

**Developing a more ‘bullish’ model of
Business English**



**TOTAL BUSINESS
COMMUNICATIONS**

Business English for Business Purposes

Ian Robert Kirkwood

NOTE

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FOREWORD

This
book discusses
communications used in
the real world of global business.

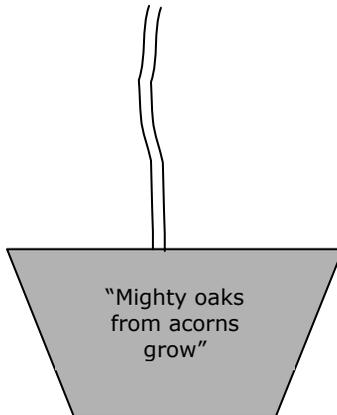
It details how the best programs can be selected by students & their sponsors. This is not academic writing. It is written in a simple way to give some guidance to business people and students into the smartest and easiest ways to learn Business English. By taking note of the author's experiences, you could save a lot of time and money by selecting an appropriate program.

This book is subtitled '*BE for Business Purposes*'.

It has been written as a practical guide to help students, teachers, managers and HR people to select the best programs to suit their specific needs.

This book would also
be a great guide
to authors of

***Business
English***



ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Ian Kirkwood has spent over thirty years in business development, marketing, and communications training. His career includes over 20 years with two Fortune 500 corporations working in a variety of executive roles in Australia, Asia and Europe. His qualifications include engineering, marketing, business administration and education. He currently lectures and trains in Sustainable Business, International Business, and Effective Communication Skills.

Dr. Kirkwood develops customized Business English workbooks and training programs for various corporate clients.

Ian Robert Kirkwood PhD
Consultant, Trainer, Educator
DrIRK@hotmail.com

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BENEFITS OF A NEW MODEL OF BUSINESS ENGLISH

The motivation to develop a more complete model of Business English

The current model of Business English (BE) is mostly focused on the 'hard skills' of language and this fact is clearly identified in a variety of handbooks on 'teaching business English'. (refer to bibliography) Some of these books are identified and analyzed in depth in the doctoral thesis from which this writing has been extracted. Most BE education in Asia is taught by educators with limited experience in any form of business and often with zero exposure to issues found in non-Western business. These educators are mostly qualified to teach the 'hard skills' of English (vocabulary, grammatical structure, pronunciation, general communications) and to get students communicating more fluently in English. As people in most cultures communicate with both spoken and non-spoken language, in linguistic, kinesthetic, unspoken, and assumptive forms (Chaika), the delivery of the language is impaired when only one form of communication is taught. As the main purpose for using English as a lingua franca is to allow a communicative connection between two parties that normally speak in different languages, some or all of the meaning imbedded in the message would most likely be impaired, undelivered or

improperly received if the communicative connection is flawed.

When people teaching BE speak in their home town speech patterns, such as those found in Liverpool U.K. or Nashville TN, USA, as two simple instances, many of the idiosyncrasies from the home town speech are also taught. People tend to naturally use a shortened form of language or a distinct dialectic form when speaking to their geographic peers, and from observations, this speech pattern creeps into the BE classroom to some extent. American colloquial idioms for instance are taught to students when these same students may never travel to America, and may never conduct business with Americans. Because of this fact, students of BE may well be taught only a portion of the vocabulary used in business, in a regional form of language, with flawed or incomplete information relating to their speech and to many specific business words and terms.

A percentage of BE students may never use their English language skills with any native English speaker in any business context. Many L2 users of BE will use their lingua franca language in communications with other L2 users; Koreans with Vietnamese; Chinese with Syrians; Russians with Uruguayans, and Japanese with Thais; and so on. A number of Korean business people claim that, for them, communicating in English with Japanese business counterparts is much easier than conducting business with Americans; but some state the reverse. Some Asians find it easier conducting business on the phone with Germans than British; but again, some state the reverse. Hence language is not necessarily the only factor involved in the equation, but

when language 'hard skills' are all that is taught, the communicative ability of BE students is automatically more limited. Language is only one of the skills involved in cross cultural transactional business communications (Oak & Martin p6, p275). When two people working in a similar job role, such as accounting, communicate across a cultural divide, both parties can often deduce what is being communicated as the subject is common to them both. Also when an alighting passenger asks a ground-crew staff person for directions to the baggage carousel, it is usually fairly easy for the staff person to respond correctly or at least adequately. When a Korean businessman is trying to convince a native of Nashville TN or Huddersfield UK to take a certain course of action in a proposed business deal, significantly more than a basic grounding in vocabulary, grammar and syntax, albeit taught by a professional English teacher, is required. (The example given for Huddersfield is from personal observation) When BE teaching/training is limited to the 'hard skills' of the English language, the use of the skill is also limited in communication. This limitation also applies to the teaching of the more specific skills of presentations, meetings and negotiations, as in reality, a significant percentage of the teaching of these skills is conducted by teachers with minimal or zero experience in the use of these same skills in real-life. It could also be argued that the use of these three skills in the aforementioned situation would be a minimal occurrence in many businesses; however, transactional situations are the very ones where new business is won or lost, and where market share is gained in greater than incremental steps. Hence the impact on a business due to high performance

transactional skills by a small number of people is arguably greater than the impact on the business by larger numbers of people in non-transactional roles. Therefore, if the teaching of BE is limited, then limited production of beneficial results from the use of English should also be expected. Similarly if greater benefits from the use of English in business communications are expected, then a wider and deeper form of BE is required.

Having an incomplete use of the English language for any reason is poor logic when the language is to be used to help corporations operate within the global economy. Poor communication skills hinder growth and development, even within same-language situations. When Koreans do business within their own country, if their communication skills are poor vis à vie their competition, they stand the chance of losing business. The same applies but to a much greater extent when conducting business in English with foreigners. Many Koreans don't learn English voluntarily; they learn it to get better jobs, so they approach their English language classes more with an attitude of despair or indifference rather than an attitude of 'spiritual enlightenment' (Parenteau). Attitudes by students and teachers alike are a big issue and need to be considered.

In fact communication can be expressed in a simple format like this:

Success (S) = TC ~ CD ~ CS

Success = (transaction complexity) ~ (cultural differences) ~ (communication skills)

TC: If the complexity of the transaction is high, then appropriate knowledge of the commercial and technical aspects of the business at hand needs to be expressed correctly and succinctly in English. This requires the communicator to be able to effectively think in English (Chaika Pp34-80).

CD: When the cultural gap is low, such as the gap between Korea and its closest neighbor, Japan, then the cultural skill required only needs to be low. However, even though the Japanese culture is possibly the closest to the Korean culture, many business dealings between Japan and Korea have broken down over the years. Doing business within vastly dissimilar cultures to Korea is far more complex and requires a much higher skills level and a detailed understanding of that culture.

CS: As recently reported (SERI), Korea ranks near the bottom of the list of 147 nations polled for verbal communication skills. This is possibly based on a lack of confidence, a lack of adaptability, or a lack of awareness as to the need for higher levels in communicative skills. This automatically places Korean business people at a significant disadvantage against almost all of their global competition. When conducting business with people who possess superior communication skills, and greater awareness of international business etiquette, Koreans can and will suffer.

$$S = TC \sim CD \sim CS$$

If math were to be brought into the equation, and if values were to be assigned to the three variables involved, a picture such as this could develop.

$S = TC + CD + CS$. Range = 3 Minimum (bad), to 9 Maximum (good)

		BAD/NEGATIVE	AVERAGE	GOOD/POSITIVE
TC	Transactional Complexity	Highly complex	Moderately complex	Low complexity
	Score	1	2	3
CD	Cultural Difference (PDI, IND, UAI) (Hofstede)	Difference greater than 50%	Difference > 10% and < 50%	Difference less than 10%
	Score	1	2	3
CS	Communication Skill	Poor communication (width and depth)	Average communication (width and depth)	Effective communication (width and depth)
	Score	1	2	3

As can be seen from this simple matrix, the worst score is 3 (1+ 1 + 1) and the best score is 9 (3 + 3 + 3).

Whilst this model is not necessarily mathematically sound, it is easy to see that the worst case for transactional communications involves highly complex business dealings, undertaken by people from vastly different cultures, where the communication skills of one party are superior to the other's, and where one side's combined business and communication skills are low.

