

IMPROVING BUSINESS COMMUNICATION SKILLS THROUGH PRAGMATICS

By

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NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF MODERN LANGUAGES

ISLAMABAD

August, 2019

Improving Business Communication Skills through Pragmatics

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M Phil, Fatima Jinnah Women University, Rawalpindi, 2011

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

In English

To

FACULTY OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES



NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF MODERN LANGUAGES, ISLAMABAD

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ABSTRACT

Thesis Title: Improving Business Communication Skills through Pragmatics

Pragmatics is an important branch of linguistics that deals with a sender's intended message, a receiver's interpretations, context, and language contents. Business communication is a specific branch of general communication. Business communication courses aim at preparing the students for effective professional communication required in their future careers. This study aims at exploring the effectiveness of teaching pragmatics explicitly along with the prescribed course contents of business communication in the classroom. The data have been collected through (1) comparative analysis of business communication relevant contents of ESP/communication courses prescribed by Higher Education of Pakistan (2012) for BBA and relevant pragmatics concepts, (2) written discourse completion tasks (WDCTs) of learners who were taught pragmatics explicitly on the pattern of single-subject experiment design, (3) semi-structured interviews of teachers of business communication, and (4) semi-structured interviews of business administrators with relevant qualification. Through the comparative analysis, the majority of contents of business communication and pragmatics are found comparable with each other. A significant impact of explicit instruction of pragmatics is noted on the learners of the single-subject experimental group. The teachers are found convinced of the utility of pragmatics in teaching business communication and a majority of them supported the notion of explicit instruction of pragmatics combined with the course contents. The business administrators also reported that they use pragmatics in their corporate communication which they have learnt implicitly through their vast exposure and they also appreciated the notion of making pragmatics a part of business communication courses. The findings of the study reveal that concepts of pragmatics are very useful in business communication. Based on findings, this study recommends the explicit inclusion and instruction of pragmatics in business communication course contents to better prepare the business students for their later professions. Further, the study also suggests additional research on the interface of pragmatics and professional communication.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BA	Business Administrator
BAs	Business Administrators
BBA	Bachelors of Business Administration
BC	Business Communication
BC-Skills	Business Communication Skills
B2B	Business to Business (deals/transactions)
DCT	Discourse Completion Task
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as Second Language
FL	Foreign Language
FSA	Face Saving Acts
FTA	Face Threatening Acts
HEC	Higher Education Commission (of Pakistan)
JDs	Job Descriptions/Duties
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
L1	(One's) First Language
L2	(One's) Second Language
L3	(One's) Third Language
ORIC	Office of Research and Industrial Commercialization
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
SL	Second Language
Sr.	Serial Number
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats
TBC	Teacher of Business Communication
TBCs	Teachers of Business Communication
TNA	Training Need Assessment
WDCT	Written Discourse Completion Task
%age	Percentage

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am thankful to my parents and my teachers. I owe special thanks to my mother who is always a source of courage for me. I also owe special thanks to my supervisor Dr Hazrat Umar who has always encouraged, guided and supported me in the long and arduous task of dissertation writing.

I am also thankful to all the people who supported me in data collection, data analysis, and other phases of this research.

I am also thankful to NUML Department of English (GS) and Faculty of Arts and Humanities for their continuous support in my PhD studies.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my late father who inspired me for higher education.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The present research aims at investigating the effects of inclusion and explicit instruction of pragmatics concepts on improving business communication skills at BBA level. This chapter, in addition to introducing the topic of research, provides a general background for the subject matter, statement of the problem, significance of the research, rationale for research, objectives, research questions, delimitation, an overview of research methods, and organization of the dissertation.

1.1 Background

Activities in business organizations can be distinguished into two categories: actions and communication. For these two activities, business professionals need to deliver their best, both in their careers and for the competitive performance of their organizations. However, the present study focuses on the latter i.e. business communication. Business professionals face diverse situations in their careers. They face extensive competition from the competitor businesses through communication mix, meet the customers' expectations, negotiate with vendors, and deal with officials from regulatory authorities. All the while, professionals are engaged in interpersonal communication. The business world is "in a constant state of competition" and the intensity of this competition is rapidly increasing (Agarwala, 2002, p. 315). Agarwala (2002) further states that corporate organizations aspire to improve their performance to avail a competitive edge; wherein a load of all the required performance lies on professionals serving in these organizations. Datta, Guthrie and Wright (2005) also emphasize high performance required from professionals in the competitive business environment of today since these professionals' "jobs tend to be more complex and varied, requiring broader skill sets and the ability and willingness to succeed in more challenging and varying circumstances" (p. 137). For the performance of these diverse competitive roles, business professionals/administrators require effective communicative competence which can be developed through "linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, and pragmatic competence" (Jendrych, 2011, p. 407). Business professionals/administrators have to maximize their contribution through both actions and communication for the realization of the targets and objectives of their respective organizations.

Nowadays, most young business professionals join the profession after acquiring a relevant degree in business studies. The courses taught in the degree programmes of business studies are meant to prepare the graduating students for their careers. In the undergraduate degree programmes, the scheme of studies includes various courses to improve business communication skills of the students. Business communication, a branch of general communication, specifically concerns itself with well-defined internal or external business communicative activities through email, memos, minutes, reports, proposals, etc. Haase (2013) identifies business communication as a means of correspondence in all kinds of business organizations. The courses on business communication skills aim at preparing students for effective communication in diverse scenarios (Higher Education Commission, 2012). Highlighting the importance of interpersonal communication, Wood (2007) says that it is “central to our everyday lives” (p. 10). Likewise, it is important in business students’ academic learning and their later pragmatic communication needs in the business world. Johan and Noor (2013) emphasize the importance of business communication “because it is through communication that an organization makes contacts with its customers, suppliers and other elements both internal and external of the organization” (p. 1231).

The majority of course books recommended for business studies in Pakistani universities are written by foreign authors, and many of these books were written years ago, or even decades ago. Such books can only partially address the needs of indigenous organizations of the present era since the writers cannot be expected to foresee the indigenous needs of business concerns in the coming years. The students of business studies are trained to work for local organizations after the completion of their academic qualifications. The course contents devised for various subjects of business degree programmes also have a likeness to the books written by foreign authors, and mostly cater to the communication needs in those foreign environs. The courses on business communication skills are the integration of both business studies and communication skills, and these courses aim at preparing the business graduates for effective communication in their afterward professional careers. Thus, these courses are an important part of the scheme of studies. Haase (2013) stresses the magnanimous role of business communication owing to its massive contribution in “administrative duties from the level of a manager to an administrator with a set of skills in the range of business writing, knowledge of a foreign language, intercultural skills, and the conduct of business” in professional settings (p. 76).

Owing to the multifaceted importance of business communication, the researcher believes that the course contents of business communication skills need to be revised and updated through linguistic pragmatics as per professional communication requirements. This study addresses the need of reviewing and revising of the course contents to meet the challenges faced by contemporary business organizations.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The business students study various courses to enhance their communication skills for their future roles as entrepreneurs, managers, team leaders, and other multidimensional roles. These courses are meant to prepare the students for effective and practical communication required in their later professional lives. The perusal of existing course contents of business communication skills during the pilot study revealed that they are inadequate for the pragmatic requirements of the job market. Many of the course contents have an implicit reflection of pragmatics concepts. However, it is assumed that the explicit inclusion and explicit instruction of pragmatics concepts would improve the course contents to make them more effective and practical, which would prepare the students for required communication skills. This study examines the effectiveness of inclusion and instruction of pragmatics concepts explicitly in the courses of business communication skills at BBA level.

1.3 Significance of the Study

The present study is significant since its findings are drawn on data collected through diverse tools, and it provides insights into business communication teaching practices by academia, business communication performed by infield professionals, the gaps between these two, and the measures to bridge the gaps through incorporating linguistic pragmatics. It explores theoretical grounds concerning the potential role of pragmatics in teaching/learning business communication skills. The study also explores the impact of explicit instruction of pragmatics on the written segment of business communication skills of students. The study also includes teachers' reflective views on the potential role of pragmatics in augmenting business students' communication skills for their later professional careers. TBCs' reflections on the connection between business communication skills and pragmatics are relevant to the objectives of this study. The data collection from business administrators regarding what they communicate, how much their academic learning helps them, and how they manage the gap between their academic learning and pragmatic communication also makes this study significant. Since the present

research aims at being both academic and applied, therefore, business administrators' views on the effectiveness and incorporation of pragmatics concepts are valuable. The reflections of these business administrators provide their position-related perspective on the need of including pragmatics concepts in business communication skills. Through these diverse tools of data collection, rich data is expected through explorations on course contents, teaching methods, professional requirements, learning and retention effect of pragmatics, the relationship between what is taught and what is needed, and the possible measures to bridge the gap.

The study is also significant concerning its application since the findings are expected to be helpful for course designers in modifying and revising the course contents of business communication for making this subject practically more useful. The areas of improvement have been highlighted through the findings of this study (see Chapter 5). Effective communication is essential for business graduates to excel in their professional careers. Teachers, curriculum designers, and course material writers need to be aware of the requirements of language courses (e.g. the four ESP/communication courses in BBA) offered to these students. The present research is expected to assist in designing course contents and 'pragmatics included teaching materials', modified teaching methods, and profession-oriented communicative skills development. Through the present study, the researcher hopes to make a contribution to the literature on the relationship between pragmatics and business communication skills.

1.4 Rationale for the Research

Business communication skills are vital for business professionals since these professionals perform complex, multiple roles in their day-to-day routine, and most of their roles are performed through communication. The significance of business administrators' roles and responsibilities demands refined and exquisite communication skills. Pragmatics is helpful in refining communication skills in multifaceted perspectives. Rose (2005) asserts that instruction of pragmatics is effective when such instruction is according to learners' educational context and communication use (p. 388). This study addresses the role of explicit instruction of pragmatics in improving business communication skills (of BBA students) for their subsequent professional careers.

