the data were entered into the computer and analysed using SPSS statistical software.

Four sets of questionnaires, divided between the three groups, were compared: students (questioned at the beginning and at the end of the course) (n=150) from six institutions, teachers (n=31) from six institutions and business people (n=31) from 31 companies. Copies of the questionnaires are located in Appendix 3.

Teachers were sub-divided into Group A (n=16) who taught more subjects for future employment needs (includes three institutions of higher education) and Group B (n=15) who taught less subjects for future employment needs (includes three institutions of higher education).

The students and the teachers came from corresponding institutions, all accredited by the Council of Higher Education in Israel. The students questioned at the start of the course were the same students questioned at the end of the course.

The business people came from various corporations and companies where employees conduct business dealings in English and come into contact with business people from abroad. All business people questioned were either CEOs (Chief Executive Officers) or Heads of Human Resources for their company.

10.4 Qualitative Research

Stakeholder Population Data

Five people from each stakeholder group were interviewed. Explanations concerning the research and types of questions to be asked were provided to all interviewees. Interviews took place either in the college/university, at the place of work, or, in one instance, at the home of the interviewer. All interviews were recorded, when necessary translated into English, and transcribed. Transcripts of the interviews are located in Appendix 4.

The first student, "R", a 25-year-old female student, last studied English in high school at the age of 17. "R" is currently working at a temporary job where she needs a minimal amount of English conversation. However, she reads a great deal of English on the Internet. Although she feels that she can currently cope with English, she admits that she must improve a great deal for future job needs, even though she is passing the advanced course.

The second student, "M", a 23-year-old female student, last studied English in a special preparatory course two years ago. "M", the weakest of the five students interviewed, does not feel that she belongs in an advanced course as she is having great difficulty coping with the material. "M" would eventually like to enter the field of marketing but at present she requires no English in her job.

The third student, "A", a 24-year-old male student, last studied English in high school. "A" speaks very little English and has little use for English at present. He feels that he is not at an advanced level and has difficulty coping with the course.

The fourth student, "F", a 21-year-old male student, studied English four years ago. "F" is the only student interviewed whose first language is Arabic, second language Hebrew and third language English. "F" started the interview by stating that he reads Hebrew better than Arabic and prefers to speak in Hebrew rather than Arabic. In fact, the only place he uses Arabic is when he is at home. He reads newspapers, books and converses with most people in Hebrew.

The fifth student, "S", a 29-year-old male student, last studied English 12 years ago in high school. "S" currently works in the computer industry and converses and reads English at work. He reads and writes e-mails and reads for pleasure in English. He has been abroad and has used his English for travel purposes. This was the only student interview conducted in English.

The first language of all students, except for "F", is Hebrew and their second language is English. All interviews, except for "S", were conducted in Hebrew.

Four of the five teachers interviewed teach business English courses at their institutions of higher education. The fifth teacher teaches general English courses that include business administration students. One teacher also teaches business English in the Executive BA programme at her college as well as business English in the regular BA programme. Another teacher is the coordinator of business English courses and teaches business English courses at her college. These five teachers have been in the English teaching profession for between seven and 35 years. The first language of all five teachers is English and all interviews were conducted in English.

The first business person interviewed, “A”, is Head of Human Resources in the largest multi-national generic pharmaceutical company in the world. There are 9,000 employees worldwide and 3,000 people are employed in Israel. “A” is responsible for 600 Israeli employees and the welfare activities and benefits for all 3,000 Israeli employees. The second business person, “C”, is general manager of a marketing company that employs 75 people. The company is Israeli-based with international ties. The third business person, “D”, is Head of Human Resources in a hi-tech company that employs 1,350 people. The fourth business person, “S”, is CEO of a local, national company employing 80 people and representing three multi-nationals, six foreign companies and one Israeli company specializing in marketing and manufacturing pharmaceuticals and health care products. The fifth business person, “N”, is a partner in a multi-national consulting and accounting firm with 120 employees in the Israeli offices.

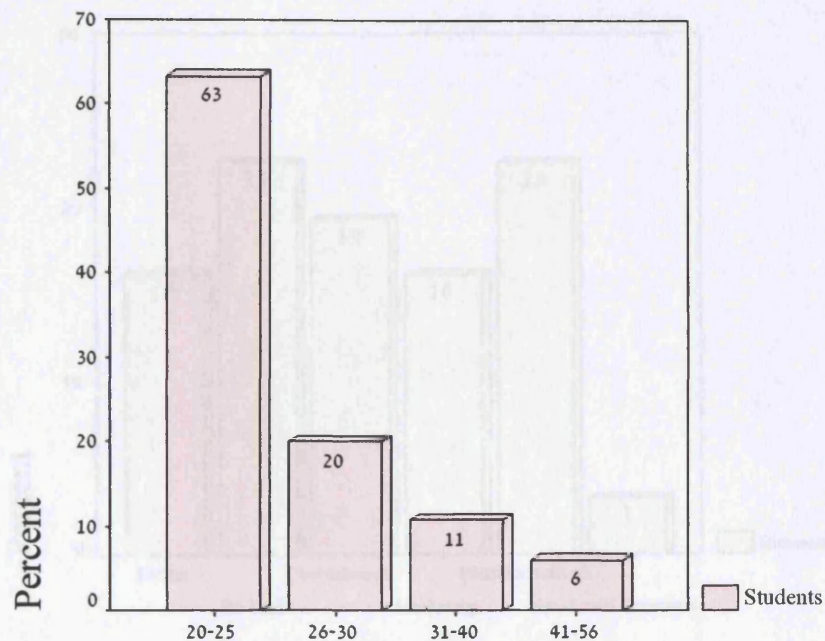
Two of the interviews conducted with business people were in English and the other three were in Hebrew. Four of the business people were males and one was female.

10.5 Quantitative Research Data

Stakeholder Population Data

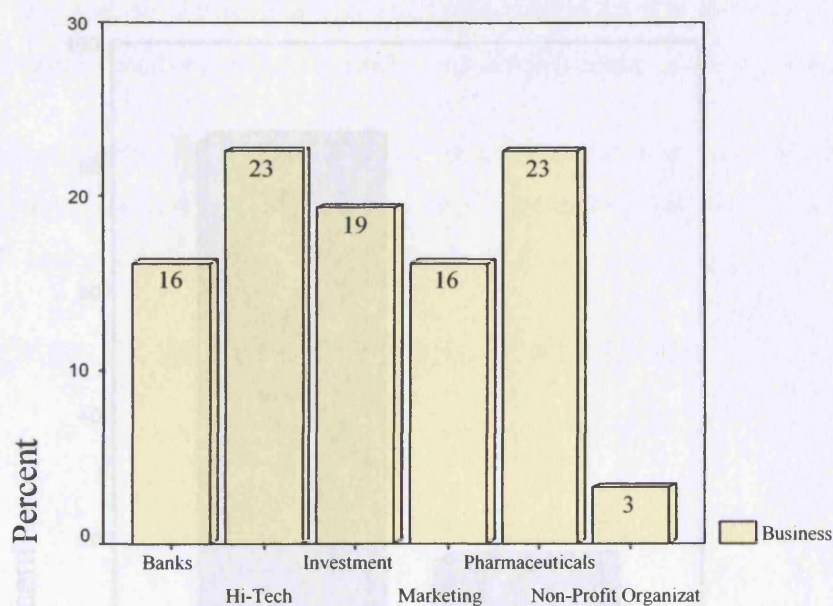
The teachers consisted of one male and 30 females, the students included 90 males and 60 females, and the business community comprised 24 males and seven females. Of the 150 students, 95 (63%) were between the ages of 20 and 25 (see Table 10.1).

Table 10.1: Age group - students



The 31 business people responding to the questionnaire were divided into six professional categories consisting of banks, hi-tech industries, investment companies, marketing companies, pharmaceutical companies and non-profit organizations (see Table 10.2). All of these companies are either multi-nationals or have globalized business dealings that require English. The banks have branches throughout the world. Of the seven hi-tech companies, three are multi-nationals and the others are Israeli companies with global business dealings. The investment, marketing and pharmaceutical companies are Israeli-based companies with international ties or offices and/or factories outside Israel. One pharmaceutical company is the largest multi-national of generic pharmaceuticals in the world and is registered both on the American and the Israeli stock exchange. The non-profit organization is affiliated with its international counterpart organization in Geneva, Switzerland.

Table 10.2: Profession – business people



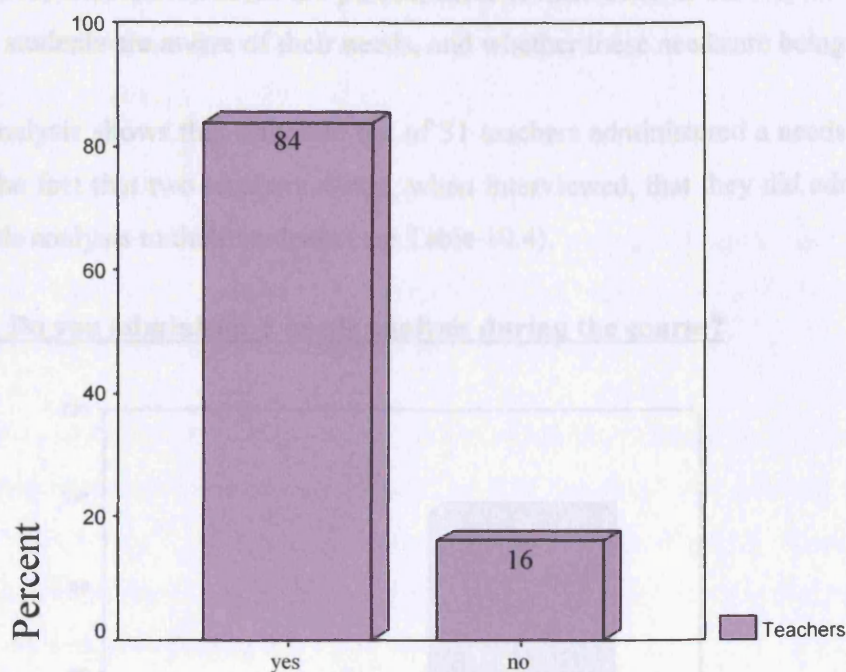
10.6 Course Data

10.6.1 ESP courses

In Israel, most academic institutions offer ESP courses, not only in business English, but also in all faculties. Readings are specific to the subject the student is studying, and, as a result, vocabulary is subject specific. Course books, except for the one used in the institution that taught general English courses, contain articles and exercises developed by the English department dealing with business English. The institution that teaches general English courses uses a standardized textbook compiled of readings from several areas and all students in this institution study the general English course (EGAP).

In this research 26 out of 31 teachers teach in institutions where ESP courses are offered (see Table 10.3), the five teachers who do not teach ESP courses belong to the same institution.

Table 10.3: Does your institution offer ESP courses?



During the interview, the teacher who teaches general English courses stated that she thinks there should be ESP courses where she works. In fact, she thinks that even where there are ESP courses there should be even more “specificity”.

10.6.2 Needs analysis

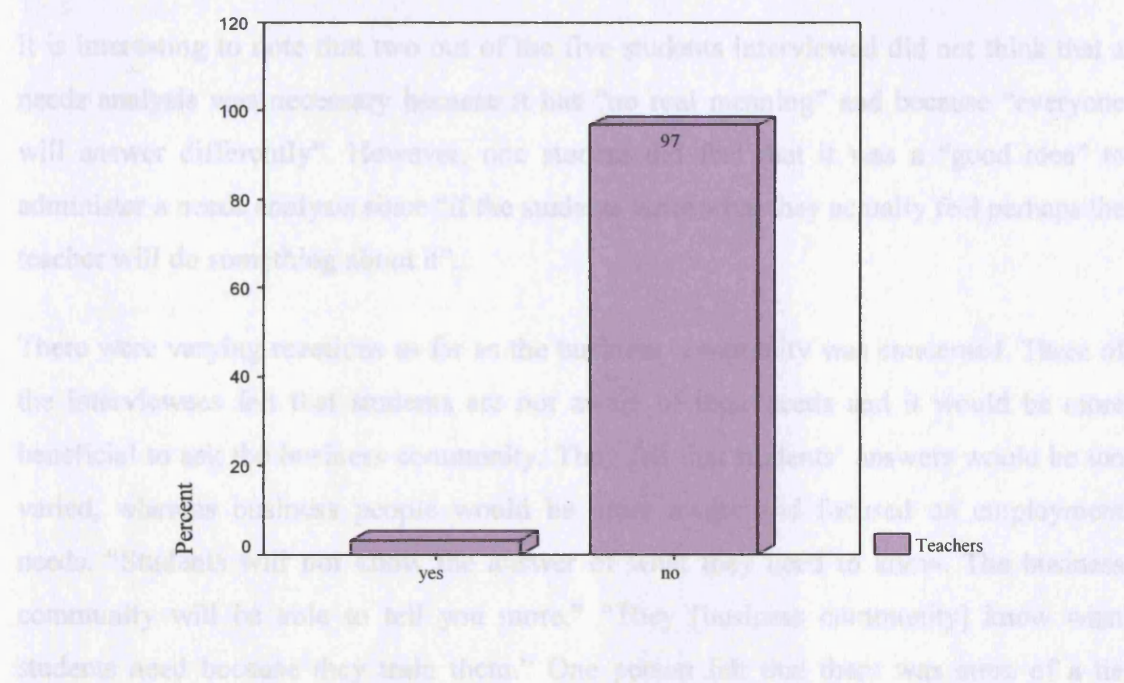
A needs analysis should take into consideration Target Situation Analysis and Present Situation Analysis. TSA in Israeli institutions of higher education can be accomplished by interviewing the business community and the business administration department concerning academic and employment target situation needs. PSA in Israeli institutions of higher education can be determined through psychometric and/or matriculation (*Bagrut*) testing or in-house testing.

TSA of future professional needs is difficult to carry out in Israeli institutions of higher education, since there is no contact with the business community. Academic target needs are determined by the English Department and include reading skills to cope with

academic English. PSA is generally quite accurate in placing students in their particular level. However, once the students are placed, there is little done in the way of exploring whether the students are aware of their needs, and whether these needs are being met.

Statistical analysis shows that only one out of 31 teachers administered a needs analysis, in spite of the fact that two teachers stated, when interviewed, that they did administer a form of needs analysis to their students (see Table 10.4).

Table 10.4: Do you administer a needs analysis during the course?



The interviews demonstrated that teachers were not fully aware of needs analysis construction. When one teacher was interviewed she stated that, although she conducted a needs analysis, “she didn’t think the students are really aware of what they need.” She did not ask specific questions and did not want to raise their expectations since she was not sure she could answer their demands. Although another teacher said that she administers a needs analysis, she admitted it was more of a questionnaire concerning their likes and dislikes and attitudes towards English. She felt that this questionnaire could help her recognize the poor students and give them assistance. Moreover, she felt answers to questionnaires could help change the focus of the course, but never the actual content.

Most importantly, since institutions, according to this teacher, do not know why they demand certain courses and what they should include in the courses, this questionnaire could help. Another teacher felt that a needs analysis should ask for the practical objectives of the students.

However, two other teachers felt that it was impractical to give a needs analysis to students since it gives students too much “autonomy”; “they don’t understand what they have to learn”; “they don’t see the real world skills” and “needs analysis turns out to be a preference and once you give it to them you have to act on it”.

It is interesting to note that two out of the five students interviewed did not think that a needs analysis was necessary because it has “no real meaning” and because “everyone will answer differently”. However, one student did feel that it was a “good idea” to administer a needs analysis since “if the students write what they actually feel perhaps the teacher will do something about it”.

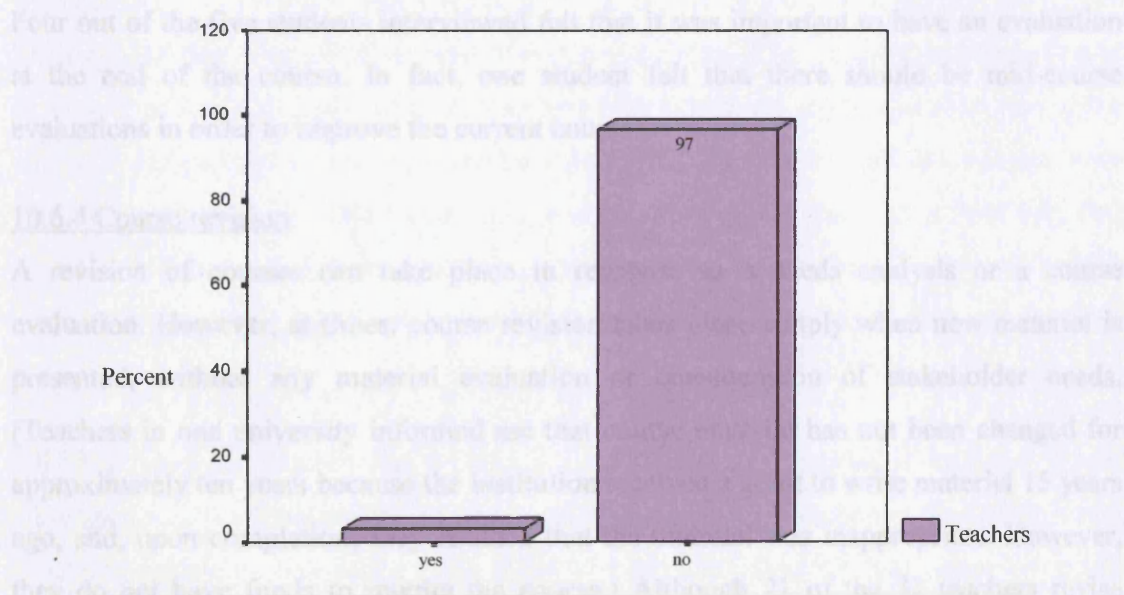
There were varying reactions as far as the business community was concerned. Three of the interviewees felt that students are not aware of their needs and it would be more beneficial to ask the business community. They felt that students’ answers would be too varied, whereas business people would be more aware and focused on employment needs. “Students will not know the answer of what they need to know. The business community will be able to tell you more.” “They [business community] know what students need because they train them.” One person felt that there was more of a tie between the educational community and the business community than between the educational community and the students. The majority of the business people felt that the business community should be questioned, and felt that their opinions may be more beneficial than those of the students. However, one business person took it for granted that the university should have been aware of needs before it designed the course, therefore a needs analysis was superfluous.

10.6.3 Evaluation

A systematic analysis of the business English course should include a formal appraisal and a determination of the worth of the course for improvement. An evaluation of business English courses would enable the designers to verify whether these courses are actually meeting the goals of the academic institutions, the students and the places of business. It is also of utmost importance that appropriate action is taken once the results are evaluated.

Statistical results show that only one teacher out of 31 conducted a course evaluation (see Table 10.5).

Table 10.5: Do you administer an evaluation?



During the teachers' interviews one teacher stated that she normally has a discussion with the students at the end of the course; however, the students' major comment is that there is too much homework. Two teachers thought that there should be a course evaluation which determines what subjects the students thought were interesting, although the teachers never administered an evaluation, nor did their college. However, one teacher felt that "students aren't capable enough to decide if the course was good. The ideal is to ask the students once they've entered the job market if the course they took in college

really helped them. The only way to evaluate is with perspective and if it really works in the real world”.

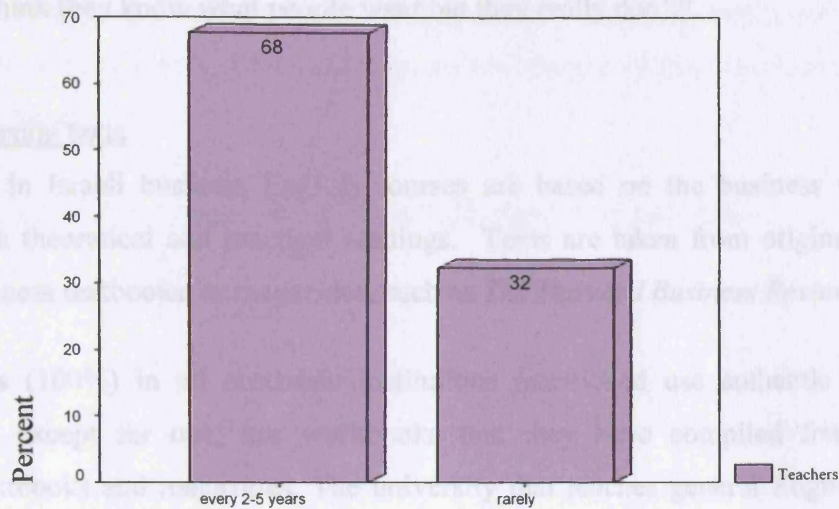
All business people were asked if there should be course evaluations. One person felt that the students alone should evaluate the courses, since the business community cannot make decisions. Another said that the “university doesn’t even see it [students learning to read, write and speak] as a goal at this point”. Therefore an evaluation would not be valid. A third person felt there should be a “constant dialogue between the educators and the business community ... It may be good to bring a representative from the business community to test the students and then tell the teachers what’s missing from the course”. A suggestion was made that an evaluation should only be given once the student started working at a place of work.

Four out of the five students interviewed felt that it was important to have an evaluation at the end of the course. In fact, one student felt that there should be mid-course evaluations in order to improve the current course.

10.6.4 Course revision

A revision of courses can take place in response to a needs analysis or a course evaluation. However, at times, course revision takes place simply when new material is presented, without any material evaluation or consideration of stakeholder needs. (Teachers in one university informed me that course material has not been changed for approximately ten years because the institution received a grant to write material 15 years ago, and, upon completion, they realized that the material was inappropriate. However, they do not have funds to rewrite the course.) Although 21 of the 31 teachers revise course material every two to five years, teachers were not aware of why course material was revised (see Table 10.6).

Table 10.6: How often are courses revised?



The interviewees were asked whether they felt there should be a change in course design as a result of the evaluation. The two teachers who responded to this question were those who said they administered some sort of evaluation. One teacher said that courses were constantly evolving, the other was more pessimistic and said that she is “not sure that anything will change. All the evaluation measures is if the teacher is okay and are the students happy. The administration needs this evaluation on record but does nothing with it.”

All five students interviewed voiced a great deal of scepticism concerning the administration’s willingness to change courses as a result of evaluation. Reactions were: “The administration will make some minor changes, but they will not make any major course changes”; “I doubt whether the administration will change anything”; “I’m very pessimistic about changes taking place . . . That does not mean that we shouldn’t try. . .”; “No one in the administration will pay attention. . .”

Three out of five business people felt that they were not familiar enough with academic institutions and the way policy is made to answer the above question. One person said that “education institutions are conservative by nature and to change something is very difficult”. Another interviewee felt that courses would be changed in colleges because

colleges are more flexible since they are private and more competitive. Universities, however, “think they know what people want but they really don’t”.

