

## **Recruiters' Perceptions on Teaching Writing Skill for the MBA Students of Anna University Affiliated Colleges in Tamilnadu**

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### **Abstract**

In the wake of global economy, communication skill in the world of business in English is considered the first and foremost asset of an organisation. Employability of an individual is determined not only by the knowledge in his field but by a set of communication skills including written communication in English as well. Business writing is a highly required skill for all the organisations around the globe. Companies seek employees with good communication skill especially in Business English. This paper focuses on the recruiters' perceptions on teaching writing skill for the MBA students of Anna University affiliated colleges in Tamilnadu. The paper hypothesises that there is a gap between the expectations of the organisations and the outcomes of the written communication course offered by Anna University for the MBA students of its affiliated colleges.

The study consists of 10 recruiters of different organisations who are engaged in recruiting the MBA graduates for their organisations. A set of questionnaire has been given to seek their responses on their perceptions, the collected data has been statistically analysed and the outcome is projected in detail.

**Keywords:** MBA- Master of Business Administration, BE- Business English, BEC- Business English Certificate

### **1. Introduction**

As a consequence of globalisation, every organisation faces tough competition in its functions both internally and externally. Powerful business strategies are being planned and implemented to achieve the business objectives and to sustain their growth. The success of

the organisational strategies, to a great extent, depends upon expressive, persuasive, and informative communication. An individual needs efficient and effective language skill particularly written communication to implement these strategies. Written communication remains more formal medium of language skill than the remaining language skills. Business writing is a rudimentary element of all the organisational activities. Writing business correspondences is one of the primary competencies for the strength of the organisational communication.

In the present situation, an MBA graduate is expected to possess good writing skill to get a job in an organisation. Recent researches state that the traditional approach to business education used by most universities and colleges does not prepare the students to be successful or at least survive in the business environments (Bailey, Sass, Swiercz, Seal, & Kayes, 2005; Olian et al., 2002). Anna University framed a curriculum and syllabus for written communication course in MBA programme that reflects more conventional way of teaching Business English and different genres of written communication. Organisations recruit MBA graduates with effective organisational communication ability especially in written communication. MBA graduates should develop their written communication skill in areas such as writing business correspondence, memos, reports, letters, emails, etc.

Learning to write in business context is an essential component in written communication. Recruiters feel frustrated because the MBA graduates' competence in written communication is not appreciable. Many MBA graduates fail in placement and recruitment examinations because of inadequate competency in written communication. Further, recruiters have added that MBA graduates do not have adequate knowledge in writing business correspondence in workplace. This paper aims to investigate the recruiters' perceptions on the written communication expected of MBA graduates.

## **2. Nature of Study**

Writing is an indispensable skill for an MBA graduate to be placed and to be effective in his/ her works in an organisation. Though the written communication course incorporates different strategies to teach various skills and components of writing, the MBA graduates' competence to perform these skills is not sufficient. The main reason for the inadequacy is that they lack business communication skill especially in business vocabulary, lexical

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competency, constructing small and long sentences and so on. Moreover, they are not able to overcome their mother tongue influence on the second language. Hence, the study is essential to know the perceptions of the recruiters involved in recruiting MBA graduates to identify the effectiveness of the written communication course offered to MBA graduates.

### **3. Formulation of Hypothesis**

Today, it is accepted that written communication, including writing business correspondence play very important role in securing employment in reputed organisations for an individual. Possession of good written communication skill in a workplace leads to success. Many MBA graduates fail to get employed because of lack of written communication skill in business. Recruiters opine that there is a dearth of skill in written communication especially in writing business correspondences, presentation, logic, clarity, grammar, tone, body language, style, etc.

### **4. Research Methodology**

The study concentrates on recruiters' perceptions on teaching writing skill for MBA students of Anna University affiliated colleges in Salem region. The data have been collected from recruiters who are engaged in recruiting MBA graduates from Salem region, Tamilnadu. As it is an empirical study, a questionnaire has been set to seek the response from the recruiters and the primary data has been collected using the questions (Types: dichotomous, Likert's 5 point scale, etc.) analysed with appropriate statistical tools and the outcomes have been discussed in detail.

### **5. Limitations of the Study**

The paper focuses only on the perceptions and responses of the recruiters who are engaged to recruit the MBA graduates. 10 recruiters from various organisations have been selected as respondents and a questionnaire has been prepared with the topics of language skills, communication skills and writing skills and given to them. The responses have been tabulated and analysed statistically.

### **6. Data Analyses and Interpretations**

#### **6.1 Importance to Communication Skills**

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When the recruiters look for a candidate with an MBA degree, communication skill of the candidate tops the list followed by teamwork, technical, leadership, and managerial skills. The following table depicts the responses rated by recruiters on the importance of communication skill in a recruitment process.