The rationale for exploring the compatibility between pragmatics and business communication is based on the notion that pragmatics deals with all human communication whereas business communication deals with field-specific communication. Thus,

pragmatics can play its role in teaching (and learning and practicing) business communication since its significance is already established through various empirical studies on the relationship between pragmatics and L1, L2, EFL, and ESL (Brock & Nagasaka, 2005; Félix-Brasdefer & Cohen, 2012; Mirzaei, Roohani, & Esmaeili, 2012; Rose, 2005; Rose & Kasper, 2001; Vasquez & Sharpless, 2009). Köksal (2000) highlights the need for a study on the effectiveness of explicit instruction of pragmatics and its potential benefits for business professionals. On the other hand, the explicit instruction of pragmatics has been found fruitful in developing and refining communication skills (Brock & Nagasaka, 2005; Félix-Brasdefer & Cohen, 2012; Lingli & Wannaruk, 2010; Rose, 2005). The following gaps found in the available literature strongly support the rationale for the present research:

Firstly, previous studies have mostly focused on the contribution and incorporation of pragmatics in L1, L2, EFL, ESL, etc. Like, Kasper (2001), Rose (2005), Lin (2007), Krisnawati (2011), and Moody (2014) highlight the significant role of pragmatics for developing communicative competence in general. But, Kasper and Rose (1999; 2002), Rose (2005), Cohen (2008), and Bardovi-Harlig (2013) emphasize the useful contribution of pragmatics and its explicit instruction in the acquisition of second language and consequent communicative competence. Whereas, Brock and Nagasaka (2005), Pearson (2006), Rueda (2006), Farahian, Rezaee and Gholami (2012), Félix-Brasdefer and Cohen (2012), and Gharibeh, Mirzaee and Yaghoubi-Notash (2016) stress upon the instruction of pragmatics to develop communicative competence while teaching a foreign language. Yet, Feng (2009) and Kasper (2001) highlight the significance of intercultural communication and the role of pragmatics in coping with the resulting differences. During the review of literature, no particular research was found specifically focusing on the role of pragmatics through its inclusion and explicit instruction in business communication courses at BBA level.

Secondly, the review of course contents reveals the implicit presence of pragmatics elements. Previous studies (as mentioned in the preceding paragraph) have proven explicit instruction of pragmatics more effective than implicit one. Lingli and Wannaruk (2010) commend the explicit instruction because “explicit explanation and explicit feedback” can enhance learners’ awareness much better than implicit learning (pp. 102-103); whereas, Krisnawati (2011) recommends that “materials for pragmatic awareness yielding in pragmatic competence are to be explicitly explored and greatly enhanced” (p. 110). So,

explorations into explicit awareness of pragmatics for business students and its usefulness for refining their communication skills are still needed, and it is addressed in this study.

Thirdly, no study, as per the review of literature, has been found on utilizing business professionals' experiences of (implicit) learning of pragmatics to improve the course contents and teaching of business communication. Moreover, their experiences and reflective views have not been explored on measures to enrich 'business communication courses' through awareness of pragmatics and pragmatic communication.

Fourthly, the importance of pragmatics awareness has been highlighted by various researchers. Yet the impact of explicit instruction of pragmatics on business students has not been explored. Dash (2004), and Riddiford and Joe (2010) insisted on awareness of pragmatics by professionals while interacting with persons from different pragmatic backgrounds. Köksal (2000) emphasizes upon equipping business professionals with "socio-cultural, socio-pragmatic and pragma-linguistic information/competence to be able to identify the pragmatic content of the message" for the sake of saving professionals from pragmatic communication failure (p. 630). No specific study is found in the existing literature on measures to prepare business students, through explicit instruction of pragmatics, for the afterward communication challenges.

Fifthly, the teaching of business communication after incorporating relevant concepts from pragmatics has not been explored. There is a gap in the existing literature on the impact of incorporating compatible concepts from linguistic pragmatics on business communication skills. This study is expected to explore the areas from linguistic pragmatics for making course contents practically more useful for the students' later professional communication requirements. The reflective views of business communication teachers and business administrators/professionals, with an awareness of pragmatics and pragmatic requirements of infield business communication, are yet needed to be explored through academic research.

Sixthly, the reason for choosing this topic also relates to the researcher's academic and professional background. The researcher himself holds a degree of MBA and has studied business communication relevant to linguistic pragmatics concepts in implicit form, both as a teacher and as a student. The researcher has also worked on pragmatics concerning TV talk shows in his MPhil dissertation. Further, the researcher himself has been teaching

business communication courses for the last fifteen years to the students of various professional programmes. All this inspired him to investigate the topic under research.

There are many studies on the incorporation of pragmatics in communication skills. Similarly, studies on the importance and improvement of business communication skills also abound. While reviewing the literature, no research has been found particularly concerning improving business communication skills through pragmatics by utilizing its inclusion and explicit instruction in courses on communication skills at BBA level. All these grounds support the justification for the present study, i.e. the role of inclusion and explicit instruction of pragmatics in ESP/communication courses for improving business communication skills at BBA level.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The study aims at exploring the effectiveness of incorporating certain concepts from pragmatics in teaching business communication skills to students of business studies. This study also endeavors to explore the consequences of including pragmatics and its explicit instruction in the course contents on learners' business communication skills. The objectives of the present study are:

1. To examine the relationship between pragmatics concepts and the course contents of business communication skills
2. To explore the impact of explicit instruction of pragmatics concepts on the students' written discourse completion tasks
3. To investigate the perceptions of the instructors of business communication skills about the inclusion and instruction of explicit pragmatics concepts along with the course contents
4. To find out the opinions of the professionals/administrators about the effectiveness of explicit pragmatics concepts in business communication

1.6 Main Research Question

- How can the inclusion and explicit instruction of pragmatics concepts in the business communication courses at BBA level contribute to better learning of students' business communication skills?

1.6.1 Subsidiary Research Questions

1. What pragmatics concepts are compatible with the course contents of business communication skills?

2. What is the impact of teaching explicit pragmatics concepts on the students' written discourse completion tasks?
3. What are the perceptions of teachers, teaching business communication skills, about explicit pragmatics concepts in the course contents?
4. How are explicit pragmatics concepts viewed by business professionals in the field?

1.7 Delimitation

The study focuses on the potential role of explicit instruction of pragmatics in improving business communication skills of business students. The first segment of data generation i.e. the comparative analysis (of business communication course contents and relevant pragmatics concepts) is delimited to Higher Education Commission's (2012) recommended course contents for BBA. Only four ESP/communication courses i.e. "English I", "English II", "Oral Communication" and "Business Communication I" have been selected. These courses are included in BBA scheme of studies as compulsory/core courses. From these courses, only the contents on business communication skills have been chosen for comparison. These ESP/communication courses, their contents specific to business communication skills, and the proportion of these contents in the relevant courses are presented and discussed in Chapter 4.

For the second segment of data collection, single-subject experimental design has been used. Data collection in this segment is delimited to four written discourse completion tasks (WDCTs) i.e. two business letters, one memorandum, and one memorandum report. Only major pragmatics concepts relevant to business communication skills were utilized (through their explicit instruction) to prepare the lesson plans (see Appendix-I) for the treatment phase. The third segment of data comprises semi-structured interviews of instructors of business communication courses from various universities in Islamabad. Only the instructors with knowledge of pragmatics and vast teaching experience have been taken as sample. For the fourth segment of this study, the business administrators with an MBA, a BBA, or a relevant qualification of business studies, and serving in business organizations at administrative posts have been taken as sample. For the present study, only the basic pragmatics concepts (mentioned in the lesson plans, see Appendix-I) have been focused on. The extended details of these concepts e.g. types of implicatures, types of FSAs/FTAs, types of schemata, philosophical underpinnings of pragmatics, politeness theories, and other such details which are not needed for business students/professionals (from the perspective of business communication courses) have not been part of this study.

1.8 Research Methodology

A mixed method approach has been used for data collection to investigate the effectiveness of explicit instruction of pragmatics concepts in improving students' business communication skills for their later communication needs. The theoretical framework is built upon Swan's (2007) notions of 'Pragmatics A' and 'Pragmatics B' along with other major pragmatics concepts. The data have been collected through four instruments: (1) the comparative analysis through an adapted model for identifying compatibility between selected pragmatics concepts and course contents of business communication, (2) students' written discourse completion tasks, (3) teachers' interviews on their reflections and opinions regarding communication skills and the effectiveness of explicit instruction of pragmatics along with the prescribed course contents, and (4) business administrators' interviews to seek their opinions on the infield professional communication situations and requirements and their views on inclusion/instruction of pragmatics concepts in business communication courses. A pilot study was conducted as a preliminary investigation. The instruments of data collection were also validated and modified after the feedback of experts in the fields of education, linguistics, and business administration. The mixed method approach has been employed to address the main as well as subsidiary research questions. The quantified data (generated through students' WDCTs) has been analyzed through SPSS and MS Excel, whereas the qualitative data have been analyzed through thematic categories and grouped responses. The data have been triangulated and the results have been synthesized to draw conclusions and present recommendations in the light of findings.

1.9 Structure of the Study

The study comprises five chapters. Chapter 1 is of introduction and includes background, statement of the problem, significance of the study, rationale for the research, research objectives, research questions, and delimitation of the study.

A review of relevant literature has been presented in Chapter 2. Pragmatics and its major concepts, the theory and practices of business communication, and the importance of effective communication skills in business organizations have been discussed.

Chapter 3 discusses research methodology. The chapter comprises the design of the study, the theoretical framework, population and sample, and tools for data collection and

procedures of analyses. Furthermore, the ways to collect and analyze the data have been explained.