10.6.5 Authentic texts

Texts used in Israeli business English courses are based on the business world and include both theoretical and practical readings. Texts are taken from original sources, such as business textbooks, or magazines, such as *The Harvard Business Review*.

All teachers (100%) in all academic institutions questioned use authentic texts. All institutions, except for one, use workbooks that they have compiled from various business textbooks and magazines. The university that teaches general English courses uses a general textbook, written by members of their staff, with authentic texts from various subjects. Only one college uses off-the-shelf textbooks, and these, too, include authentic texts.

10.7 The Importance of English

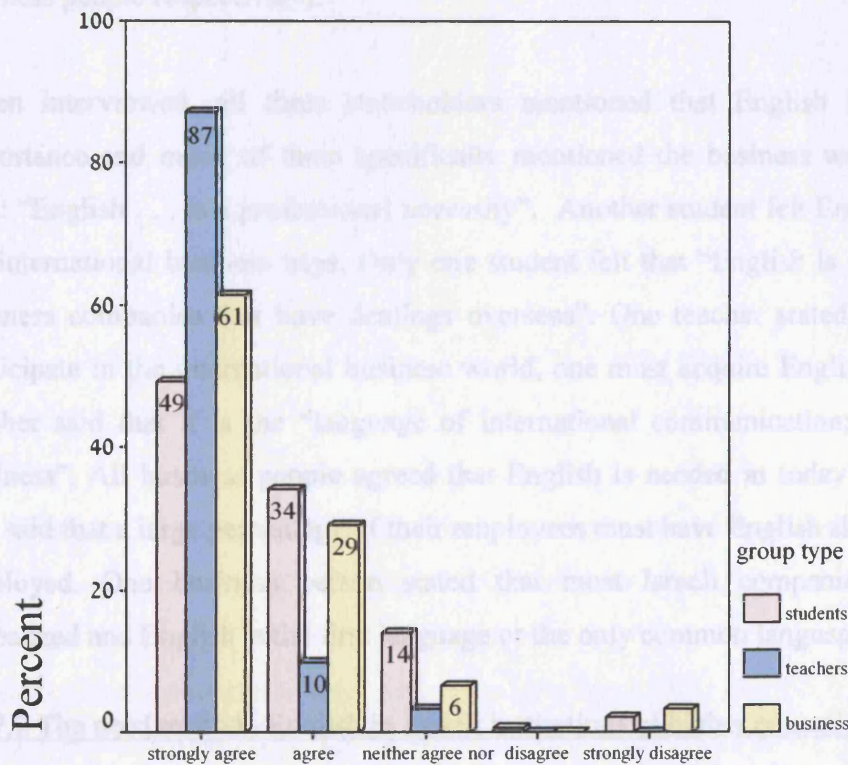
10.7.1 The need for English within the Israeli business community

In order to more accurately estimate the importance of English, particularly within the Israeli business community, all three stakeholders were given the statement: “English is a necessity in the Israeli business community”. Statistics show that the majority of all three stakeholders ‘strongly agree’ or ‘agree’ with this statement (see Table 10.7).

The combination of the two categories ‘strongly agree’ and ‘agree’, is necessary as subjects responding to such questions may not be able to accurately distinguish between these two categories, since the boundaries within the two positive and the negative options can never be precisely determined. It may be that two different people have defined the same amount of use differently. There is much less confusion distinguishing between the first two options, the third option and the last two options. Nevertheless, it was important to list five possibilities in this question as this question is central to the research. (The two other statements that list five possibilities are: “This course answered academic needs” and “This course answered professional needs”. These two statements

are also crucial in determining stakeholders' perceptions regarding accountability.) The fact that 57 percent of all stakeholders 'strongly agree', while only two percent 'strongly disagree', with this statement demonstrates the importance of English within the Israeli business community.

Table 10.7: English is a necessity in the Israeli business community.



In Chi-Square Tests a significant difference was found between students, teachers and the business community ($\chi^2 = 16.431$; $df = 8$; $\alpha = 0.037$).

In order to determine differences in the mean between the three groups an ANOVA Analysis was performed (see Appendix 5). There are significant differences between the mean of the three groups. The Post-Hoc Test of Scheffe shows that the significant difference is between the students and the teachers. There is no significant difference between the other groups.

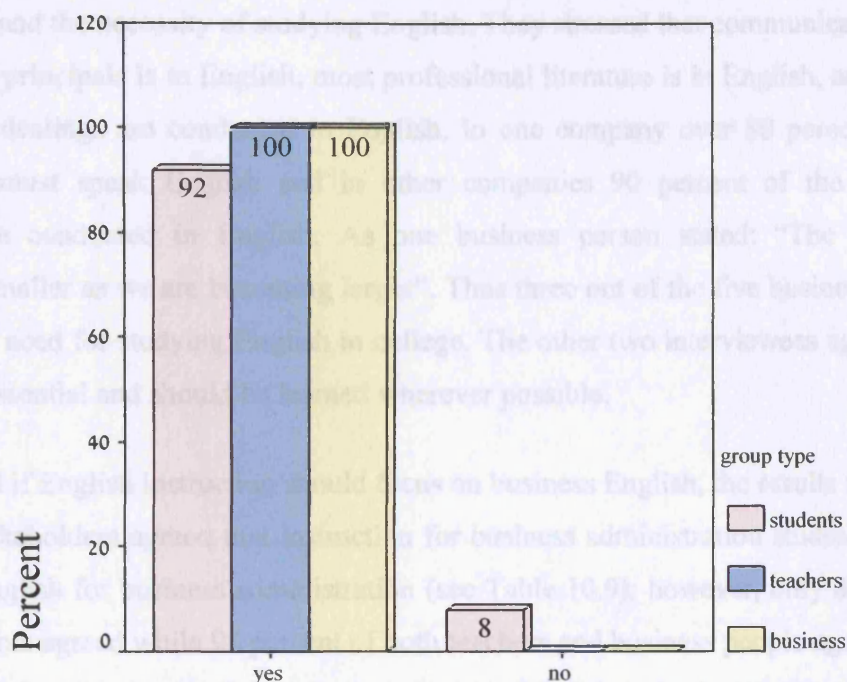
Although the majority of the three stakeholders agree with the statement “English is necessary in the business community”, the students, when compared to the other two stakeholders, felt that there is less of a need for employees to know English in their profession. The students have the highest percentage of those that ‘neither agree nor disagree’ (14 percent as compared with three percent and seven percent for teachers and business people respectively).

When interviewed, all three stakeholders mentioned that English is of the utmost importance and many of them specifically mentioned the business world. One student said: “English . . . is a professional necessity”. Another student felt English is important for international business trips. Only one student felt that “English is only important to business companies that have dealings overseas”. One teacher stated that, in order to participate in the international business world, one must acquire English skills. Another teacher said that it is the “language of international communication; the language of business”. All business people agreed that English is needed in today’s business world and said that a large percentage of their employees must have English skills in order to be employed. One business person stated that most Israeli companies are becoming globalized and English is the first language or the only common language.

10.7.2 The need to study English in Israeli institutions of higher education

Since English holds such a prominent place in Israel, all Israeli institutions of higher education demand that their students graduate with an advanced knowledge of English. When stakeholders were questioned about whether it is necessary to study English in college/university, the statistical research shows that 92 percent of students and 100 percent of teachers and the business community agree that English should be studied in college/university (see Table 10.8).

Table 10.8: It is necessary to study English in college/university.



In Chi-Square Tests no significant difference was found between students, teachers and the business community ($\chi^2 = 5.258$; $df = 2$; $\alpha = 0.072$).

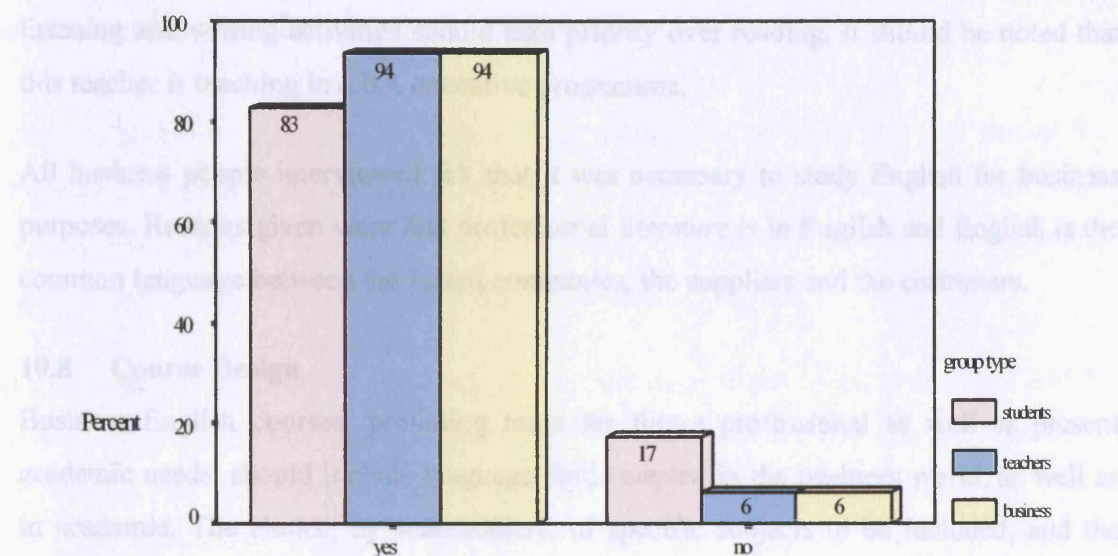
When students were interviewed, four out of five agreed that English is very important in Israel. They said that: “English gives confidence”; “It should be taught at a very early age”; “English is the international language of the world”; and “If you don’t speak English you will never succeed anywhere”. These same four students felt that it was necessary to study English in college because institutions have to produce students who know English and students should study subjects (one student specifically mentioned conversation) for future employment. One student also felt that these courses should help acquire skills for the reading of complex English texts and vocabulary expansion.

Teachers interviewed also agreed that English was important to the extent that one teacher defined English “as the air we breathe”. Teachers felt that every field demands English and students must master English to graduate.

Business people were even more specific as to the English demands of the business community and the necessity of studying English. They stressed that communication with all overseas principals is in English, most professional literature is in English, and export and import dealings are conducted in English. In one company over 80 percent of the employees must speak English and in other companies 90 percent of the business dealings are conducted in English. As one business person stated: "The world is becoming smaller as we are becoming larger". Thus three out of the five business people stressed the need for studying English in college. The other two interviewees agreed that English is essential and should be learned wherever possible.

When asked if English instruction should focus on business English, the results show that all three stakeholders agreed that instruction for business administration students should focus on English for business administration (see Table 10.9); however, only 83 percent of the students agreed while 94 percent of both teachers and business people agreed. This may reflect the fact that students are less aware of their needs than are teachers and business people.

Table 10.9: Business English should be taught in institutions of higher education.



In Chi-Square Tests no significant difference was found between students, teachers and the business community ($\chi^2 = 4.276$; $df = 2$; $\alpha = 0.118$).

During the interviews all five students stressed the importance of studying English business subjects. Several mentioned subjects such as presentation, negotiation, conversation, business vocabulary, e-mail writing, and reading. One student said that the course should focus on future employment needs. This illustrates the difference between a questionnaire, where those questioned can only tick a yes/no answer, and an interview, where the interviewees can develop and expand their answers. Thus, although only 83 percent of the students answered 'yes' to the importance of studying business English, perhaps, once they started verbalizing their thoughts, they realized its importance.

All teachers agreed that English courses should emphasize business content and they all agreed that both reading and speaking, listening and writing business skills should be included in business English courses. Three teachers suggested that an additional course should be provided to teach broader English language business skills that were not previously taught. One suggestion was to teach reading in the first year and gradually integrate other language skills, either in the same course or in a separate course that can

either be elective or mandatory. A further proposal includes a second year course in presentation with peer and expert feedback. A third teacher suggested elective mini-workshops for specific areas such as presentation. One teacher even said that speaking, listening and writing activities should take priority over reading. It should be noted that this teacher is teaching in a BA executive programme.

All business people interviewed felt that it was necessary to study English for business purposes. Reasons given were that professional literature is in English and English is the common language between the Israeli companies, the suppliers and the customers.

10.8 Course Design

Business English courses, providing tools for future professional as well as present academic needs, should include language skills needed in the business world, as well as in academia. The choice, by stakeholders, of specific subjects to be included, and the actual inclusion of these subjects by the institutions, will help determine the accountability of institutions to the stakeholders.

Although an actual needs analysis was not administered to the stakeholders in this study, it was necessary to determine the subjects that the various stakeholders felt should be included. The subjects listed in the questionnaire were a compilation of those suggested by St. John (1996), Ellis and Johnson (1994), Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998), the teaching staff at the business administration department in Netanya College, students, and members of the business community. These subjects were: problem solving, business vocabulary, writing, conversation (includes telephone and socializing), presentations, business correspondence, business meetings and negotiations, reading and grammar.

10.8.1 Students before: what subjects should be included in business English courses?

Students after: what subjects should have been included in business English courses?

No institution of higher education in Israel formally administers a needs analysis to the student population; however, for the purposes of this research, a questionnaire was distributed to students participating in this study (see Table 10.10). Although this

questionnaire was not distributed in order to make changes within the course, the results reflect the expectations of the students regarding course design. (Students were made aware that this was a research questionnaire and teachers would not change course content as a result of this questionnaire.)

Students at the beginning of the course were asked what subjects they felt should be included in business English courses and students at course termination were asked what subjects should have been included in the course. A comparison was made to determine if students' needs had changed by the end of the course.

An examination of students' responses at the beginning of the course concerning which subjects should be included in business English courses revealed that over 85 percent of all students chose all subjects except for grammar (66.7%) for course inclusion.

At the end of the course students were once again asked which subjects they felt should have been included in the business English course. These included subjects that were actually taught and subjects students felt should have been taught. There is a significant difference in how the students answered at the beginning and how they answered at the end of the course. Only one subject, conversation, was chosen by over 90 percent of the students at course conclusion. Presentation (79%), business vocabulary (78%) and business meetings and negotiations (68%) were the next three subjects chosen. All other subjects were chosen by less than 56 percent of the students. This reinforces Pinot do Santos' (1994) argument that only when students have language awareness can they answer a needs analysis.

Table 10.10: Subjects to be included in business English courses.

Summary of Cross-Tabulations and Chi-Square Tests:
Students Before: What subjects should be included in business English courses?
Students After: What subjects should have been included in business English courses?

Group Type	Students (Before)		Students (After)		Results Chi-Square Tests
	Yes	No	Yes	No	
Problem Solving	129 86.0%	21 14.0%	81 54.0%	69 46.0%	**
Business Vocabulary	141 94.0%	9 6.0%	117 78.0%	33 22.0%	**
Writing	128 85.3%	22 14.7%	81 54.0%	69 46.0%	**
Conversation (includes telephone and socializing)	144 96.0%	6 4.0%	136 90.7%	14 9.3%	
Presentation	138 92.0%	12 8.0%	119 79.3%	31 20.7%	**
Business Correspondence	145 96.7%	5 3.3%	81 54.0%	69 46.0%	**
Business Meetings and Negotiations	144 96.0%	6 4.0%	102 68.0%	48 32.0%	**
Reading	143 95.3%	7 4.7%	84 56.0%	66 44.0%	**
Grammar	100 66.7%	50 33.3%	62 41.3%	88 58.7%	**

**** - Significant difference between students' answers at beginning and end of course.
(A significance level of 0.05 was used.)**

In the summary of the chi-square tests there is a significant difference between students at the beginning of the course and students at the end of the course in all subjects to be included, except for conversation.

When students were interviewed (all interviews took place from the middle to the end of the course) they stated that presentations, negotiations, conversation and all subjects relevant to future employment, including reading, should be included in business English

courses. Reading was only mentioned in conjunction with presentations, since through presentations one can learn reading. However, the students emphasized that speaking skills, should be taught since these are necessary for future employment. One student mentioned that learning business subjects needed for employment would improve self-confidence and specifically mentioned vocabulary as being the most important.

Students' creative suggestions included ideas such as sitting in a circle and conducting negotiations, conversations, presentations and interviews; dividing the class into groups in order to conduct debates, role-plays and simulations; teaching English in a colourful and exciting way and grading through discussion rather than by numbers; offering several courses which include reading, speaking, listening and writing skills for work as well as academia and a summary course of the two.

10.8.2 Students before: what subjects should be included in business English courses?

Teachers: what subjects were included in business English courses?

Questionnaires were administered to teachers asking them which subjects were included in the business English courses that they taught. A comparison was made between what was actually taught and what students would like to learn (see Table 10.11). The cross tabulation between what students at the beginning of the course wanted to be included and what teachers actually included showed a significant difference in all subjects except for reading and grammar. Students, as was stated above, wanted everything except grammar included, and most teachers only included reading.

Table 10.11: Subjects to be included in business English courses.

Summary of Cross-Tabulations and Chi-Square Tests:

Students Before: What subjects should be included in business English courses?

Teachers: What subjects were included in business English courses?

Group Type	Students (Before)		Teachers		Results Chi-Square Tests
Subject	Yes	No	Yes	No	
Problem Solving	129 86.0%	21 14.0%	6 19.4%	25 80.6%	**
Business Vocabulary	141 94.0%	9 6.0%	17 54.8%	14 45.2%	**
Writing	128 85.3%	22 14.7%	7 22.6%	24 77.4%	**
Conversation (includes telephone and socializing)	144 96.0%	6 4.0%	12 38.7%	19 61.3%	**
Presentation	138 92.0%	12 8.0%	12 38.7%	19 61.3%	**
Business Correspondence	145 96.7%	5 3.3%	1 3.2%	30 96.8	**
Business Meetings and Negotiations	144 96.0%	6 4.0%		31 100.0%	
Reading	143 95.3%	7 4.7%	31 100.0%		
Grammar	100 66.7%	50 33.3%	7 22.6%	24 77.4%	**

** - Significant difference between what students wanted included and what teachers included in business English courses.

(A significance level of 0.05 was used.)

In the summary of the chi-square tests there is a significant difference in all subjects, except for business meetings and reading, between what the students want included and what the teachers provide in courses.

Teachers interviewed cited reading, e-mails, presentations, conversation and academic research as the current English needs of students. However, one teacher stated that “there are no English speaking or writing skills needed in college” and therefore, students would need only reading for present needs. She continued, saying that subjects such as e-mails

and conversation would be for students' own personal use, and all other subjects would be for employment purposes, if students were employed at the time of studying. According to two teachers future needs include presentation, while two other teachers believed that needs depend upon the place of work and these needs are constantly changing.

10.8.3 Teachers: What subjects were included in business English?

Business Community: What English subjects are necessary for work?

In an investigation of client companies and trainers conducted by St. John (1996) the following business communication subjects were identified as needed for business companies:

Table 10.12: Business communication subjects

Listening/Speaking	Reading/Writing
Telephoning	Corresponding
Socializing	Report writing
Giving presentations	
Taking part in meetings	
Negotiating	

(St. John, 1996, p.6)

In the current research, 31 Israeli companies were asked to identify the business subjects necessary for work. Accountability of institutions toward the business community entails including subjects deemed necessary by the business community in course design. Once business needs were determined, then inclusion in business English courses was verified by a comparison between subjects business people stated were necessary and subjects teachers included. Over 90 percent of the business people questioned chose four out of nine subjects listed in the questionnaire: business vocabulary, conversation, presentation and business correspondence. Business vocabulary is the only one not included in St. John's list above.

A comparison was made between subjects business people stated were necessary and subjects teachers included in business English courses (see Table 10.13). The only subject selected by over 90 percent of teachers interviewed was reading. This illustrates a

difference between what business people consider essential for employment needs and what subjects are actually taught.

Table 10.13: Subjects included in business English courses and subjects for employment.

Summary of Cross-Tabulations and Chi-Square Tests:

Teachers: What subjects were included in business English?

Business Community: What English subjects are necessary for work?

Group Type	Teachers		Business		Results Chi-Square Tests
Subject	Yes	No	Yes	No	
Problem Solving	6 19.4%	25 80.6%	26 83.9%	5 16.1%	**
Business Vocabulary	17 54.8%	14 45.2%	29 93.5%	2 6.5%	**
Writing	7 22.6%	24 77.4%	24 77.4%	7 22.6%	**
Conversation (includes telephone and socializing)	12 38.7%	19 61.3%	28 90.3%	3 9.7%	**
Presentation	12 38.7%	19 61.3%	29 93.5%	2 6.5%	**
Business Correspondence	1 3.2%	30 96.8	29 93.5%	2 6.5%	**
Business Meetings and Negotiations		31 100.0%	25 80.6%	6 19.4%	
Reading	31 100.0%		24 77.4%	7 22.6%	
Grammar	7 22.6%	24 77.4%	17 54.8%	14 45.2%	**

** - Significant difference between what teachers included in business English courses and what the business community considers necessary for work.

(A significance level of 0.05 was used.)

In the summary of chi-square tests there is a significant difference in all subjects except for business meetings and reading between what the business community needs and what teachers provide in courses.

Although reading and writing were chosen by only 77 percent of the business people as necessary, during interviews all business people mentioned them as being necessary for business communication. The contradiction in business people's written and spoken responses may be the difference between a questionnaire, where reading was the next to last item and therefore may have held less prominence, and a face-to-face interview, which allows discussion and interpretation of topics.

Four out of five business people see reading as necessary to cope with foreign correspondence and professional articles. Writing was mentioned as necessary for e-mails, report writing and correspondence. All companies mentioned the speaking skills. One company demands that product managers know how to converse during meetings; another mentioned negotiations and conversation for overseas business trips; the marketing and sales department in one company needs presentation, negotiation and conversation for business meetings. Some interviewees mentioned that each department needs specific subjects and skills and one person stated: "They all need all skills."

Business people stated that employees must improve conversation, reading, presentation and e-mail correspondence, and one person said all of them. This shows that many employers feel that their employees are arriving with a lack of business English to cope in the business world. All interviewees admitted that many of their employees lack the necessary English language skills and the companies offered them extra English courses, either in-house or out-sourced, and provided them with English secretaries. This put the burden of supplying business English on the company.

10.9 The Role of the Teacher

During the interviews, all three stakeholders felt, without exception, that business English teachers should be familiar with business subjects, concepts and vocabulary.

Teachers' understanding of students' present and future needs necessitates understanding the importance of inclusion in business English courses of specific business subjects to satisfy these needs. When questioned, over 90 percent of the teachers felt that business vocabulary, conversation, presentation and reading should be included in these courses.

In fact, more teachers (94%) felt that business vocabulary should be included than reading (90%) (see Table 10.14); however, only reading was actually included by all teachers. Therefore, there is a gap between what teachers felt should be included in course design and what they actually taught. One explanation is that some institutions adhere strictly to reading comprehension courses. The course books include only reading exercises and teachers must strictly follow these course books. In other institutions teachers have more freedom to include other subjects besides reading comprehension in their course. This may be due to the fact that one teacher participating in the study is head of the English department and has more leeway to teach what she wants; two other teachers teach the B.A executive course, where business English incorporates the needs of the professional business community as well as academic needs. This may explain the reason why some teachers felt that certain subjects should be included but did not include them, and why other teachers could include them.