In some specific circumstances, communication skills become the delivery mechanism through which ideas, offers, and counter offers are made to potential buyers and suppliers. If the delivery of the message is poor, then overall communications suffer. Failures of this nature occur at the highest levels of international political negotiations, so to think that they don't occur at operational levels in business is very naïve. They do, and unfortunately as egos are involved, often the reason for failure is unclear, inaccurately identified, or not identified at all. In the worst case, the cause of failure is attributed to the wrong issue or the wrong party, possibly to save face, or possibly out of ignorance or naivety. In any case, the cost of failure in business due to breakdowns in communication is high. (Fisher & Ury)

Where one party's communication skills are markedly higher than the other party's skills, the first party could have a distinct and usable advantage. This does not mean that the higher skill is to be used to cause a zero-sum result, but it could be used to create a 'big win-little win' result where one

party's 'win' is far greater than the other's. The ability to speak accurately and fluently in the sanctuary of one's own home environment, and the ability to communicate effectively in a complex and possibly stressful business environment in a foreign country, are unrelated issues. Learning English communication skills in a classroom environment and then being forced to use those same skills whilst under emotional stress in a negatively charged business environment are two different issues. In fact they are polarized issues. The result of sound business communication skills adds economic value to the entire business set. It adds value to all shareholders and stakeholders and adds economic improvement to the business in general. However, poor communication skills subtract value from the EVA equation, as economic value is not added but subtracted from the operation. Where business deals are lost or poorly won, not only is value not added to the business, but the cost of the equation is effectively subtracted from the business. Hence if a party invests a million dollars into the preparation of a billion dollar project, and the project is lost, a million dollars is effectively subtracted from the value of the business and the derived profit from the project is subsequently added to the EVA of a competitor. Hence if the deal were lost due to poor skills on the part of the negotiating team, then the cost of those poor communications is the sum of the lost profit plus a million dollars. This is too high a price to pay, simply for poor communication skills, and is far greater than the cost of effective education in the first part.

The cost of poor education

Following on from the previous section, the cost of poor or inappropriate education is measured primarily in economic terms, but just as importantly, it is measured in social terms. Economically, poor communication skill reduces value or adds less than expected value into the business EVA equation. EVA is a major measure of any business and is a primary factor that contributes movements in the Market Value Added (MVA) of a business. If the EVA is poor and this is reflected in a downward MVA, then the result is a reduction in the equity value of the business and a reduction in share price. However, good business raises the EVA which mostly is reflected in stronger market optimism which improves the MVA. Hence, the ability of staff members to perform properly in global business dealings is vital to the overall benefit of the Korean economy. Hopefully at some point in the future, economists will be able to put a more precise value on the difference between good and poor education, but at the moment all that can be considered is the relative difference in spending on English education between Japan and Korea. Korea spends considerably more on a per capita basis than does Japan, but the Japanese economy is more than six times greater than Korea's. With Korean Presidential elections looming, at least one of the Presidential candidates (Korea Times) has publicly stated that the Korean education system for English language needs revamping as the benefits derived from money spent is simply too low; it is not adding to Korea's economic advantage. This cost is not just a financial burden to Korean

society but is a serious burden on Korean families. It robs Koreans of valuable time which is spent needlessly in language academies after school, university, and work, often for long hours, year after year after year. But after all of this 'education', Koreans still rank near the bottom of global rankings for communication skills.

An example of a typical Korean language program would be something like this:

Three classes a week, one hour per each class, with six students per class.

Speaking time per student would be around twenty minutes per class or an hour a week

Speaking time for a year would be approximately 50 hours.

Speaking outside of class for practice purposes = nil (most normally)

According to a report entitled Good and Bad uses of the TOEIC by Japanese companies (Childs), and the report on Prediction of English proficiency progress (Saegusa), on average for any student to 'level up' takes this amount of time:

TOEIC 300 to TOEIC 400 = 150 hours

TOEIC 400 to TOEIC 500 = 200 hours

TOEIC 500 to TOEIC 600 = 250 hours

TOEIC 600 to TOEIC 700 = 300 hours

TOEIC 700 to TOEIC 800 = 350 hours

TOEIC 800 to TOEIC 900 = 400 hours

It does not need any deep analysis to see that 50 hours (or even 100 hours) a year is somewhat inadequate when compared to the time required to 'level up' from one level to

any other. At least 150 to 300 hours a year of communication time is required for any serious development of communication skills to take place. If the total class time were considered from our example (3 hours a week) and if the full 150 classroom hours were counted, the result would still only allow any given student to 'level up' a relatively small amount unless the student's starting point was very low to begin with. As the tabulation shows, to go from, say, TOEIC 400 to, say, TOEIC 700, a full 750 hours are required. Therefore 'intensive' BE programs that focus exclusively on the 'hard skills' of language require significant amounts of time to be effective. However, if BE programs were to include a mixture of 'soft and hard' skills, with major emphasis on the development of a usable business skill with English communications being acquired as a byproduct, then students can be expected to develop better, more effective communication skills in much less time. As shown in the TOEIC data, it takes a lot of time to improve language skills, but from research conducted on students during regular class time, significant improvements can be made when the focus is taken away from language and placed on 'effective business communications'.

Language academies do not normally teach what students need; they mostly teach only that which helps students pass tests. Hence the focus of this education is on the passing of tests and not on genuine skills development. From a BE perspective, business English education is following much the same path as the rest of English education in Korea. BE classes are often streamed unnecessarily with simplistic language skills and very basic vocabulary being all that is

taught – in other words incomplete content with zero context. Students use somewhat unrealistic workbooks, and classes are taught by teachers who have little or no concept of value adding education for business. If Korean students are going to spend such a small amount of time on their BE education, the education can ill afford to be biased towards an inaccurate and incomplete model. Hence a new model of BE that is streamed according to purpose and includes the best of content and context is clearly required to put value back into the Korean education system to get the greatest advantage from the small amount of time available by Koreans for English language development, and subsequently reduce the overall costs to Korean society.

Financial benefits from correct education

Decisions concerning BE education are mostly made by human resource management personnel (HRM) or individual students based on advice given by language institutes and academies. These institutes and academies are the acknowledged ‘experts’ in their field so their advice is taken seriously. In most instances this advice is given sincerely, but not always, and often it is given based on what the academy or outsourcing-operation can provide. This in itself is no different to any business selling any product, for Academies ‘sell’ BE programs the same as Hyundai sells automobiles. If a buyer is relatively unsophisticated, then that buyer is at the mercy of the salesperson. Hopefully the sales person has ethics and scruples for if they don’t the buyer ends up owning

the vehicle of the sales person's choice and not the one needed by the buyer. If the buyer of a BE program simply wants BE for his/her people, or even specifies a specific type of program such as an 'Intensive 18 week PMN program' (presentations, meetings, negotiations), the buyer is still at the mercy of the Language academy in question as there is no specificity in the type of skills required by the purchaser. PMN skills delivered by teachers in a GBC environment have a different focus than those delivered in a PBC environment. The focus of both is valid but different. Hence to specify an 'Intensive program' such as this with the wrong type of focus may well be a waste of money. Similarly, students attending standard BE classes in an academy where the focus is on skills defined in a workbook, where the teacher follows a rigid formulaic teaching regime based on the dictates of the academy's management may well also be wasting their time and money. This is not to malign any academy or institute, and definitely not to malign or degrade any teacher; it is simply to say that for students and their sponsors to gain full value for the money they are spending on BE education, a deeper analysis of student requirements needs to be made - then to match those requirements to the offerings made by academies and institutes to achieve the best match. When knowledge and skills received equals knowledge and skills required, then education has achieved its purpose. If this exact-match education costs more than mismatched education, then the cost for the exact-match education is the true cost regardless of the cost of the flawed education. If the education costs X , and the benefit derived from that education exceeds X , then the value equation is positive. By considering this formula for

all instances of BE education, the overall equation must be positive. If more money is spent using this method, then whilst the initial cost may increase, the economic value returned to Korean business must increase at a greater rate. However, if greater results are derived than any additional costs incurred, then the economic advantage from more accurately defined education is multiplied. On the flip side of this equation, if the costs incurred for more specific BE education are the same as the current set of costs, and if no improvements are made in the output from BE students, then the value equation is plus or minus zero; no benefit and no loss. Hence when the worst case is zero, and the best case is positive, then more specific selection of BE programs based on corporate and student needs is warranted.

Specific benefits for all parties within the Business English Environment

As BE is a service provided to both businesses and students, the immediate benefits to both groups need to be realistic to be worthwhile. Also the benefits of the new model must be greater than the benefits derived from the old model. Within the new model, the old model is retained in toto (as General Business Communications) hence nothing is lost whatsoever from this modification. Therefore there is no down-side to the change and only an upside. Where businesses and or students gain benefits from the additions to the model, two key variables involved are time and cost. However as time involved in BE programs is most likely unchanged, then the

key variable is cost. Now it is unknown from this research what the cost impact would be on business, so the only way the cost differential, if any, could and should be measured, is by the simple formula of extra cost involved compared to the extra benefits gained. Now if there is no extra cost, and if the extra benefits are in fact realized, the cost-benefit equation is positive. However this equation is totally theoretic and in reality could only be worked out by the learner or his/her sponsor.

Secondary Benefits from this change have to be derived by all the actors involved (if possible) for change to be warranted, promoted, and widely accepted. In fact the research question could be rephrased as: ‘what are *all* the benefits that are potentially available to *all* the actors involved from the adoption of this expanded model of Business English?’ It would help to tabulate the actors involved and some potential positives and negatives.

	Actors	Positives	Negatives
1	Businesses	Retention of all existing BE teaching and training services for no change in cost structure. Access to specialized communication skills training in English. Ability to add specific knowledge and skills development into BE programs. Ability to train staff to increase productivity, profitability and	Possibly higher costs for SBC and PBC education for some businesses.

