

# Research on Business English Curriculum Design Based on Learning Needs Analysis

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**Abstract:** *Business English (BE) in colleges and universities is a new subject. Because of its strong practical characteristics, the author agrees to discuss problems under the premise of demand theory. Based on the empirical analysis of learning needs and target needs, combined with the current situation of undergraduate BE curriculum, this paper puts forward that undergraduate BE curriculum should be based on "subject-oriented" and "ability-oriented"; The course content should be complementary and organically integrated; Handle the relationship between theoretical teaching and practical teaching; Set up elective courses dynamically; Cultivate subject thinking and enhance innovation consciousness. This article first elaborates on the foundation and model of demand analysis theory, proposes the demand dimensions of BE professional courses, and then conducts a survey on three demand dimensions using a questionnaire survey to identify the gap between the curriculum design of BE professional courses and the actual needs of society and students. Suggestions are proposed, hoping to be beneficial for the scientific cultivation of BE versatile talents.*

**Keywords:** *Learning needs; Business English; Curriculum design*

## 1. Introduction

Under the background of vigorously developing vocational and technical education, China's higher vocational education has developed rapidly and achieved fruitful results, and has become an important part of higher education. China's higher vocational education has made great contributions to the popularization of higher education and social and economic development. BE writing is a compulsory course for BEs, which does not take language learning as the ultimate goal, but focuses on the ability to complete information exchange and solve practical business problems in written English [1]. The traditional teaching mode of "language explanation+writing" is not ideal, and the teaching content and methods need to be improved. Curriculum design must have corresponding teaching objectives, teaching contents, teaching evaluation, making an outline for macro guidance, and compiling and selecting teaching materials and teaching can be targeted [2] Under this background, the university where the author works has formulated the Undergraduate Teaching Plan for BE Majors, and has carried out more than three years of practical exploration on the curriculum of business undergraduate, and the construction of the curriculum system has begun to take shape. However, in-depth investigation and analysis show that there is still a certain gap between the curriculum and the needs of learners and society, so there is a lot of room for expansion and improvement. The starting point of curriculum design is demand analysis, and only in this way can curriculum design have a more real and reliable theoretical and practical basis [3]. Some researchers have divided it into two modules: business professional knowledge and English language skills, that is, the business+English model. However, there is no consensus on the proportion of business and English in the curriculum and what is important and what is not; Of course, some scholars believe that the weight of both accounts for 50% each [4]. Other researchers believe that the course module of BE should be Business+English Language+Other modules, totaling three or four modules or multiple modules. The curriculum design of vocational colleges is a concentrated manifestation of the training objectives of technical and applied talents in the school curriculum plan, which reflects the teaching subjects required by the training objectives and their objectives, content, progress, and implementation methods. A reasonable curriculum is the soul of talent cultivation [5]. Through learning and practice, students master the essential basic knowledge and skills of a certain major, and then apply the knowledge to their work and life to achieve the purpose of learning. The school determines the types of courses and the types of courses established based on the training objectives, and the curriculum must meet the requirements of the training objectives [6]. After fully understanding the needs of students in all aspects, based on the results of students' needs analysis, this paper analyzes the English curriculum of BE in our school to find out whether the previous and

existing English curriculum can meet the actual needs of different students and whether there are any shortcomings. Then, according to the actual needs of students, the author puts forward some suggestions to adjust the existing English curriculum, hoping that these suggestions can help improve or cancel the original substandard courses, and at the same time, add new courses as appropriate according to the actual situation to meet the learning needs of students [7]. The focus of this article is on the process of data collection and analysis during the writing process of the paper. I conducted a questionnaire survey on students and professional teachers of three-year BEs offered by ten vocational colleges under the guidance of needs analysis theory. The content involved included students and teachers' opinions and suggestions on professional training objectives, curriculum models, internship training, teacher team construction, and teaching evaluation.

## **2. Overview of Research on BE Curriculum Design**

### ***2.1. Elements and Practice of BE Curriculum Design***

Demand analysis includes social demand and personal demand. The social demand mentioned here mainly refers to the employment ability demand of BE graduates by society and employers, while the personal demand mainly refers to the purpose of students' learning and the gap between the current actual level and the level they hope to achieve [8]. The professional elements of BE education mainly refer to the ability to engage in business practice. Because students lack understanding of business practice ability, the survey of BE graduates is also involved in the demand analysis. According to the survey of 22 students' learning goals, 91% of them think that the goal of learning BE is to obtain English grade certificate and obtain employment, and at the same time, they also express their desire to further improve their oral English and writing [9]. Curriculum design refers to "a general statement of the nature and characteristics of language and language teaching, the teaching requirements, and a description of the means and methods to achieve the teaching objectives". That is to say, the main elements of BE curriculum design include the description of BE teaching objectives, curriculum, teaching mode and business discourse evaluation [10].