Table 10.14: Subjects included and should be included in business English courses.

Summary of Cross Tabulation:
Teachers: What should be included in business English courses?

	Should be Included Total (from 31)	Was Included (% from Should be Included)	Not Included (% from Should be Included)
Problem Solving	26 83.8%	6 23.1%	20 76.9%
Business Vocabulary	29 93.5%	16 55.2%	13 44.8%
Writing	11 35.4%	3 27.3%	8 72.7%
Conversation	28 90.3%	12 42.9%	16 57.1%
Presentation	28 90.3%	12 42.9%	16 57.1%
Business Correspondence	10 32.2%		10 100.0%
Business Meetings and Negotiations	15 48.3%		15 100.0%
Reading	28 90.3%	28 100.0%	
Grammar	1 0.3%		1 100.0%

When interviewed four out of five teachers mentioned that students should learn presentation. All teachers mentioned reading, but they felt there should be another course, or series of workshops, dealing with other subjects that include speaking, listening and writing skills. One teacher mentioned “flexibility to accommodate change” and a “holistic view”. Another teacher mentioned using the computer as a tool for teaching; while yet another specifically mentioned vocabulary, but then went on to include other subjects. All teachers mentioned that they would like to include more subjects for future employment needs. This indicates that the teachers are aware that they do not incorporate the necessary subjects into their courses. Nevertheless, one teacher did mention that, given the time span allotted for English, she accomplished what she was supposed to do, which implies that time may be a primary factor in inclusion or exclusion of subjects.

During interviews, four teachers stated that presentation, conversation, negotiation, communication, report reading, globalization and telephoning were needed at places of work. One teacher answered that she was not sure of future needs "because all needs change". After listing several subjects another teacher added: "The skills that students need in business depends upon the business itself." This indicates that teachers are aware of a wide range of language skills and subjects needed for future employment but may not know how to teach them, nor do they have contact with the business community and consequently do not know what specific subjects are needed.

10.10 Teaching Subjects for Future Employment Needs

Through analysis of research statistics it became evident that some institutions of higher education participating in this study were teaching subjects other than reading comprehension. The inclusion of these additional subjects satisfied various future employment needs of the students. It was possible to divide the institutions into two groups: those who taught more subjects (Group A) and those who taught less subjects (Group B) for future employment. All teachers in Group B taught reading and 33 percent taught business vocabulary. Aside from these subjects no other subjects were taught. However, 75 percent of the teachers in Group A taught business vocabulary, conversation and presentation (see Table 10.15).

Table 10.15: Subjects included in business English courses.

**Summary of Cross-Tabulations and Chi-Square Tests:
Teachers Group A & B: What was included in business English courses?**

Group Type	Teachers (31)		Teachers Group A (16 teachers)		Teachers Group B (15 teachers)		Results
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
Problem Solving	6 19.4%	25 80.6%	6 37.5%	10 62.5%		15 100.0%	
Business Vocabulary	17 54.8%	14 45.2%	12 75.0%	4 25.0%	5 33.3%	10 66.7%	**
Writing	7 22.6%	24 77.4%	7 43.8%	9 56.3%		15 100.0%	**
Conversation (includes telephone and socializing)	12 38.7%	19 61.3%	12 75.0%	4 25.0%		15 100.0%	
Presentation	12 38.7%	19 61.3%	12 75.0%	4 25.0%		15 100.0%	
Business Correspondence	1 3.2%	30 96.8%	1 6.3%	15 93.8%		15 100.0%	
Business Meetings and Negotiations		31 100.0%		16 100.0%		15 100.0%	
Reading	31 100.0%		16 100.0%		15 100.0%		***
Grammar	7 22.6%	24 77.4%	2 12.5%	14 87.5%	5 33.3%	10 66.7%	

** - Significant difference between Group A and Group B

*** - Constant

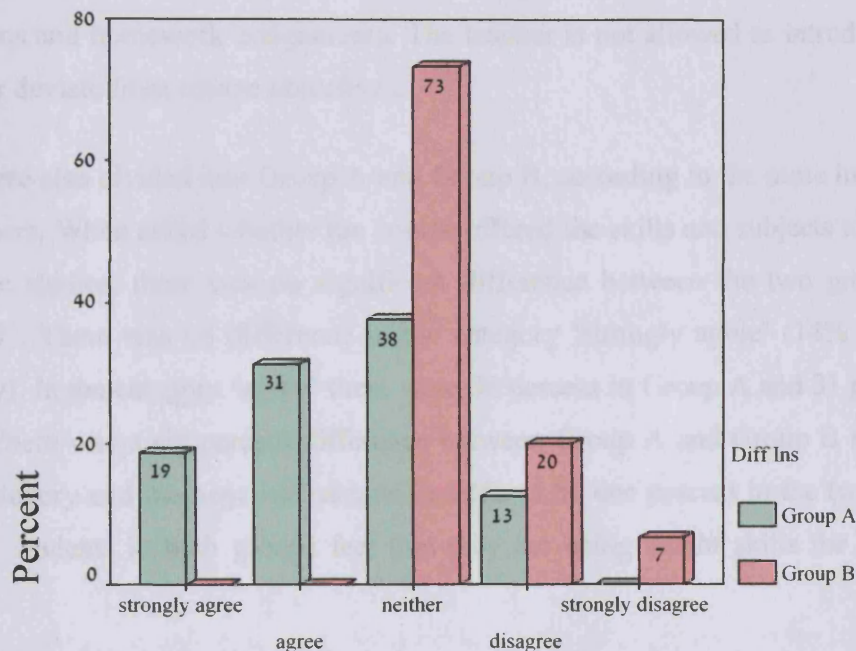
(A significance level of 0.05 was used.)

In Chi-Square Tests there is a significant difference between Group A and Group B in the subjects of business vocabulary and writing. Although the chi-square test could not test conversation and presentation since the contingency table shows a zero, statistics demonstrate that seventy-five percent of teachers in Group A in both these categories teach these subjects, while no teachers in Group B teach these subjects.

Furthermore, when questioned as to whether teachers felt that these courses taught skills for future employment, there was a significant difference in the answers of the two groups (see Table 10.16). Whereas 50 percent of Group A answered 'strongly agree' or

'agree' none of the teachers in Group B answered in the positive. In fact, 73 percent of Group B had no opinion, which may indicate that they do not know what the skills for future employment are.

Table 10.16: Did this English course teach my students employment skills?



In Chi-Square Tests a significant difference was found between groups A and B ($\chi^2 = 10.649$; $df = 4$; $\alpha = 0.031$).

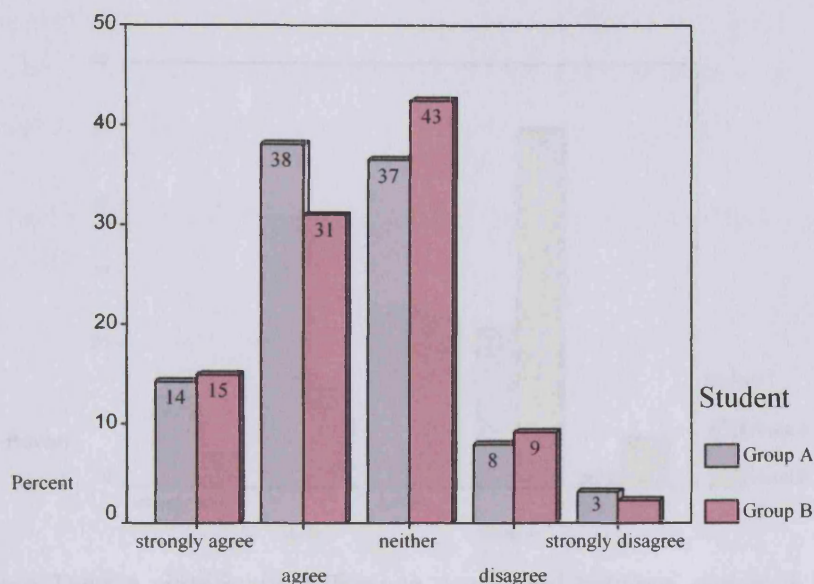
In order to determine if there is a significant difference between the means of the two samples, teachers in Group A and Group B, on this occasion, a t-test analysis was performed so as to decide which sample better complies with the question (see Appendix 5). This test show a significant difference of 0.005 in the mean between the two groups. Group A has a mean closer to five (strongly agree) which means that they feel that this course taught students subjects for future employment needs.

The disparity between these institutions may be explained in the interviews. In Group A one teacher interviewed is the coordinator for business English courses in her institution

and can introduce extra material. Two other teachers teach in the Executive BA programme, which specifically gears itself employment as well as academic needs. In Group B one teacher teaches in an institution that does not offer ESP courses and another teacher believes that the course is aimed at academic reading needs and not speaking skills and therefore she teaches only reading. The sixth institution (which was not interviewed) follows a structured course of reading comprehension with pre-prepared books, exams and homework assignments. The teacher is not allowed to introduce extra material nor deviate from course objectives.

Students were also divided into Group A and Group B, according to the same institutions as the teachers. When asked whether the course offered the skills and subjects to succeed in academic studies, there was no significant difference between the two groups (see Table 10.17). There was no difference in the category 'strongly agree' (14% and 15% respectively). In the category 'agree' there were 38 percent in Group A and 31 percent in Group B. There was a six percent difference between Group A and Group B in the 'no opinion' category and the negative categories differed by one percent in the two groups. Thus, most students in both groups feel that they are being taught skills for academic purposes.

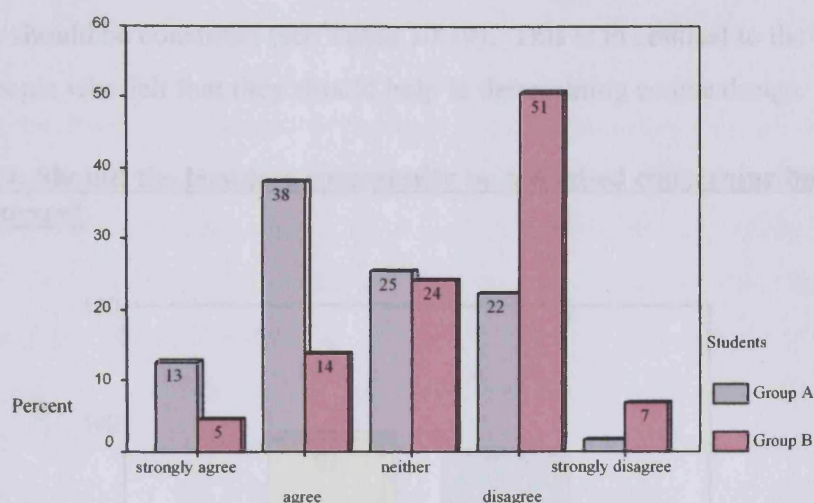
Table 10.17: Did this course fulfil students' academic needs?



In Chi-Square Tests no significant difference was found between groups A and B ($\chi^2 = 1.050$; $df = 4$; $\alpha = 0.902$).

However, there is a significant difference between the two groups where subjects for future employment are concerned (see Table 10.18). Within the positive categories, 51 percent of the students in Group A felt that they have learned subjects for future employment (13% 'strongly agree'; 38% 'agree') in contrast to 19 percent in Group B (5%; 'strongly agree'; 14% 'agree'). This indicates that many more students studying with teachers who include some subjects for employment, aside from reading, are aware of the fact that this will help them in the future. In Group A, 24 percent felt that they have not learned these subjects (22% 'disagree'; 2% 'strongly disagree'), this contrasts with 44 percent in Group B (39% 'disagree'; 5% 'strongly disagree'). Those that have no opinion are the same in both groups.

Table 10.18: Did this course fulfil students' future employment needs?



In Chi-Square Tests a significant difference was found between groups A and B ($\chi^2 = 21.816$; $df = 4$; $\alpha = 0.000$).

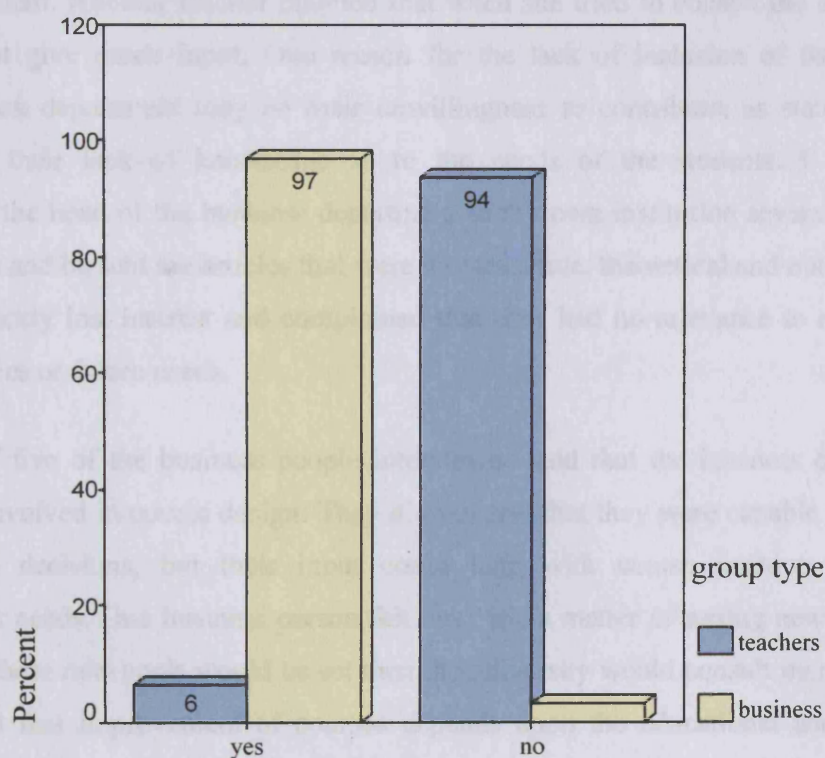
In order to determine if there is a significant difference between the means of the two samples, Group A and Group B, on this occasion, a t-test analysis was performed so as to decide which sample better complies with the statement (see Appendix 5). The test shows a significant difference of 0.000 in the mean between students in Group A and Group B and therefore there is a difference between the two groups. Group A has a mean closer to five (strongly agree) which means that they are taught more subjects for future employment.

This demonstrates that students are aware that they are studying business English subjects for future professional needs.

10.11 Stakeholder Involvement in Course Design

Statistics in this research show that of the 31 teachers, none of them consult the business department. Furthermore, only seven percent of the teachers felt that the business community should be consulted (see Table 10.19). This is in contrast to the 97 percent of business people who felt that they should help in determining course design.

Table 10.19: Should the business community be consulted concerning business English courses?



In Chi-Square Tests a significant difference was found between the teachers and the business community ($\chi^2 = 50.633$; $df = 1$; $\alpha = .000$).

All teachers interviewed stated that the teachers, or the coordinator, or both, determined course content. However, all teachers agreed that all stakeholders should be consulted for input in course design. One teacher suggested an ongoing negotiation between all parties.

Although teachers felt that academicians should decide course content, outside sources, such as the business community, should be consulted. However, one teacher believed that students might not be able to contribute to course design because they “don’t know what they’re going towards”.

Ideally the business administration department of the institutions should be included in these consultations, however, when one teacher did consult the business department “the readings received were inappropriate and highly specialized”. Therefore, she stopped consulting them. Another teacher claimed that when she tried to consult the department they did not give much input. One reason for the lack of inclusion of the business administration department may be their unwillingness to contribute, as stated by one teacher, or their lack of knowledge as to the needs of the students. I personally approached the head of the business department in my own institution several times for course input and he sent me articles that were too academic, theoretical and outdated. The students quickly lost interest and complained that they had no relevance to either their current studies or future needs.

Four out of five of the business people interviewed said that the business community should be involved in course design. They did not feel that they were capable of making pedagogical decisions, but their input could help with course content for future employment needs. One business person felt that “it’s a matter of setting new goals and the minute these new goals would be set then the university would consult more people”. Another felt that improvement of courses depends upon the educational and business communities “getting closer”. As one business person put it: “Methodology and materials should be determined by educators; input into course design should come from the business community”.

When asked what subjects should be included in business English courses the business people suggested all subjects related to business, such as cultural intercommunication, reading, and speaking with an emphasis on presentations, writing a market plan and e-mails, negotiating.. Although many suggestions were general, the business community

could certainly advise on specific topics, such as writing market plans, negotiating and presenting.

All students saw the business community taking a part in course design. Some felt the students should not be involved, some excluded the institution of higher education's administration, but all saw the teachers taking an active pedagogical role and making the final decision, with input from the business community. Students were aware of the role, or lack thereof, that they should play in course design, actually citing their lack of knowledge as a disadvantage. They were also more aware than the teachers of the contribution the business community could make. "The administration should also consult outside business sources for input on course design. But teachers should be the ones who actually design courses. I can contribute ideas to the course but I can't make major decisions." Another student remarked: "The teacher and the business community [should be involved in course design] but I don't think that students are capable of making any real decisions". A third student commented: "Colleges want one thing and companies want something else and different companies demand different things".

10.12 Conclusion: Are the Institutions Accountable?

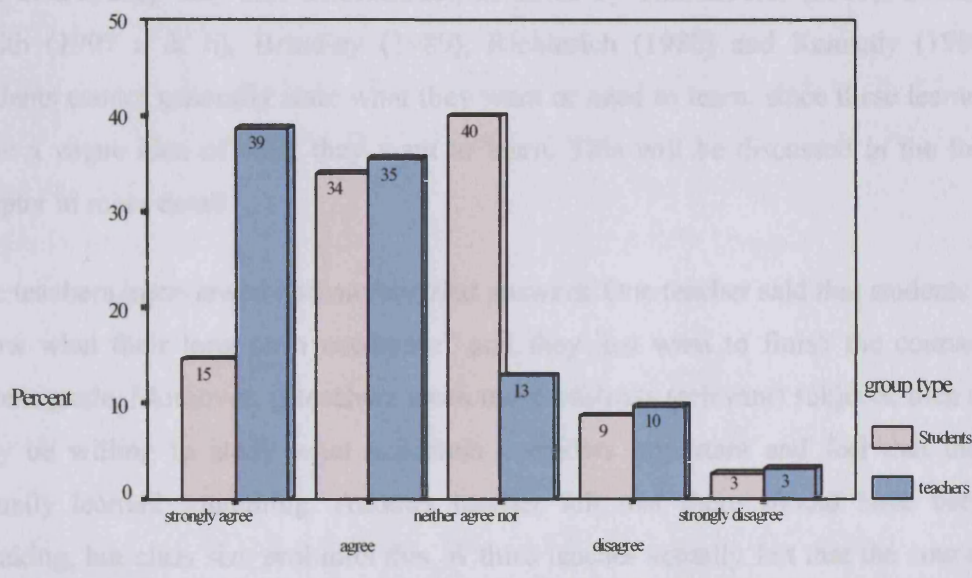
10.12.1 Students' academic needs

All the stakeholders were questioned concerning whether they believe business English courses answered both academic and employment needs. Fifteen percent of students strongly agreed and 34 percent agreed that business English courses answered current academic needs, as compared with nine percent who disagreed and three percent who strongly disagreed. The remaining 40 percent of students held no opinion (see Table 10.20). This indicates that more students agree that business English courses answer academic needs than disagree.

More teachers (39%) strongly agreed that this course answered academic needs, while the percentages for 'agreed' (36%), 'disagreed' (10%) and 'strongly disagreed' (3%) were similar to those of the students. The most significant difference between students and

teachers is in 'neither agree nor disagree', 13 percent of teachers were in this category therefore fewer teachers than students held no opinion.

Table 10.20: Do business English courses answer students' academic needs?



In Chi-Square Tests a significant difference was found between the teachers and the students ($\chi^2 = 13.316$; $df = 4$; $\alpha = .010$).

In order to determine if there is a significant difference between the means of the two samples, students and teachers, on this occasion, a t-test analysis was performed so as to decide which sample better complies with the statement (see Appendix 5). The test shows a significant difference of 0.014 in the mean between students and teachers and therefore there is a difference between the two groups. Teachers have a mean closer to five (strongly agree) which illustrates that they feel business English courses answer current academic needs.

There was a considerable discrepancy between student questionnaires and interviews. All five students interviewed were emphatic concerning the fact that they did not learn anything in English. "Waste of time" and "no improvement" described most of their

feelings. One student admitted there was an improvement, simply because he had learned the art of taking 'unseens' (tests composed of a reading passage and questions) and passing tests. This discrepancy may be due to the fact that students are unaware of the differences between academic needs and future needs, and/or may not have been made aware that this was a course that teaches only reading comprehension for academic needs. The discrepancy may also demonstrate, as noted by Thanasoulas (2000), Delucchi and Smith (1997 a & b), Brindley (1989), Richterich (1980) and Kennedy (1980), that students cannot generally state what they want or need to learn, since these learners only have a vague idea of what they want to learn. This will be discussed in the following chapter in more detail.

The teachers interviewed had more varied answers. One teacher said that students "do not know what their long term needs are" and they just want to finish the course with a decent grade. Moreover, if teachers teach more business (relevant) subjects, then students may be willing to study what academia considers important and feel that they have actually learned something. Another teacher felt that there should have been more speaking, but class size prohibits this. A third teacher actually felt that the course was a success and students were taught subjects for both academia and the workplace, while another teacher felt that the course did answer academic, but not employment, needs. One teacher admitted that she does not know if the course answered students' current needs, although given the time stricture she "covered enough".