		<p>effectiveness with existing BE programs.</p> <p>Access to specialized training during in-house BE programs.</p> <p>Ability to develop in-house programs for intercultural and interpersonal skills development in English.</p>	
2	Students	<p>Access to more specialized business communications training from BE education.</p> <p>Wider selection of training to choose from and ability to choose specific programs.</p>	<p>Possibly higher costs for some students depending upon availability of suitable teachers and trainers.</p>
3	Academy owners	<p>Able to add extra programs into the marketing offering.</p> <p>Ability to expand service offering to clients.</p>	<p>Need to engage specialist trainers if demanded by clients.</p>
4	Educators Teachers etc	<p>No change to existing BE programs.</p> <p>Greater scope for career development through being able to offer a wider base of training services</p> <p>Scope for subject specialists in BE teaching.</p> <p>Scope for specialists in PBC and SBC arena.</p>	<p>Some retraining involved for some self-selected educators</p>
5	Writers and authors	<p>By having three markets - GBC, SBC, PBC, the market for new workbooks expands.</p>	
		<p>An expanded model is more representative of a 'language</p>	

6	Academia	for a specific purpose' than the model in its current form. Hence the totality of TBC becomes a genuine ESP.	
7	Testing Bodies	New markets for additional testing and appraisal services.	Inability to test students using existing methods for all but GBC.

Summary of benefits

The economic benefits to be gained from a new model of BE cannot be less than those currently derived from the present model, but could be substantially greater. The measurement of this gain warrants further research analysis, possibly from Korean economists as research would need to be made within larger Korean Chaebol as well as Korean SMEs. The term 'substantial' in this context is used appropriately. With significantly improved communication skills that allow Korean business people to better negotiate and conduct business with foreigners, the economic gains that could be derived by Korean businesses could only be termed as 'substantial'. As observations made during the writing of this thesis progressively showed improvements in student output, and as more 'tweaking' of the system was made, greater improvements were shown, then it is quite clear that streaming both Intermediate and Advanced students into the three areas of GBC, SBC and PBC is valid and would produce beneficial results for Korean society; bearing in mind that as Adam Smith stated 'economics and society cannot easily be

separated' (Fukuyama p13). When considering the benefits involved, other issues need to be considered that are not necessarily economic. The first is pride. Koreans are genuinely proud of the levels of economic achievement they have made over the past thirty years or so, but they also recognize the perils that lie in wait for them as the Chinese economy grows and they are caught as the shrimp in the Sino-Nippon 'prawn sandwich'. With a high tech highly competitive economy to the East which is six times greater than the Korean economy, and with the fastest growing economy in the world just off the Korean West coast, Korea needs to develop fast to just stay even with its neighboring competition, much less try to catch up to them. Speaking poorly does not help at all but having high level communication skills will go some distance to offset Korea's other competitive disadvantages such as lack of raw materials and a progressively aging society with a reduced growth rate. Overall, the introduction of this expanded model of BE into the Korean landscape must be seen as a positive initiative for the Korean economy.

A MORE COMPLETE MODEL OF BUSINESS ENGLISH

A model that allows BE to be classified as an ESP

This chapter details the model of Business English (BE) identified in this paper as Total Business Communications (TBC). When BE is used as a lingua franca for business (BELF), it falls naturally into three key areas which collectively cover the full needs of English for intercultural global business. Not all areas would be required by all students or all businesses but when put together as a set, these three areas form an all-encompassing model of business education that allows BE in its totality to be considered an 'English for a Specific Purpose' (ESP) and a full and complete Business Lingua Franca.

General Business Communications (GBC):

Teaching of a wide variety of language and communication skills focused on general, everyday situations found in work and business. GBC includes any activity set where the focus of teaching is centered on the development of language and communications. This form of BE is aimed at developing language skills, grammar, syntax, general business vocabulary, speech related issues, pronunciation skills, and a wide variety of general business communications. GBC is mostly teaching, language, and content focused.

Specific Business Communications (SBC):

The teaching of specific business subjects (content based or context relative), lexes, or anything of a specific nature, much the same as business issues taught in business or commerce schools, albeit with a bias towards vocabulary and communication skills. This area simultaneously combines the learning of business subjects with English language development to give a time efficient dual benefit. Academic and/or accreditation rules do not need to apply to SBC teaching as subjects can be combined, renamed, or taught in any manner that best suits any given student-focused or client-focused situation.

Performance Business Communications (PBC):

The training and educating of students in performance based communication skills most normally associated with cross-cultural (intercultural) business transactions. This area includes interpersonal skills, intercultural skills, and salesmanship, which are often referred to as the 'soft skills' or activators of communications. Business communication skills are included in this area where the focus is on effectiveness, people skills, and business knowledge, that when combined, allow the user to communicate effectively to cause or create desired results in work or business.

These three classifications delineate somewhat disparate aspects of BE, all as valid as each other but not necessarily for the same students. The first area, GBC, has always been the most common version of BE. The second area, SBC, could be described as Business in English (BiE), English for Business

(E4B) or English for Business Purposes (EBP). The third area, PBC, is necessary to help specific students in their use of the English language as an intercultural business communications tool. By combining GBC, SBC and PBC, the focus of BE education switches from a relatively narrow pedagogical language/lexicon based approach, to a more holistic and all encompassing approach. Nothing is lost from the current model: the pie has simply expanded.

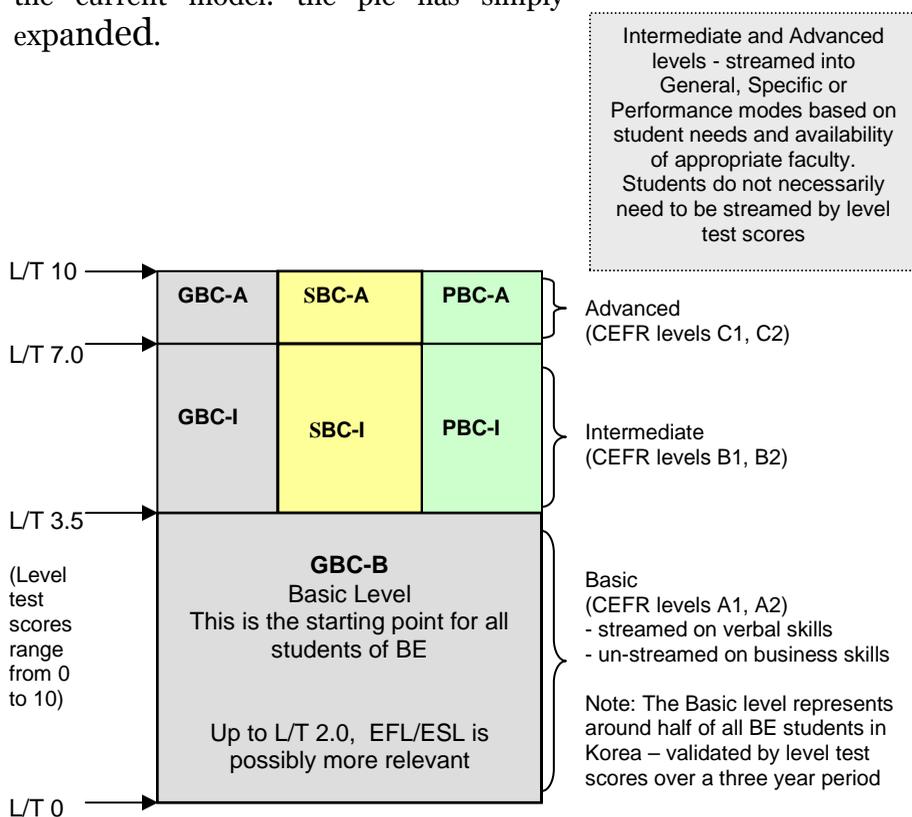


Fig 1.Complete Business English Model

For a European reference - Basic approximates A1 & A2; Intermediate approximates B1 & B2; Advanced approximates C1 & C2; - on the Council of Europe's Common European Framework of References for Languages (CEF). On the simple numerical reference used in this thesis, Basic is 0 – 3.5, Intermediate is 3.5 – 7.0, and Advanced is 7.5 – 10. A score of ten represents the best, generally speaking, that an L2 speaker living in an L2 country could realistically achieve. The level of ten approximates a high school graduate for an L1 speaker in his/her native country.

As SBC represents anything deemed 'specific', then this is the area where anything of a specific or specialized nature would be taught or learned.

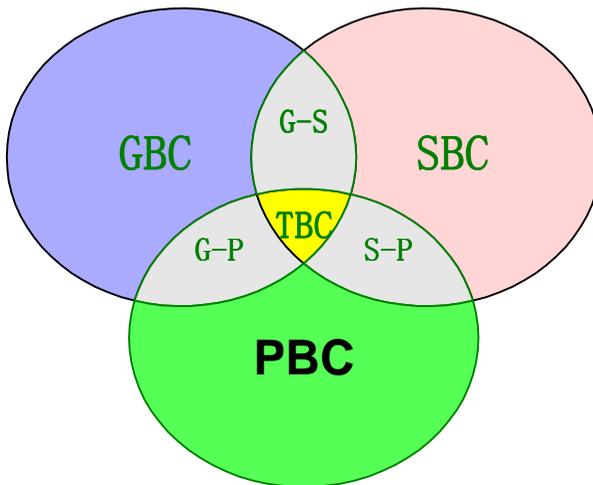


Fig. 2. Venn representation of the TBC model

When we represent the TBC model in the form of a Venn diagram, we get seven different issues represented.