Data collected from different sources have been analyzed in Chapter 4. The data consist of the comparative analysis of business communication course contents and pragmatics concepts, students' WDCTs, teachers' and business administrators' interviews. Chapter 4 comprises analyses of the data, synthesis of results, and discussion. The data have been examined in response to the research questions.

Chapter 5 concludes the study along with findings and recommendations on the proposed inclusion of pragmatics concepts, probable competencies enhanced through teaching explicit pragmatics, teaching approach for pragmatics, and implications of the study. Suggestions for further studies are also presented.

1.10 Summary of the Chapter

Business communication is important for business professionals/administrators, and thus business students need to be well trained during their academics for their later professional communication requirements. The researcher has presented his case in this chapter on the need of revising the curriculum. The research problem has been amply stated, and the significance and rationale for conducting the present research have been explained. The main research question along with subsidiary research questions according to the objectives of the study has been presented. A review of relevant literature on language, pragmatics, business communication, and their interface follows in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter comprises a review of literature related to pragmatics and business communication skills. It has been divided into theoretical concepts of pragmatics, the theory and practices of business communication skills, and argumentative literature review to support the case of the present research. The first section includes the concepts from pragmatics and linguistics which have a relationship with the course contents of business communication skills and the related concepts. Concepts of pragmatics on pragmatic meaning, speaker meaning, listener's interpretation, context and co-text, shared knowledge, various levels of meaning, Grice's cooperative maxims and their flouting, presupposition, entailment, implicature, various aspects of face, speech acts, locutionary act, illocutionary act, perlocutionary acts, routine, genre, respect, politeness, and cultural and conventional schemata have been discussed in the perspective of business communication skills. The relationships among pragmatics and sociopragmatics, pragmalinguistics, and metapragmatics along with their roles in communicative events have been elaborated. The second section relates the theory and practices of business communication with linguistics and pragmatics. The literature on professional communication requirements and business communication courses along with their compatibility with pragmatics has also been presented. The third segment comprises the review of literature on explicit instruction of pragmatics in learning L2 and foreign language. This segment also presents the case on the potential role of explicit instruction of pragmatics in improving learners' business communication skills.

2.1 Pragmatics and its Major Concepts

Language is a means of communication for human beings, and pragmatics relates to the real use of language. Pragmatics as a sub-discipline of linguistics studies 'ordinary language in use', and examines the use in both formal and informal ways. Crystal (1987) asserts that pragmatics studies language of real use from various perspectives: forms, users' view-point, users' choices, constraints faced by users, use of language in social interactions, effects of using language, and nature of a communication event. Pragmatics consists of all those "factors that govern our choice of language in social interaction and the effects of our choice on others" (Crystal, 1987, p. 120). Pragmatics concerns contextual meanings as

intended by the encoder (speaker/writer), interpreted by the decoder (listener/reader), and other factors which influence the whole process of contextual communication (Yule, 1996a, p. 4). Pragmatics studies “communicative behavior displayed by interactants in a speech situation” and the transmitted meanings which are often unsystematic, nonstructural, and quite opposite to proper ‘linguistic meaning’ (Martínez, 1996, p. 366). Pragmatics handles those aspects of language use that fall apart from the formal system of analysis of language made by other disciplines (Yule, 1996a, pp. 6-8).

Pragmatics addresses some core communication issues including the use of language for performing social interactions by speakers/encoders along with its effects on communicators in a communicative event (Kasper, 1997). Pragmatics also deals with socio-cultural perspectives along with “the focuses of grammar structure and vocabulary accuracy, the considerations of speech appropriateness, and the different cultural issues” (Lin, 2007, p. 92). Semantics and pragmatics are interlinked branches of linguistics since both deal with meaning, the former with contextual meaning and the latter with literal meaning. Semantics is the ‘toolkit’ of meaning, whereas pragmatics convenes the use of the tools of this toolkit; semantics deals with “knowledge encoded” in the form of the vocabulary of a language and helps in building “elaborate meaning” whereas pragmatics deals with contextually meaningful communication; pragmatics harmonizes users’ “semantic knowledge” with their surrounding world (Griffiths, 2006, p. 1). On the whole, pragmatics studies language as a means of communication from multiple perspectives.

Pragmatics deals with a triangle of three closely linked contributors: (1) speaker/encoder’s intended message, (2) contents and contribution of the context, and (3) a competent hearer/decoder’s interpretation (Gauker, 2008). The encoders are supposed to “design their utterances against the common grounds they share with their addressees—their common experience, dialect, and culture”, whereas the addressees are supposed to actively understand the communication since “People understand each other in conversations by gathering evidence about each other’s intentions” (Schober & Clark, 1989, p. 211). The knowledge of pragmatics facilitates communicators (encoders/decoders) in understanding the intended meaning, underlying assumptions, purposes and goals, speech actions through various linguistics forms (Yule, 1996a, p. 4). Pragmatics addresses all communication issues including the use of language for performing social interactions by speakers/encoders along with its effects on all communicators in that communicative event (Kasper, 1997). Pragmatics is “a ‘component’ of language system on a par with

Phonology, Syntax, Semantics, Sociolinguistics, Psycholinguistics etc.” (Martínez, 1996, p. 364). Pragmatics addresses “factors that govern our choice of language in social interaction and the effects of our choice on others” (Crystal, 1987, p. 120).

2.1.1 The Role of Pragmatics in Understanding Human Communication

Language is means of communication for transmitting messages among the members of society through verbal or nonverbal signs and symbols, but when it is the case of different societies, there may be some differences in the use of such signs and symbols in terms of preferences, formality, media, immediacy, etc. (Fernández-Souto, Gestal, & Pesqueira, 2015, p. 237). Besides, language performs various functions e.g. complimenting, requesting, complaining, and apologizing, through discourse/speech events of diverse length and complexity (Kasper & Rose, 1999). “Language is not just a carrier of information – it can convey various levels of meaning depending on the situation” (Hartley & Bruckmann, 2002, p. 31), thus it is a tool of communication with the world outside (Griffiths, 2006). Likewise, Moody (2014) views language as a tool “to creatively engage in and construct dynamic relations with others” (p. 42).

Pragmatics is a broader field. Martínez (1996) recommends studying it from two perspectives: “Universal Pragmatics and Empirical Pragmatics” (p. 364). Universal pragmatics studies “general conditions framing communication and linguistic performance” including universal essentials of “speech as action, the dialogic structure of production and understanding, the elements integrating a speech situation (e.g. interlocutors, time, space, intention of speaker, background knowledge, etc.), or deixis understood in general sense” and “empirical universals or language universals which can be empirically observed to occur as a general rule” (Martínez, 1996, p. 365). Empirical pragmatics is concerned with “description and interpretation of linguistic interaction ranging from isolated speech acts (e.g. illocutionary acts, perlocutionary acts, indirect speech acts) to complex communicative situations, and these always in relation to individual languages, societies and cultures” (Martínez, 1996, p. 365).

Pragmatics is all about human communication and speech acts. “Pragmatics is studied in the framework of a communicative act or a speech act sequence” (Rose, 2012). Clyne (1994) identifies the following four functions that language performs:

- Language is a means of human interaction.
- Language is a means of social identification and reveals religious, social, ethnic, or national groupings.
- Language is a means of gaining and transmitting knowledge from childhood to adulthood. In childhood, it is a means of learning and developing language skills and then relating their experiences to their surroundings. In adulthood, language facilitates in developing new ways of thinking and building new concepts. Thus, language contributes to human intellectual development.
- Language has a ‘do’ aspect along with a ‘say’ aspect, as most of human communication is linked with their actions e.g. in promising, apologizing, etc.

Pragmatics is concerned mainly with language in context in which an encoder’s message is interpreted by the decoder. Yule (1996a) asserts the important role of pragmatics:

Pragmatics is the study of relationships between linguistic forms and the users of those forms... The advantage of studying language via pragmatics is that one can talk about people’s intended meanings, their assumptions, their purposes or goals, and the kinds of actions (for example, requests) that they are performing what they speak. (p. 4)

The knowledge of pragmatics facilitates understanding the veiled aspects of human communication. Yule (1996b) highlights the importance of ‘shared assumptions and expectations’ in understanding ‘how more is communicated than what is said or written’ (p. 127). Language as a means of human communication performs diverse functions: “to express emotions, to give instructions, to exchange small talk at a social occasion, etc.” and each of these functions requires “a different approach with different conventions” (Hartley & Bruckmann, 2002, p. 60). Humans communicate through verbal and nonverbal symbols, and both may have many invisible meanings. Human communication is too complex to be interpreted easily and precisely, yet pragmatics may play its role through focusing on ‘what is meant’ or ‘what is interpreted’ rather ‘what is said/written’ in the light of Yule’s (1996a) assertion: “pragmatics is appealing because it’s how people make sense of each other linguistically, but it can be frustrating area of study because it requires us to make sense of people and what they have in mind” (p. 4).

2.1.2 Communicative Competence and Pragmatic Competence

Competence and performance are two contrasting but interlinked phenomena in human communication. Competence comprises tacit knowledge/ capability of a person whereas performance is noticeable; it is through the demonstration of performance that competence can be evaluated, developed, and maintained (Singh & Choo, 2012). Humans communicate with the help of their knowledge of grammar, appropriate use of vocabulary, rules of acceptable writing, and speaking patterns and feedback. Identifying the importance of pragmatics, Canale and Swain (1980) opine that grammar rules are useless unless a communicator is familiar and expert in them. Granado (1996) also asserts that communicative competence is not merely expertise of correct grammar usage but also of the appropriate use of language. Celce-Murcia (2007) identifies various components of communicative competence: socio-cultural competence, linguistic competence, interactional competence, discourse competence, strategic competence, and formulaic competence. Among the aforementioned competencies, socio-cultural competence and discourse competence are strongly associated with pragmatics. Socio-cultural competence includes a sender's pragmatic knowledge which is depicted in his/her communication appropriate per cultural and social context. On the other hand, socially or culturally misfit communication is considered a serious error. Canale and Swain (1980), and Loveday (1982) assert that communicative competence assists in performing communicative functions in a social context. "Discourse competence refers to the selection, sequencing, and arrangement of words, structures, and utterances to achieve a unified spoken message" and pragmatic knowledge is fruitful in demonstrating discourse competence (Celce-Murcia, 2007, p. 46).