10.12.2 Students' professional needs

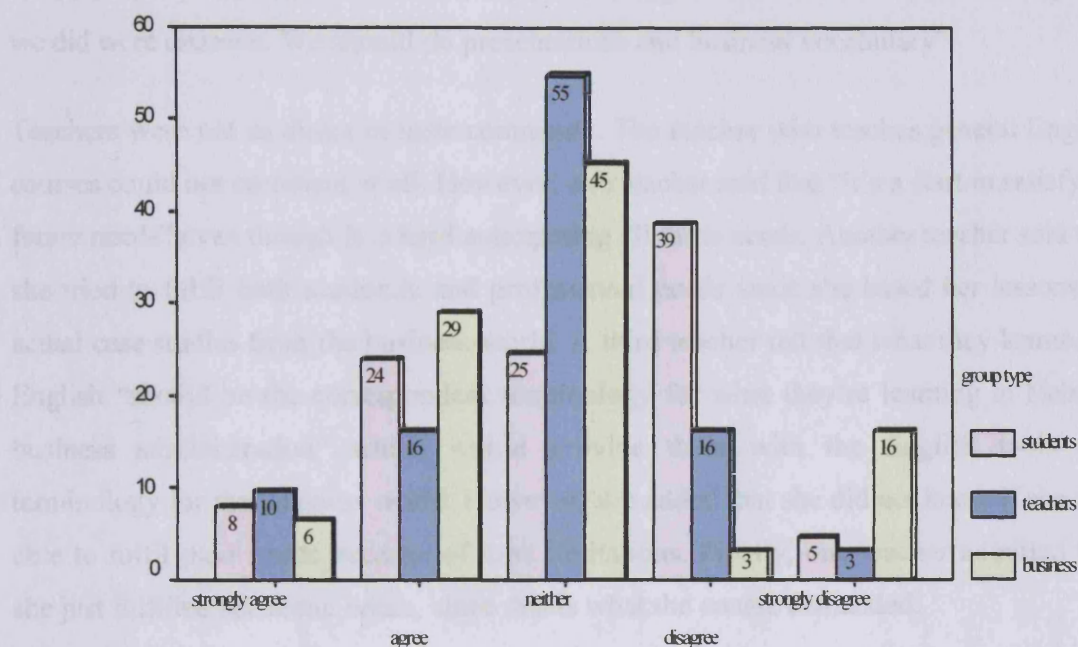
All three stakeholders were questioned as to whether business English courses taught the business subjects needed for the future (see Table 10.21). In the category of 'strongly agree' students, teachers and business people answered similarly, with eight percent, ten percent and seven percent respectively. The category 'agree' showed a difference, with the teachers' answers (16%), being lower than the students (24%) and the business people (29%). However, the difference is clearer concerning 'neither agree nor disagree' where the teachers had the highest percentage (55%) as opposed to the students, who had the lowest percentage (25%). This may suggest that teachers are generally not aware of the

future employment needs of the students and are therefore reluctant to answer this question. The business community also registered a high percentage (45%) of people who 'neither agree nor disagree'. This may be because business people are not aware of the subjects being taught in the institutions and cannot accurately answer whether or not their employees are proficient in English as a result of their academic courses.

The students' highest percentage is in the category of 'disagree' (39%) as contrasted to teachers (16%) and business people (3%). This suggests a high amount of student dissatisfaction with these courses regarding future needs. It also suggests that students are aware that they should be taught more subjects for their future professions other than those needed for academia, and even if they are not totally aware of what they are, they are aware that they are not receiving them.

The categories of 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree' offset each other regarding teachers (16% and 3% respectively) and business people (3% and 16% respectively). However, the fact that 16 percent of business people 'strongly disagree' with this statement indicates that the business community is more strongly displeased with these courses than other stakeholders. This view will be reflected in interviews with this stakeholder.

Table 10.21: Do business English courses provide future employment skills for students?



In Chi-Square Tests a significant difference was found between students, teachers and the business community ($\chi^2 = 29.634$; $df = 8$; $\alpha = .000$).

In order to determine the difference in the mean between students, teachers and the business community an ANOVA Analysis was performed (see Appendix 5). No significant difference was found between the mean of the three groups. The Post Hoc Scheffe Test did not show any differences between the groups. The mean of the three groups varied between 2.92 and 3.06, which does not show a significant difference between these groups. Thus, in the mean of this question, they neither 'agree' nor 'disagree'; however, the dispersion of the five categories in the cross tabulation shows a difference between the three groups. Teachers and business people have the highest percentage in category 'neither agree nor disagree' while students have the highest percentage in 'mostly disagree'.

Student interviews reflected that all five students felt that they did not gain anything from the course. Students' comments included: "This course did not teach me skills for my future career"; "The current course did not teach any of these future needed skills"; "All we did were unseens. We should do presentations and business vocabulary".

Teachers were not as direct in their comments. The teacher who teaches general English courses could not comment at all. However, one teacher said that "it's a start in satisfying future needs" even though it is hard anticipating all these needs. Another teacher said that she tried to fulfil both academic and professional needs since she based her lessons on actual case studies from the business world. A third teacher felt that what they learned in English "should be the correspondent terminology for what they're learning in Hebrew business administration" which would provide them with the English tools and terminology for the business world. However, she added that she did not know if she was able to fulfil their needs because of time limitations. Finally, one teacher admitted that she just fulfilled academic needs, since this is what the course demanded.

Two business people interviewed stated that they were not sure where their employees had gained their English skills, from college, from courses after college, or from previous employment, although one added that they lack English language business skills. One business person said the employees lack conversation and subjects and skills needed to function in English in a business environment.. He did note that they "read better". Another stated that although they can cope with the material, the employees "take too long". And one business person asserted: "Most of the workers do not know English. They must study it now". Another commented that universities should teach business subjects and skills. The final comment of one business person was that the educational system has an obligation to teach English for the business world.

In conclusion, although questionnaires showed a general satisfaction with English business courses answering present academic needs, there was dissatisfaction with these courses when students were interviewed. This discrepancy may indicate that students, without knowing if they are aware of course goals, or academic and professional needs,

may not be able to accurately judge and evaluate courses. Therefore, their responses may not be valid.

Regarding future professional needs, more students than teachers and business people felt that their future professional needs are not being satisfied. However, a proportionally large percentage of teachers and business people (55% and 45% respectively) have no opinion regarding future professional needs. This indicates a general dissatisfaction on the part of the students regarding the ability of the institutions to provide them with the requirements for gaining employment and coping with professional demands. It also indicates that the other two stakeholders are not aware of, or familiar with, subject material required by the business community and subject material being taught by the academic institutions.

The following chapter will discuss these findings and offer conclusions regarding the quantitative and qualitative data presented.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH RESULTS

11.1 Introduction

This chapter will examine the results of the quantitative and qualitative research findings in an attempt to determine whether the institutions of higher education are actually accountable to all the stakeholders involved in business English courses. After evaluating the findings, conclusions regarding course accountability will be discussed.

11.2 Course Data

11.2.1 ESP courses

Israeli academic business courses are, for the most part, general business courses that do not emphasize any one subject within business administration. (As noted in the previous chapter, only one institution does not teach ESP courses.) There is no uniform course taught in all institutions, but rather, each institution determines course content. However, all institutions stress reading comprehension, although some institutions also include other subjects. Adapting the constraints of Singh (1983) and Robinson (1991) to Israeli ESP courses, this study reveals that Israeli business courses lack time to teach all needed subjects, students are unaware of current and future needs and thus feel that English is a “waste of time”, English for future professional needs should not be taught in the first year of studies when students do not understand their professional needs, teachers lack business knowledge, and there is no communication between the business English teachers, the business administration department and the business community. As a result, although most institutions offer ESP courses, course content does not include the necessary subjects for future business needs.

11.2.2 Needs analysis

A needs analysis may be administered at the beginning of the course (Robinson, 1991), at intervals during the course (Richards, 1984; Nunan, 1988), or continuously, to guarantee initial goals are achieved (Chambers, 1980). A needs analysis may take

into consideration present situation analysis or target situation analysis and may be given to only one stakeholder or all stakeholders involved in the course. Robinson (1991) and West (1994) advocate questioning all stakeholders involved in business English courses. They also consider needs analysis as a means of determining students' future business needs, wants, deficiencies, and the process of learning. Robinson (1991) and West (1994) view needs analysis as an ongoing process of investigation of all stakeholders. This form of needs analysis would supply the necessary information for all those involved, take into consideration all parameters necessary for a relevant, motivating course, and supply constant supervision and inspection of courses.

When deciding upon the administration of a needs analysis it is important understand why, when and to whom it is being administered, along with inclusion of most, if not all, of the parameters listed above. However, since only one teacher in this research administered a needs analysis, none of these concerns were taken into consideration. Thus, business English courses are being designed without determining stakeholder needs. According to the teacher interviewed, the needs analysis that was administered asked global rather than specific questions, focused on wants rather than needs, and did not deal with the question of course content or present and future needs. Furthermore, only one stakeholder was questioned, the students.

Thus, in spite of the fact that a needs analysis is seen as the basis for ESP (Stevens, 1977; Munby, 1978; Coffey, 1984; Hutchinson and Waters, 1987; Johns, 1991; Robinson, 1991; Ellis and Johnson, 1994; Nunan, 1998), and most Israeli institutions of higher education offer ESP courses, needs analysis is not administered in the majority of these institutions to any of the stakeholders. A needs analysis enables teachers to determine potential academic and professional needs and design a programme responsive to the requirements of stakeholders that can maximize student participation and motivation (Knox, 1997), but this does not seem to be taking place within these institutions.

11.2.3 Evaluation

Although evaluation is an important part of course design and can revise and enhance current courses, and allow them to be more accountable (Richards, 1990; Rea-Dickins, 1994; Dudley-Evans and St. John, 1998; Sysoyev, 2000), only one teacher

actually gave a form of evaluation and this was only given to students. This suggests that there is no method of follow-up, course revision, course improvement or course accountability.

There is also a lack of confidence, especially on the part of the students, concerning the administration's willingness to improve and modify courses, even if there has been an evaluation. This illustrates pessimism on the part of the students where their needs are concerned and a belief that the administration is not flexible or open-minded concerning course design. It also indicates a lack of responsiveness and responsibility to the stakeholders, especially the students, which may lead to a lack of motivation on the part of the students. Since there is no course evaluation, the administration may be totally unaware of students' attitudes, whether courses fulfilled the needs of the stakeholders (academic or professional) and ways to improve courses.

Without a course evaluation it is difficult to determine the success of courses. The administration, along with the teachers, is working in a vacuum and has no way to assess courses, student satisfaction and need fulfilment. Both the lack of a needs analysis and an evaluation demonstrates a lack of accountability, since institutions have no clear idea what subjects are demanded by the various stakeholders and whether the courses offered are effective in answering the needs of these stakeholders.

11.2.4 Course revision

The results show that over half the institutions do revise material every two to five years. However, according to the teachers interviewed, course revision does not seem to occur as a result of course evaluation. Therefore, the fact that courses are periodically revised does not indicate that course revision takes place as a consequence of planned, supervised or systematic forethought.

11.2.5 Authentic texts

Authentic texts are used in these courses to reflect real world use. As Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) write, "Authenticity of purpose is as important as genuineness of text" (p. 28).

Canale and Swain (1980), Xiaoju (1990) and Nunan, (1991) advocate the use of authentic texts to familiarize students with texts they will be exposed to in academic

and professional settings. The emphasis on reading comprehension in English academic courses in Israeli institutions of higher education may have led to an awareness of the importance of using authentic texts. Thus, only authentic texts are employed in business English readers. Furthermore, these authentic texts are taken from professional or academic sources, such as the *Harvard Business Review*. The use of authentic texts aids in expanding students' business vocabulary as well as helping them deal with authentic material in real world use (Dudley-Evans and St. John, 1998).

11.3 The Importance of English

11.3.1 The need for English within the Israeli business community

According to Israel's Ministry of Education (1988), English is considered the prime means of international communication in the world today and, for this reason, is taught in all educational institutions. The influx of multi-national companies in Israel and the economic, technological and business ties with the United States and other western countries demands that Israeli business people have a command of the English language. Therefore, English language skills have become necessary for employment in many Israeli companies.

The statistical analysis demonstrates that the majority of the three stakeholders felt that "English is necessary in the business community". However, students, as compared to the other two stakeholders, had the highest percentage of stakeholders in the category 'neither agree nor disagree'. This implies that students are less aware than other stakeholders of their English business needs for employment, and are therefore reluctant to answer. This coincides with the fact that students are least aware of their academic needs, as will be documented below.

All interviewees agreed that English was necessary in the business community, and business people stressed its importance in today's multi-national arena where English is the predominant language. One business person stated: "Most of the professional literature is in English. Second, this is the only language between us and our suppliers and sometimes our customers." Another emphasized: "Most of the companies are turning into global and international companies and English is becoming the first

language.” A further comment was: “ English is the number one business language spoken around the world.”

Students commented: “English is the international language of the world and everyone at one time or another will need it”; “If you don’t speak English you will never succeed anywhere”. Teachers also expressed the need for English and made the following comments: “English is the most important second language in the world”; “It’s the language of international communication; the language of business”. Thus, although students may not be fully aware, as pre-experienced learners, of the necessity of knowing English, all three stakeholders overwhelmingly conclude that English holds a place of importance within the Israeli business community.

11.3.2 The need to study English in Israeli institutions of higher education

It is important to reiterate that, in spite of the fact that the Council of Higher Education does not require that English be taught, institutions of higher education demand English. The importance of English has entrenched itself so deeply into the Israeli culture and attitude toward success (Lockard, 1998) that English has become a necessary subject in the curriculum (Spolsky and Shohamy, 1997).

An overwhelming majority of all three stakeholders believe that English should be taught in all institutions of higher education. Stakeholders also feel that business English should be taught to business administration students, thus supporting theoretical evidence that ESP caters to the particular needs of the students (Johns and Dudley-Evans, 1991; Dudley-Evans and St. John, 1998; Coffey, 1984). If the specific business needs are satisfied then Israeli institutions of higher education will be more accountable to the stakeholders involved.

Although the majority of stakeholders advocate studying English, and specifically business English, in institutions of higher education, it is important to note that the features necessary for successful ESP courses that satisfy both academic and professional needs are not included in courses by most teachers surveyed in this study. These features include needs analysis, essential for determining important subjects for course inclusion, and evaluations, necessary for assessing the success or failure of courses and their future implementation. Thus, even if stakeholders support ESP

courses, business English teachers do not include, or are unaware of, the tools to make these courses effective.

11.4 Course Design

11.4.1 Students before: What subjects should be included in business English courses?

Students after: What subjects should have been included in business English courses?

The inclusion of stakeholders in course design suggests that stakeholders' suggestions contribute to course content. Inclusion in decision making and determining needs involves the power, knowledge and ability to determine which needs should be included (Chambers, 1980). The original assumption of this researcher was that all stakeholders should be included equally as decision makers in business English course design as mentioned by Ramaswamy (1992, quoted in Heinfeldt and Wolf, 1998) and Neave (2000). They state that accountability in higher education requires participation of the various stakeholders and it is crucial that all stakeholders are included and participate in order to include the skills needed both for current and future needs

Students, as one of the stakeholders, were questioned at the beginning of the course regarding their course needs. This was done in order to determine whether students, as pre-experienced learners, were capable of being included as decision makers at the start of their business English course. The results imply the lack of ability to discern between subjects since over 85 percent of all students chose all subjects except for grammar (66.7%) for course inclusion.

Students were also given a questionnaire towards the end of the course. Statistical results show a significant difference between the beginning and the end of the course. However, when calculating the differences in percentages between the questionnaires, of nine subjects, there was a differential of twenty-five percent or less in four of the subject (business vocabulary, conversation, presentation and grammar). Therefore, on the basis of these questionnaires, it would be impossible to conclude that students had gained enough knowledge during the course of the year to make decisions concerning subject inclusion in business English courses.

In the interviews, as well, the students were not able to analyse the subjects and determine which was more beneficial to immediate academic needs and which to future professional needs. They stated that presentations, negotiations, conversation and all future employment subjects, including reading, should be included in business English courses, which does not show an understanding of the importance of one subject over another. They, also, did not see the importance of learning reading comprehension for present academic or future professional needs.

Both questionnaires and interviews suggest, as Brindley (1989) and Kennedy (1980) state, that learners may not have the capability to make decisions concerning course content. Richterich (1980) expresses doubt that learners are aware of their future needs, and Thanasoulas (2000) feels that learners do not possess sufficient knowledge to plan, monitor and evaluate their own learning. Also, students may be designating their wants and desires rather than their needs (Chambers, 1980). Furthermore, the varied responses of the students may lead to an inability to satisfy even some of the needs, and a feeling on the part of the students that they were misled. Finally, the fact that a needs analysis is given after the start of the course means that it may be impossible to revise the current course to fit any of these needs or wants, and teachers may also feel frustrated, having collected data and not having had a chance to implement changes immediately. Therefore, including students as equal decision makers does not seem feasible. One suggestion, put forward by Basturkmen (1998), recommends gathering information about student use of language, which does not necessarily mean gathering information from students themselves.

Pinot do Santos (1994) suggests that only when students have language awareness can they answer a needs analysis. However, students may not have enough language awareness by the end of a one-year course to make decisions concerning subject inclusion. Thus, student needs analysis for business English courses in Israeli institutions of higher education should not necessarily ask about subject inclusion. There may be other methods to elicit relevant information from students, where they can offer positive input for course design. Recommendations will be found in the following chapter.

An approach that will shift the target from the learner and his/her needs to the learning situation and its needs is the learning centred approach (Nunan, 1995;

Hutchinson and Waters, 1987. According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987) the learning centred approach is “an approach with the avowed aim of maximising the potential of the learning situation” (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987, p. 77). This research indicates that students, as pre-experienced learners, are not totally aware of their needs. Therefore, shifting the target from the learner’s needs to the learning situation will remove the burden of decision making concerning these needs from the students (Huchinson and Waters, 1987). If, as this research suggests, a business English course geared to academic needs would be offered in the first year, this course would deal with developing the skills, strategies and competence of the learners in reading comprehension of business texts. A business English course in the final year would offer skills and strategies in speaking, listening and writing skills (or a selection from the three). The students, through their studies, will be better acquainted with business concepts, theories and practices by their third year. They thus can better develop language competence within the business setting through the three skills (or a selection thereof).

Students can be a viable stakeholder in business English courses. This is seen in student interviews, when suggestions made by students show that students are aware of the importance of English and want to be motivated, and view this as an essential factor in teaching. They can also be imaginative and innovative, proposing sitting in circles when conducting negotiations, conversations, presentations and interviews, and forming groups for debates, role-plays and simulations. They are aware of their deficiencies when expressing the need for weekly business vocabulary tests, and approach business English holistically by combining reading, writing and speaking skills through the use of presentations. If institutions were to develop an ongoing dialogue with the students, these institutions would be more aware of students’ ability to make insightful proposals and include some of the students’ suggestions in future course design.

Since business English courses are a permanent part of the academic curriculum, and the student population does not change drastically from year to year, information can be gathered from students and applied to future courses. Perhaps the most constructive method is to administer a questionnaire in the form of a course evaluation to students every year towards the end of the year, compile information

from several years, and then modify or change courses using this information, together with input from the other two stakeholders. This will be discussed in further detail in the next chapter.

11.4.2 Students before: What subjects should be included in business English courses?

Teachers: What subjects were included in business English courses?

Comparing the results between teachers and students at the start of the course illustrates that both stakeholders are unaware of all the requirements for present and future needs. Students wanted everything except grammar included, and most teachers only included reading. It is understandable on the part of the students, since they are not trained pedagogically, nor do most of them have previous business experience. However, the teachers should be more aware of both the academic and business demands made of the students. This requires the English teacher to take an interest in business matters. It does not entail becoming a business specialist, but rather an English specialist who can relate and interact better in the business area (Dudley-Evans and St. John, 1998; Ellis and Johnson, 1994; Robinson, 1991).

Even though, during the interviews, many teachers expressed a certain familiarity with subjects needed for future professional needs, half of them did not include any of these in their courses. This may be due to the fact that some of them did not have the freedom to include subjects they felt necessary. However, stakeholders expect teachers to be familiar with business concepts and the needs of the business community in order to better train students to function in this environment. As business people stated in the interviews: “They [teachers] should be updated about business”; “He or she should come from the business sector or should know business very well”. Perhaps an ongoing dialogue between all stakeholders and the business administration department would make teachers more aware of business needs. Teachers then would have the insight to incorporate the appropriate needs in course content.

11.4.3 Teachers: What subjects were included in business English?

Business Community: What English subjects are necessary for work?

There was a significant difference between what teachers included in courses and what business people felt necessary for employment. All teachers included reading,

since they saw this as essential for academic needs. Nevertheless, half of the teachers gave no consideration to professional needs. The business community suggested business vocabulary, conversation, presentation and business correspondence. This demonstrates that the business community is the only stakeholder offering a clear understanding of needs for students' future professions. However, business people felt that many employees, after completing advanced business English courses in institutions of higher education, lack the necessary English skills to properly function in their jobs. If employers refuse to hire potential employees due to a lack of English this may lead to pressure being put on academic institutions to provide courses that better meet future professional needs.

11.5 The Role of the Teacher

This research supports Kumaravadivelu (1993) who notes that teachers may have every intention of teaching communicative skills, but may lack necessary strategies and methodologies for this approach. Teachers in Israeli institutions of higher education lack awareness of the skills needed for future business needs and there is also a possible lack of knowledge in teaching language skills other than reading. This is evidenced in the questionnaires where over 90 percent of the teachers felt that business vocabulary, conversation, presentation and reading should be included in these courses. However, only reading was actually included by all teachers. This may be due to the fact that most teachers are bound by the syllabus that they receive and cannot include what they think is necessary for both present and future needs. It may also be that there is not enough time to teach students both reading comprehension and include any of the other subjects necessary for professional needs. The teachers who did include something other than reading comprehension were either the coordinator of the department or taught in Executive BA courses that included subjects other than reading comprehension.

Although Kumaravadivelu (1993), as noted previously, presents five strategies to help teachers in the teaching of the communicative approach, the most helpful would be for the administration, or the head of the English department, to offer a short seminar demonstrating how to incorporate a broader range of teaching skills within the present courses. Another suggestion is to create a dialogue between the English department, the business administration department and the business community to increase the

flow of knowledge and information about what is being taught and what should be taught. Moreover, team teaching, where the business teacher teaches content and the English teacher teaches language and assignments are devised and corrected by both teachers for content and language, can be instituted in academic institutions (Dudley-Evans and St. John, 1998; Ellis and Johnson, 1994; Robinson, 1991). Perhaps the most important factor is to make the administration aware that more time is needed to teach for both academic and professional needs, and the most effective way to do this is to maintain a first year course for business reading comprehension (or second year if the student needed a preliminary course) and incorporate a course geared to professional needs in the third year.

11.6 Teaching Communicative Skills for Future Employment Needs

When subjects other than reading were introduced in business English courses, students viewed this as positive since they felt they were acquiring subjects needed for future professional needs. Future professional target needs are important in promoting and creating more interesting and motivating material as well as stimulating the students to succeed (Widdowson, 1978; Hewings and Nickerson, 1999). Inclusion of these needs would enable students to believe that institutions are aware of future needs and assume responsibility in training students for future employment. Inclusion would also make the institutions responsive to students' needs. This would lead to more motivation on the part of the students to learn and perhaps more success in gaining the necessary tools to succeed.

The teachers who included subjects other than reading, did so because they either had the power to do so (as coordinator of the department) or they taught special courses that include both academic and professional needs. Perhaps if more academic institutions instituted courses that provided these subjects for pre-experienced learners, if more time was allotted for English teaching, if more teachers were trained in teaching all language skills and if there was a dialogue between stakeholders, then business English courses would better meet both present and future needs.