First we get the discrete circles of GBC, SBC, and PBC, of which GBC and SBC are often offered as complete programs in themselves.

- Between GBC and SBC we get the G-S representation, which is a combination of the general form of BE combined with some more specific aspect such as the lexis of a specific business discourse or some specific business subject training.

- Between GBC and PBC we get an overlap between the general form of BE and some performance based training, such as Presentations skills, Negotiation skills, or Cross cultural training.

- Between SBC and PBC we get a mix of some specific aspect of business or some business discourse combined with some performance based training, the same as that existing in the G-P overlap.

The overall aim of the TBC model is to combine all three aspects of GBC, SBC, and PBC to get the overlap identified as TBC (Total Business Communications) which is the only area in the diagram that could qualify as representing an ESP and offering the full suite of Sustainable Communication Skills, suitable for and covering almost all the lingua franca communication needs of any business. Developing sustainable communication skills is the best end result from any BE education/training that will add sustainable value into

any organization or for any learner. Hence when viewed from a strategic HR management (SHRM) perspective, GBC, SBC, and PBC all need to be viewed simultaneously to determine what skill-set the business requires that would allow it to achieve its strategic goals, or for any learner to analyze what skills he/she would need that would best match his/her employment needs.

GENERAL BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS

(GBC)

Overview

GBC appears to be the best known, most easily identified and most commonly taught aspect of BE anywhere in the world. The majority of student workbooks on the market appear to be written to suit this area of BE education. This area would represent the ‘total set’ of BE for most teachers and language academies, many client companies, and a significant percentage of all students. GBC covers a wide range of areas from reasonably simple listening and speaking skills, through reading, comprehension, and writing, to fairly complex business case analyses. Workbooks are mostly written to suit a streamed audience, where the streaming separates students on their English speaking skills or their general English comprehension. Streaming generally does not take into account business knowledge or business abilities. When streaming of this nature takes place, the focus of the program is on English used in general everyday working communications; the focus not being on business as such.

Objective

The objective of GBC is to assist students through teaching and training to advance their English

communication skills in specified areas to a target level within a certain timeframe by using any topic or any subject as the chosen medium. Everyone of every nationality planning to communicate through the medium of English in any business, work or occupational situation must be able to express them self properly to be coherent and understood. The base of their English communication needs to be well grounded in good quality English language. Just for a moment if we were to consider how many native English speakers have ever had any vocational training in ‘business communications’, the number would be extremely low. Therefore in most cultures, business communications training is almost unheard of unless it is sales training, or coaching for a specific event. However, everyone can converse fluently in their native tongue. Most people graduating from colleges or universities do not graduate with any qualifications in business communications, as most business communications are learned on the job. Likewise it is often argued that Business English also need not be specific, but be taught in a business-relative context. This is largely what GBC is; general English communications being taught by teachers who do not need any specific business background. It is argued that teachers of GBC do not need to have any depth of knowledge of business, or any specific aspect of business, so long as they have a general ‘feel’ for business. As most of the skills being developed from GBC teaching are language based, it is more relevant that teachers have language teaching skills rather than business skills or any specific business knowledge. This is reinforced by Ellis when he says that teachers should ideally have an interest in

Business, but this is not an essential requirement for the job of teaching GBC.

GBC language skills represent the backbone of BE, but GBC cannot on its own represent all of BE. As has been stated by Ellis and others, GBC is best taught by teachers who can teach or train students to read, comprehend, write, and verbally communicate at an appropriate level that matches their business or corporate needs. The background of teachers is largely irrelevant; the only thing that counts is the teacher's ability to elevate students' standards to some predetermined level in a specific time frame. Trying to get restaurant wait-staff or retail shop assistants to speak fluent English could well be a waste of time and resources for their need to communicate at anything higher than a mere perfunctory level is largely unnecessary. However, senior staff working within the same businesses could well benefit from a much higher level of spoken English. Then at the top of the corporate tree, senior executives that cannot communicate fluently in English may well be disadvantaged in their career progression. Therefore, GBC skills can be taught to all students until such time as they become as good in their communications as could be expected for people of their nationality or age, or career needs. As a communications backbone, GBC is essential. However, as GBC can easily be taught by teachers with no background in business, GBC is therefore not a language for a 'specific' purpose, as no specific aspect of business needs to be taught, and the language being taught is much the same for all students in all work capacities in all industries. Hence there is no need for any specificity

within GBC. GBC is possibly the largest and most necessary component part of all BE education.

Everything currently being taught as BE that falls under this general description need not be altered or changed in any way. However GBC should only be seen as the leading edge to BE and not the sum-set. It should also be seen as the entry point into the world of business communications education as it lays down the foundations for all other aspects to be built upon. GBC therefore represents the basic platform of knowledge, language, structure and vocabulary for all general working and business related communications. It should be borne in mind that many BE students will never need any more communications education or skills other than that offered by GBC.

Subject Material

Almost any topic can be used for students of GBC so long as the subject matter is understandable to the teacher and the topic is at a language level suitable for BE students. In this context, the term 'business' means any work experience, ideally in private enterprise, but could include experience within government bodies, Agricultural organizations, NGOs, or any other type of organization. As the 'subjects' of business are as wide as business itself, there is no specific determination as to what aspects of business need be included in this area of teaching. Hence any subject that is of a communicational nature, and where training, teaching and coaching in that area benefits students, then that subject

would most likely be deemed appropriate. Language should ideally be as pure as possible avoiding regional expressions, colloquialisms, and country-specific idioms. Universally used expressions, colloquialisms, and idioms can be taught where the knowledge or use of such expressions would be advantageous for the student. If the language being taught is to be used primarily between L2s, then any language detractions should be avoided, particularly with lower level students. More specific activities such as presentation skills, meeting skills and negotiation skills can also be adequately taught by ESL/EFL teachers where the focus of the skill is on communication.

Students

As the primary focus of GBC is language and vocabulary, the basic inputs and outputs for the enablement of non-native communications, any person that works or plans to work is a potential valid student of GBC. There need be no delineation between employment groups, industries, markets, cultures, countries, or even civilizations, with this form of education. As there is no definition of what is a business and no definition of what is a student, then logically, any person that plans to work for or currently works for any type of business, government body, NGO, or any activity that involves work in any capacity, can realistically be or become a student of GBC. Students can be of any age but third year university would realistically represent the lower limit (unless they are majoring in Business), with no upper limit necessary.

Students could have level test scores ranging from 2.0 (basic) upwards, and students should ideally be streamed based on these scores. Students can also be streamed based on positional responsibilities, job titles or any other relevant categorization.

Teachers

According to authors of teacher-training manuals, anyone possessing the right attitude and personality, ideally with a pass grade from a recognized program such as the LCCIBE, could become a GBC teacher. In fact anyone in reality can become a teacher of BE as the primary focus is on the teaching of language skills and not on the teaching of business. Hence, knowledge of business or any specific aspect of business would be considered extra to and not an essential part of the requirements to teach GBC. In Korea there are people from many different nationalities including Americans, British, Canadians, Scots, Irish, New Zealanders, Australians, South Africans, Filipinos and Koreans personally known to the author that teach GBC. Qualifications of this grouping range from High School education, undergraduates in a wide variety of majors, and post graduates with majors in education or business administration. Some of these teachers have had many years of practical business experience whereas some have had zero work experience. Whilst the focus of the education is pedagogical and language based, anyone who understands the rudimentary basics of the English language could teach GBC. Within Korea all non-Korean teachers must

have at least a four year undergraduate degree (except Australians who need a three year degree) in any major. Korean nationals and Kyopos have no minimum educational requirements to teach BE. Very few employers require specific teaching qualifications such as TESOL, CELTA or DELTA etcetera although some of the major corporate employers do prefer some relevant teaching qualification.

Workbooks

A wide variety of workbooks is available covering many issues and topics, some general, and some more specialized, covering student rankings from basic to advanced. Many of these books need no explanation and some come with teacher's guides and student notebooks. Some come with CDs attached for pronunciation practice. Many of these workbooks would be suitable for an entire program, depending upon the number of hours involved. Many need to have supplemental notes that could be provided by a resourceful teacher. Almost all of these workbooks are written to give students an exposure to the English language in a somewhat businesslike context, contain topical and relevant information, and many have exercises for students to work through. The standard of most of these workbooks is adequate for GBC however some would fall somewhat short of the mark for realistic business communications. Whilst this is just an opinion of the writer, these same workbooks would be good for stimulating students in the development of their basic language skills. Specific-skills books such as those containing a single business area like Presentations, Meetings, and Negotiations, are also

available and can be adequately taught by most ESL/EFL/GBC teachers.