Pragmatic competence includes awareness of communication action—how that action is to be carried out and the ability to use appropriate language in keeping with contextual factors (Kasper, 1997). Gharibeh, Mirzaee and Yaghoubi-Notash (2016) assert that pragmatic competence is accomplished through cognitive language learning. Brock and Nagasaka (2005) view pragmatic competence as an "ability to express or interpret communicative functions in particular communicative contexts" (p. 17). They also state that an underdeveloped or faulty pragmatic competence may cause "inappropriate expressions or inaccurate interpretations resulting in unsuccessful communicative events", and may lead to "misunderstanding and miscommunication", whereas pragmatically appropriate utterances are probable to get a favourable response from the audience (p. 17).

Pragmatic competence encompasses one's capability (1) to utilize and construe language in a certain context, (2) to manipulate and adapt language for diverse purposes (e.g. requesting, informing, greeting, demanding, etc.), (3) to use the language according to the receiver's expectations and needs and the situation, and (4) to use acceptable communication norms (Brock & Nagasaka, 2005, p. 19). Pragmatic incompetence can lead to communication breakdown and misunderstandings (Thomas, 1983). Enhancing the pragmatic competence of communicators takes a longer time to develop (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001). Competent language users are aware of the changes happening around them, and it is reflected in their conversations (Griffiths, 2006, p. 4).

2.1.3 Sociopragmatics, Pragmalinguistics, and Metapragmatics

Pragmatic competence is associated with learners' sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic skills. Sociopragmatics comprises the knowledge to formulate a speech act during a communicative event, and deals with those behavioural norms which help in recognizing speech acts in specific contexts according to the demographic traits of communicators (Mirzaei, Roohani, & Esmaeili, 2012). Demographic traits may comprise culture, age, gender, social status, and communicators' status and role in a communicative event (Thomas, 1983). Sociopragmatic skills include performance, proficiency, and suitability of expressions and interpretations of social meaning during an interaction (Riddiford & Joe, 2010, p. 185). Sociopragmatic variables include cultural awareness, social distance, relative power, and the extent of imposition of a request or other speech acts in day-to-day or professional settings (Hudson, 2001, p. 284). Communication is considered a social act in sociolinguistics (Granado, 1996). Sociopragmatic competence enables the language users in harmonizing their communication with the norms of society in terms of incorporating social aspects of power and distance (Félix-Brasdefer & Cohen, 2012, p. 651); thus, one's pragmatic knowledge/competence is associated with one's pragmalinguistic and sociolinguistic competence.

Awareness of acceptable socio-cultural behaviour is important in managing interpersonal relationships (Moody, 2014, p. 42). Pragmalinguistics encompasses "the language resources speakers use for pragmatic purposes" and sociopragmatics includes "the rules that guide use of language in context" (Bardovi-Harlig, 2013, p. 78). Pragmalinguistics relates to competence and performance of language conventions whereas sociolinguistics relates to situation-specific communication (Félix-Brasdefer & Cohen, 2012). Pragmalinguistic resources acquired for L1 influence the use of "language

structures” while learning/acquiring L2 (Moody, 2014, p. 42). Pragmalinguistics facilitates making lexical and grammatical choices for speech acts and explores resources for performing communicative acts and interpersonal meanings whereas metapragmatics studies intentions behind an utterance and effects of the utterance (Mirzaei, Roohani, & Esmaeili, 2012). Pragmalinguistic competence enables one in performing language conventions through utilizing linguistic resources of a language, and ‘contextually appropriate’ speech acts (Félix-Brasdefer & Cohen, 2012, p. 651). Pragmatics helps make choices from available “semantic possibilities”, in interpreting users’ choices of linguistic patterns, in elaborating the role of context through available knowledge, and in building elucidation based on semantic foundations (Griffiths, 2006, p. 2). In the light of the aforementioned studies, the present research assumes that pragmalinguistic resources can prove useful in improving learners’ business communication skills. Therefore, knowledge gained through the learning of pragmatics can help learners in developing their metapragmatic, pragmalinguistic, and sociopragmatic skills needed for effective communication.

2.1.4 Pragmatic Meaning

Humans invent words, design their structures and sequences, adapt them to linguistic conventions, and make generalizations and interpretations; pragmatics assists in understanding how humans attach meanings with words or make these words produce intended meanings (Johnstone, 2002, p. 64). Christie (2000) argues “what we can mean is a function of what we are saying. Meaning is more than a matter of intention; it is also a matter of convention” (p. 108). Pragmatics examines meanings generated at the sentence level, utterance level, and ‘speaker’s intended meaning’ (Verschueren, 1999, p. 37). Meanings are ‘socially constructed’, they are context-dependent, they require cooperation among communicators, and they need to be matched in terms of the speaker’s intentions and the listener’s pragmatic inferences (Kecskes, 2010, p. 51).

In pragmatics-semantics distinction, ‘speaker’s meaning’, ‘utterance meaning’ and ‘sentence meaning’ are used to explain three diverse aspects of meanings. Sender’s meaning is what a sender (speaker/writer) intends while conveying an utterance; utterance meaning is related to explicature and implicature, and it is what competent language users interpret based on their knowledge about the speaker and the context; sentence meaning is ‘literal meaning’ which the language users consider even if the sentence is spoken/written in isolation (Griffiths, 2006, pp. 9-11). An understanding of pragmatics concepts on a

diversity of meanings facilitates in interacting more compatibly when conversational patterns of communicators are different. The knowledge of pragmatics assists in conveying messages more effectively, and can, thus, contribute to effective communication.

2.1.5 Pragmatic Context and Shared Knowledge

In day-to-day conversations, ‘context’ comprises the circumstances in which communication takes place. Pragmatics investigates “language in social contexts and settings” (Martínez, 1996, p. 363). ‘Contextual information’ makes the communicators’ intended message, denoted through linguistic symbols, comprehensible for the audience (Griffiths, 2006). Åkerman (2009) declares that “the context determines the correct interpretation of a sentence (as uttered in that context) as well as the proposition expressed” (p. 127). The linguistic components of human languages depend on the context when they are used as syntactic/semantic units—sentences, phrases, words, or even morphemes/emes. Kecskes (2010) states that communicators “produce and comprehend language while relying on their most accessible and salient knowledge expressed in their private contexts” and “linguistic data” i.e. ‘what is said’ is completed through “non-linguistic” and “contextual interpretation processes” i.e. ‘what is unsaid’ (p. 51). Kecskes (2010) further asserts that context comprises multiple factors—social, physical, epistemic, linguistic—which can affect signs or expressions used for communication (p. 53).

Context facilitates understanding the meaning in physical, social, socio-psychological, and chronological perspectives (Cutting, 2002, p. 2). Among these perspectives, Hartley and Bruckmann (2002) consider the role of social perspective more important than others. ‘Shared knowledge’ is equally possessed information by a speaker and a listener in a communicative event (Yule, 1996a). It is equally important to understand the audience’ background and their social context as Hartley and Bruckmann (2002) argue:

In order to fully understand how people communicate, we need to understand not just the immediate background but the much broader social context and history of their relationship. Not only do we have to examine how people come to agree on what is happening, but we also have to look at how they feel about events. (p. 23)

Context contributes to formulating utterances and interpreting their pragmatic meanings. Human languages are context-dependent (Åkerman, 2009, p. 155). Furthermore, shared knowledge is characterized through social groupings, discourse community, interaction patterns, and group memberships; wherein all these factors provide

a platform for ‘discursive practices’ (Johnstone, 2002, p. 116). Writers and speakers formulate their messages with certain assumptions on their receivers’ knowledge. The notion of ‘context’ is closely associated with ‘presupposition’. Context is an essential component of ‘shared knowledge’ among communicators. Kecskes (2010) opines that “mental representations of (assumed) shared knowledge exist in the speaker before conversation; they relate to, and facilitate comprehension of, the intentions and goals, and thereby direct the conversation in the desired way” (p. 56). “What a speaker assumes is true or is known by the hearer can be described as presupposition” (Yule, 1996b, p. 132). The participants of a conversation gather evidence about each other’s intentions through their uttered words, after decoding and interpreting them in the light of the context of conversations, and “try to ensure that what is said is also understood”, and thus speakers (encoders/senders) are “responsible for making themselves understood to the other participants” (Schober & Clark, 1989, pp. 211-212). Both context and presupposition contribute to generating the pragmatic meaning of utterances.

Context attributes meaning to utterances, and pragmatics assists in determining contextual meaning. The receiver’s interpretation of a message in his/her background has a significant role:

- i. Because of differences in background, this meaning can differ considerably from the intended meaning of the sender.
- ii. Good feedback is essential in determining the effectiveness of a message.
- iii. The greater the common background, the less information is needed to be encoded in the message (Hartley & Bruckmann, 2002, p. 20).

Both context and shared knowledge attribute meaning to utterances. Besides the linguistic context, co-text, socio-cultural context, and physical context also contribute to meanings. The surrounding words in a text i.e. co-text attribute certain meaning to a specific word besides the effects of physical location, time, and place (Yule, 1996b, p. 129). Socio-cultural context relates to schemata and ‘social knowledge’ of a language, and it is vital for composing a business message for an audience with different socio-cultural dimensions (Zhu, 2005, p. 32). Physical context also influences the meaning since a communicative event occurs in certain physical circumstances.