11.7 Stakeholder Involvement in Course Design

It is important to plan the course with the following factors, as noted by Walker, (1990 quoted in Marsh, 1992): platform, deliberation and design. The platform of the course should take into consideration the subjects needed by both the academic and

the business community by involving all parties knowledgeable of present academic and future business subjects. This may include both the business administration department and the business community. The students should also be consulted since they may have input, as was seen above, that could lead to creative teaching. Deliberation involves consulting the various stakeholders on a regular basis. After the institutions have received the necessary input, it is their responsibility to design appropriate courses and produce suitable teaching material. As suggested by the stakeholders in this study, the onus of producing and implementing the courses is upon academia.

Brennan and van Naerssen (1989) suggest coordination between stakeholders since each stakeholder has a niche of expertise. According to the response of all stakeholders in this study, teachers should hold the final responsibility for pedagogical decisions and for course implementation. However, at the start of the course students should be made aware of course goals and relevancy of the course for present academic and/or future professional needs. There should also be constant checking of progress to meet these needs. This will give the students a feeling of progression towards the goals that should be met and a feeling of motivation. Students should evaluate the course, so that they may contribute their opinions as to course success regarding the meeting of the goals that were set at the beginning, and any relevant suggestions concerning future courses. Furthermore, past students can also aid in telling teachers what subject were relevant to their present employment.

Although there is a debate concerning the role of the student, particularly as consumers of higher education (Delucchi and Smith, 1997a and b; Eisenberg, 1997), it is suggested that the students, being adults, have moral rights as participants and direct recipients of the course, and therefore should be consulted (Bligh, 1982). Consultation with students does not imply that all suggestions must be accepted. Nor does it imply that consultation should occur at the beginning of the course when students are little aware of their needs. However, students can be a creative partner in business English course design, as was witnessed in this study. Moreover, consultation with students may lead to more motivation on their part, since they will feel that they have a direct input in the course, and thus have a desire for it to succeed.

Along with the students, the business community can also contribute to course design. Questioning the business community (which has not been done to date) is essential in understanding the future needs of students and may lead to more realistic, focused and practical courses (Schleppegrell and Royster, 1990; Ellis and Johnson, 1994). The business community may not be able to advise on pedagogical matters but they may be able to offer topics for teaching and samples of work.

It is also recommended, as de Beaugrande (2000) advocates, that the business department be consulted regarding the needs of students on business English courses. Consultation with the business administration department entails informing them of the English course's aims, the language capability of students regarding reading material, and stressing the practical rather than theoretical aspects of the course. The business administration department can be an active contributor in providing information concerning present academic needs. Given the proper information, business administration teachers will make more meaningful contributions to business English courses.

Broadening the involvement of all stakeholders, can involve team teaching. This may involve teachers of both the English department and the business administration department, or even business specialists from the outside. This would guarantee courses that include areas that are pertinent to the present and future needs of the students (Heinfeldt and Wolf, 1998). What is crucial in all of the above suggestions is to initiate a dialogue between all involved parties in order to provide courses that answer present and future needs of students.

One possible solution to creating a dialogue is consulting a group of business people every two to four years, so as to keep updated with new trends in the business field. Furthermore, conducting evaluations and discussions with the students at the end of the course is recommended. In this way, course modification and/or revision would comprise suggestions from all stakeholders. If data concerning stakeholder suggestions is collected over several years (for instance two to four years) course revision will be based on actual need changes. Moreover, teachers should be made aware of business demands and needs through periodic consultation and should be encouraged to include these in course content. Finally, teachers should also become aware of business trends, vocabulary and articles, along with the teaching of role-

plays, simulations, presentation, negotiation and problem solving techniques and any other communicative teaching material necessary to these courses. This can be done through workshops, seminars and reading professional literature.

11.8 Conclusion: Are the Institutions Accountable?

Higher education today, and business English courses specifically, have a responsibility to both educate for academic needs and provide tools so that students can actively participate in the society in which they live. In order to fulfil this responsibility employment and academic needs should be incorporated within the framework of academic courses (Pearson, 1985; Kamba, 2000; Scott, 2000). This entails a dialogue between all parties involved in business English courses. This dialogue necessitates that higher education should be accountable to itself, to the students and to the business community (Bligh *et al*, 1999; Neave, 2000; Nakamura, 2000).

When students and teachers were questioned regarding whether business English courses answer student academic needs, more teachers than students felt that these courses answered academic needs. However, there was considerable discrepancy between student questionnaires and student interviews. The questionnaires illustrate that many students (forty-nine percent either strongly agree or agree) feel that they received the tools to contend with their academic needs or have no opinion (forty percent). This would imply either satisfaction with the course or an ignorance of what the academic needs are that have to be satisfied, or just a feeling of apathy concerning this course. However, during the interviews the students were much more vociferous regarding their negative opinions concerning this course, compared with twelve percent who either disagreed or strongly disagreed in the questionnaires. As was stated previously, interviews were conducted before analyzing the questionnaires, so that the interviewer could not question the students regarding this discrepancy.

This discrepancy may be due to the fact that students are not actually aware of their needs and therefore their questionnaires are not a reliable source of information (as was seen with the questionnaires at the beginning of the course). It may also be a result of the fact that students could not differentiate between immediate and future needs, nor were they aware of the goals of the course. This reinforces Thanasoulas (2000), Delucchi and Smith (1997 a & b), Brindley (1989), Richterich (1980) and

Kennedy (1980) who feel that students, especially pre-experienced, cannot generally state what they want or need to learn, and since these learners only have a vague idea of what they want to learn it would be impossible to design a language program based only on the learners. This study shows that these students, because of the discrepancy in answers, may not have understood the implications of academic and professional needs, and are not capable of making any decisions regarding course design. However, if students are made aware of course goals, and the specific needs that are being taught within the course parameters, then when students are questioned (either through questionnaires or interviews) they may be able to respond more responsibly. Thus, eliciting any information from students must be based on the premise that students have the knowledge to answer these questions.

Regarding the accountability of higher education to itself, this study suggests that the current objectives of business English courses in Israeli institutions seem to fulfil only present academic needs and not future professional needs. Moreover, this study suggests that teachers are unaware of future needs. Furthermore, since in this study there is no evidence of needs analysis and evaluation being administered, there is no way to assess student and business needs and measure whether courses fulfil these needs.

Regarding students, this study suggests that there is no participation of students in course design, nor do the institutions provide necessary skills for future employment needs. Since measurement means do not take place, there is no way to determine whether the knowledge transmitted and generated by the institutions serve the students. Although most students agree that learning English is a necessity, they fail to realize that business English courses provide them with this knowledge. Students are unaware of their present and future needs and, therefore, feel that they have “wasted their time” and have gained little or nothing from the course.

Regarding the business community, this study suggests that there is no collaboration between the business community and the institutions; therefore the institutions are unaware of the business community’s expectations regarding business English courses.

Thus, the results of this study infer that there is a lack of communication between all three stakeholders. The students are unaware of what is required of them both academically and professionally. The teachers are not certain of future employment needs and have no contact with the business administration department or with the business community. And the business community, who receives the final product, has no connection with academia and no chance to present an outline of necessary subjects.

Investigation as to whether a needs analysis, an evaluation and course improvement was implemented for more accountable courses presented the following results:

Needs Analysis - Students at the beginning of the course are not aware of their present or future needs and teachers do not administer a needs analysis to any of the relevant stakeholders. In addition, neither the business administration department nor the business community is consulted and, as a consequence, teachers are unaware of present academic or future professional needs. Nevertheless, when questionnaires were distributed to the business community during this research, the results revealed that the business community is aware of their own needs, and believe that they want to be consulted, although not to the extent of involvement in the actual pedagogical design of the course. This indicates that the business community is aware of its limitations but views itself as a significant consultant with the ability to make an important contribution to these courses.

Evaluation - Since institutions do not administer course evaluations to any of the stakeholders, they are unaware of the dissatisfaction on the part of students and the business community, as noted in their interviews. An evaluation would only serve to make the institutions aware of unfulfilled needs and make institutions more responsive and responsible to the other two stakeholders. Evaluations would also serve in course revision, when needed.

Improvement - Improvement can only come through recognition and awareness of stakeholders' needs through evaluations. Teacher training and an awareness of business as well as academic needs, and student awareness of his/her own needs will aid in course improvement and improve student motivation. Course improvement would provide a measurement for accountability for institutions of higher education.

Accountability - Institutions must be willing to re-evaluate business English course content. Needs analysis and evaluations should be administered to students at the time most beneficial to draw accurate results. Ongoing consultation with both the business administration department and the business community should take place. Constant teacher training seminars for those who teach business English courses, so as to update teachers on business concepts, vocabulary and theories, should be required of the teachers. Mini-seminars should be provided for teachers in subjects such as presentation and negotiation,. These are some of the suggestions that will make courses more accountable to all those who stand to benefit from them.

This research has demonstrated that business English courses in higher institutions in Israel should be more accountable to the stakeholders involved. Re-evaluation of course objectives and research into both the academic and employment needs of the students will lead to more accountable courses. The following chapter will offer suggestions for future course direction.

CHAPTER TWELVE

CONCLUSION

12.1 Introduction

This study examines academic institutions' accountability to those involved in business English courses by investigating the needs of the providers (institutions of higher education), the students and the business community. Providing English competency in the business field requires courses that teach business subject specific content (ESP courses) for present academic and future professional needs (Johns and Dudley-Evans, 1991; Robinson, 1991; Strevens, 1980; Wilkins, 1976). "What seems crucial, ultimately is that courses are designed with particular students in mind, whatever their work or study needs and their personal preferences" (Robinson, 1991, p. 5).

The importance of English has entrenched itself so deeply into the Israeli culture and attitude toward success that English has become a necessary subject in the curriculum, in spite of the fact that the Council of Higher Education does not require that English be taught. Although English is taught in every academic institution, an investigation into business English courses in Israeli institutions of higher education illustrates that although most institutions offer ESP courses, they fail to provide the necessary tools for the success of these courses such as needs analysis and evaluation. Many of these courses also fail to provide the professional skills needed for students' future careers. Moreover, although these courses are geared to students' present academic needs and teach reading comprehension, students seem to express dissatisfaction with the course, as indicated by their comments: "This course has not improved my English and did not teach me skills for my future career"; "I did not gain anything from this course"; "This English course was a waste of time for me"; "I did not learn anything; I do not know English".

Findings in this study also show evidence of a lack of communication between any of the parties involved in business English courses. Institutions, specifically the English department, are responsible for course design, content inclusion and implementation and no one else is consulted concerning business English courses. Moreover, it

appears that there is no means of determining course success or failure since there is no course evaluation. Therefore, the English department is working in a vacuum, ignoring and disregarding the opinions of any of the other stakeholders.

Considering the assumed lack of accountability on the part of the institutions, this chapter will offer suggestions for future directions of business English courses that will assist in making these courses more viable, relevant and motivating. This chapter will also discuss the limitations of this study, and offer explanations and suggestions regarding these limitations.

12.2 Limitations of Research

The limitations include those that were discovered during the pilot survey, together with possible solutions, and those that had to be circumvented or incorporated into the study, since no viable solution was found.

During the pilot study several problems arose which were corrected before the final administration of the questionnaires.

- The original questionnaires included ten to twelve questions each. It was possible to eliminate questions that were not directly related to this study and combine other questions in order to shorten the questionnaire so that those questioned would not lose patience and refuse to answer.
- In many cases, language was simplified, particularly in the students' questionnaires.
- In the pilot study, student questionnaires were given at the end of the class. Since students were in a rush to leave, many answered the questionnaire haphazardly and some did not answer at all. Therefore, during the actual administration of the questionnaire, teachers were asked to take five to ten minutes from their class time and administer the questionnaires at the beginning of the class, they all complied.

This study included the following limitations.

- *Student survey population* – Questionnaires were administered to 150 students at the beginning and at the end of the course, and five interviews were conducted with students studying business English. Ideally, more accurate

answers as to whether business English courses actually answer employment needs could be obtained from former students currently employed in their professions. The problems with this survey population were identifying and contacting 150 employees in various companies who had just finished their studies in the same academic institutions and were currently working within their professions. Moreover, it is probable that companies would deny permission to sort through their employee roster for the purpose of choosing appropriate candidates. Furthermore, in order to determine whether the business English courses studied in institutions of higher education satisfied employment needs, it would be necessary to ascertain that these employees were not exposed to any other sources of English learning. This would be an impossible task, since employees are constantly exposed to English and inevitably learn through this exposure. Once students are in the workforce it is impossible to determine whether it was the academic business English course that answered future employment needs or other sources of English study. In conclusion, although beginning employees would be the ideal stakeholder to question, it would be impossible to contact them and to isolate the reasons for their English skills.

- *Questionnaires* - Although all questionnaires were distributed in English for the sake of unity, and to avoid partiality towards one first language over another, it would have been possible to translate the questionnaires into Hebrew, Russian and Arabic (the three major languages in Israel) in order to make them more comprehensible to the students. However, in some classes there were also students whose mother tongue was French, Italian, Spanish or Amharic. Therefore, although for full comprehension purposes questionnaires should be in the participants' mother tongue, there were too many languages involved and, for the sake of objectivity, English was chosen as a neutral language understood by everyone.
- *Quantitative and qualitative information* – There were discrepancies between the information gathered from the questionnaires and from the interviews. Since the questionnaires were more tedious to answer, involving lists of subjects to be ticked, students may have lost patience with the questionnaire even though the English was not difficult. On the other hand, the interviews

were conducted in the language most convenient for the interviewee and information was more forthcoming and may have been more accurate.

- *Interviews* – If more interviews had been conducted, more information could have been gathered. However, the limitations involved in interviewing more people were the time element and the access available to the participants. For these reasons, it was not viable to interview more respondents.

12.3 General Conclusions

This study demonstrates that the three stakeholders, on the whole, agree with the premise that English is necessary for academic studies and employment within the Israeli business community. However, this study also illustrates that the institutions of higher education fail to provide the necessary skills for these purposes.

Since business English courses do not answer the future professional needs of the students they are not accountable to the students and the business community for failing to provide the language skills necessary for future employment. This generates a feeling of dissatisfaction on the part of the students and the business community. One reason for the academic institutions' failure to provide the necessary skills is a lack of communication between stakeholders, and between the English and business departments in the institutions. This leads to a lack of motivation to study English on the part of the students since students lack awareness of the importance of English both within the institution and in the professional world. Non-inclusion of future professional business English skills, due to the lack of involvement of the business community, places the burden of supplying these skills on the business community during the time of employment. The economic recession in Israel has led to a reduction in these courses, which implies that places of business are turning to the academic institutions to equip employees with the necessary English skills to cope in the business world. This places the burden of supplying both academic and professional skills on the academic institutions.

Another reason for lack of inclusion of English professional needs is the lack of time relegated to English courses. Teaching both academic needs, which involves mostly reading comprehension, and professional needs, which may involve conversation, listening, writing, as well as reading, would not be possible within the time limit involved.

A third reason for lack of inclusion may be due to English teachers' lack of awareness of future professional needs. If teachers are not aware of business needs they cannot teach them. Furthermore, if teachers are aware of the fact that they are not providing their students with the proper tools for their future profession, they can put pressure on the institutions to provide a second course devoted to the teaching of English for future professions. In addition, if students were made more aware of their needs, both academic and professional, they would realize that the course in reading comprehension is providing them with the skills they need for their present academic studies.

This study has also investigated the inclusion of the three stakeholders within the decision making process of course design. It also recommended that the business administration department should become an active partner with the English department where academic needs are concerned. Although it is important that all stakeholders participate, to the best of their capability, in course design and implementation, it may not be feasible to include the three stakeholders on an equal basis. This study recommends that each stakeholder contribute in the areas in which they are most capable, or have the best expertise. Involvement and participation should be through needs analysis, evaluation and discussion. Below is a discussion of recommendations for implementation.

12.4 Recommendations for Improvement of Needs Analysis, Evaluation and Student and Teacher Awareness

- *Needs analysis* – “Needs analysis is the corner stone of ESP and leads to a very focused course” (Dudley-Evans and St. John, 1998, p. 122). Successful and relevant courses that incorporate pertinent skills essential to present and future needs, should consider all stakeholders' needs in course design (Brennan and van Naerssen, 1989; Ramaswamy, 1992 quoted in Heinfeldt and Wolf, 1998).

In order to fulfil the needs of the stakeholders, it is vital to decide which needs should be included in business English courses and then confirm that the courses actually fulfil these needs. This twofold obligation, determining present and future needs and providing tools to verify the provision of these

needs, will help in establishing whether the institutions are accountable to all stakeholders involved for the business English courses provided.

As this study illustrates, administering a needs analysis to students to determine what they feel should be included in business English courses, does not yield valid results. Students are not aware of their future needs, as pre-experienced learners, even at the end of the course, and do not understand the importance of learning reading comprehension for their present academic studies.

The ideal would be to question students immediately out of college/university at the beginning of their business career. Thus, we could better understand exactly what subjects these former students find necessary for their current job, and whether the business English course actually helped prepare them for their current jobs.

It is important to establish students' knowledge of English, and investigate their strengths and weaknesses at the start of the course (PSA). Although no institution tests all incoming students, their level of English is determined through the English matriculation exam and/or the psychometric exam. However, it may also be advisable to determine, at the beginning of the course, students' previous knowledge of English and their lacks, particularly regarding reading comprehension. This is important since many students took these exams before their army service and the exams may not be a true reflection of their current capabilities. Therefore, teachers may want to consider administering some informal test or analysis at the start of the course in order to assess their students' English knowledge. A brief introductory, informal group discussion concerning students' needs, interests and previous experience is advisable. This will give the teacher insight into class needs and wants while allowing students to hear what other students expect.

During the course it is essential to constantly assess students' understanding and progress. This is generally done through exams (in the case of reading comprehension courses in Israel unseen are the means of testing). However, it may also be useful to instigate discussions at least twice during the semester,

to determine whether the students actually feel they are making progress and to allow teachers to reiterate class goals. In this research, all five students interviewed stated that they felt the course was not beneficial, and all five of students came from different institutions. This reflects that students in this study, no matter what their grades are, do not feel they have progressed. Therefore, it is advisable for all teachers to continuously ensure students actually feel motivated and feel they are progressing. The grades on the unseen, whether good or bad, are not a measurement of the student's feeling of accomplishment.

A needs analysis should be given to both the business administration department and the business community. The business administration department is one of the important sources for determining present academic needs. Therefore, an ongoing dialogue between the the English department and the business administration department will guarantee that business administration teachers are familiar with English course goals and syllabuses so that business administration teachers can supply English teachers with relevant and interesting material. Conversely, the business administration department can provide a list of business vocabulary words and English texts to be used in class so that the English department will be able to focus course content on the demands of students' business courses. An interaction of departments will guarantee more relevant courses answering students' current academic needs that will lead to more motivation to learn English on the part of the students.

The business community is probably the most important source in gaining information concerning future professional needs and responding to a needs analysis. Therefore, it is essential that they become a vital stakeholder and contributor to business English courses. The business community should be questioned approximately every two to four years concerning future professional needs since the needs of the business community should be established in order to ascertain the future employment needs of students (Louhiala-Salminen, 1996; Schleppegrell and Royster, 1990; Ellis and Johnson, 1994; Flowerdew and Peacock, 2001). This time span will allow for comparisons from past questionnaires and reflect any changes within the

business community regarding everything from theory to vocabulary. Inclusion of these changes into course content will thus take place every few years. Since it is impossible to question the whole business community in Israel, a core of representatives from various business fields can be chosen to participate. This may be done by attending various business conferences in Israel and approaching the appropriate business people from companies that demand English for business dealings, and asking them to take part in this survey on a permanent basis. In this way a permanent committee of Israeli business people can be established and this committee can also participate in course content design and offer guidance concerning various business subjects. Business people interviewed for this study were positively inclined to participate in such a committee.

- *Evaluation* - Verifying that needs cited by the various stakeholders have actually been included in course design, and these courses have been successful in teaching present academic and future professional needs, should entail the administration of an evaluation. Evaluation is an important part of course design and can revise and enhance current courses along with allowing them to be more accountable (Richards, 1990; Rea-Dickins, 1994; Dudley-Evans and St. John, 1998; Sysoyev, 2000).

Towards the end of the course, an evaluation in the form of a questionnaire should be administered to the students and information from the questionnaires should be reviewed over a period of approximately two to four years, with the intention of course revision when necessary. This will prevent constant course revision without substantial data. Data collection from two to four years is extensive enough to provide the information necessary for course revision. Questions should focus on whether students felt that course goals were accomplished. This can only be asked if students are made aware of course goals at the beginning of the course.

Members of the business community should also be questioned concerning whether their employees have learned the necessary skills in higher education to cope with the necessary English in the business world. If the answer is

negative, this may bring pressure upon the institutions to institute business English courses catering to professional needs. . Evaluating the success of the English courses at the place of work may be problematic since, as many commented during interviews, it is impossible to know whether the employees acquired their English knowledge solely through the college/university course or through other means. The most efficient method is to track students after completion of college/university and upon entering their places of business, and then administer an evaluation of academic business courses. This may provide the most reliable answers for fulfilment of the task of supplying tools for future needs. As noted above, this may appear to be an impossible task. However, if each college/university takes it upon itself to follow approximately 20 students and administer an evaluation every two to four years to these students, the evaluation may be feasible. The difference between administering a questionnaire for the sake of this study and monitoring students for evaluation purposes is that the numbers are much smaller when dealing with evaluation, and individual institutions will do the monitoring by direct contact with the student, without the involvement of the business company. The academic institutions must be willing to, and capable of, devoting time and resources for the sake of evaluation. Once evaluations are analysed courses can then be revised or totally changed according to the results.

The business administration department should also be questioned concerning the ability of students to cope with academic readings in their business courses. This will lead to involvement of the business administration department.

To date, no Israeli institution administers course evaluations (although many institutions administer teacher evaluations). However, these evaluations are important in determining whether stakeholder needs have been met. As mentioned above, evaluations should be administered every year, towards the end of the course and re-assessed every two to four years to decide upon course revision. These evaluations should question what subjects included in course study, progress of students and student satisfaction with what has been

taught. It is also useful to interview several students from different classes. These interviews may yield valuable information concerning students thoughts concerning motivation (as seen in this study).

- *Student awareness* - Academic institutions are obligated to provide the necessary information so that students understand the English demands in academic institutions. Course information should be given at the time of registration, possibly during orientation week, when students should be made aware of the importance of learning English and the reasons why it is needed during their academic studies. If this information is presented, students may better understand why they are studying business English and the importance of reading comprehension for their academic studies and may be more motivated to study.

As a result of this study, the English department at Netanya College presented information concerning English courses to all new students during orientation week. The purpose of this information was to inform students as to the importance of English within the college curriculum, advise them of the conditions concerning English, and explain to them how this course could help in their future professions. The administration also included a section on English in the forthcoming catalogue for the College. This will explain in detail the importance of English and the terms and stipulations of the course. Thus, the administration is coming to the conclusion that student awareness of English language importance will aid in student motivation and also prevent student complaints.