The writer of this paper has written two books which have been used in GBC classes. Details are as follows:

1. Business Documentation, 132 pages, 28000 words
2. Telephone Skills, 87 pages, 20000 words

Conclusion

General Business Communications (GBC) represents the base of and a strong foundation for all BE education. GBC is suitable for all students but is most suitable for Basic and Intermediate levels. It must also be noted that older and or more experienced students rated Intermediate or higher would probably need a more advanced standard of BE to keep them interested and involved in the education process. The current form of BE, renamed GBC, is totally adequate for general business communications and English education and is suitable for people interested in the improvement of any aspect of their communication skills.

SPECIFIC BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS

(SBC)

Overview

This area of BE is the teaching of a specific aspect of business in English for a dual benefit: - specific business knowledge plus the acquisition of English communication skills. This area is more focused on a specific aspect of business (subject, content, context, lexis etc.) rather than on the development of language skills so that students could well be classified as business students equally as much as language students. The subject might or might not be taught at an academic level but is taught with more specific business focused content than that taught at the GBC level. The language used by the teacher would be relevant to the level of the students, and either a specially created workbook or an academic text would be used. A variety of subjects or issues could be taught using this method, limited only by the availability of a suitable teacher and material. If a suitable workbook is not available, a relevant text could be used provided that the students are able to read and comprehend the contents. The advantage derived from this form of BE is the dual benefit of specific subject knowledge gained whilst passively acquiring improved communication skills (Brown). Generally speaking, many higher level students would rather

improve their communication skills whilst learning a business subject than by specifically studying English. SBC could well be termed 'business in English', 'English for business' or 'English for specific business purposes'.

Objective

The objective of SBC is to multiply the effectiveness of student's time and to make English language and communication classes more interesting and more attractive. As a generalization, a high percentage of Korean business people are time deficient due to work (and family) commitments, and many do not relish the thought of spending any of their limited spare time learning English. Many Koreans recognize their English communication limitations, and know they need to improve for the sake of their career. However, English classes are often associated with negative connotations and feelings based on prior experiences, particularly from their 'cram classes' in after school language academies. Hence to make English communication classes more appealing and worthy of their time, specific subject classes with real world benefits as well as improved communication skills are welcomed. The thought of passively acquiring improved communication skills whilst participating in a subject-specific class of interest, such as marketing, supply chain management, or strategic planning etcetera, would have much higher student appeal; particularly if there were guarantees that their English would improve somewhat commensurate with the same time spent in GBC classes. At present there is no such guarantee, however,

additional research in this area could prove this to be a more beneficial mode of learning. It should be noted that the data collected during the developmental phase of this thesis showed that subject knowledge gained by students reflected a somewhat linear improvement over time, whereas the 'language acquisition' benefit was a curved function with a sharp improvement after about 100 class hours. Overall, major objectives of SBC are to make BE classes more attractive, more specific, more beneficial and more appealing to adult business students.

Subject Material

SBC subjects need to be business specific and geared into the interest area of students to be attractive and suitable. The list of subjects is wide and would generally reflect subjects (or lexes) found in business administration, public administration, or business management courses. As a specific instance, Marketing could be selected and a workbook written around the specific market in which the students operate. If the program were to be conducted in-house with a specific company, then the sales, supply chain management and marketing issues associated with that company could be included. The workbook could then include issues that would be found in the countries in which this particularly company operates or is marketing into. Another specific case could be the teaching of Finance and Accounting in English to non-financial people to give them an overview of an area of business that they would not necessarily choose to learn in

their native language, but would be of interest when learned in English. Also, as most students in an L2 country attend universities and colleges that teach in their native language, relearning the same subjects in English from a different perspective could be quite beneficial. For instance, learning Marketing in a Western culture teaches students mostly about marketing to a Western client base, using Western influenced methodologies. The same applies in Eastern, Japanese, and Islamic societies. Hence to learn marketing from a different perspective multiplies the students' effectiveness in global business. SBC can also include company specific subject material based around any issue relevant to students such as Change Management, Globalization, or Six Sigma, for instance. SBC is also the area where subject-specific vocabulary relating to any area of business or work, or any issue relating to technical aspects of work such as Engineering, Chemistry, Agronomy etcetera, from any given context could also be taught.

Students

SBC students can be represented by any eclectic grouping or contiguous cohort; from individual students with no commonalities attending classes in an academy, to a group of co-workers from one company involved in a tailor made in-house program. The only need for commonality is the motivation to learn the subject in question. As individual students, the benefits of this type of learning come from mixing with people from dissimilar backgrounds, all wanting to improve their subject knowledge as well as their

communication skills, with all participants actively contributing to the learning experience. With in-house students, specific company information can be used in the program which adds a dynamic and very real element into the subject, so the benefits are multiplied – subject knowledge, company application, and more focused communication skills. In all cases, growth and development of specific vocabulary is automatic where students learn words, meanings and usages in context. Students can range from university students to company freshmen, to junior staff, through all ranks of management. There is no reason for students to be streamed based on their English speaking skills as they are able to talk in their native tongue when working on assignments and projects. As a specific subject is involved in this method of learning, a minimum level test score of 3.5 to 4.0 is essential for two way communications and comprehension between students and teacher. From practical teaching experience, it makes little difference what level test scores students are rated as, for higher level students can be paired with lower level students for balance. As higher level students do not necessarily have higher level subject knowledge, and as lower level students may have more practical business experience, streaming by way of verbal test scores is not necessarily the best for learning, and may well be flawed logic. In the real world, when business people come together to conduct business, it is most common for people of different nationalities to have dissimilar academic backgrounds and different commands of the English language. Hence streaming students by way of level test scores could ultimately disadvantage them. Students are then considered equal, with

total focus on the subject being taught. This is much the same as any MBA class in a Western university environment where students may well be a mix of part time and full time, native and non-native speakers, pre-employment of career executives, all different academic backgrounds, all from different types of businesses, careers, and cultures.

Teachers

SBC teachers need to have academic or practical experience in the subject being taught all well as its lexicon so as to be able to add value into the educational experience. Subject knowledge is expected of any specialist teacher teaching a specific subject. Teachers with appropriate university majors can be easily trained to teach a variety of business subjects provided they have a fundamental understanding of the subject being taught. It must not be overlooked though that the teacher has a dual role, the secondary function being to help students to develop their communication skills whilst learning the subject. Hence some focus on subject related vocabulary and use thereof is important. Teachers should aim at getting students to verbalize their new knowledge through group and individual presentations and through assignments. One particular example (Bell) concerned a class dealing with ecology where students asked for clarification of the differences between the terms symbiosis, mutualism, predation, parasitism and commensalism. These terms describe different types of relationship between organisms - distinguishable only by asking such questions as:

- Do the organisms share the same habitat?
- Does one organism harm the other?
- Does one organism benefit from the other?
- Do both organisms benefit?
- Does one organism feed on the other?

This example shows quite clearly that looking up word meanings in a dictionary (and heaven forbid looking up complex meanings in any Korean electronic dictionary) is not the answer and the subject teacher needs far more than just a basic knowledge of the words involved. This example involves the lexicon of ecology which is a specialized area of agribusiness. But specialized lexes are found in the building of power plants, aircraft, trains, hydraulics, economics, futures trading, and so on. Almost every business has some specialized vocabulary associated with its products, technologies, applications or markets. Knowledge of the words alone is probably insufficient if holistic value is to be delivered through the BE education program. Therefore teachers should ideally have a sound understanding of the subject as well as its terminologies.

Workbooks

SBC workbooks are not found in any abundance as most workbook writers have focused on the pedagogical aspects of BE and not on the business of business. Hence most BE workbooks are written in a small 'b', big 'E' style. As a result, workbooks often have to be created for SBC programs by the

teacher or a subject specialist. Workbooks of a fashion are available in some language academies, but these are often written in a very technical and user-unfriendly style that makes them value-detracting for students. SBC workbooks need to have a depth of subject material to make them worthwhile, but also have language and vocabulary content as well. They also need to be student-friendly to have students wanting to use them both during the program and afterwards as reference sources.