SI No	Importance to Communication Skills	No. of Recruiters	Percentage
1	Yes	8	80
2	No	2	20
<b>Total</b>		<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>

The above table depicts the details for the question, ‘do you give importance to the communication skill?’. Recruiters give more importance to all skills such as attitude, aptitude, reasoning ability, problem solving, etc. This has been included to check their importance in communication skills. A majority of recruiters (80%) have responded that they give more importance to communication skill, whereas 20% recruiters have stated that they do not give that much importance to it.

## 6.2 Satisfaction on Students’ Language Skills

A strong proficiency in language skills is an asset that promotes an individual throughout his/ her lifespan. Recent research has revealed that many of the students are not qualified to be employed. Recruiters are not fully satisfied with the students’ language skills. The table below presents the information on the recruiters’ level of satisfaction on the MBA students’ language skills.

SI No	Satisfaction on Students’ Language Skills	No. of Recruiters	Percentage
1	Yes	2	20
2	No	8	80
<b>Total</b>		<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>

The result presented in the above table relates to the recruiters' level of satisfaction on the language competence of the MBA students. 80% of the recruiters have stated that they are not satisfied with the level of competence of the students. Only 20% recruiters feel satisfied with the competence level of the students in language skills.

### 6.3 Rank the Linguistic Skills

Recruiters have been asked to rank the language skills according to the importance which they attach to them and their responses are given below in detail.

#### 7.3.1 Listening

Listening is an active and essential skill required for the business. It is involved in recognizing the sounds of speech and processing them into meaningful words and sentences.

Sl No	Listening	No. of Recruiters	Percentage
1	1	0	0
2	2	0	0
3	3	4	40
4	4	6	60
<b>Total</b>		<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>

As far as listening skill is concerned, 60% of the recruiters have allotted listening skill to 'rank 4', whereas 40% recruiter to 'rank 3'.

#### 6.3.2 Speaking

Speaking is a productive and more complicated skill than other language skills, and it involves more than just producing some oral sounds. It supports an individual to verbalise his opinions, thoughts, feelings, etc. The following table gives the details as follows:

Sl No	Speaking	No. of Recruiters	Percentage
1	1	5	50
2	2	5	50
3	3	0	0
4	4	0	0

<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>
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As speaking is one of the prominent skills in any language, a mixed response has been given by all the recruiters. 50/50 responses have been given to ‘rank 1’ and ‘rank 2’.

### 7.3.3 Reading

Reading skill is a challenging one because it introduces new vocabulary and complex sentences to comprehend. An active reader could recognize the simple sentences and understand the organizational structure of a piece of writing with ease.

SI No	Reading	No. of Recruiters	Percentage
1	1	0	0
2	2	0	0
3	3	6	60
4	4	4	40
<b>Total</b>		<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>

As far as reading skill is concerned, it is a receptive skill and it required active listeners to reach the highest level of competence. The above table shows that 60% recruiters have given ‘rank 3’ and 40% recruiters ‘rank 4’ to reading skill.

### 6.3.4 Writing

Writing skill is an important part of communication. Good writing skill helps an individual to transcode his messages with lucidity and simplicity to a set of far larger readers. It is very important as this profession involves more writing procedures like memo, email, reports, letters, etc. The following table gives the responses of the recruiters on writing skill:

SI No	Writing	No. of Recruiters	Percentage
1	1	5	50
2	2	5	50
3	3	0	0
4	4	0	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>

As writing skill is a productive skill, it requires an active reader to read and understand its objectives. A mixed response has been given by the recruiters, 50% of the recruiters have allotted it to 'rank 1' and 50% to 'rank 2'. From this it becomes clear that writing skill along with speaking skill has been placed at the top position as recruiters ranked them very high.

#### 6.4 Importance of Writing Skill

The following table reveals the details of responses given by recruiters on the importance of writing skills.

SI No	Do you give Importance of Writing Skill?	No. of Recruiters	Percentage
1	Yes	10	100
2	No	0	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>

From the above table, it is clear that all the recruiters agree that writing is more important in Business Communication.

#### 6.5 Rating the Writing Skill

Recruiters have been requested to rate the following aspects of writing skill exercises and the results have been tabulated and described in detail.

##### 6.5.1 English Grammar

Sticking to grammar is an important feature in any communication to avoid misapprehensions. It would slow down one's communication process if one uses incorrect grammar in conversation or in any form of communication. The following table reveals the details of rating given by recruiters for this.

SI No	Rating	No. of Recruiters	Percentage
1	Excellent	0	0
2	Good	0	0

3	Average	3	30
4	Poor	5	50
5	Very poor	2	20
<b>Total</b>		<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>

The highest positive response of the recruiters (30%) on English Grammar is ‘average’, whereas 50% of the recruiters have responded that when the students write something, their grammar is ‘poor’, 20% of the recruiters are not satisfied with the students’ ability in English grammar and they have rated it as ‘very poor’.