Regarding students future professional English needs, representatives from various companies should be invited to inform students concerning their future professional careers, and they should include the demands for business English. This should be done towards the end of the second year, so if a second business English course is instituted in the third year, students will know exactly what they should expect and demand.

- *Teacher awareness* – All stakeholders agree that teachers are most capable of making pedagogical decisions, and should be the only stakeholder in finally determining course design. If teachers administer the proper needs analysis,

evaluations, discussions and interviews, they would have proper tools in order to design courses that meet both the present academic needs and future professional needs of the students.

Teachers should also be knowledgeable concerning the teaching of a broad range of language skills in business English that will be relevant for both present academic needs and professional business needs. Teachers should also know how to administer needs analysis and evaluation. Business English teachers should have a degree of business knowledge and they should be English specialists with all the knowledge needed to teach a successful, relevant course, including knowledge of, but not specialization in, business studies (Dudley-Evans and St. John, 1998; Ellis and Johnson, 1994; Robinson, 1991).

This study indicates that teachers are unfamiliar with professional literature concerning ESP, CLT, needs analysis and evaluations. Teachers are also unfamiliar with business literature and concepts. Teachers may be unable and/or unwilling to teach speaking, listening and writing skills due to lack of time or knowledge of how to teach them. However, given the proper training they could make their students more aware of the need for reading comprehension and thus motivate their students. Moreover, once the teachers are aware of the demands of the business community, they could demand another course that would teach the students the skills needed for future professional needs. Thus better teacher training would give the teachers better teaching tools, and make them more aware of the future needs of their students.

12.5 Recommendations for Future Course Design

Providing a needs analysis, evaluation, and student and teacher information is not sufficient to ensure course success. Courses must be designed to convey the most relevant information in the most suitable, efficient and effective manner. A possible suggestion for inclusion of present and future needs in business English courses during academic studies would be the addition of one more business English course at the end of studies.

The first year English course should be based upon current academic needs, and therefore incorporate reading comprehension in order to prepare students for present academic needs. The reader should be a compilation of texts from recent journals, textbooks and other business sources along with suggested relevant reading from the business administration department. This course should also include a review of reading skills and an emphasis on business vocabulary.

In addition, there should be an English course based on business skills other than reading comprehension in the third year. This course may include subjects such as presentation, negotiation and business correspondence, depending upon the time allotted. Institutions can offer a year- or semester-long course which would include all (or most) subjects, or mini-courses for each subject, depending on student registration. Case studies suggested by the business community should be used and representatives of the business community should be invited to demonstrate activities such as presentations or marketing plans. This may involve team teaching and may also encourage teachers to be better acquainted with business subjects. The purpose of offering this course in the last year will be to prepare the students for professional needs immediately before they enter the job market.

Throughout the students' academic studies guest lecturers from the business community should be invited periodically to talk to the students. This will aid in listening comprehension and broaden the students' English vocabulary along with exposing the students to the business world and its demands. Debates with representatives of the business community will encourage English conversation, presentation and negotiation on a professional level. Furthermore, representatives of

the community should be invited to conduct mock interviews to prepare the students for their entrance into the job market.

12.6 Recommendations for the Business English Reader

The business English reader should reflect all subjects necessary for present academic and future professional needs. The business English reader in Netanya College was redesigned for the academic year 2003 – 2004, in response to research findings. It includes activities other than reading comprehension and is divided into business areas of interest. The first part of the reader includes a review of reading skills using business subjects as examples. The reader is then divided into four areas of interest: marketing, advertising, corporate structure and finance. These were included as a result of a questionnaire administered to the students and discussions with the dean of the business administration department. Each section includes subject specific vocabulary, reading comprehension, writing activities and problem solving activities. For instance, the section on marketing includes vocabulary, reading and writing exercises to do with marketing. A section on the 'marketing mix' and a 'SWOT Chart' includes exercises where students write their own marketing mix in English on a specific product. A problem solving activity dealing with marketing includes reading, discussing and writing conclusions. The students are also given unseen tests (reading texts and questions that they have not seen before) that deal with marketing and include the vocabulary they have learned. Context-based short vocabulary quizzes are also frequently given.

During the academic year of 2003 -2004, in classes with 15 students or less, students prepared presentations of two to three minutes. These presentations were based on the subject being studied in the English class. The students enjoyed these presentations and stated that it motivated them and gave them self-confidence since they could see immediate use in what they had learned.

One limitation to the inclusion of various skills and subjects is that there are not enough hours to cover all subjects thoroughly. It may therefore be necessary to impress upon the administration the importance of these courses and formulate additional, possibly elective, courses in the third year of studies. Furthermore, since the final exam is a reading comprehension unseen, concentration is on reading

comprehension, especially towards the end of the year. Moreover, there is a sense of frustration on the part of the students (and the teacher) that there will be no continuation of English before students enter their professions. Thus, while the course tries to provide certain broader language skills, students are informed that this is the bare minimum, and they must keep on improving their English after the end of the course. Positively speaking, students do gain business vocabulary, reading skills and a certain amount of self-confidence regarding their conversation skills.

12.7 Future Directions

Since most colleges and universities teach ESP courses and have business administration departments it would be worthwhile instituting seminars concerning business English courses. Business English seminars should include business English teachers, representatives from the business community and teachers from business administration departments. This would be the first step in opening a dialogue between the various stakeholders. The seminars should not only include lectures pertaining to business English but also business subjects that would help the business English teachers to keep abreast of current business ideas. There should also be discussion time allotted for the parties to further understand the needs of the students. These seminars should be conducted on a regular basis so that the contact and dialogue is continued between all parties.

The importance of teaching ESP courses and the lack of teacher awareness concerning how to teach these courses has led to a proposal, currently under consideration by the Council of Higher Education in Israel, for an ESP Master's Programme at Netanya College. This programme will include ten courses over two years comprising subjects such as linguistics, academic teaching, and courses geared to specific teaching disciplines. It is hoped that once this programme is approved, students of this programme will comprise former English teachers who want to enter academic teaching and lack the necessary skills. This programme will educate a new generation of academic teachers who are aware of the specific needs of each discipline and will have the necessary tools to provide courses that better meet these needs.

Furthermore, when the ESP Master's Programme is approved, Netanya College will become the centre of ESP. This will enable the college to organize business English

forums and seminars and collect and share information between institutions. Collecting and processing information as far as needs analysis and evaluations are concerned will be more organized when a central body is supervising and administering.

A planned future study concerning ESP teachers will aim at collecting data concerning ESP teachers' pedagogical knowledge and discipline specific knowledge. The ability of the teacher to teach complex material in the field of study, specifically business and law when the teacher lacks any background in law and business, will be investigated.

Another planned future study concerns students' ability to comprehend discipline specific material in their native language and in English. This study will compare students' results in reading difficult business and law texts with subject specific vocabulary in both Hebrew and English with the aim of determining if the difficulty lies in the subject matter or the language. These two studies will be undertaken with another colleague and will hopefully begin in the year 2005.

The above guidelines for creating business English courses that are more accountable to the stakeholders concerned, illustrates several of the principles discussed in professional literature and research findings of this study. Stakeholders' opinions regarding business English courses are productive and valuable and stakeholders should be consulted concerning course design. However, it is important to determine when and who to consult and provide the necessary information so that all stakeholders can offer relevant advice. Furthermore, institutions must be more amenable to providing courses that answer the needs of the stakeholders. The addition of courses providing future professional English needs and a reorientation of institutions of higher education to the needs of employment are necessary. What is also necessary is a re-education of the student and teacher population so as to become better informed concerning these courses.

In conclusion, this study has provided relevant information concerning current teaching of business English courses in Israeli institutions of higher education. Hopefully, as a result of this study, Israeli academic institutions will include more stakeholder suggestions in the planning of business English courses. Moreover,

teacher training regarding all language skills and business knowledge should be offered, together with better student awareness of academic and professional demands. These suggestions will help to create more accountable, responsive, creative and motivating business English courses.

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Appendix 1
CORRESPONDENCE

September 24, 2001

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing a doctoral thesis entitled "The Provision of English Language Courses for Business Administration Students in Israeli Higher Education Institutions". The study entails providing the requirements of the Council for Higher Education for English language studies in institutions of higher education in Israel.

I would appreciate it if you would inform me as to these requirements, along with any information concerning the needed qualifications of institutions of higher education, in order to be certified by the Council for Higher Education as far as English language studies are involved.

Thanking you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Francine Robinson

September 25, 2001

Dear Ms. Robinson,

According to the Council for Higher Education Law (a copy of which, in English, I am attaching), the universities are autonomous academically. This includes degree and language requirements. The Council does not issue any directives in this matter. The Council for Higher Education does not specify any requirements for English. I would assume that each university concluded by itself (this is, after all, a very reasonable and common academic requirement) that proficiency at a certain level of English must be demonstrated or proven by university graduates. To the best of my knowledge, there are no institutions of higher education that do not require proficiency in English for graduation.

You'll have to contact each university (and there are many other institutions here, not just universities) for information on English language requirements. When an institutions (usually a specific degree program at an existing or a new institution) is evaluated before accreditation the infrastructure (academic and physical) available is examined, as well as the particular program of study (the curriculum). To the best of my knowledge, English language requirements, including for exemption, are not usually discussed. Usually each institution has it's own institution-wide requirements. They probably are, in general, similar, but you'd have to check that with them.

(Mrs.) Yael Attiyah

Librarian, Council for Higher Education – Israel

E-mail: yaelat@che.org.il

Tel: 02-5679909; Fax: 025660625

Appendix 2

BACKGROUND QUESTIONNAIRES

Student Questionnaire: Basturkmen, 1998

I. Background Information

1. Sex:

Male Female

2. Department in the College

electrical computer chemical industrial mechanical petroleum civil

3. English language experience *before* college

I studied English as a subject at school.

I attended an English medium school.

I lived abroad.

Other (Please specify)

4. Present English courses

098 ____ 123 ____ 221 ____

5. If your present English course is 123 or 221, please answer this question. *If not, leave it blank.*

Did you take the 098 course in College?

Yes ____ Number of times: 1 ____ 2 ____ No ____

6. Is your native tongue Arabic?

7. When do you use English?

When studying.

When socializing.

At home.

Other (please specify)

II. Language Needs in the College

1. Of the four major English skills, which are the most important for success in your other subjects in the College? Number choices 1-4, with 1 as the most important.

1 2 3 4 Reading comprehension

1 2 3 4 Listening comprehension

1 2 3 4 Speaking

1 2 3 4 Writing

2. How important are these tasks in English for your other subject?

Circle the appropriate number according to the following scale.

1=very important 2=important 3=not important

Reading

1 2 3 Textbooks

1 2 3 Technical articles and journals

1 2 3 Manuals

1 2 3 Course handouts

1 2 3 Texts on the computer

1 2 3 Instructions for assignments/projects

1 2 3 Instructions for labs

1 2 3 Study notes

Other (please specify) _____

Writing

1 2 3 Lab reports

1 2 3 Assignments

1 2 3 Field trip reports

1 2 3 Projects (short)

1 2 3 Taking notes in lectures

1 2 3 Answering questions related to part of the textbook

Other (please specify) _____

Listening and Speaking

1 2 3 Following lectures

1 2 3 Following question/answer sessions in class

1 2 3 Listening to spoken presentations

1 2 3 Listening to instructions

1 2 3 Listening to instructions for assignments

1 2 3 Participating in discussions

1 2 3 Asking questions in class

Other (please specify) _____

3. In relation to your college studies, evaluate your abilities and knowledge of English in the following areas.

1=good 2=satisfactory 3=unsatisfactory

1 2 3 Reading

1 2 3 Writing

1 2 3 Speaking

1 2 3 Listening

1 2 3 Grammar

1 2 3 General vocabulary

1 2 3 Technical vocabulary

III. English Language Instruction

Please indicate how far you agree with each idea.

1=strongly agree 2=agree 3=disagree

1 2 3 More time should be given to English instruction.

1 2 3 The content of my English course is interesting.

1 2 3 Instruction should focus on general English.

1 2 3 Instruction should focus on the English needed for engineering studies.

1 2 3 More should be done to help students with speaking.

1 2 3 I enjoy my English class.

1 2 3 Having good English is important in this college.

1 2 3 Some instruction should focus on the English needs of engineers after college.

1 2 3 English is my least important course.

1 2 3 My English course is easy.

1 2 3 The English language teachers here do a good job.

1 2 3 My English course helps me in my engineering studies.

Undergraduate courses

Postgraduate courses

Other (Please specify)

7. For what specific purposes do these students require English?

Understanding lectures in their special field of study in English.

Taking part in oral tutorials in English.

Reading textbooks in their special field in English.

Writing answers to examination questions or reports.

Other purposes (please specify)

8. Are there national goals or policies which encourage English Language teaching programs to include ESP courses?

9. (Please specify)

10. Are there institutional goals or policies which encourage English Language teaching programs to include ESP courses?

11. (Please specify)

12. Is there any indication that ESP courses would be welcomed at your institution?

13. (Please specify)

JOB NEEDS

14. For what jobs or purposes is the student being trained?

15. What is the age range of the students?

16. Why do the students require English? Because

The main language of the job is English.

They are working with English speaking colleagues.

Teacher Questionnaire: Mackay, 1978

1. Does your institution run a course/courses which can be regarded as a course/courses in ESP?
2. Are the needs which these English courses meet principally academic needs or job needs?

NEEDS

ACADEMIC NEEDS

3. What is the special field or fields of study of the students?
4. What is the medium of instruction in that special field?
5. What is the age range of the students?
6. Are the students in
Secondary education
Undergraduate courses
Postgraduate courses
Other (Please specify)
7. For what specific purposes do these students require English?
Understanding lecturers in their special field of study in English.
Taking part in oral tutorials in English.
Reading textbooks in their special field in English.
Writing answers to examination questions or reports.
Other purposes (please specify)
8. Are there national goals or policies which encourage English Language teaching programs to include ESP courses?
9. (Please specify)
10. Are there institutional goals or policies which encourage English Language teaching programs to include ESP courses?
11. (Please specify)
12. Is there any indication that ESP courses would be welcomed in your institution?
13. (Please specify)

JOB NEEDS

14. For what jobs or purposes is the student being trained?
15. What is the age range of the students?
16. Why do the students require English? Because
The main language of the job is English.
They are working with English speaking colleagues.

Some/most/all of the written or printed materials connected with the job are in English.

They have to follow training courses conducted in English.

Other (Please specify)

17. Do they require English for

Understanding

Reading

Speaking

Writing

Other purposes (Please specify)

THE COURSES

18. Are the ESP courses in your institution organized and run by

a) A central 'service' department e.g. a Language Center?

b) The English Department?

c) Separate departments for their own students?

d) Others? (Please specify)

19. In what year/years of their studies do they receive English Language classes?

20. Is attendance at these English classes obligatory?

21. How many hours of English instruction a week do they receive?

22. How many weeks per year do the English classes last?

23. Is there a final examination in English?

24. How many ESP courses does your institution run per year?

25. How many teaching hours does each course last for?

26. What is the total number of students per year who attend these courses?

27. What is the approximate size of each class?

28. Does your institution run different kinds of ESP courses catering for different needs?

29. (Please list the course or courses and describe the aims of each briefly.)

30. How many years of English instruction have the students had before attending these courses?

31. Do your courses cater for different levels of proficiency?

32. (If yes, describe briefly)

33. Are the students tested for proficiency in English before being admitted to the ESP courses?

34. Do you offer ESO instruction to complete beginners in English?

35. What proportion of the time spent teaching English on these courses involves *remedial instruction*? (i.e. re-teaching points which were already taught at school but inadequately learned.) 1/10 ____ 1/8 ____ 1/5 ____ 1/4 ____ 1/3 ____ 1/2 ____
(If more, please state.)
36. What proportion of the time on these courses is involved in the development of language skills (i.e. developing upon what the students have already learned?)
1/10 ____ 1/8 ____ 1/5 ____ 1/4 ____ 1/3 ____ 1/2 ____ (If more, please state.)
37. By means of the numbers 1 (most), 2, 3, and 4 (least) indicate the time the course devotes to each skill.
- 1 2 3 4 Listening
1 2 3 4 Speaking
1 2 3 4 Reading
1 2 3 4 Writing
38. Are there any of these skills which are ignored as not being relevant to the students' needs?
39. (If so, which?)
Listening
Speaking
Reading
Writing
40. What proportion of the ESO course time is spent in
Classroom teaching
Language laboratory
Others (Please specify)
41. Do you use a tape recorder as a teaching aid?
42. (For what purposes?)

MATERIALS

43. Are published textbooks used on these courses?
44. (Give the title, author's name and publisher of each of these textbooks.)
45. Are published materials used in the language laboratory?
46. (Give the title, author's name and publisher of each of such tape courses.)
47. Are teaching materials specially prepared in your institution?
48. Do they cover the needs of the entire course?
49. Are there supplementary materials?
50. (Describe briefly the purpose and content of the materials.)

51. Who prepared them?
52. Can you make a sample copy available to RELC?

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

53. Is there an ESP materials writing project going on in your institution?
54. (Describe it. Name those involved/hours per week/aims.)
55. Is a progress report available?
56. Are there any other materials used in your ESP courses which have not been mentioned?
57. (Please specify, e.g. films)
58. Is there an ESP research project going on in your institution?
59. (Describe it. Name those involved/hours per week/aims.)
60. Is a progress report available?

THE TEACHERS

61. How many teachers/lecturers are involved in ESP courses in your situation?
Full time
Part time
62. Do the part time teachers have other and primary duties within your institution?
All of them
Most of them
Some of them
None of them
63. How many hours per week does each teacher teach on these courses?
Full time
Part time
64. Have they any other official duties in
Your own institution
Other institutions
65. (Please specify)
66. Do the ESP teachers work in collaboration with the subject teachers/lecturers e.g. the lecturers in science or the special field of study of the students?
67. (What kind of cooperation is involved?)
68. Have the teachers any special training or instruction before being required to teach these ESP courses?

69. (Please specify)

70. Are there any native speakers of English employed in these ESP courses?

71. (Please name them)

72. (Name the sponsoring body)

73. Is there any other information you feel is relevant to the aims of the questionnaire?

74. (Please specify)

Appendix 3
QUESTIONNAIRES

QUESTIONNAIRE
STUDENTS
(Beginning of course)

1. Age: _____

2. Sex: (please check)

____ Male

____ Female

3. Of the following subjects, which do you think should be included in this course:

(Check either 'yes' or 'no')

SUBJECT	Yes	No
Problem Solving		
Business Vocabulary		
Writing		
Conversation (includes telephone and socializing)		
Presentation		
Business Correspondence		
Business Meetings and Negotiations		
Reading		
Grammar		

THANK YOU!

QUESTIONNAIRE

STUDENTS

(End of course)

1. English is a necessity in the Israeli business community.

(Put a check [V] next to the correct answer.)

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

2. It is necessary to study English in college/university.

(Put a check [V] next to the correct answer.)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

3. Students studying business administration should study English for business purposes.

(Put a check [V] next to the correct answer.)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

4. Of the following subjects, which do you think **should have been included** in this course?

(Check (v) either 'yes' or 'no')

<u>SUBJECTS</u>	Yes	No
Problem Solving		
Business Vocabulary		
Writing		
Conversation (includes telephone and socializing)		
Presentation		
Business Correspondence		
Business Meetings and Negotiations		
Reading		
Grammar		

5. Put a check (V) next to each appropriate column.

	This English course taught skills needed for current academic studies.	This English course taught skills needed for future employment.
STRONGLY AGREE		
AGREE		
NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE		
DISAGREE		
STRONGLY DISAGREE		

THANK-YOU!

QUESTIONNAIRE TEACHERS

1. Sex: (please check)

☐ Male ☐ Female

2. Does your institution offer **ESP** courses (English for Specific Purposes courses)?

☐ Yes ☐ No

3. Does your institution administer a needs analysis for English courses?

☐ Yes ☐ No

4. Does your administration administer a course evaluation?

☐ Yes ☐ No

5. How often are courses revised?

- ☐ Every year
- ☐ Every two to five years
- ☐ Rarely (after five years)
- ☐ Never

6. Do you use authentic texts for course material?

☐ Yes ☐ No

7. Do you consult the Business Administration Department in your academic institution concerning business English course content?

☐ Yes ☐ No

8. Do you consult the business community concerning business English course content?

(Put a check [V] next to the correct answer.)

_____ Yes _____ No

9. English is a necessity in the Israeli business community.

(Put a check [V] next to the correct answer.)

- _____ Strongly agree
- _____ Agree
- _____ Neither agree nor disagree
- _____ Disagree
- _____ Strongly disagree

10. It is necessary to study English in college/university.

(Put a check [V] next to the correct answer.)

_____ Yes _____ No

11. Students studying business administration should study English for business purposes.

(Put a check [V] next to the correct answer.)

_____ Yes _____ No

12. Of the following subjects, which **were included** in this course and which do you think **should be included** in this course: (Check the appropriate answers. You may check subjects in both columns if necessary.)

	WERE INCLUDED	SHOULD BE INCLUDED
Problem Solving		
Business Vocabulary		
Writing		
Conversation (includes telephone and socializing)		
Presentation		
Business Correspondence		
Business Meetings and Negotiations		
Reading		
Grammar		

13. Check the appropriate answers for each column.

	This English course taught skills needed for current academic studies.	This English course taught skills needed for future employment.
STRONGLY AGREE		
AGREE		
NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE		
DISAGREE		
STRONGLY DISAGREE		

THANK-YOU!

QUESTIONNAIRE

BUSINESS

1. Sex: (please (V) check)

☐ Male ☐ Female

2. Please indicate the specialization of your company.

3. English is a necessity in the Israeli business community.

(Put a check [V] next to the correct answer.)

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

4. It is necessary to study English in college/university.

(Put a check [V] next to the correct answer.)

☐ Yes ☐ No

5. Students studying business administration should study English for business purposes.

(Put a check [V] next to the correct answer.)

☐ Yes ☐ No

6. Of the following subjects, which are necessary for work?

(Please check (V) all the appropriate boxes.)

Problem Solving	
Business Vocabulary	
Writing	
Conversation (includes telephone and socializing)	
Presentation	
Business Correspondence	
Business Meetings and Negotiations	
Reading	
Grammar	

7. Should the business community be consulted concerning business English course content?

___ Yes ___ No

8. The English my employees learned in college/university taught them the English skills they currently need for employment.

___ Strongly agree

___ Agree

___ Partially agree

___ Disagree

___ Strongly disagree

THANK-YOU!

Appendix 4

INTERVIEWS

STUDENT INTERVIEWS

Interview 1: *Personal Information:* “R” is a 25-year-old female student. Her first language is Hebrew and her second language is English. The last time she studied English before entering college was in high school at the age of seventeen. The interview was conducted in Hebrew.