2.1.6 Reference, Referring Expressions and Referents

Pragmatic meanings are also influenced by referring expressions used for a referent. Reference is made by a sender through the use of certain expressions while talking about particular people, things, times, events, or ideas through using certain expressions e.g. ‘my brother’, ‘your book’, ‘the next year’, ‘2017’ ‘marriage anniversary’, ‘funeral prayer’, ‘morning meal’, ‘the wonderful plan’; whereas the entity for which a reference is made through a referring expression is termed as referent (Griffiths, 2006, pp. 13-15). A particular reference is interpreted in a particular context. Deictic expressions are the words, phrases, or other grammatical components which support in making references, and these expressions can be in the form of words e.g. ‘me’ (which denotes the sender himself/herself) or ‘here’ (which denotes the physical place of the sender) (Griffiths, 2006, pp. 14-15). In parallel to the aforementioned pragmatics concepts, Murphy, Hildebrandt and Thomas (2007), the authors of a book on business communication, presented a notion of a communication triangle comprising symbol (words/images), referent (reality), and common experience. The pragmatics concepts on shared context, pre-existing knowledge structures, entailment, etc. can be used to interpret the communication triangle and its three components. The knowledge of pragmatics blended with business communication courses can benefit learners in improving their business communication skills.

2.1.7 Speaker’s Intentions and Listener’s Interpretation, and Influences of their Personality Traits

Pragmatics focuses upon communicators’ intents, expectations, and probable interpretations. Both ‘said’ and ‘unsaid’ are important for sending and receiving a message. One of the major focuses of pragmatics is to study a speaker’s ability to communicate than “what is explicitly said” (Faber, 2009, p. 62). Schober and Clark (1989) view that participants of a conversation gather evidence about each other’s intentions: (1) the audience about the senders, through their uttered words, after decoding and interpreting them in the light of the context of conversations, and (2) the senders through “try to ensure that what is said is also understood”, and being “responsible for making themselves understood to the other participants” (pp. 211-212). There are meanings of both the conveyed contents and the way the contents are conveyed. Understanding of a conveyed message by the audience in accordance with conveyed/desired meaning is essential for effective communication (Pearson & Nelson, 2000). Christie (2000) argues “what we can mean is a function of what we are saying. Meaning is more than a matter of intention; it is

also a matter of convention” (p. 108). “In order to fully understand how people communicate, we need to understand not just the immediate background but the much broader social context and history of their relationship” (Hartley & Bruckmann, 2002, p. 23). Communicators must use situation-specific and socially acceptable language to demonstrate their communicative competence (Brock & Nagasaka, 2005; Vasquez & Sharpless, 2009).

Successful communicators can assume their audience’s perception of their intentions and interpretation of the message (Schober & Clark, 1989). In the context of business communication, business messages should have audience-centeredness (Davis, 2010). Hartley and Bruckmann (2002) recommend that the business language should be comprehensible for the general audience, and it should not look like ‘propaganda’ or merely ‘sales-oriented talk’, or have unnecessary clichés, euphemisms, or buzzwords (p. 45). Gallo (2006) opines that business professionals should have an in-depth awareness of the effects and impacts of their communication with their colleagues, bosses, subordinates, clients, prospects, etc. on their company’s goodwill, and sale of goods or services. Organizational communication is a process of information exchange between two or more people who not only understand the conveyed message but also recognize the intent of stimulating or influencing behaviour (Daft, 1997, p. 560). The reviewed literature affirms that knowledge of pragmatics is useful in situation-specific, audience-centered, purpose-oriented, and culturally acceptable communication. This study explores the pragmatics concepts useful for business students in learning business communication and, later, for performing business communication skills in a professional arena.

In internal or external communication activities, business professionals expect their audience to perform/act/react in response. It is important to devise tactful content in a certain situation (Brock & Nagasaka, 2005; Vasquez & Sharpless, 2009). Professionals achieve their communication goals through making choices from multiple options: direct or indirect expressions, concise or verbose, plain or figurative. They may need to disseminate information, arouse interest, develop conviction, create a certain desire, or induce action while performing an internal or external communication activity. Corporate organizations adopt internal communication strategies, forums, or blogs where their customers or worker can express their views (Peña-Acuña & Sánchez-Cobarro, 2017). In such a case, professionals/administrators need to be vigilant in deciphering the information posted on these media.

Harmony between the desired message and its interpretation/effect is an important focus both in pragmatics and business communication. Pragmatics encompasses shared knowledge and certain assumptions which assist in determining the communicative intent during a conversation. Griffiths (2006) recommends an active collaboration between a sender and a receiver to harmonize the sender's intended meaning and receiver's interpreted meaning. He asserts that (1) the same words can convey quite a diverse message depending on the context, the sender's intentions and the receiver's interpretation, (2) the addressee's active participation can convene in conveying more with fewer words, and (3) the misunderstandings can be reduced significantly which otherwise may distort a communication (p. 4). What a speaker produces as an utterance and what the listener interprets is strongly influenced by their pragmatic elements (Kecskes, 2010). Thus, knowledge of pragmatics is equally significant in both day-to-day communication and business communication.

Speakers' and listeners' personality traits can influence their ways of encoding and decoding messages. Davis (2010) identifies that an individual can employ 'extroversion or introversion', 'sensing or intuition', and 'judgment or perception' in one's day-to-day activities and even in communication (p. 33). Davis (2010) further identifies certain factors like 'attitude', 'circumstances' and 'knowledge'. An extrovert draws energies from other people whereas an introvert gains energies from oneself. One can rely on one's senses or intuition to draw information. One can decide based on either logic or feelings and emotions. Likewise, one can rationally set one's priorities (i.e. judgment oriented) or on a spontaneous basis (i.e. perception-oriented).

2.1.8 Presupposition, Pre-existing Knowledge Structures, Frame and Schemata

Presuppositions are associated with communicators' shared knowledge which is not overtly asserted in utterances. Writers and speakers formulate their messages with certain assumptions on their receivers' knowledge: "What a speaker assumes is true or is known by the hearer can be described as presupposition" (Yule, 1996b, p. 132). "Presupposition can be defined as a mechanism whereby the speaker addresses a body of knowledge and experience, involving both linguistic and non-linguistic contexts, which he or she assumes to be common to him-/herself and the hearer" (Cap, 2010, p. 207). Both context and presupposition play a vital role in generating the pragmatic meaning of utterances.

Communicators rely on their pre-existing knowledge structures for interpreting the unsaid or unwritten part of utterances, for which familiar patterns and structures assist them in experiencing similar structures (Yule, 1996a, pp. 85-86). These structures are called schemata. When schemata are discussed in terms of cultures and conventions, they are termed as cultural schemata and conventional schemata respectively. Background knowledge structures are culturally determined and make cultural schemata (Yule, 1996a, p. 87). Pre-existing knowledge of the linguistic conventions formulates conventional schemata. Since communicators are the members of a society, a group, or a sub-group, both cultural schemata and conventional schemata reflect their communal norms (of that group or sub-group) and play a role towards presuppositions. Pragmatics helps in understanding the various dimensions of schemata, cultural or conventional, and their underlying factors (Yule, 1996b, p. 62).

Pre-existing knowledge structures are linked with schema and frame. “Schema (plural, schemata) is a pre-existing knowledge structure in memory” (Yule, 1996a, p. 87). Schemata help in interpreting the ‘unsaid’ part of an utterance (written or spoken). Fixed and static patterns to a schema are called ‘frame’ (Yule, 1996a, p. 85). Often communicators develop rigidity in terms of their knowledge, conventions, beliefs, behaviours, and personality traits which generate such fixed and static patterns i.e. ‘frame’. Pre-existing knowledge structures help in interpreting the new-fangled experiences through relating them with the previous experiences. ‘Conventional schemata’ can include jargon that is easily understandable among a particular community, but can baffle the out-groups. Thus conventional schemata include the symbols (written, oral or nonverbal) used in encoding a message. A speaker is responsible for using the symbols which, on one hand, convey the message and, on the other hand, are easily decodable for the listener. Pragmatics concepts on presupposition, pre-existing knowledge structures, frame, and schemata are important in understanding the audience’s reception and perception of messages. In line with pragmatics concepts on frame and schemata, Hartley and Bruckmann (2002) assert that the management of a corporate organization “may not be able to avoid some ethnocentrism if they do not interact with staff from different cultures” since schematic differences can cause problems in cross-cultural communication (p. 63).

2.1.10 Gricean Cooperative Principle

Gricean cooperative principle emphasizes cooperation in communication and consequently assists communicators in producing effective discourse and in mitigating

obscurity and misinterpretations. Gricean cooperative principle is sub-divided into four maxims: quantity, quality, relevance, and manner. These principles emphasize the encoders (writers/speakers) to cooperate with the decoders (readers/listeners). The cooperative maxim of quantity concerns the size of information. The speaker should contribute as much as is required for the specific purpose of a particular communicative event. The maxim of quantity binds the encoders to give enough information, neither more nor less than required. The maxim of quality addresses the truthfulness of a message. The maxim of quality binds a speaker not to communicate false, doubtful, or evidence-lacking contents. Furthermore, this maxim ensures genuine, sincere, true, and fact-based information in a written or spoken discourse. The maxim of relevance requires the utterances in an event relevant to the context of communication. The maxim of relevance stipulates such contents as conveying the intended message to the expediency of the audience and situation. The maxim of manner requires that meaning should be presented clearly and concisely, and utterances should not cause ambiguity. To ensure that an utterance reflects clarity, a speaker should avoid obscurity of expression, ambiguity, unnecessary wordiness and verbosity, and poor orderliness (Yule, 1996a, p. 37). Cooperation in communication can be better managed through the maxims of quantity, quality, relation, and manner since the receivers assume that their senders are communicating cooperatively in terms of truth, size, relevance, and clarity respectively.