### 6.5.2 Business Vocabulary

Sufficient vocabulary is the basic need of every interaction. Since Business English is used as the language of communication in organizations, strong vocabulary is equally important for workers from different organizations. The table below presents the details of recruiters’ rating on the importance of business vocabulary.

Sl No	Rating	No. of Recruiters	Percentage
1	Excellent	0	0
2	Good	0	0
3	Average	3	30
4	Poor	5	50
5	Very poor	2	20
<b>Total</b>		<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>

From the above table it becomes clear that 30% of the recruiters have said that the students’ level of competence in business vocabulary is ‘average’, 50% percentage of recruiters have rated the students’ level of competence as ‘poor’, but 20% of the recruiters have accepted that the students’ ability in business vocabulary is ‘very poor’.

### 6.5.3 Sentence Construction

It is very important that the students are able to compose sentences of different structures. It helps to highlight different ideas or thoughts elegantly. The following table gives details on the importance of sentence structure as rated by the recruiters.



SI No	Rating	No. of Recruiters	Percentage
1	Excellent	0	0
2	Good	0	0
3	Average	4	40
4	Poor	4	40
5	Very poor	2	20
<b>Total</b>		<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>

40% of recruiters have rated the ability of the students to construct sentences as ‘average’ and the same percentage of recruiters have rated it as ‘poor’, whereas 20% recruiters have rated it ‘very poor’.

#### 6.5.4 Writing Paragraphs and Essays

Arranging our thoughts in paragraphs is an art of writing and effective paragraphs are essential in all types of writing. Paragraphs guide the readers through explanations, substantiations, and support the statement or argument. The data related to the importance of writing paragraphs and essays as perceived by the recruiters are presented below.

SI No	Rating	No. of Recruiters	Percentage
1	Excellent	0	0
2	Good	0	0
3	Average	3	30
4	Poor	6	60
5	Very poor	1	10
<b>Total</b>		<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>

Above table describes the recruiters’ view on the students’ ability in writing essays and paragraphs. A majority of the recruiters (60%) have said their opinion as ‘poor’, whereas 30% recruiters admit the level of students’ ability in writing essays and paragraphs as ‘average’. And 10% recruiters have responded that the students ability is ‘very poor’ in this particular exercise.

#### 6.5.6 Business Correspondence

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Business correspondence is a type of communication that is used in almost all organizations. Poor business correspondence leads to disastrous results in business. Hence it is important to have good correspondence skill. The following table presents the details on its importance as responded by the recruiters.

SI No	Rating	No. of Recruiters	Percentage
1	Excellent	0	0
2	Good	0	0
3	Average	2	20
4	Poor	4	40
5	Very poor	4	40
<b>Total</b>		<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>

Though writing business correspondence has been at the highest place in learning written communication skill course, the recruiters are not much satisfied with the outcomes. 80% of the recruiters have rated the students' ability to write business correspondence as 'poor' (40%) and 'very poor' (40%) and 20% of recruiters rated that the students' ability is 'average' in writing business correspondences.

#### 6.5.7 Overall Rating on Students' Writing Skill

The following data reveals the overall rating given by the recruiters on the importance of the writing skills.

SI No	Rating	No. of Recruiters	Percentage
1	Excellent	0	0
2	Good	0	0
3	Average	2	20
4	Poor	4	40
5	Very poor	4	40
<b>Total</b>		<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>

The above table shows the responses of the recruiters in overall writing skill competence. Only 20% recruiters have responded that the students' overall ability is

‘average’, whereas 40% recruiters have rated the students’ ability as ‘poor’ and the same percentage of recruiters have rated it as ‘very poor’. None of the recruiters has rated it as ‘excellent’ or ‘good’.

### 6.6 Percentage on Students’ Employability Skills

Enhancing the employability skill is an important goal of all management institutions. A recent article which appeared in Deccan Chronicle (dated 29<sup>th</sup> April 2016), states that only seven percent students of management programme have the employability skills. The employability percentage of the students as given by the recruiters is presented below in the table.

SI No	Percentage on Students’ Employability Skills	No. of Recruiters	Percentage
1	20	3	30
2	15	3	30
3	14	1	10
4	10	3	30
<b>Total</b>		<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>

30% of the recruiters have stated that 20% of students may have the employability skills followed by the same percentage of recruiters who have said that 15% of students have the skills for employment. 30% recruiters have said that 10% of the students having skills to employment and 10% recruiters have responded that only 14% students have the employability skills required for the workplace.

### 8. Findings and Conclusion

It is seen from this study that the recruiters are not satisfied with the performance level of students in written communication. All the aspects of written communication have to be taught in an effective manner so that the MBA graduates are able not only to get placed and also survive in good business houses and go up in the ladder of their career. The teachers of BE should concentrate more on imparting sentence construction skill and paragraph building skills to their students and help their students excel in drafting business

correspondences and shine in their field.

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