“R” is currently working at a temporary job where she needs a minimal amount of English conversation. However, she reads a great deal of English on the Internet. Although she feels that she can currently cope with English, she admits that she must improve a great deal for future job needs, even though she is passing the advanced course.

Do you think English is important in Israel? English is very important in Israel and is a professional necessity. Everywhere you go you must know English. Many business terms are in English. Knowing English gives confidence. If you know English you can converse with those who also know English.

Why do students need to know English in college? It is important for the institution’s reputation to produce students who know English. However, if someone does not want to learn English and does not see any necessity in learning English, no amount of courses will help.

Should an English course be offered in college or in the place of business or both? It is important to study English in college, however, the language one learns at college is not the language one would learn at a course at work. It is the course at work that is essential for future needs. Students learn self-confidence in using the language in an academic course.

Has this course improved your English? This course has not improved my English and did not teach me skills for my future career.

What skills do you think are important to learn in college? It is important to study presentations, negotiations and everything else related to business.

What kind of course should be given in college? The course should be a combination of reading and conversation where the students sit in a circle and conduct negotiations, conversations, presentation and interviews. The students should be divided into groups

and conduct debates, role-plays and simulations. In this way the students would enjoy the lesson and learn more.

Do you think teachers who teach business English should also know about business? Teachers should have some business background.

Do you think that a needs analysis should be given at the beginning of the course and a course evaluation at the end? I don't think it is necessary to give students a needs analysis and an evaluation because it has no real meaning.

Do you think that the administration will change anything as a consequence of the evaluation? The administration is willing to make some minor changes, but they will not make major course changes.

Who should be involved in course writing? The administration should also consult outside business sources for input on course design. But the teachers should be the ones who actually design the course.

Do you think you are capable of making decisions about course content? I can contribute ideas to the course but I can't make major decisions.

Are you planning on taking extra courses in English after you graduate? Definitely, in order to improve my English for my job. I will probably take a course in conversation.

Interview 2: Personal Information: “M” is a 23-year-old female student. Her first language is Hebrew and her second language is English. The last time she studied English was in a special preparatory course before entering college two years ago. “M” is the weakest of the five students. “M” does not feel that she belongs in an advanced course and is having great difficulty coping with the material.

The interview was conducted in Hebrew.

“M” would eventually like to enter the field of marketing but at present she requires no reading, writing or speaking English skills in her current job.

Do you think English is important in Israel? English is only important to companies that have business dealing overseas.

Do you think everyone should study English? Everyone should start studying English at an early age, but people working in local companies will never use the language.

Should an English course be offered in college or in the place of business? Employees should acquire English skills before coming to their place of work, especially in business.

Has this course improved your English? I did not gain anything from this course and my English did not improve at all.

What skills do you think are important to learn in college? Conversation, which is different from the reading and writing needed at school; academic courses should include this skill.

Do you think teachers who teach business English should also know about business? Teachers should have some business background in order to teach business English skills.

Do you think that a needs analysis should be given at the beginning of the course and a course evaluation at the end of the course? Definitely.

Do you think that the administration will change anything as a consequence of the evaluation? I doubt whether the administration will change anything.

Who should be involved in course writing? The business community and the teachers should be involved in course design.

Who should make the final decision as to what should be included in the course? Only the students and the teachers should do the final course design

What would you put in a course if you were to design it? I don’t exactly know.

Are you planning on taking extra courses in English after you graduate? I'm not sure. It depends where I work.

Interview 3: Personal Information: “S” is a 29-year-old male student. His first language is Hebrew and his second language is English. The last time he studied English before entering college was twelve years ago in high school. The interview was conducted in English.

“S” currently works in the computer industry and converses and reads English at work. He also converses, when needed, with friends, reads and writes e-mails and reads for pleasure in English. He has been abroad and has used his English for travel purposes.

Do you think English is important in Israel? It is very important and should be taught at a very early age. Students should come into college with a high level of English so as not to have to use translated reading material.

Why do students need to know English in college? In order to acquire skills for complex reading of texts in English and learn the techniques to deal with difficult vocabulary, and expand the student’s current vocabulary.

Has this course improved your English? This English course was a waste of time for me. It did not improve any English skills. My English is very advanced and I just missed the exemption cut-off by a few points.

What skills do you think are important to learn in college? Reading is important, and so is vocabulary. It is also important to learn skills for future employment such as presentations, conversation, e-mail writing, correct pronunciation and correct spelling. If you learn these skills in for future employment you can learn reading, writing and speaking through them. For instance, when making a presentation there is reading to investigate the subject, speaking through presentation and a test on the material. The current course did not teach any of these future needed skills.

Do you think teachers who teach business English should also know about business? Teachers should be familiar with business material.

Do you think that a needs analysis should be given at the beginning of the course and an evaluation at the end of the course? Yes, both should be given. Evaluations should also be given in mid-course in order to improve the specific course.

Do you think that the administration will change anything as a consequence of the evaluation? I’m very pessimistic about changes taking place. The administration will take approximately five to ten years to make any changes because it is locked in its ways. That does not mean that we shouldn’t try to make changes.

Who should be involved in course writing? The teachers and the business community, but I don't think that students are capable of making any real decision.

Who should make the final decision as to what should be included in the course? The head of the department and the business community should make the final decision.

What would you put in a course if you were to design it? I would present language teaching in a colorful and exciting way so that it brings the students closer to the language. Grading should not be done with numbers, but by telling the students where they need improvement and how to make the improvement.

Are you planning on taking extra courses in English after you graduate? Of course, I want to learn all the skills I didn't learn in this course, like how to make a presentation in English, how to negotiate, how to correspond and everything else that was missing.

Interview 4: Personal Information: "A" is a 24-year-old male student. His first language is Hebrew and his second language is English. The last time he studied English before entering college was in high school. The interview was conducted in Hebrew.

"A" speaks very little English and has little use for English at present (even though his mother is an English teacher.) He feels that he is not at an advanced level and had difficulty coping with the course, however, managed to pass at the end.

Do you think English is important in Israel? English is very important in Israel and Israelis must be able to communicate with the rest of the world, especially when they take international business trips and talk to foreign workers in Israel. English is the international language of the world and everyone at one time or another will need it, for work, travel or pleasure. Because of this it is one of the most important subjects and must be taught properly.

Why do students need to know English in college? It is the last step before going out into the real world, and because of this it is important to teach the right English skills in college. When you decide to study in college it is because you want to and not because someone is forcing you. So you should be studying the subjects for your future employment.

Has this course improved your English? Not at all. All we did were unseens. We should do presentations and business vocabulary; in fact every week there should be a vocabulary test on twenty words. In reality, I did not learn anything.

What skills do you think are important to learn in college? Specific business subjects, like vocabulary and presentations, this will improve self-confidence which many students lack, and reading, although the reading should not be emphasized. Students should read articles in class and then explain the article in Hebrew, to make sure he understood it. The most important thing, however, is vocabulary and once you have a large vocabulary everything else will become easier.

What kinds of courses should be given in college and why? Several courses should be offered: a reading course, a course in communicative skills for work and a course summarizing the two previous courses. If these courses are offered most students will choose to register.

Do you think teachers who teach business English should also know about business? The teachers should know business subjects very well. This will only contribute to the course.

Do you think that a needs analysis should be given at the beginning of the course and an evaluation at the end of the course? I think it's a good idea. If the students write what they actually feel perhaps the teacher will do something about it.

Do you think that the administration will change anything? No one in the administration will pay attention and change anything. In reality something should be done about these courses. Teachers realize that they are doing something wrong.

Who should be involved in course writing? Everyone, meaning teachers, students and the business community.

Who should make the final decision as to what should be included in the course? I am not sure since colleges want one thing and companies want something else and different companies demand different things.

Are you planning on taking extra courses in English after you graduate? I will definitely need one. I will take one that is geared to business English and hopefully will learn the vocabulary and skills I didn't get in college.

Interview 5: Personal Information: “F” is a 21-year-old male student. His first language is Arabic, his second language is Hebrew and his third language is English. The last time he studied English before entering college was in 1998. The interview was conducted in Hebrew.

“F” started the interview by stating that he reads Hebrew better than Arabic and prefers to speak in Hebrew rather than Arabic. In fact, the only place he uses Arabic is when he is at home. He reads newspapers, books and converses with most people in Hebrew.

Do you think English is important in Israel? English is most important, and if you don’t speak English you will never succeed anywhere. I think English should be taught even before Arabic.

Has this course improved your English? I feel I am at an intermediate level, not an advanced level, even though I can cope with the work in the advanced class. This is the second time I am taking this course because I failed last year, and this year I am doing well and passing. I am passing because I have learned how to take unseens; I’ve learned the method. This doesn’t mean that I know English; it means I know how to take tests.

What skills/topics do you think are important to learn in college? It is important to learn conversation, especially for future business needs. I am not sure where I will work after college, but I know that I will need English.

What kinds of courses should be given in college and why? I think that there should be one course in reading and one in conversation.

Do you think teachers who teach business English should also know about business? Business English teachers should be acquainted with business studies.

Do you think that a needs analysis should be given at the beginning of the course and an evaluation at the end of the course? It would be useless to give a needs analysis at the beginning because everyone will answer differently. However, it is important for students to evaluate the course at the end.

Do you think that the administration will change anything as a consequence of the evaluation? I’m doubtful that the administration will do anything in response to the evaluations.

Who should be involved in course writing? I think both teachers and students should be involved. But the administration should not because they don’t know anything about the courses. The business community does not know specifically what to teach, but they can contribute general opinions.

What would you put in a course if you were to design it? I would like to see much more conversation in the course, even though I enjoy solving the unseen and I would not like to give this up.

Are you planning on taking extra courses in English after you graduate? I think so. I think I will continue to study English. I like the language and think it's important to learn.

TEACHER INTERVIEWS

Interview 1: *Personal Information:* B is a female teacher who has been teaching for 35 years. She never taught EAP-B courses but has taught courses that had business students. Her mother tongue is English and the interview was conducted in English.

Do you think English is important in Israel? Yes. English is the most important second language in the world. We live on an island that's isolated surrounded by people who don't speak English. We must have a language we can communicate in.

Do you think everyone should study English? Yes – but it's not practical. Anyone who has any aspirations needs English.

Do you think everyone should study English in college? Everyone should study English in college. This is the only way they can access information, use e-mail, etc.

Should an English course be offered in college or in the place of business or both? Both are separate needs. The EAP course can't be a "hands-on" course for specific job issues.

What activities do your students currently need English for? Reading, e-mails, presentation, and conversation.

What did you hope the students would gain from the course? Confidence in communicative skills. They shouldn't feel that they're forced to take the course. They should feel that they're taking the course for their own good. They should have proficiency even on a menial level – short e-mails, articles, and so on.

What skills should be taught? They should learn presentations, they should be student generated (not teacher generated) since students understand their profession better than teachers. This should come from student meta-cognition and needs analysis.

Do you think that the courses given in English have fulfilled your students' expectations? The problem is that when they're students they don't know what their long term needs are. Therefore we need a needs analysis mostly for immediate needs. The higher the motivation the more it's oriented towards needs. The students say what they want and we tell them what they need. It should be a combination of the two. If we give them enough of what they think they need then they'll be willing to learn what we think they need.

We also don't know exactly what they need. We need more negotiation with the business world – a dialogue to see what they really need. We might have misplaced judgment in what we think they need. We need a dialogue between the three stakeholders.

Students' expectations are to get out with good grades. Those that realize they need more ask for it and are grateful. If we give them more business skills, then they're willing to

work on what we think is important. It's a balance. Many students are anti-academia and want more practical skills, therefore we should try to show them that they have to read academic articles along with gaining practical skills.

Who determines the content of the curriculum and how is it being determined? I don't teach ESP courses where I work. I think there should be ESP courses. Even where there is ESP there should be more specificity.

Do you think teachers who teach English should also know about business? ESP makes English teachers much more specific in their field. General teachers lack skills in specific subjects. Business English teachers should know about business. A teacher should not teach in a field she's not interested in. Language teachers are language people. They know the specific lexis and discourse. English speaking people who are business people without any teaching background should not be employed. They will teach business courses in English. What we teach is English business courses. We teach language not business.

What kinds of courses should be given in college? Students must learn reading skills. Reading courses should be done in the first year because they need these skills for college. However, communicative skills should be given later on because they're going to be using this for business. First year should be reading. Gradually, this course should integrate communicative skills. I'm not sure if it should be in the same course or a separate course. This course should have the input of the three stakeholders.

Do you think that a needs analysis should be given at the beginning of the course to see what the students want to learn? It should not be given. They don't know what they want. They don't see the real world skills. A needs analysis turns out to be a preference and once you give it to them you have to act on it. If you don't, you disappoint them. So if you ask the stakeholders you have to warn them that the course design might not include everything they specified.

Do you think some sort of evaluation of the course should be given at the end of each course? Students aren't capable enough to decide if the course was good. The ideal is to ask the students once they've entered the job market if the course they took in college really helped them. The only way to evaluate it is with perspective and if it really works in the real world.

Who should be involved in course writing? The three stakeholders should be involved in course design. All have demands and constraints. But it all has to be negotiated and it has to be ongoing.

Who should make the final decision as to what should be included in the course? The administration usually makes final decisions, however all three stakeholders should have a say.

Do you think representatives in the business community should be consulted concerning course design? We should consult the business community.

What would you put in a course if you were to design it? There is no best way to study. It should all be flexible enough to accommodate change. There is no one way. There should be a general holistic view – writing, presentation, etc.

What activities do you think your students will need English for in their place of business? I'm not sure of future needs because all needs change.

Why would some of your students want to take English course after college? Now they know what their needs are.

Interview 2: Personal Information: M is a female teacher who has been teaching for twelve years. She is the coordinator of business English courses in her college. She teaches EAP-B courses. Her mother tongue is English and the interview was conducted in English.

Do you think English is important in Israel? Yes. It's the language of international communication; the language of business.

Do you think everyone should study English? Yes. From eight years old. They should definitely study in college. Everyone should study English.

Should an English course be offered in college or in the place of business or both? Ideally, in both.

What activities do your students currently need English for? For reading. They do presentations for the English course, but they don't need it for studies. There are no English speaking or writing skills needed in college.

What did you hope the students would gain from the course? I hope that in a semester course they can improve reading, writing, and speaking.

What skills are taught? In a business English course the emphasis is on reading skills, but students must give a short presentation and there is a bit of writing.

Do you think that the courses given in English have fulfilled your students' expectations? Students feel that the course should include more speaking skills, but it's impossible with 35 students.

Who determines the content of the curriculum and how is it being determined? It is determined by the coordinator and teachers give input.

Do you think teachers who teach English should also know about business? They should be interested and aware of what's going on in the business world.

What kinds of courses should be given in college? The Ideal course: 1st year reading where the 1st semester focuses on writing. The 2nd year focuses on presentations. In presentations they should have both peer and expert feedback.

Do you think that a needs analysis should be given at the beginning of the course to see what the students want to learn? I did it but I don't think the students are really aware of what they need. I didn't ask very specific questions in the needs analysis because I didn't want to raise their expectations because I can't offer what they want in a course.

Do you think some sort of evaluation of the course should be given at the end of each course? Normally I have a discussion with them at the end of the course and their main comment is: "Too much homework."

Do you think that the administration will change anything as a consequence of the evaluation? Courses are constantly evolving.

Who should be involved in course writing? I asked the business department for readings and the readings were inappropriate and highly specialized. The business department doesn't have the same aim as the English department therefore I choose to use more interesting readings and they can use the same techniques in reading as they do for the business department. I haven't really approached the business community.

What activities do you think your students will need English for in their place of business? Presentation, conversation, negotiation etc. I haven't taught all these skills, but if they learn presentation they can learn all the other skills.

Why would some of your students want to take English courses after college? Because English should be an ongoing learning experience. According to time constraint this course has tried to satisfy the present needs of the students. It's a start in satisfying future needs. It's hard to anticipate all these needs. The needs are constantly evolving, therefore we must always modify the course.

Interview 3: Personal Information: B is a female teacher who has been teaching for twenty-five years. She teaches EAP-B courses. Her mother tongue is English and the interview was conducted in English.

Do you think English is important in Israel? Yes because if people want to participate in anything international they must have English. In any field and anywhere you must know English.

Do you think everyone should study English? English should be obligatory in grade school and high school.

Do you think everyone should study English in college? To get a degree every student should master certain skills in English. No student should graduate without English.

Should an English course be offered in college or in the place of business or both?
Both

What activities do your students currently need English for? Lectures in English, reading, some writing, e-mail and computers. They have to start working with English on a daily basis while they're studying.

What did you hope the students would gain from the course? A more integrated use of skills and not just reading.

What skills did you teach? In this course they have to make presentations in English, discussions are in English and reading and writing is in English.

Do you think that the courses given in English have fulfilled your students' expectations? I tried to fulfil both workplace and academic needs. All activities are text based and they are given case studies and reading, writing, and conversation are based on case studies. Students felt they were able to use what they learned so feedback was very positive. The course fulfilled their expectations and it was useful. I enjoy teaching the course – it's open and I can try new things. The skill I would emphasize more is writing. The course should be more project-oriented. I would invent more projects the students can work on as teams. At work they work as teams and this would give them a chance to use teamwork.

Who determines the content of the curriculum and how is it being determined? Teachers determine course design and the chairperson approves it. The course evolves; it is not textbook-oriented; it is a collaborative activity.

Do you think teachers who teach English should also know about business? They should take a direct interest in business and be aware of what's going on.

What kinds of courses should be given in college and why? It should be an integrated course. The students shouldn't only use language to read for information. Language is used for many things, therefore it shouldn't be one course for reading and one course for speaking etc. However, there should be special shorter workshops available to people who want to go more deeply into a specific area, like a presentation workshop. These would be special courses that the university can and should provide.

Do you think that a needs analysis should be given at the beginning of the course to see what the students want to learn? I give it. It should be given not so much to see what they expect but what they like.

What should be asked in this? It should ask about attitudes towards English. The students should evaluate their own uses of English. I look to see if they're working and what they need English for and I try to incorporate it into course. Also if there's a poor student, I try to find out more about him or her in order to help. I use it - but I wouldn't change the entire course because of it. However, I may change the focus. It helps because a lot of times the university doesn't know why they demand something and what they should put into the course and this helps. This particular course allows for the teaching of other skills, besides reading. Other courses just do reading. There are currently courses that have writing.

Do you think some sort of evaluation of the course should be given at the end of each course? I give out course evaluation.

Do you think that the administration will change anything as a consequence of the evaluation? I'm not sure that anything will change. I feel that all evaluation measures is if the teacher is okay and are the students happy. The administration needs this evaluation on record but does nothing with it.

Who should be involved in course writing? The ideal situation is to have all stakeholders involved in writing. At times I consult with the business department – but not enough. When I tried to involve them they didn't give much input.

Who should make the final decision as to what should be included in the course? The teacher.

What would you put in a course if you were to design it? I would teach all skills. I would have the students use the computer as a tool for studying English. It should not be a total virtual course but used as a tool.

What do you think is the best way to learn English? Students would do portfolios – writing inside and outside of the class (students must do writing in class to make sure that they actually do their own assignments – since the truth is that students do cheat and may not do their own work if it is only assigned as homework.) I also would do a lot of teamwork.

What activities do you think your students will need English for in their place of business? To communicate, read reports, essentially read, write and speak. They must be able to function with people of different cultures – globalization.

Do you feel your students are as eager to learn and participate as business people who take a course after college? Students are eager and motivated to learn. They generally want to improve their English. Some may only want it in order to graduate, but there is generally some motivation when they realize the course will give them skills for work. If there are other courses available there might be candidates.

Interview 4: Personal Information: J is a female teacher who has been teaching for seven years. She teaches EAP-B courses. Her mother tongue is English and the interview was conducted in English.

Do you think English is important in Israel? Yes. English is very important because people need to be able to communicate and read and write in English since any business conducted outside Israel is done in English.

Do you think everyone should study English? It's a question of aptitude and some people don't have the aptitude. It's useful to have a good basis.

Do you think everyone should study English in college? Everyone in college should study if it's required for academic purposes. The onus to study English should be on the college.

Should an English course be offered in college or in the place of business or both? English should be given in college. In these economically rough times employees should enter work with English because employers can't afford to spend money on courses.

What activities do your students currently need English for? The need it for academic research. This is not a spoken language course. The students only learn reading skills. The course is limited. However, I hope that they take these skills further. But in truth it is only a reading course.

What did you hope the students would gain from the course? Students who wish to take the course and benefit from it found the course limited to academic research and would have liked to take the course further and learn more skills besides reading.

Do you think that the courses given in English have fulfilled your students' expectations? The course fulfils the purpose for which it's meant, the academic purpose, but not if you want to take it a stage further.

Who determines the content of the curriculum and how is it being determined? It's determined by teachers with input from the institution.

Do you think teachers who teach English should also know about business? Teachers who teach English should also know about business. It makes the subject less dry and more understandable.

What kinds of courses should be given in college? Reading courses should be given with one optional semester of communicative skills.

Do you think that a needs analysis should be give at the beginning of the course to see what the students want to learn? We can't give students that much autonomy. They

must learn the basics and be told what to learn. Students don't understand what they have to learn. The more advanced courses can be optional.

Do you think some sort of evaluation of the course should be given at the end of each course? We should have a student evaluation to see what they thought was interesting.

Who should be involved in course writing? In reading courses the institutions. In communicative courses the business community should be involved. And a good teacher should be aware of what's happening in the business community.

Who should make the final decision as to what should be included in the course?
The teacher

What would you put in a course if you were to design it? I would put in vocabulary in context and communicative skills such as meetings, listening, watching videos of meetings, and telephone skills.

What activities do you think your students will need English for in their place of business? The skills that students need in business depends upon the business itself. Anything from telephone to negotiations and presentations.

Do you feel your students are as eager to learn and participate as business people who take a course after college? Students will work harder if they see that it will benefit them in the future. Most students in 1st and 2nd year don't realize the importance of English. English is just another course. If this course was taken in a final year they would see it as English for business purposes, in other words, getting a job. However, now it's just another EAP course – just another academic course. Those students who see some importance in the course try harder and achieve.

Why would some of your students want to take English courses after college? In order to improve the skills they're lacking for work.

Interview 5: Personal Information: R is a female teacher who has been teaching for 32 years. She has been teaching EAP-B courses for 15 years. R is teaching a BA Executive course. Her mother tongue is English and the interview was conducted in English.

Do you think English is important in Israel? It's absolutely important to study English in Israel for communication with the rest of the world.

Do you think everyone should study English? Yes. It's in the air we breathe.

Do you think everyone should study English in college? There should be a compulsory ESP course in college.

Should an English course be offered in college or in the place of business or both? In both. It should be offered for continuity. The courses in places of business should be more focused and comply with the place of business. In college it should be focused but more general.