The writer of this paper has written four books which have been used in SBC classes. Details are as follows:

1. Marketing, 122 pages, 31000 words
2. Production management, 117 pages, 32000 words
3. International business, 126 pages, 34000 words
4. Improving business performance, 127 pages, 33000 words

Conclusion

SBC forms the second area of communication in the world of Business English. This area is best suited for students who are at intermediate or advanced levels of English. There is logic in learning a specific skill in English. Firstly, it does not imply that the universities in the student's country are in any way inadequate. Nor does it mean that student's educational levels are poor or bad. Learning any SBC subject is layering useable skill upon useable skill. It takes people at any level and increases their value. This process then equips them to conduct business more confidently. Specialty subjects can be similar to those being taught in local colleges and universities. However, there is a twist; these subjects are taught in English with a 'learn now – use now' focus. This means that the

subject material (and/or its lexicon) needs to be the focus of the learning with English being acquired as a by-product. Interestingly though, by focusing on a specific subject, intermediate and advanced learners may speak more confidently in English than students who learn a more generalized form of BE hence, a double bonus; a specific subject plus improved English speaking skills simultaneously. SBC is based on the teaching of specialty subjects. With specialty subjects, or the lexicon thereof, the focus is placed on the issues of business rather than the communication of business – marketing for instance. Too many companies have great signs and slogans printed announcing their intentions to be ‘Global No 1’, yet they fail to recognize the need for their people to be adequately trained in sales and marketing skills to do business beyond their own national border. Unfortunately, marketing skills are mostly regional. For instance, Korean marketing skills all too often don’t apply outside of Korea as they are based on personal relationships that are developed over many years. Once outside of Korea these skills are somewhat irrelevant in many markets. This same logic applies to the skills learned in many different countries (Globe). There are many subjects that can be taught in the SBC specialty area including - Finance, Site-safety, Engineering, Organizational Behavior, Strategic planning, Globalization, Accounting, International Business, Business Case Development, Value Chain Management and so on. There are many other worthwhile business subjects that could be added to this list and all are learned with the dual benefit of subject knowledge plus advanced communication skills. SBC is also the area where the specific language or lexicon of a

given subject area is taught. However it is recommended that where English for a specific aspect of business is being taught as a standalone subject, both content and context are taught and that students are made to use the language in the correct manner.

PERFORMANCE BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS

(PBC)

Overview and Logic behind PBC

This area of BE is aimed at intermediate and upper level students who need to use their communication skills to conduct transactional-business, and where beneficial results from their communications are expected. This area focuses more on the use of the language as a creative business tool than on the language itself. It focuses more on the use of specific subject knowledge and comprehension than on the subject itself. It focuses more on the creative use of language to enable effective communications between people of dissimilar traditions, backgrounds, languages and cultures to cause or create specific business results. This area of BE is focused on human interaction and subsequently takes into account both the hard and soft skills of communications, sociolinguistics and econolinguistics, as the focus is on people and business to cause results.

As expressed by the eminent Dutch social scientist, Gert Hofstede, “at best cultural differences are a problem; at worst they cause wars” (Hofstede). Taking this into account, to consider language skill in isolation to other key areas of communication is akin to teaching fighter pilots how to fly

using automotive simulators. People can learn to drive extremely well by this method; however, it does not matter how good the training is or how good the trainers are, this method of learning is inadequate for training fighter pilots. Following on from this, even a multimillion dollar flight simulator is definitely not the same as flying a real aircraft where the pilot has to make judgmental decisions, often under stress or duress.

A most relevant issue in business communications is the effect (and affect) of Fluid Intelligence on unexpected or unpredictable situations. The differences identified between Fluid Intelligence (gF) and Crystallized Intelligence (gC) (Cattell 1963) are considered relevant when considering the totality of Business English and subsequent communications. Crystallized Intelligence is considered to be predominately performance from past experiences and from generalized data and fact based learning. Situations that require crystallized intelligence include reading comprehension, learning of vocabulary and grammatical structures and so on, and includes the passing of exams from memorized data. This type of intelligence is based upon facts and rooted in experiences which become stronger as people age and accumulate new knowledge and understanding. Crystallized intelligence can most easily be gained from structured learning within an established pedagogical framework and particularly from rote or repetitive learning (Flynn, Geary). Within the area of Business English, Crystallized Intelligence is posited as the learning of grammatical structure, general vocabulary and business lexis all related to the general world of work and business. In the model identified in this paper, Crystallized

Intelligence is mostly captured within the areas of General and Specific Business Communications. As Koreans are defined as being high in both Power Distance (60/100) and Uncertainty Avoidance (85/100) (Hofstede), and as both of these cultural characteristics influence communications, particularly when combined and particularly when both are high, then it is reasonable to consider that Korean business people are potentially high in Crystallized Intelligence but not necessarily so in Fluid Intelligence. This issue is particularly important when business communications are being conducted by Koreans in countries where their counterparts exhibit lower Power-Distance or Uncertainty-Avoidance scores, and certainly in situations where the combination of Power-Distance and Uncertainty-Avoidance scores vary significantly from the typical Korean scores.

Fluid intelligence was originally defined by Cattell in 1963 as "...the ability to perceive relationships independent of previous specific practice or instruction concerning those relationships." Fluid intelligence is often described as the ability to think and reason abstractly and solve problems, and this ability is considered independent of learning, experience, and education (Cattell 1998). General examples of the use of Fluid Intelligence include solving puzzles and developing problem solving strategies. In the area of Business English, Fluid Intelligence is posited as the creative use of language skills combined with decision making business skills, cross-cultural communications, and unlearned situation-specific collocations used in the solving of dynamic and complex business situations; most of which are unplanned. As most Korean education is based on learning standardized patterns

and pre-planned collocations, and as rote learning holds much higher sway than spontaneous or unstructured thinking or utterances, then it is reasonable to consider that the Korean form of education limits the ability of Koreans to develop Fluid Intelligence. Performance Business Communications (PBC) takes both Crystallized and Fluid Intelligences into account, but is mostly focused on developing higher levels of Fluid Intelligence.

It could also be argued that the business subject being discussed in any given business situation is the total responsibility of the student, and nothing whatsoever to do with the teaching of BE. However, this is flawed logic as the subject is about business and it is being conducted in English. We are not talking about specifics of products or services, but we are talking about business actions that require communication. Hence if the subject is about business, and it is being conducted whilst using the lingua franca of English then it has everything to do with BE. The combined ability of two parties to be able to express their thoughts appropriately, accurately and coherently is a definite issue of BE. If one speaker has a far greater ability to communicate than the other party, and if the communication is of a transactional nature, then there is an automatic advantage-disadvantage situation caused by the difference in the communication itself. As practitioners of business know that to have an edge over another party is something many business people would take advantage of as a win-lose, or zero-sum game. The disadvantaged person may be forced to discontinue the transaction altogether and it subsequently becomes a lose-lose game. As noted in the National best selling book on

negotiations entitled Getting to Yes (Fisher & Ury p32), the authors state on the subject of communications, “Without communication there is no negotiation. Negotiation is a process of communicating back and forth for the purpose of reaching a joint decision. Communication is never an easy thing, even between people who have an enormous background of shared values and experience.” The authors go on to say, “The third communication problem is misunderstanding. What one says the other may misinterpret. Even when negotiators are in the same room, communication from one to the other can seem like sending smoke signals in a high wind. Where the parties speak different languages the chance for misinterpretation is compounded.” Remembering always that negotiation skills form the core of many BE classes and are included in many BE workbooks.

Overall it is of little benefit if BE students complete their studies with a high level of English language skills and a well rounded knowledge of issues relating to business, but are still unable to use their skills and knowledge to conduct business in any meaningful way due to lack of Fluid Intelligence. To reinforce this point, another analogy will be used. My wife is an Australian, speaks English at an educated level, has worked for several businesses in key administrative roles, but would be totally out of her depth in any business interaction with Koreans, even though her business knowledge is high and her English communications are flawless. She simply does not have the communication skills to conduct business. As previously stated, the primary purpose of business is business, so the main purpose for learning BE is business facilitation.

The purpose of creating the category of PBC is to delineate between language focused BE education, and results focused BE training. The creation of PBC does not denigrate GBC in any way as GBC is relevant for all learners, whereas PBC is not. PBC is mostly aimed at people who need to meet face to face with value chain partners in an effort to transact business. In this regard, the expression ‘value chain partners’ means people in the existing or proposed supply chains and demand chains of the business, plus other partnering or value-adding relationships that need to be created or maintained. Naturally enough the skills gained from this form of training can also assist in internal communications where salesmanship or persuasion is required to achieve results. The area of PBC is not limited to any specific terms or names, but its focus is very clear. The point of PBC is to help learners to use their language skills to cause or create business. Basic language skills in the form of GBC and SBC will always remain the backbone of BE, but PBC is the area that best helps learners to develop high level communication skills required in the development of quality business relationships.

Objective

The objective of PBC is to be able to use the English language in a variety of transactional business situations where the user of the language can combine language skills with communication skills with business skills with intercultural/interpersonal skills to cause or create beneficial results for the person involved and/or his/her employer. PBC

skills are mostly required by business people who are proactively involved in the pursuit and conduct of business, possibly in supply chain, selling, project management or managerial situations, and possibly where the English language is not necessarily the native tongue of any of the people involved. This skill is essential in some capacities in almost all global and international corporations.

Subject Material

PBC subjects can include anything related to the 'soft skills' of communications; selling skills, socializing skills, negotiation skills, debating skills and applications of reason, desire and thymos (Fukuyama, Ch17). All PBC skills training is focused on the use of the language to cause a result, hence the subject involved is necessarily performance focused with language skills development being a secondary issue. Subjects can include any issue that contributes to specific skills development that assists students in the actual conduct of business, or cross-cultural management of people, projects, and functions.