The foreign language teaching in universities is different from that of key universities and ordinary universities. To cultivate the English ability of vocational college students, it is not only necessary to consolidate the foundation, but also to highlight practicality, so that they can master as many language skills as possible that can directly serve their job within a shorter period of education, based on the existing English foundation. Therefore, when designing courses and selecting textbooks, schools should not only consider the impact of the curriculum on the educational target, but also consider the prospects of the curriculum for their employment and its assistance in future work. A comprehensive and in-depth analysis of students' needs must be conducted first. Only by conducting a thorough and detailed analysis of needs can a more reasonable curriculum outline be established and more suitable teaching materials be selected for students. At present, scenario analysis starts from the learners' own learning needs, covering their personal information (including personal basic information, learning objectives, future expectations), learners' language proficiency (including English proficiency, mastery of business knowledge, basic language skills), learning abilities (including learning methods and skills, cross-cultural and interdisciplinary understanding ability, and mastery of learning strategies).

Target scenario analysis refers to the gap between social needs and actual employment (including positions provided by society, skills needed by positions and knowledge and communication skills needed). The author believes that only by clarifying the needs of society can we cultivate talents who can adapt to social and economic development and understand the gap between what we have learned and the needs of society can we better make up for the shortcomings of school education. Learning situation analysis refers to the self-demand investigation of BE graduates and students, including learning motivation, curriculum evaluation and evaluation of teachers. Demand analysis is the starting point and foothold of language learning and curriculum setting, and it is also one of the reasons for the emergence and development of ESP. Therefore, the curriculum setting of BE in higher vocational colleges should attach importance to the role of demand analysis, obtain effective data through data collection and analysis in all aspects, and determine training objectives, training programs, teaching plans, curriculum implementation and other activities on this basis, optimize teachers' teaching programs, improve students' learning efficiency, and meet students' learning needs to achieve the goal of cultivating talents.

## 2.2. Discussion on Business English Curriculum

The quality of cultivating BE talents depends crucially on the scientificity and rationality of the curriculum. Based on the survey and analysis results, we believe that the current issues that need to be addressed in curriculum design are: how to effectively connect business courses with language courses; How to combine theoretical teaching with practical teaching; How to strengthen the cultivation of students' subject awareness and ability through the curriculum design process. Firstly, based on the "discipline oriented" approach and guided by the "ability oriented" approach. The "discipline based" emphasizes the systematicity and completeness of subject knowledge, and emphasizes the importance and central position of imparting knowledge. Enable students to understand the basic logical structure of the subject and master the basic concepts, principles, and laws of the subject. The "ability based" teaching principle is based on the abilities required to fulfill job responsibilities, emphasizing the dominant position of learners in the learning process, and emphasizing the cultivation of students' practical operational abilities. Secondly, focus on the integration and integration of business knowledge, skills, and language learning. Knowledge structure plays a bridging role between language learning and content learning. Content based language learning is the most effective approach in providing both meaningful and meaningful communication and purposeful language learning.

This teaching process is not simply to add business content to English courses, but to cultivate business skills as the core and always run through the improvement of language skills. Therefore, it is extremely necessary to infiltrate the basic knowledge and skills of business into language learning at the basic stage, thus forming English listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation courses around business activities. Combining language learning and accumulation with the accumulation of business knowledge and the cultivation of skills will help students to establish discipline awareness and cultivate discipline thinking as soon as possible, and lay a good foundation for the further improvement of business professional knowledge and skills in the senior stage. Third, increase the proportion of practical teaching and cultivate vocational skills. Practical teaching is an important means of cultivating students' practical ability and innovative consciousness. By guiding and helping students engage in practical activities such as social practice, experimental teaching, scientific research, and professional internships with teaching requirements, we aim to enhance the depth and breadth of students' understanding of society, cultivate their mastery of scientific methods of integrating theory with practice, exercise their practical operational ability to achieve expected goals, and prepare them for entering society in various aspects such as spirit, psychology, knowledge, experience, and skills after graduation. So it is best not to combine business with English, or English with business, but to integrate business with English and use English in a business environment. Based on the main job positions (or business environment) and business skills suggested by enterprise experts, the courses of BE are divided into two major modules, namely the core technology module and the vocational skills module. As shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Module Curriculum Settings

Course module	Course Name
Core Technology Module	Professional comprehensive English, BE audiovisual oral, BE translation, BE stylistic analysis and writing, foreign-related business reception, foreign-related business negotiation, customer development and maintenance, International marketing and planning.
Vocational and Technical Module	Office Equipment Operation Training, International Trade Practice Training, Business Correspondence Training, and Foreign Related Documents Training

In view of the fact that BE is not only a series of vocabulary, grammar and discourse features, but also a discourse system including discourse forms, politeness system and socialization approaches, the principles of business politeness, cross-cultural communication and cooperation should be infiltrated into these courses, which can not only cultivate students' ability to think, analyze and work in English in business environment, but also help to improve their professional ethics.