The cooperative maxims are helpful for communicators in producing effective discourse. Kecskes (2010) views Gricean maxims as a set of comprehensive rules for encoding an utterance and warranting cooperation among/between communicators (p. 56). Gricean maxims ascertain that encoders (1) observe certain cautions in relaying utterances, (2) maintain a strong collaboration with their addressees towards whom the utterances are directed, and (3) convene the addressees/decoders in decoding the utterances. A message is successfully communicated when the sender has convened the addressee in recognizing the intended meaning, and the addressee has recognized what the sender has intended to convey (Griffiths, 2006, p. 3). Gricean maxims provide bases for studying and interpreting implicit meaning. At the micro-pragmatic level, these principles help in investigating “the force and function of utterances and their communicative goals” (Cap, 2010, p. 211). These principles/maxims also help in understanding surface meaning, context, implicature, flouts, and other common assumptions. Gallo (2006) emphasizes the importance of simplicity and clarity for effective communicative skills of business leaders

(professionals/administrators): “Leaders on the front lines of any industry must strive for simplicity and clarity if they hope to inspire and motivate employees, customers or shareholders” (p. 106). In the light of Gallo’s (2006) assertion, Gricean maxims seem equally important in business communication. Their role in business communication will be studied both theoretically and empirically (see sections 4.1 and 4.2 of Chapter 4) in this research.

2.1.11 Flouting of Cooperative Maxims

Non-observance of cooperative principles is termed flouting. Gricean maxims are flouted for plenty of reasons by individuals as well as by communities. Among different linguistic communities, there exist different patterns for extending or shortening a message (flouting of quantity). A certain communicative situation may demand communicators say doubtful or evidence-lacking utterances (flouting of quality). Communicators may flout the relevance maxim during a communicative event for certain reasons, especially on informal occasions (flouting of relevance). Communicators may say such utterances as are ambiguous, wordy, verbose, and lacking orderliness (flouting of manner). There are certain examples of floutings in business communication, for example, the persuasive messages are written as per AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) plan which comprises extra information, and indirect bad news messages contain ‘buffer’ as an extra text (Murphy, Hildebrandt, & Thomas, 2007). These components of ‘AIDA plan’ and ‘indirect bad news plan’ flout Gricean maxims.

Grice himself did not intend to force the language users to follow his maxims, rather he was more interested in purposive or unintentional ‘non-observance’ of these maxims by masses; he was curious to explore the hidden aspects/meanings caused through ‘flouting’ (Cutting, 2002; Yule, 1996a). The ‘unsaid part’, context, and many other pragmatic features play their role in ‘flouting’ and compensation of flouting. Gricean maxims smoothen and regulate the conversations, and thus adherence to Gricean maxims can convene business professionals in achieving the targeted goals through their communication.

2.1.12 Entailment and Implicature

Entailment and implicature enable communicators in understanding ‘what is said’ and ‘what is meant’. Entailment establishes the relationship between two statements where the truth of one statement (A) requires the truth of the other statement (B), and thus entailment is considered a purely logical concept (Yule, 1996a, pp. 33-34). In implicature,

the truth of one statement (A) suggests the truth of (B). Implicature and entailment are closely associated concepts in pragmatics. An entailment is considered to be necessarily true if its accompanying proposition is true. Entailment depends upon the language, but implicature depends upon the conversational context. Entailment is also different from presupposition. Entailment does not face negation whereas presuppositions can be negated (Yule, 1996a). Implicature is what communicators can suggest, mean or imply, apart from the actual words in an utterance. Griffiths (2006) asserts that an implicature provides a clue on the meaning of an utterance and the sender's intentions (p. 7). Griffiths (2006) is also convinced of the strong role of 'inference' in this regard which an addressee develops on 'background information' and the sender's viewpoint on a particular issue in a certain context.

Through utterances, written or spoken, something more is communicated than what just the words mean, and this additionally conveyed meaning is called implicature (Yule, 1996a, pp. 35-36). Implicature is frequently employed in decoding an utterance by a listener/decoder. An implicature arises from "breaches of some of the norms that underlie human communication and determine its efficient and rational character" (Cap, 2010, p. 211). Implicature is a kind of inference based on logic and implication. Implicature is better understood when it is contrasted with explicature which is the basic interpretation of any utterance and is based on 'contextual information', knowledge about the surrounding world, information about referring expressions, and awareness towards 'disambiguation' during utterance interpretation (Griffiths, 2006, p. 6). The explicature of an utterance goes beyond its mere 'literal meaning' or 'sentence meaning' since it depends on context for clear understanding and disambiguation; whereas in making an implicature, the sender's apparent and implied intentions contribute along with the solid contextual clues (Griffiths, 2006, p. 6). In contrast to both explicature and implicature which are purely pragmatic inferences and are cancellable, entailment is non-cancellable (Griffiths, 2006, pp. 19-20).

Semantics also plays its role in this regard: implicature is based on 'explicature' and explicature is based on literal meaning. The literal meaning is based on the semantics of a particular sentence; explicature is developed through pragmatic reference to lessening 'disambiguation' whereas implicature is built upon pragmatic hints (Griffiths, 2006, p. 7). Implicature is the pragmatic aspect of meaning and is connected with contextual, conventional, and literal dimensions of the words (Brown & Yule, 1983, p. 33). Furthermore, implicatures are linguistically generated meanings and are distinct from

implicit meanings, and they shape the utterances as not merely ‘say’ something but also ‘do’ something (Christie, 2000, pp. 99-149). An understanding of implicature and explicature, presupposition, and entailment assists in both oral and written communication.

2.1.13 Compensation of Flouting through Implicature

The non-observance (flouting) of Gricean maxims is compensated through implicature. Implicature interprets the non-existent, extra, irrelevant, obscure segment of an utterance (Yule, 1996a, pp. 35-36). The communicators often say more or less than what is required. In this case, the listener has to rely more on implicature to interpret the unsaid/extra part of an utterance. The listener draws certain inferences from an utterance to derive additional meaning to understand what a speaker implies, suggests, or means apart from tangible words.

A listener/receiver draws inferences when s/he feels that there is a difference between what has been uttered and what should have been uttered in a conversation, but these inferences are mere “informed guesses” (Griffiths, 2006, pp. 7-9). To develop a precise implicature, the listener needs familiarity with contextual, conventional, and literal facets of words and phrases in an utterance (Brown & Yule, 1983, p. 33). The words which show a semantic scale e.g. ‘OK’, ‘good’, ‘excellent’ etc. also provide strong foundations for pragmatic inferences and explicatures which depend on one’s pre-existing knowledge about the circumstances or parameters of using these ‘scale’ words (Griffiths, 2006, pp. 7-9). Implicature is more a pragmatic meaning than a semantic one in decoding a message. Christie (2000) declares implicature as linguistically generated meaning, which attributes ‘do’ something than a mere ‘say’ something character of an utterance (pp. 99-149).

2.1.14 Speech Acts and Felicity Conditions

Language not only deals with ‘say’ aspect but also with ‘do’ aspect of words and utterances. The notion of ‘do’ feature of language evolved the concept of speech acts and their different types. Speech acts are ‘action’ part of communication e.g. ‘requesting’, ‘commanding’, ‘questioning’ and ‘informing’ (Yule, 1996b, p. 132).

The speech acts whose words carry their literal meaning are termed direct speech acts. Questions and affirmative statements are direct speech acts. One simple measure to make direct speech acts is to use words and their combinations in their literal meaning. When utterances mean beyond their mere literal meaning, they become indirect speech acts. Indirect questions, polite requests, exclamatory sentences, sarcastic/ironic remarks are

examples of indirect speech acts. For example, a statement can be used to make a request ('I am feeling cold'). Among various forms of speech acts, constative speech acts are characterized by their truth or falsehood.

Performative speech acts are meant to perform actions as per one's capability to perform. Communication actions like 'naming', 'apologizing', 'welcoming', 'advising' are some examples of performative speech acts. For example, the owner of a house names it whatever he desires, a person with authority can name a public building, a naval chief can name a ship, a child can name his/her particular toys. Utterances of performative speech acts need appropriate conditions. Performative verbs can be used to classify speech acts: assertive (utterances in which the truth of an expressed proposition is binding e.g. suggest, narrate, state, report, claim, warn), directives (utterances which reveal an intention of invoking/requiring the listener/reader an action e.g. command, beg, request, warn, recommend, enquire, ask), commissives (utterances which commit a speaker/writer to a future action e.g. vow, promise, undertake, offer, threaten, contract), expressives (utterances which reveal a speaker/writer's psychological attitude towards a state of affairs e.g. congratulate, appreciate, appraise, thank, condemn, condole, forgive, blame, pardon), declaratives (utterances which bring a real change in physical/social/marital/organizational/spatial/legal/mercantile status of objects or humans e.g. terminate, dismiss, resign, employ, divorce, christen, open, close, name, sell, gift, endow, entrust, sentence, bid, sanction, allocate, declare, withdraw).

In par with linguistics and pragmatics, business communicators also perform 'communicative acts' to initiate an action or to report about some occurring; these communicative acts are the foundation of business and can be considered as 'organization primitives' (Steuten, van de Riet, & Dietz, 2000, p. 134). The nature and implications of direct vs. indirect speech acts, and performative speech acts vs. performative verbs make a place for them in business communication since these speech acts are frequently used in professional settings.

Felicity conditions are of various types e.g. general conditions, sincerity conditions, preparatory conditions, and essential conditions (Yule, 1996b, pp. 50-51). These felicity conditions play their role in (1) making appropriately, effectively, and "successfully performed" communicative events, (2) convening communicators in recognizing the role of context, (3) helping communicators carry out complete communicative actions, and (4) enabling the communicators to guess others' real intentions during a conversation (Cutting,

2002, p. 18). Felicity conditions also include general conditions, sincerity conditions, preparatory conditions, and essential conditions with a focus on the ability to understand the language being used, sender's genuine intentions behind a promise, implications of utterances of promise/warning, and bondage to fulfill a promise/warning in an utterance respectively.