Within PBC three major skills ideally need to be addressed to allow students to communicate effectively and to be cognizant of all that is being communicated: Interpersonal skills, Cross cultural (or intercultural) communications, and Social styles. The reason for including these three particular issues is that in order to communicate effectively, particularly with foreigners in foreign or unfamiliar situations, it is important for learners to understand the dynamics of human interactions and basic human psychology. Interpersonal Skills

is a significant area within every company in every market around the world. People are fundamentally different, no matter what their education level, their background or age. Unless people are robots they will have unique personalities and individual thinking processes. No two people are identical no matter how similar their personalities appear to be. The purpose of interpersonal skills training is to get people to understand themselves as well as to understand others. In the process, they learn why they think, act and speak as they do, and why others do likewise. They learn to work better in a team environment as they have a much deeper appreciation for the differences between people and how these differences can be used as a positive driving force for the benefit of the team and the overall business. As many people learn English to be able to conduct business internationally, this information is extremely valuable when communicating with people who don't speak their particular language and who are culturally dissimilar. The second major area is cross cultural communications. This is the learning of communication between different cultural groups and people who do not share common traditions. The study of cross cultural (or intercultural) communications focuses on major aspects of cultural difference. This allows students to develop 'mental bridges' to enable them to cross-over into the other person's world. The third area in functional communications is the concept of Social Styles. This area is the study of individual personal behavioral patterns which categorizes people into recognizable and understandable groups. Overlaid on this is the macro study of overall patterning of people groups categorized by countries. In this area, people as a general

grouping from one country are compared to people from other countries. Students develop their abilities to predict performance from a wide grouping of people, clients, and prospects, no matter where they live or what nationality they are. Embedded in these three skills are other issues that directly and indirectly effect communication, but are all a part of these three basic categories. This includes the concept of time (chronemics) and how time is used to gain advantage; the issue of context, and whether people come from high or low context societies; the issue of hierarchy, and how hierarchical structures and relationships affect communications; the issue of risk avoidance and how people are either risk tolerant or risk adverse which indirectly affects their ability to communicate; and kinesics, body language and non-verbal communications that always affect communications positively or negatively at almost sub-conscious or imperceptible levels.

If we take the three categories discussed so far in functional communications - Interpersonal Skills, Cross Cultural Communications, Social Styles – these skills equip students to be able to communicate at very high levels with people anywhere in the world, including their own country. These three areas are to BE as mortar is to bricks or glue is to Lego® blocks- it holds it all together and makes the language much more business-usable. These skills can be taught on their own or built into other subjects including the original PBC trio - Presentations, Meetings, and Negotiations. PBC cannot exist on its own as it is built on top of the base of language and communication skills developed in the GBC environment. PBC can realistically include any issue that

positively affects communications, and be used to eliminate negative or harmful issues.

Students

Generally speaking, all PBC students have a need for, or will have a need for, or have already conducted, some form of transactional-business using the English language as a lingua franca. These students could come from sales, marketing, supply chain, purchasing or logistics, management or executives, engineers, site managers or project managers. There is no specific category for students of PBC other than their need to conduct business whilst using English as a lingua franca. Conducting business in the transactional sense is markedly different from conducting general business. The difference is in the expectation of beneficial results, or the consequences of disadvantage from poor or negative results. The need for PBC education is subsequently results driven and this in turn determines which people need to be students.

Teachers

Teachers of PBC are much more trainers and coaches than teachers, although the role encompasses all three areas for best results. These educators need to be skilled and knowledgeable in cross cultural communications, interpersonal skills and both 'soft and hard' skills of communications. They also should have some experience from cultures different from their home culture and the

culture in which they are working. Ideally they will have some practical experience in management and leadership, but they really ought to have had some genuine working experience in some aspect of interactive-business such as sales, PR, negotiations, or some area where their personal communication abilities have contributed to the winning or retention of business. Ideally they would hold qualifications in business administration and preferably hold multiple majors to have a wide view of business and people. Teachers with advanced academic qualifications but no practical working experience are not necessarily suitable for PBC but possibly suitable for SBC. Much the same applies to ESL/EFL teachers who have practical working experience but limited business and sales experience, where their talents are probably more relevant to GBC than PBC. Research (albeit limited) in this project indicated that good PBC trainers could be either L1 or L2 speakers of English.

Workbooks

PBC workbooks may have similar titles to those written for GBC subjects although some would be quite different. Three similar-titled workbooks are Presentations, Meetings, and Negotiations. PBC approaches these three skills from a performance perspective with less focus on language. This means that the primary focus of the training is on the development of usable skills, with a secondary focus on the language used in the conduct of that skill. In PBC training, students are trained to use skills to cause or create desirable

business results, ideally in a win-win situation. In these cases English is used as a performance-based lingua franca as the circumstances may be cross-civilizational (Huntington). In advanced classes, realistic examples and scenarios are highly recommended from well researched books such as the factual data given in Merriam Webster's guide to International Business Communications (Atkinson), or from the more general examples given in Gibson's book entitled Intercultural Business Communication. Gibson's book tends to be fairly general but is considered a usable resource book for PBC classes, or in fact any intercultural class. By way of contrast in GBC classes, the issue of cultural differences is generally not fully addressed, or if so, is done in a simpler more general manner that could potentially cause additional barriers to communications. PBC workbooks need to be focused on the specific development of skills that can be used in a variety of transactional-business circumstances. All such books need to be written by authors who have experienced the conditions about which they are writing, and must cite reputable references and credits. This area cannot be written about from a theoretical perspective, nor can it be written about from a pure English language perspective. One of the key issues involved in PBC is that the Anglo/American approach to language and business is often not relevant or appropriate for many L2 students. When Koreans do business with Arabs, Europeans, South Americans, Africans, Russians or Southern Asians, for instance, and where all parties are using English as a second or even third language, and where no party is from an Anglo/American culture, then any use of Western methodologies, idiosyncrasies, or country-specific speech

patterns could be detrimental. What is required is the development of communication bridging strategies that facilitate clear understanding of what both parties want to achieve from their communications, and how they will act and or communicate in the attainment thereof. Hence the key focus of PBC programs is helping students to develop personal communication strategies that would positively influence their abilities to conduct business. Any workbook with any title that helps students to achieve this goal would be considered PBC.

The writer of this paper has written seven books which have been used in PBC classes. Several other books co-authored with Jon Scott Parenteau which are not detailed below have also been used in PBC classes.

Details are as follows:

1. Negotiation skills, 150 pages, 31000 words
2. Interpersonal skills, 168 pages, 40000 words
3. Cross cultural communications, 100 pages, 24000 words
4. Professional selling skills, 116 pages, 30000 words
5. Presentation skills, 40 pages, 8000 words
6. Connect and communicate, 88 pages, 12000 words
7. Strategic management, 54 pages, 6000 words

Note: being customizable, these books have formed the basis of several other company-specific workbooks with different titles. One example is 'Professional selling skills for capital equipment', created for a Korean industrial company involved in design and construction of multi-million dollar projects throughout Asia.

Conclusion

The business of business is business! Without an ability to communicate, thinking is somewhat irrelevant. In business it does not matter what a person thinks or what a person is capable of mentally creating if thoughts cannot be adequately communicated. One of the greatest challenges faced by intelligent people who lack speech is the ability to communicate new and original ideas. In business situations, verbal communication is the primary means through which ideas and thoughts are communicated, particularly when meeting face to face with suppliers, clients, or other stakeholders in a global business value chain. Verbal communication is essential to convince or persuade people to do something or to take particular courses of action. Without being able to convert thoughts into any usable utterance, thinking people are extremely limited in their ability to conduct business. There are times when face to face verbal communications are not only desirable but are essential when causing business to happen.

In cross cultural and cross border business dealings, there are three primary issues involved in verbal communications. The first is the subject matter to be discussed. The second is the scope of difference between the two parties. The third is the combined ability of the two parties to be able to express their thoughts appropriately. Hence in the communication process, language is just a component part and certainly does not represent the entire communications set. To conduct business effectively, much more is required than the simple

ability to speak in English. This then raises an interesting point: is BE limited to just the language skills required for communication? Or does it include the development of communication skills that allow the language to be used? The difference between these two points is in fact 'doing business'. For complete effectiveness, BE needs both parts of the communication equation.

Without language skills, communication cannot take place. Without being able to use communication skills effectively within a specific business context, business cannot be conducted. By definition all business that requires the use of a lingua franca is automatically cross cultural. Where English is the native language of only one party, communication is unbalanced. For instance, Koreans (L2) often have difficulty communicating with British people (L1) due to the advanced level of grammar, structure and vocabulary used by British businessmen. Where the lingua franca is being used as a foreign language by both parties (L2-L2), both are disadvantaged but not necessarily equally. For instance Korean business people often consider Germans to be reasonably easy to communicate with in non-transactional communications, but tough to deal with in face to face serious negotiations. Also Koreans generally find it easier to communicate with other Asians who have cultures and speech patterns more similar to their own. This of course is quite natural. Australians are more at ease doing business with South East Asians than they are with Koreans or Japanese. Where the cultures are more similar, or where there is greater affinity, business communication is easier. But where cultures are greatly dissimilar, and where competing agendas are

involved, communications are always harder. No two cultures are considered the same when there is no shared language. Some cultures are similar, but most are not.