## 3. Research on BE Curriculum Design Based on Learning Needs Analysis

### 3.1. Set up professional courses and conduct demand analysis

At present, there are five English courses offered in the BE of our school, including Global English, Global English Listening, English Speaking, College English, and Accounting English. In the next

semester, Level 08 plans to offer English Level 2 courses, which were originally used as extracurricular tutoring courses, to be included in daily teaching. We hope that more students can pass the Level 2 exam to meet the graduation requirements of the school. At the same time, we can also have more chips when we graduate and apply for jobs in the future. In addition, a comprehensive and detailed needs analysis is also a prerequisite for ensuring teaching effectiveness. The school did not conduct a student needs analysis before setting up English courses for the BE, and it is unclear what students have for their English learning needs. Therefore, when setting up English courses, it is impossible to adjust the course content, types, and hours according to the actual needs of students. Therefore, the English curriculum set up in this situation is difficult to meet the different requirements of different students. In the current English curriculum of the school, not all students majoring in BE will engage in jobs related to their major due to a small number of professional courses. Through a survey of past graduates, it can be found that only a portion of students engage in professions related to BE, and there are also a certain number of people working in banks, computer companies, shopping malls, and other units.

The school believes that the BE is also an English major, and the English foundation should be solid. Therefore, the school pays more attention to arranging public English classes in English curriculum, and the original intention is to let students master more basic English knowledge. However, vocational school students are not high school students after all, and they don't need to take the college entrance examination. Their demand for English is more for future work. More students think that they are business majors first, followed by English majors, and English should be combined with business majors to serve business majors. . Therefore, all the previous graduates surveyed think that it is too monotonous to set up compulsory English courses in schools, and English elective courses should be added, with elective specialized courses as a supplement to compulsory specialized courses to meet students with different learning needs. Moreover, the content of elective courses should be oriented to the different employment and learning needs of different students, so that not only students with different learning interests can be satisfied, but also students with different employment needs can learn relevant professional English knowledge.

### ***3.2. Students hope to offer public English courses with moderate difficulty***

From the feedback of students, it can be seen that they believe that public English classes do not need to be too difficult, as teaching basic English knowledge is the main focus. Because students' English proficiency is generally not high, they hope that public courses can help them consolidate their English foundation and improve their English proficiency, making it easier for them to continue learning in the future. Of course, there are also many students who have good English proficiency and high requirements for their own English, especially those who aim to advance to undergraduate studies. College level English courses are also essential for them. Therefore, for college English and similar difficult subjects, setting them as elective courses is a better choice, and it can also make our public English courses more suitable for the learning needs of students at different levels.

The curriculum of BE should highlight the backbone of the subject, pay attention to the cultivation of ability, advocate the development of personality, optimize students' knowledge structure and ability structure, and improve their comprehensive quality. Like most universities in China, BE courses in our school are mainly divided into three modules under the guidance of the syllabus: general education and other courses (including quality education and practical teaching), professional basic courses and professional direction courses, accounting for 22.9%, 56.94% and 20.16% respectively. Specifically, the required courses for BEs in our school include English interpretation, introduction to English linguistics, British and American literature, English-Chinese translation, English-Chinese translation, general situation of English-speaking countries, BE, business communication, BE writing, international trade practice, international business and marketing; Specialized elective courses are as follows: Introduction to Business, Cross-cultural Communication, Business Listening, International Finance, English Speech, International Commercial Law, Legal English, Public Relations Etiquette and E-commerce. The course modules can be understood as three: language+business+cultural background, or multiple module forms such as language+business+culture+others. To some extent, it highlights the characteristics and purpose of ESP. After completing professional core courses, senior students often believe that although the curriculum is relatively comprehensive, the focus, detail, and prominence of the direction are not strong. For example, their understanding of the business field may be extensive, involving trade practices, international business theory, commercial law, and even finance. However, when faced with specific tasks, they do not know how to operate them, such as signing contracts, preparing documents, documenting, customs declaration, logistics, etc. Even seemingly simple customer reception and fax communication with customers cannot be controlled.

Enhance the perceptual knowledge of the major through visits, inspections, investigations, consultations, lectures and exchanges; While strengthening discipline awareness and broadening horizons, learn to understand and think about problems from a professional perspective. But at present, we have not done enough in this regard. Flexible and diverse graduation practice/thesis (design) forms can not only make students apply what they have learned, but also stimulate students' creativity, which is conducive to cultivating discipline thinking, enhancing discipline awareness, and exercising the ability to analyze and solve practical problems, thus enhancing discipline ability.

#### 4. Conclusions

The curriculum designed based on demand analysis plays a traction role in BE education and can meet the needs of society and individual students. But courses based on demand analysis are not static or static; With the passage of time, the requirements and conditions for curriculum implementation will change, which makes it necessary to conduct intermittent and continuous needs analysis, interspersed in every link of curriculum objectives, curriculum design, curriculum implementation, curriculum evaluation, etc., to help students and teachers identify new needs and play the role of evaluation and feedback, to ensure that the developed curriculum does not deviate from the course, Always serve the constantly changing learning needs and established teaching objectives of students. To sum up, there is room for further discussion on the study of BE, whether it is textbook compilation, subject orientation, curriculum setting or the construction of "amphibious" compound teachers. In particular, how to urge the education sector, academic circles and institutions to adopt truly effective and feasible methods, policies and measures to further improve and solve fundamental problems requires our unremitting urging and efforts.

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