2.1.15 Locutionary, Illocutionary, and Perlocutionary Acts

Utterances are produced at three levels according to speech act theory: locution, perlocution, and illocution. Locutionary acts are 'acts of saying' or "what is said"; illocutionary acts refer to "what is done in uttering the words"; perlocutionary acts relate to the consequences and effects of these words i.e. "what is done by uttering the words" (Cutting, 2002, p. 16). Understanding of locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts are equally important in business communication as Hartley and Bruckmann (2002) state:

Deciding what we mean by communication is not just an academic exercise. As human beings, we act on the basis of our perceptions and beliefs. So if we have a particular view of human communication, then we will act on that view. If we have a faulty view, then our behaviour may cause problems. An example of how managers act upon their perceptions and cause problems will make this point clearer. (p. 12)

Illocutionary acts are used to ask a question, to answer a question, to give warnings, to say assurances or reassurances, to express wonder and other utterances which perform the role of more than mere 'saying'. The success of illocutionary acts depends also on a receiver's ability to understand and thus these acts are based on implications with significant contribution of effects and responses (Cutting, 2002).

2.1.16 Face

'Face' is one's public image as well one's perception of oneself. A communication-competent adult member of a society has "an inclination to keep up his face" (Jansen & Janssen, 2010). The sender should consider the face needs of the receiver (Jansen & Janssen, 2010, p. 2533). Faces of a person, both positive face and negative face, "are inevitably threatened when he takes part in communication" (Jansen & Janssen, 2010, p. 2533).

'Positive face' desires one's positive image in the community, and appreciation and approval for the one among one's circle of relations. The positive face of a person

comprises his presumption that “his wants are desirable for at least some others” (Jansen & Janssen, 2010, p. 2533). ‘Negative face’ requires freedom of action and avoidance of imposition from others. Negative face is a “form of deference” and “the way an individual adheres to social and situational determined rules”, though it is also seen as “the desire of an individual to be unimpeded by others” (Jansen & Janssen, 2010, p. 2531). Face threatening acts are related to some factors including the ‘distance’ particularly ‘social distance’ between a sender and a receiver, the ‘power’ of the receiver over the sender or vice versa, and imposition of the face threatening act, and status (Bargiela-Chiappini & Harris, 1996; Brown & Levinson, 1987; Jansen & Janssen, 2010).

Face and face wants, face saving acts (FSAs), and face threatening acts (FTAs) are very important for the communicators as they express and respond according to these phenomena: “Your negative face is the need to be independent and to have freedom from imposition. Your positive face is your need to be connected, to belong, to be the member of the group” (Yule, 1996b, p. 134). Brown and Levinson (1987) also consider the face-related aspects significant in maintaining expectations from others. A communicator needs to use politeness strategies to save his own and his communication partner’s positive face to create a friendly environment in business and other day-to-day interactions. Zhu (2005) believes in the dynamic nature of ‘face’ and asserts that face and politeness strategies are influenced by communicators’ social status, social distance, power dimensions, communication circumstances, self/otherness, linguistic patterns, ethnocultural differences, and other interpersonal or social dimensions (p. 22). Zhu (2005) endorses the use of different linguistic strategies for each separate case of business correspondence, and that “specific interpersonal and organizational communication patterns may also play a significant role in a certain context” (p. 24).

Politeness strategies are frequently used in business correspondence. Like linguistics and pragmatics, the concepts of face, positive face, negative face, FSAs, and FTAs are equally important in business communication, since a person’s ‘faces’ are a continuous threat in business and other such interactions and transactions (Jansen & Janssen, 2010). A few researchers have made investigations into professional communication in this regard. Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris (1996) used business documents e.g. letters, memoranda, etc. as data to analyze the implicit or explicit presence of pragmatics in them. Pilegaard (1997) identifies the various ways of politeness strategies used in business letters to: “(1) prepare the ground for the formulation of the letter's main

request, (2) redress the face-threatening act of requesting, and (3) round off the letter” (p. 241). Blum-kulka (1987) considers politeness as an “interactional balance achieved between two needs: The need for pragmatic clarity and the need to avoid coerciveness” (p. 131). Corresponding to pragmatic ‘face’, Overton (2003) states three kinds of images which need to be considered in business communication: (1) projected image “what people want appear to others” i.e. “to look good to others”, (2) self-image “how people see themselves”, (3) external image “how people appear in the eyes of others” (p. 21). Overton (2003) also suggests that communication should not threaten or downgrade others’ projected image, though one should be careful about the fact that there can be a significant difference between one’s self-image and projected image.

2.2 The Theory and Practice of Business Communication

This section reviews the literature on the theory and practices of business communication from the lens of communication, business communication, linguistics, and pragmatics.

2.2.1 Importance of Business Communication in Business World

Since business activities involve communication, business communication occupies a significant position in the business world. A few academician-researchers have explored business communication courses from multi-perspective industry-academia relations. Akhtar and Hussain (2019) regard effective business communication skills as a means of growth for both professionals and their organizations in the competitive business world. Raina and Pande (2012), and Husain (2013) emphasize the need for proficient communication skills for business administrators in performing their managerial roles. Haase (2013) studies business communication as a part of global English and reviews its recent definitions and its applications in the business world. He declares ‘business communication’ as a multifaceted business phenomenon of the globalized business world. The terms ‘business’ and ‘commercial’ are often used as synonyms in academic as well as in colloquial discourses. He considers business communication competence as an ‘intellectual/intangible capital’ of the business world that helps in employing “means and tools for the performance of business” to support commercial processes (pp. 56-57). He deems business communication as an important interdisciplinary subject of business studies and communication/linguistics studies. Owing to the prolific presence of linguistics in ‘business communication’, the present research investigates the relevant concepts of

pragmatics (since this branch of linguistics is more relevant with communication) to be included in business communication taught at business schools.

Business communication is a fundamental part of both internal and external organizational activities. Business communication in real professional settings has been widely recognized as an important field of empirical investigation by various researchers. Highlighting the required innovative developments in business communication, Daniushina (2010) suggests linguists and communication theorists “to suggest methods of improving its efficiency through optimizing communication” (p. 243). Convinced with the importance of linguistics in the business world, Daniushina (2010, 2011) suggests introducing a new interdisciplinary field of ‘Business Linguistics’. Melaia, Abratt and Bick (2008) declare communication competencies, specifically interpersonal and persuasion competencies, among the imperative job requirements for marketing professionals. Johan and Noor (2013) view business communication as imperative because “it is through communication that an organization makes contacts with its customers, suppliers and other elements both internal and external of the organization” (p. 1231). Owing to the enormous role of communication in business settings, Marjanovikj-Apostolovski (2019) stresses teaching field-specific communication skills to business students for increasing their employability. Al-Musalli (2019) asserts that business communication courses should match job market requirements. In the light of findings and assertions of aforementioned studies, the present research investigates the effectiveness of inclusion/instruction of pragmatics as per pragmatic communication requirements to enhance business students’ communicative competence for their later professional careers.

2.2.2 Interpersonal Aspects in Business Communication

Three levels are identified in communication: interpersonal, intrapersonal, and impersonal. Out of these three types, most of the communication in organizations is interpersonal i.e. communication between two persons or two parties (Murphy, Hildebrandt, & Thomas, 2007). Wood (2007) asserts the importance of ‘interpersonal communication’ in everyday life since humans rely on others to manage their matters, basic hierarchy of needs, problems, apprehensions, and social membership. One of the desired outcomes of business communication is to ascertain commonality among the communicators for making the workplace more productive and harmonious (Overton, 2003, p. 6). Among other managerial and occupational roles, employers/organizations require the proficiency of oral and written communication from the employee-professionals

(Melaia, Abratt, & Bick, 2008). Steuten, van de Riet and Dietz (2000) assert that communication occupies the foremost place among organizational activities since it coordinates and organizes all other activities (p. 121). In business organizations, formal correspondence is part of official work, whereas in social life individuals communicate as members of the society they are living in (Cox, Ortmeier-Hooper, & Tirabassi, 2009, p. 72). Most of the present day workplace communication is in written form because of “advent of technologies” which facilitates the written talk (Cox, Ortmeier-Hooper, & Tirabassi, 2009, p. 72). Business correspondence is purpose centered and audience-centered; it aims at getting the task accomplished by the target audience; it addresses an audience who may know less than the sender; it aims at establishing or strengthening a connection between a sender and audience (Dias, Freedman, Medway, & Paré, 1999). Agarwala (2002) identifies certain changes in modern organizations—“advances in technology, new forms of employment, and focus on cost-cutting necessitates concomitant modifications in recruiting, selection, training, appraisals, rewards and other human resource practices”—which require highly dynamic professionals with strong interpersonal skills and with an ability to “understand the emerging trends and the nature of innovations” (p. 315).

2.2.3 Importance of Effective Communication Skills in Business Organizations

Effective communication is indispensable for business organizations. Communication plays a central role in organizational functions, coordination, control, and survival (Gizir & Simsek, 2005). Managers need to make their communication direct, simple, precise to make it more effective and compatible with their receivers’ preferences (Genç, 2017, p. 511). Business professionals communicate with both internal and external public audiences (ranging from peers to customers, general public to regulatory bodies) whereby they need effective communication for disseminating and seeking conformity to organizational ideas, values, norms, goals, and behaviours (Gizir & Simsek, 2005). They need to communicate with their countrymen as well as customers, colleagues, competitors, etc. from abroad with different ethnic, social, cultural, linguistic backgrounds. Owing to the immense importance of communication, employers/organizations expect their administrative professionals to effectively communicate in management meetings, while negotiations, with different levels of staff, and in diverse situations (Singh & Choo, 2012).