In many Western universities, MBA programs are starting to focus more on the soft skills of communications including negotiation skills and intercultural issues. Also Masters Degrees in fine arts (MFA) are quickly becoming popular in the business world as business leaders recognize the need to develop more of their 'right brain' skills rather than simply relying on the 'hard' skills of management. The switch is from spreadsheets to conceptual design skills; from financial management to cross cultural people skills. And with this switch comes communication skills, where business leaders are developing new skills in people-development rather than human 'resource' management. Where the leadership standards of Henry Ford and Henri Fayol (plan, organize, command, coordinate, control) are disappearing and a new regime is moving to center stage based on the softer skills required for inspirational motivation and performance-leadership. And so too the shift in matrix versatility where managers are also expected to be communicators throughout global business networks; where teams are becoming more multinational and multicultural; where work is spreading around the globe and people are becoming more verbally connected by interactive audiovisual devices and teleconferencing; where the English language is being used by a variety of different people where all participants need to understand what is being said regardless of their mother tongue or the language they normally think in; where people expect their managers, leaders, business partners, suppliers

and customers to be verbally and mentally in tune with themselves. Hence the obvious need for development at the highest possible levels in business communication skills for all participants. As more and more people of different nationalities are assuming global leadership roles, so the diversity of languages used in business is shrinking. Also, as the world of business is getting faster and faster with decisions being made instantaneously in real time more and more frequently, so the need to speak the 'real and specific' language of global business is become a reality for some and a nightmare for others. Full use of PBC skills is not a luxury any more - it is fast becoming a global business-necessity. GBC is fine as a base, but it is insufficient for people operating at the 'sharp' end of business. SBC is essential to gain the specific knowledge and lexicon for areas such as marketing. But there is no substitute for a full and proper working knowledge and use of the skills needed to connect, communicate and conduct business in the global environment.

TOTAL BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS (TBC)

Putting it all together

This chapter offers an expanded and more clearly defined model of BE than the current model. It adds two new dimensions to the popular and most prevalent form of BE known as GBC. This expands the world of BE and offers much more for students, their sponsors, and the teaching fraternity. It introduces more for language institutes to offer to clients in a logical and sensible way that is easily understood. It simply expands the entire field of BE. Interestingly though, there is really nothing new in the world of TBC. Many people have been using aspects of PBC and SBC for decades. However, TBC pulls the lot together into a consolidated package all under the banner of Business English. It separates the three dissimilar areas into aspects of specialization. It allows BE teachers with no business experience to become ‘specialists’ in language, lexis, and communication skills. It allows business professionals to be specialists in their relative areas of expertise. It also includes all the English language programs currently being taught in academies and other places of higher education to be reclassified as SBC-BE. TBC also gives much more visibility to businesses during their planning process to better enable them to get more value for money from their out-sourced or in-house language programs. They can now plan curricula based on three elements – language

skills, business skills and communication skills. Corporate managers can now match their language skills development directly to corporate growth and development needs. Refer to figure 3. From this diagram we can see the relationship between corporate growth and development needs, and the development needs of the people who will cause the business to grow.

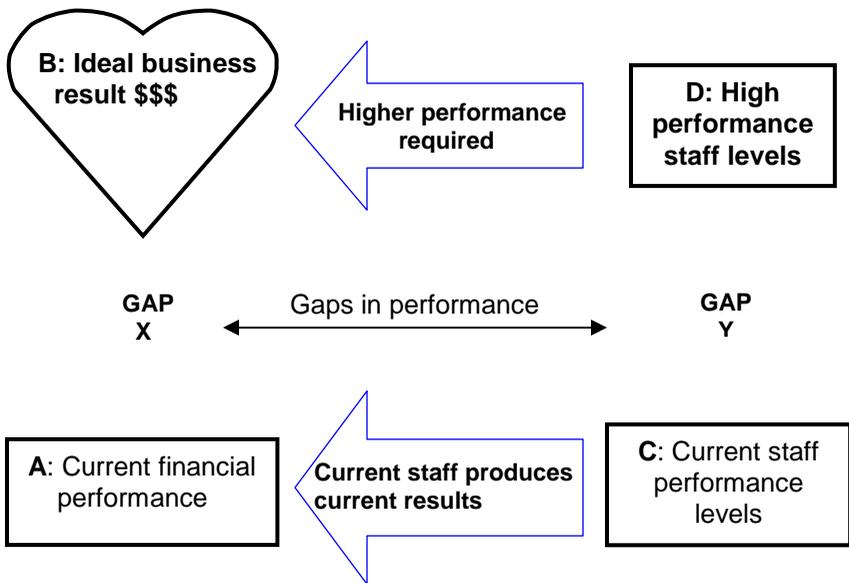


Figure 3 Performance Gap Diagram

**TO ELIMINATE GAP X (financial performance)
FIX GAP Y (people performance)**

What we are looking at in Figure 3 is financial performance of the business on the left hand side (A and B), and people performance on the right hand side (C and D).

Senior management has to be concerned with the left hand side, as this is their primary responsibility. But HR management is mostly concerned with the right hand side. If financial performance is to be improved from (A) to (B), then staff performance must be improved from (C) to (D). If staff performance doesn't improve, the probability of the company achieving its ideal business result (B) is compromised.

HR personnel and senior managers can use this model to ascertain people-performance skills as well as language and communication skills that are required to grow the business. TBC gives a single solution to this issue by offering combinations of general language skills, specific business skills and performance based business communication skills, all within well crafted BE programs.

SUMMARY

A recent article in the Chosun Ilbo newspaper detailed some illuminating facts from research conducted by Samsung Economic Research Institute (SERI). The article indicated that nearly ten times more money is spent annually per capita in Korea than in Japan on English education. This is quite an impressive ratio when taking into account the fact that Japan's GDP is more than six times greater than Korea's. But the rest of the report painted a hugely different picture. Of the 147 nations surveyed, Koreans ranked near the bottom of the list, at 135, when it came to English speaking skills. We can all ask why this is so, and we can all try to figure out causes of the problem. Throughout history, errors in communications combined with cultural misunderstandings have caused serious political gaffs and even led to wars. In the world of cross-border business, an inability to communicate effectively is a serious issue. In business dealings, verbal communications are critical; for without being able to express oneself properly, communications break down. Vast numbers of business deals are concluded by people verbally discussing sensitive issues and negotiating specific points for mutual gain. However, if people lack the ability to communicate verbally, advantages can be missed and business opportunities lost. Reading and writing skills are important; but being able to express thoughts clearly, accurately and succinctly through verbal communications is vital for the ongoing development of Korean businesses and the Korean economy. Global competition is increasing and so is the

ability to communicate in English by Korea's competitors. Total Business Communications has been created to give Korean businesses and business students the best possible advantage available in the world today: Business English plus Business in English. By combining these two facets of language and business, an advantage over other countries can be gained and communication disadvantages can be minimized or eliminated. The writings embedded in this thesis offer a realistic model for the benefit of all Business English education.

TERMS AND ACRONYMS

BE	Business English
BET	Business English Teaching
BIE	Business In English
BTIE	Business Teaching In English
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
EAP	English for Academic Purposes
EBP	English for Business Purposes
EEP	English for Educational Purposes
EFL	English as a Foreign Language ie (English in Korea)
ELT	English Language Teaching
ESAP	English for Specific Academic Purposes
ESL	English as a Second Language ie (English in USA)
EOP	English for Occupational Purposes
EPP	English for Professional Purposes
ESP	English for Specific Purposes ie (BE)
GBC	General Business Communications
GBE	General Business English
IBC	Integrated business communications
MI	Multiple Intelligences
PBC	Performance Business Communications
SBC	Specific Business Communications
SBE	Specific Business English
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
SLE	Speaking, Listening, Expression
TBC	Total business communications
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

These acronyms are used to describe elements of English Language teaching and learning. You will see them used in a

variety of books on English teaching. There are more than what has been included here, but you can get the basic gist of what they all mean. Sometimes I think writers or researchers create new terms just to make their ideas stand out from the crowd.

The difference between ESL and EFL is where the language is learned. ESL is learned in an English speaking country (ie USA). EFL is learned in a non-English speaking country (ie Korea).

At G7 English, we consider that TBC is comprised of the four elements - GBC, PBC, SBC and IBC.

GBC = General business communications

PBC = Performance business communications

SBC = Specific business communications

IBC = Integrated business communications. (This includes all spoken, written and electronic communications)

The terms: GBC, SBC, PBC, IBC, TBC – are © copyright and their use is restricted to G7 English (Korea) Ltd., or must be fully referenced and acknowledged in any written works of any kind whatsoever.

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A Unique Insight in to Business English From a Business Development Perspective

This paper is highly recommended for anyone interested in Business English. It offers a holistic-systemic way of looking at Business English which is valuable for any interested person – particularly business executives and HR managers. It is also highly recommended reading for Business English teachers and potential Business English students.

This paper identifies a more complete model of Business English as it approaches the subject from a strategic human resource perspective within a cross-cultural business development environment.

This paper is recommended reading for all decision makers of Business English programs

**Total Business Communications
~ A Business Focused Model ~**