What activities do your students currently need English for? Students need English for their future work. What they learn in English should be the correspondent terminology for what they're learning in Hebrew in business administration.

What did you hope the students would gain from the course? I don't know what students need English for in college. Students should gain "comfort" in learning how to read newspapers, reinforcement of business terminology, and general communication. They studied presentation, CV writing, business vocabulary, socializing, and reading. The final exam is an unseen and vocabulary. Thirty-five percent of the grade is a presentation

Do you think that the courses given in English have fulfilled your students' expectations? I don't know. I feel that in the amount of time given I covered enough.

Who determines the content of the curriculum and how is it being determined? The coordinator determines the course and there is no teacher involvement. The course is not geared towards reading skills. I feel that there should be input from the business department and the business community.

Do you think teachers who teach English should also know about business? Definitely.

What kinds of courses should be given in college? Communicative activities should have a higher priority than reading. Reading should be taught, but minimally.

Do you think that a needs analysis should be given at the beginning of the course to see what the students want to learn? Yes

What should be asked in this? What are the students' practical objectives?

Do you think some sort of evaluation of the course should be given at the end of each course? Yes.

Who should be involved in course writing? Students shouldn't be involved in course design because they don't know what they're going towards. Teachers in the business department should be involved because the business department has experience in business world. Stress should be on the practical rather than the theoretical side.

Who should make the final decision as to what should be included in the course? Just the coordinator.

Do you think representatives in the business community should be consulted concerning course design? Yes

What would you put in a course if you were to design it? I feel that students should approach reading for the pleasure of reading. However, we should not test reading. If I had smaller classes I would do continuous testing throughout the year.

What do you think is the best way to learn English? The course design should include students' future needs such as correspondence, verbal communication, and technical literature. I haven't taught them these skills. I feel that I have taught them present needs. I also feel that many of them can cope with academic reading.

What activities do you think your students will need English for in their place of business? The course design should include students' future needs such as correspondence, verbal communication, and technical literature.

Do you feel your students are as eager to learn and participate as business people who take a course after college? The students are eager to learn because they feel that the course is practical.

Why would some of your students want to take English courses after college? Students would need an extra course after this class because of lack of skills they didn't receive in college.

BUSINESS INTERVIEWS

Interview 1: *Personal Information:* A is head of human resources in the largest multinational of generic pharmaceuticals in the world. There are 9,000 employees worldwide; in Israel there are 3,000; A is responsible for 600 employees and welfare activities and benefits for all Israeli employees. This interview was conducted in English.

Do you think it is important to study English for business purposes? Yes.

Why do you think English is important in Israel? Because we work with many companies around the world and all our communication is in English, particularly business English. English is the common language all over the world.

What percentage of business is done with overseas clientele who speak English? The subsidiaries outside Israel, which is 90 percent of the business, only communicate in English.

What percentage of people in your company must speak English? Marketing and salespeople all speak English.

What activities do your employers need English for? All of the employees need English because they all read professional articles. They have to know how to write, because they get e-mail. The managers and product managers need also speaking because they have meetings with companies and they have to communicate with them. They also need to know how to make presentations, and managers need to know how to negotiate.

Is there an English test that employees must pass before being employed? Secretaries take a test because they have to write and understand English. We don't give a test regularly with other employees. If we hire a manager and he comes from another company we don't test him because he comes with the skills. Actually we should do it, but we don't do it regularly. We know if someone knows English when we hire him, although we don't know the extent.

Is the employee's English good enough to cope with situations that arise at work and with visitors? Most employees' English is okay. They also take some courses so this helps.

Do any of your employees study English? Some. We offered in-house courses a few months ago. It was a project in which almost 80 people studied, 5-6 levels. Now we send some of our managers outside. The course that we offered was mostly communication with vocabulary. It was a communicative course in communicative skills for 2-3 hours a week. The company pays for it. It was part on company time and part on employees' time. For some employees the company pays 100 percent. I think the idea of having an in-house course was the company's idea, so we encourage our employees to study English. Everyone should know English in this country. In work, if they need English, they should study it at work.

Where would you like to see an improvement in your employees' English skills? Most need it in communication. For writing, you have a speller. But once you have to talk to someone or to present something you have to have the ability to talk. It is not enough if you understand every word. If you have to speak and you can't, you have a problem.

Do you think that the English courses your employees took in university gave them the necessary skills to cope with English in the business world? I'm not sure. No, most of them not. What's missing is the conversation, communication, presentation, the business skills they don't have. Maximum they read better, but they don't have the communication skills.

Do you think that the business community should be consulted/involved in business English courses in university? It would be a good idea. They would offer vocabulary and tell what they need.

What kinds of courses should be given in college? It depends on what level you come to the university. Somebody who comes on an advanced level, I personally think the communicative skills are much more important.

Do you think that a needs analysis should be given at the beginning of the course to students and the business community to see what they want to learn? It's always good to look at the needs of the students. The problem is you have several needs and how are you going to divide the students. As for the business community, I think so, it's a good idea. The emphasis should be on several issues such as production, R&D etc. You could divide the courses and make a general course and then give a more specific course.

Do you think some sort of evaluation of the university program should be given to the business community? The students should have some evaluation. The business community – it's nice to know but it's not necessary and we can advise and help but we can't make decisions.

Do you think that the administration will change anything as a consequence of the evaluation? I don't know.

Who should make the final decision as to what material should be included in the university course? The easy answer is to say everyone. But I think finally the college, because the college can collate all the ideas. They should decide what they think because sometimes there may be some other issues that the students and the business community don't know about and the college has all the information.

Do you think business English teachers in higher education should also know about business? I think so. They should be updated about business and they should have articles. In conclusion, I think the courses in university were not enough and we have to give extra courses at work.

Interview 2: Personal Information: C is general manager of a marketing company. The company employs 75 people. It is an Israeli-based company with international ties. This interview was conducted in English.

Do you think it is important to study English for business purposes? It's absolutely important for several reasons. One, most of the professional literature is in English. Second, this is the only language between us and our suppliers and sometimes our customers.

Why do you think English is important in Israel? Because Israel relies on foreign connections. It's important in other countries, too. For instance, we have business dealings with France and if the French did not know English we would not know how to communicate with them. I guess, it's important all over.

What percentage of business is done with overseas clientele who speak English? Eighty percent of our imports are done with overseas clientele who speak English. It's a heavy English traffic.

What percentage of people in your company must speak English? All marketing people must know English and also import/export people, roughly 50-60 percent. They need mainly reading, writing and conversation. And some of them have to do negotiations. All of them must read professional literature. They have to read correspondence with suppliers and all the correspondence is in English and all the professional literature is in English. Some of them need writing – professional writing of reports and business correspondence – so all of them need reading and writing. Also, some of them go once or twice a year overseas so they need conversation proficiency. I guess then they need all three.

Is there an English test that employees must pass before being employed? No, there isn't. I would not rule out not hiring someone whose English abilities are not good, but I would take it into consideration. But this is not a bad idea – giving an English test. I know if the employee's English is not good only after the fact. We think a person who finished a first or second degree would know some English. However, this is not always true. Some of them pass the exam in many peculiar ways and their English is below standard. And then we have to give them assisting mechanisms. For instance, we have to give them English secretaries to help them. It is not an ideal situation, however, being a non-English speaking country we have to take into consideration we may have marketing people with poor English abilities. Unfortunately, there's nothing done in the interviewing process to see whether the employee knows English.

What are the most important English skills and topics that they have to know? First reading, then speaking, then writing.

Is the employees' English good enough to cope with situations that arise at work and with visitors? I think they can handle it. I think we are not on a very good English level, but they can just handle it.

Do any of your employees study English? No. With our poor Israeli English we manage to solve our problems. So I can't tell you that there is a burning problem to study English.

Should an English course be offered in college or in the place of business or both? I think mainly in college because that is your opportunity to catch someone's attention. And for small and medium sized companies it's very hard to allocate time and money for something that is not a burning necessity. So, the first place should be the university.

Where would you like to see an improvement in your employees' English skills? Mainly reading then conversation.

Do you think that the English courses your employees took in university gave them the necessary skills to cope with English in the business world? Success is limited. They can cope with material but they take too long. It would be a very good idea to insist that students take courses in college in English.

Do you think that the business community should be consulted and/or involved in business English courses in university? There should be some input from the business community. Shakespeare is very interesting but does not contribute a lot to business English. Most of the English you need for business is American English and not English English and many teachers teach English English.

What kinds of courses should be given in college? Studying a language is not all about one skill. It's a mix. And I think this is the way you should study a language. In a good course you should have a course that teaches all skills. Language is understanding a culture and speaking is part of it.

Do you think that a needs analysis should be given at the beginning of the course to students and the business community to see what they want to learn? Students will not know the answer of what they need to know. The business community will be able to tell you more.

Do you think some sort of evaluation of the university programme should be given to the business community? Absolutely

Do you think that the administration will change anything as a consequence of the evaluation? I don't know if something can be changed but something should be changed. Educational institutions are conservative by nature and to change something is very difficult.

Who should make the final decision as to what material should be included in the university course? The business community should have an input.

Do you think business English teachers in higher education should also know about business? He or she should come from the business sector or should know business very well

Do you think people are more willing to learn English once they are in a business setting? Yes. I don't think the student really understands what she or he has to face in business. In conclusion, I think in order to be successful you needed a certain amount of English.

Interview 3: Personal Information: D is head of human resources in a hi-tech company. The company employs 1,350 people. This interview was conducted in Hebrew.

Do you think it is important to study English for business purposes? Very important.

Why do you think English is important in Israel? Most of the companies are turning into global and international companies and English is becoming the first language.

What percentage of business is done with overseas clientele who speak English? The whole pharma-chemical branch of the company is based on export and this makes it necessary to know English. Once the American FDA approves the factory, all instructions are in English. English for international companies is a necessity.

What activities do your employers need English for? The R&D department needs English for reading and scientific and technical writing of reports. The marketing and sales department needs English for presentations, negotiations, and meetings. All correspondence with them is done in English. We have a company outside of Israel then all correspondence and communication is in English. Therefore most of the workers need all English skills. Of course, everyone has their specific needs. The researchers need more reading and the managers need more conversation and negotiation.

Is there an English test that employees must pass before being employed? It depends on the position. For instance, secretaries are given a certain type of test. For many, however, who come with a university degree, we rely on what they learned. There's no doubt the language is something that improves with use. Those that really need English usually improve their skills with use. Sometimes we send the employees to courses. However, we don't reject somebody who has all the other credentials, because they don't know English. We rely on the fact that somehow they will learn it. We always find the way for them to learn.

Is the employees' English good enough to cope with situations that arise at work and with visitors? It's very individual. I send many employees to English courses. In fact most of the employees do need English courses after coming to work. The university gives a base – they know how to read articles. However, between that and knowing how to negotiate in English there is a huge gap. Most of the time I do outsourcing. The amount of time is very individual.

Do any of your employees study English? There are always people studying English. It is an ongoing activity. The company, most of the time, pays because it's something the company asks for. We very much encourage our employees to study since at the end they are the ones who represent us. Our calling card is their ability to deal in English.

Should an English course be offered in college or in the place of business or both? The level of English is becoming better with the youth because they are exposed much more. There's no end to the way they can improve. There's no doubt that learning English is something necessary.

Where would you like to see an improvement in your employees' English skills? It depends where the employee works.

Do you think that the English courses your employees took in university gave them the necessary skills to cope with English in the business world? It's a difficult question since I would have to know them before the course and see if there was an improvement. I'm not sure that the English they have is a result of the university. There's no doubt that the university gave them some kind of basis. I'm not sure that the university pays enough attention with business majors to subjects like negotiations and presentations. Most of the workers can understand English texts because this is what they learned in college, but as far as writing and conversation, their skills are very poor. There is a huge gap between reading, writing and conversation.

Do you think that the business community should be consulted and/or involved in business English courses in university? This is a philosophical question. Do you really think that academia will actually consult the business community? Today the university teaches the student what he/she needs for studies and this is the reason why students know how to read. I don't think the university is interested in turning out students that can function in the business world. They want students as tools who can read, and they succeed here. If their goals would widen and they would have a larger perspective then they would ask the business community. It's a matter of setting new goals, and the minute these new goals would be set then the university would consult more people. There is no doubt that asking the business community will only help.

What kinds of courses should be given in college? There should be an emphasis on presentation. In the executive programmes the idea of having a course that caters more to the business community needs is built in. But these are the only courses that take this into consideration. I am not sure how I would offer the courses, but I would be extremely happy if the university would produce students who could read, write and speak in English. Therefore, there should be a mixture of courses.

Do you think that a needs analysis should be given at the beginning of the course to students and the business community to see what they want to learn? I think that the minute the university teaches reading, writing and speaking, then they will take this into account for course design. Therefore, it may not be necessary to have a needs analysis. It's a matter of the university understanding the needs of the students. Part of the course will be presentation, part giving lectures, part simulations of negotiations – but it shouldn't all be reading and unseen.

Do you think some sort of evaluation of the university programme should be given to the business community? Possibly, but the university doesn't even see it as a goal at this point.

Do you think that the administration will change anything as a consequence of the evaluation? I am not familiar enough with the administration. I don't know how open they are to suggestions.

Who should make the final decision as to what material should be included in the university course? The best would be a combination, but practically it's the universities. The question is whether the university is willing to take into consideration the opinion of the business community. And this is the philosophical question – what is the goal of the university?

Do you think business English teachers in higher education should also know about business? Of course.

Do you think people are more willing to learn English once they are in a business setting? Of course, because they need it more and know their needs. In conclusion, the ideal course would be correspondence and presentations together with reading comprehension.

Interview 4: Personal Information: S is CEO of a local, national company that represents three multi-nationals, six foreign companies and one Israeli company specializing in marketing and manufacturing pharmaceuticals and health care products. This interview was conducted in English.

Do you think it is important to study English for business purposes? Absolutely

Why do you think English is important in Israel? We're a little island that lives off of exportation and importation and English is the number one business language spoken around the world. In my company, representing so many foreign companies, it is the prerequisite of every employee to speak English fluently. Therefore, among the 70 employees, 80 percent speak English and the other 20 percent are primarily workers who don't need English.

What percentage of business is done with overseas clientele who speak English? Most of the business.

What percentage of people in your company must speak English? Eighty percent. Some of them don't have the expertise.

What activities do your employers need English for? Mostly speaking and understanding. Marketing people correspond directly with people overseas and medical reps, who do not correspond with people from overseas, have to train with people from overseas. Furthermore, 99 percent of written material that we receive from overseas is in English, so the employees must be able to read English.

Is there an English test that employees must pass before being employed? No. Once in a while on the secretarial or salesmanship level they talk to the English-speaking secretary to see what their spoken English is like. Senior management, before being hired, pass through a screening process and part of the testing is to see if the employee has English skills. However, I am not sure if there is a real English test given in this screening process. If an employee is hired who needs English and does not have English, the employee does not last a long time. English may be a crucial reason to keep a person in this company.

Is the employees' English good enough to cope with situations that arise at work and with visitors? Most of the employees can communicate well through e-mail, telephone and visiting overseas principals. As far as writing marketing plans and business proposals, they get the assistance of the English secretaries. They have to make presentations and it's usually in a small forum and they can cope. They usually don't conduct negotiations; this is done by senior management staff and their English is fluent.

Do any of your employees study English? At this point, no. We offered in the past – business presentation in English and the company paid.

Do you encourage your employees to study English? Absolutely. If someone wants to study English out-house the company would pay 50 percent, like in all other courses.

Should an English course be offered in college or in the place of business or both? It should be a must in college. People going into the business world should study business English because business English has its own lexicon, and people studying in college should study this course.

Where would you like to see an improvement in your employees' English skills? Presentations and e-mail correspondence. This would help them communicate with overseas correspondents, and presentations would make a better impression if they have better skills in front of foreign principals. The employees have enough social skills and enough experience for this "behavioural" English.

Do you think that the English courses your employees took in university gave them the necessary skills to cope with English in the business world? I couldn't answer that. People who come to our company usually have pretty good skills. Whether they acquired these skills from another company or from college, I don't know. One thing is certain – without English in the business world one cannot get ahead. Where you acquire these skills is minor. The obligatory education system should realize this.

Do you think that the business community should be consulted and/or involved in business English courses in university? I think the more the business community could be involved the better the courses would be. (i.e.- When the company offered a French company as a partner they had an in-house French course for presentations. The course was given through the French embassy and the woman teaching the course majored in French literature and French was her native tongue. However, she knew nothing about business and presentations. The course was a failure.) If one wants to improve business English courses the education community has to get closer to the business community and try and design these courses according to the business needs. Then the students will graduate with better preparation for real life.

What kinds of courses should be given in college and why? Giving basic English in college is superfluous. English should be given in grade school, and students should not be accepted to college without English. The English BA and MBA courses should be geared towards what the students will do in real life. Business students should be taught how to write a market plan, presentation, negotiation, e-mails – all needs for business. In Israel, a lot of students go into higher education without a good proficiency in English. It really hurts them because they can't deal with professional material. The course should be specifically designed for the future needs of the students. The course should be a mix of all skills according to the needs of the skills. In business the two skills needed are writing and presenting.

Do you think that a needs analysis should be given at the beginning of the course to students and the business community to see what they want to learn? Absolutely. I think you will find that business people will think alike and the students, not having any

experience, will give different responses one from another. I think you should listen more to people in the business. They know better what students need because they have to train them. There is a tie between the business community and the educational community and less of a tie between the students and the educational community.

Do you think some sort of evaluation of the university programme should be given to the business community? I would encourage a constant dialogue between the educators and the business community. For instance, one way is to bring in speakers in English from the business community to tell the students what their needs will be and to tell the institutions what their needs will be. It may be good to bring a representative from the business community to test the students and then tell the teachers what's missing from the course.

Who should make the final decision as to what material should be included in the university course? The educators. They're the only ones who have the skills to make the final decision. Methodology and materials should be determined by the educators; input into course design should come from the business community.

Do you think business English teachers in higher education should also know about business? Teachers should be split up into specific fields, and therefore these educators should specialize in this field. I am very much in favour of ESP courses. My needs are totally different from other fields.

Do you think people are more willing to learn English once they are in a business setting? Yes.

Do you think they are more aware of their needs? Yes – that's why it's important to consult the business world and not the students.

In conclusion, courses should be hands-on. In other words, experience the business world. Make presentations, have business people visit the classroom. This could enhance the knowledge of the students and expose them to different business areas, and motivate them more.

Interview 5: Personal Information: N is a partner in a multi-national consulting and accounting firm. There are 120 employees in the Israeli offices. This interview was conducted in Hebrew.

Do you think it is important to study English for business purposes? Without a doubt. I feel that someone who comes to work in a specific company should come with basic English and knowledge of English. At work he can improve the specific skills he needs for work.

Why do you think English is important in Israel? Because of the ties with the outside world. The world is becoming smaller as we are becoming larger. Therefore, there is a necessity to know English.

What percentage of business is done with overseas clientele who speak English? It's difficult to answer, however, we need to use English everyday. At least every two days, if not more, I have a conversation with someone in English from overseas.

What percentage of people in your company must speak English? Everyone needs to know English.

What activities do your employers need English for? They need business correspondence, reading of professional material, advising in English, negotiating in English, reading a newspaper. In other words, they need all English skills.

Is there an English test that employees must pass before being employed? No, however, from now on we are going to give preference for employment to those people whose native tongue is English. There was a management decision made which says that between 20-25 percent of new people accepted to work would have to be native English speakers. This decision was taken because our employees need to deal with the American mentality as well as the English language.

What are the most important English skills and topics that they have to know? Conversation is the most important. Someone who knows how to speak can also read. Writing is less critical, since he can gain help from other company people in writing. But speaking is a necessity. There's an Anglo-Saxon secretary who just deals with English needs of the company.

Is their English good enough to cope with situations that arise at work and with visitors? No. The employees' skills are not sufficient for anything.

Do any of your employees study English? Yes they have a teacher who gives English lessons mostly in reading and conversation once a week two hours after company hours and the company pays.

Do you encourage your employees to study English? Yes. I don't really believe in college courses. People who studied in college do it because they are made to. Those that

study at work do it because they realize they have a lack and want to learn. This is a big difference. In college they study in order to pass the course. At work they study because they want to, since no one is forced to study, and at work the courses are more focused to the needs of the students.

Should an English course be offered in college or in the place of business or both? Learning English is a long process. Today kids who study in college know English beforehand. They've been brought up on English. The college just has to polish them. Courses given at work are specific courses for each field, such as advertising, accounting and so on.

Do you think that the English courses your employees took in university gave them the necessary skills to cope with English in the business world? Most of the workers do not know English. They must study it now.

Do you think that the business community should be consulted and/or involved in business English courses in university? Of course. Even though there may be very bright people in academia they know nothing of the business world.

What kinds of courses should be given in college and why? Conversation and reading go together. Writing is another story. What's important is speaking and one who knows how to speak can read. First, I'm interested in conversation, then reading, then writing.

Do you think that a needs analysis should be given at the beginning of the course to students and the business community to see what they want to learn? Of course, to both. They should be asked what do they want to do with English afterwards?

Do you think some sort of evaluation of the university programme should be given to the business community? After the course everyone should go to his place of work and see if the course helped. During studies they really wouldn't know.

Do you think that the administration will change anything as a consequence of the evaluation? In colleges of course, because they're more flexible, because they want to bring in students and if they want more students they have to bring them in. In universities the academics think they know what people want but they really don't.

Who should make the final decision as to what material should be included in the university course? I don't think the business people are experts in teaching, but they know about business. They should tell the academics what should be taught and the academics should decide how to teach in order to get to this goal.

Do you think business English teachers in higher education should also know about business? Of course. It should be a combination of being a teacher and knowing business.

In conclusion, business people best know what their needs are, but not how to teach.

Appendix 5

GRAPHS

10.7 - The need for English within the Israeli Business Community

ANOVA

F Value	Df	Sig.	Mean
5.926	2,209	0.003	Students–4.28 Teachers – 4.84 Business – 4.45

10.16 - Teachers (Group A and Group B): This English course taught my students employment skills

t-Test

	Mean Group A	Mean Group B	t	df	Sig	Result
Skills for Employment	3.56	2.67	3.058	29	0.005	Significant difference

10.18 - Students: This course fulfilled employment needs.

t-Test

	Mean Group A	Mean Group B	t	df	Sig	Result
Skills for Employment Needs	3.38	2.59	4.838	148	.000	Significant difference

10.20 - Students and Teachers: Business English courses answer academic needs.

t-Test

	Mean Students	Mean Teachers	t	df	Sig	Result
Skills for Employment	3.49	3.97	-2.48	179	0.014	Significant difference

10.21 - Students, Teachers, Business Community: The business English course taught skills for future employment.

ANOVA TEST

F Value	df	Sig	Mean
0.645	2.209	0.525	Students – 2.92 Teachers – 3.13 Business – 3.06