Business professionals need to be well expert and accurate in their communication with multiple and multidimensional ‘others’ to avoid any conflict, negativity, or any ill

impression to carry out successful business transactions. Datta, Guthrie and Wright (2005) stress professionals' high performance in the competitive corporate environment of the present era as their jobs are varied, complex, and demanding which require skilled abilities to cope with challenging circumstances (p. 137). Overton (2003) highlights the role of skillful communication: "The more skilled you are at communicating, the more often jobs will be done properly and finished on time" (p. 11). Communicators need to understand the requirements of language in diverse situations of day-to-day human life (Hymes, 1964), as well as in business settings. In terms of discourse competence, business administrators need proficiency in making linguistically appropriate expressions. Koriche (2015) asserts that familiarity with "the social features and interactional aspect of the language" is also essential for infield business correspondence which the students should be taught (p. 539). Sociolinguistic competence, relevant business settings, requires professionals to have cultural, social, and contextual awareness. Oral and written communication competence and performance are among the essentials for administrative professionals (Melaia, Abratt, & Bick, 2008). Professionals also need competence for understanding their intent, their specific role, communication situation, and agreeable communication norms (Genç, 2017; Gizir & Simsek, 2005). Effective communication is inevitable for profitable business ventures (Johan & Noor, 2013). The losses caused by ineffective communication are often irreparable for business corporations.

2.2.4 Importance of Communication Skills for Professionals

Communication skills are imperative for professionals at administrative positions in managing the smooth operations of their organizations. These professionals also keep their upper management informed. Business administrators perform diverse activities: they sell goods or services; they interact with regulatory authorities; they negotiate with stakeholders; they maintain the organization's goodwill; they make efforts for creating an environment suitable for smooth functions of organizations. Communication skills assist professionals in performing their jobs and making advancements in their careers (Roebuck, Sightler, & Brush, 1995). Educational qualification enhances intellectual and personal skills (Bradshaw, 1985, p. 201). The courses on communication skills need to be empowered to enable the learners for their future professions (Korn, 2004, p. 589). Courses on writing skills should teach students what they intend to learn and what they may need beyond their classroom i.e. their future professional and social requirements of community

and workplace (Cox, Ortmeier-Hooper, & Tirabassi, 2009). Raina and Pande (2012) declare that:

There is no denying the fact that effective communication is at the root of virtually all success which mandates that even engineers, scientists and technocrats need to translate their work into understandable communications so that it can be applied outside their own level of expertise. (p. 511)

Likewise, effective communication skills are necessary for business administrators, especially at the top ranks of management, because they perform more of their job tasks or get the tasks done by their subordinates through communication (Raina & Pande, 2012).

In internal communication, business professionals communicate with their subordinates to boost their morale, administer information to get tasks performed, announce and implement policies to their subordinates, and manage changes in organizational functions. Intra-organizational communication is delicate and complex because of hierarchal structures which demand acute attention from administrative professionals (Charles, 2007). Charles (2007) further states: “Communication potential is driving dramatic changes in organizations and their environments” (p. 261). Business administrators need to address their employees’ fears and apprehensions on job security and growth; they need to ensure accomplishment of tasks and responsibilities by their subordinates/employees; they have to motivate their staff members for planning and executing (Husain, 2013). For the performance of all these functions, business administrators need strong and effective communication skills. Business organizations aspire for financial profits, and these financial profits are associated with (1) their goodwill and positive image for customers and public; (2) their employees’ morale to perform official duties and their loyalty with the company; (3) their employees’ cordial dealings with customers and vendors; (4) securing cooperation from regulatory authorities (Choi & Wang, 2007). During all these internal and external communication situations, business administrators demand some action from their audience to have desired results in favour of their organizations.

Strong communication skills are essential for one’s getting a job and afterward for making career growth. Communication influences one’s perception of self and one’s interaction with the environment; communication reflects one’s thoughts and level of knowledge, competence, and ability to accomplish an assigned task (Singh & Choo, 2012,

p. 117). Communication is indispensable for professionals in organizational fields like marketing, event management, media relations, customer relations, and public relations (Wymer & Mottner, 2009). Business professionals make strategic decisions on (1) urgency and immediacy of messages, (2) attention to multiple media and multi-message stances based on their compatibility, (3) choice of media for the effective conveyance of messages, and (4) grouping the audience based on their similarities through ‘audience profiling’ (Gimenez, 2014, p. 2). Services providing organizations also require effective communication from their employees because these organizations identify the needs and afterward provide services (Genç, 2017). There are limited opportunities for career growth for employees with weak communication skills (Murphy, Hildebrandt, & Thomas, 2007). For international business correspondence, professionals need interlingua/intercultural competency to communicate with their counterparts from other countries (Fernández-Souto, Gestal, & Pesqueira, 2015, p. 237).

Communication is essential for those business administrators in performing leadership roles to ensure product quality, service, and profitability (Peña-Acuña & Sánchez-Cobarro, 2017). Professionals at administrative positions need effective communicative skills to get tasks accomplished from their subordinates (Raina & Pande, 2012). Organizations demand good communication from their managers and administrators, and the managers, who get tasks optimally accomplished from their subordinates, are rated successful (Genç, 2017). For this purpose, administrators need to develop and implement integrated communication strategies for top to bottom coordination for smooth organizational functions (Niemann-Struweg, 2014, p. 184). Agarwala (2002) also views communication as an important requirement in corporate organizations, for which they often focus on communication training and development programmes. The administrative professionals are expected to manage afore narrated communication phenomena through their effective management/interpersonal skills (Cohen & Kassis-Henderson, 2012; Jendrych, 2011; Lehtonen & Karjalainen, 2009; Murphy, Hildebrandt, & Thomas, 2007; Overton, 2003; Pilegaard, 1997).

Since communication is an important component of corporate functions, the employers require communication proficiency from the employees/professionals as well, besides their managerial and occupational expertise (Melaia, Abratt, & Bick, 2008). Corporate organizations in developed countries create special positions for personnel who are experts in communication affairs and can serve as spokesperson (Pikhart, 2014). These

officials are termed as communication officers, communication executives, or alike nomenclature; they are ranked among middle or top management in prospering organizations; they are placed on the company's executive boards and these officials are assigned to look after the matters on 'business to business' and 'business to customers' affairs; and these officials have an influencing role in decision making (Verhoeven, 2014).

2.2.5 Communication Requirements and Challenges for Modern Business Organizations and Role of Effective Communication

Effective communication is an integral part of all organizational activities. Modern organizations have diverse challenges, diverse products to sell, diverse targets to achieve, a diverse workforce to employ, and many other issues where 'diversity' is at the core. "Communication is a 'bridge' to link and direct all the levels of an organization in achieving organization objective" (Johan & Noor, 2013, p. 1231). In terms of communication, there are communication barriers to overcome, the linguistic diversity of employees to be managed, ethnolinguistic identities to be considered, socialization to be established, organizational culture to be incorporated, negotiating strategies to be implemented. Organizations communicate their employees their tasks, organizational policies, and living and behaving as an organizational community through (1) addressing employees' queries, (2) creating community spirit among employees, (3) gaining and retaining employees' trust, (4) motivating these employees, (5) enhancing their loyalty with the organization, (6) increasing their participation in organizational functions, (7) reducing the fears of uncertainty, and (8) assuring these employees' on their job security (Husain, 2013).

Modern day business organizations adapt themselves to the ever-changing business environment; these organizations consider their customers' preferences and behaviours, innovations in technology, changes in the market. (Johan & Noor, 2013). Corporate organizations keep pace with rapid changes in manufacturing, logistics, communication media, demands of e-commerce, globalization to gain and retain competitive advantage (Niemann-Struweg, 2014, p. 184). These organizations often face multi communication stances, for which effective communication is an essential requirement (Gimenez, 2014, p. 3). Oliván (2017) views "a good communication system is vital for the correct execution of corporate tasks and for creating an environment favourable to their execution" (p. 1536). Agarwala (2002) identifies certain new challenges which present-day organizations face in the form of globalization, competition, market factors, social changes, economic rise and

fall, and technological advancements. Charles (2007) is also convinced of the importance of communication in managing the aforementioned and similar challenges:

Companies need to see internal communication as an integrated issue, including both formal and informal communication. They need strategies for implementing their language policies—strategies that take into account the language challenges that individual employees face in globalised operations. They also need to be aware of the potential that judicious handling of language issues offers them. (p. 278)

2.2.6 Text Books/Materials on Business Communication and Improvements Needed

Course contents, course books, and other relevant materials are significant in teaching business communication. Higher Education Commission (2012) recommends some books as core texts and some as additional material. Books on business communication mostly comprise (1) basic concepts and theories on communication, (2) principles of business correspondence, (3) information on culture, ethics, technologies involved in business communication, (4) samples of various business communication genres e.g. letters, memorandum, reports, etc., (5) case studies and anecdotes related to business organizations, (6) authors' commentary on some crises situations/incidents occurred in the corporate sector, and (7) some famous incidents occurred in prominent multinational companies (e.g. Chaney, 2005; Davis, 2010; Gizir & Simsek, 2005; Hartley & Bruckmann, 2002; Murphy, Hildebrandt, & Thomas, 2007; Overton, 2003; Wood, 2007). The authors of these books on business communication have tried to focus on workplace communication skills of both oral and written forms along with nonverbal communication in diverse organizational situations. Yet many researchers have highlighted discrepancies between academically taught business communication and infield requirements of corporate organizations.

Zagan-Zelter and Zagan-Zelter (2010) recommend careful probing while need analysis, course design, syllabus, material development, and material selection for business communication (p. 245). The needs of actual organizational discourse need to be explored (Hyland, 1998) and the graduating students should be prepared for what they are expected to perform in their future professions. McCarthy (2001) emphasizes the need of aligning academic instruction with the actual requirements of a specific society or its specific segment so that the graduates are well prepared for societal and workplace challenges related to communication. Korn (2004) emphasizes that courses on business

communication should match with learners' career needs. Weninger and Kan (2013) recommend that disciplinary contexts, institutional contexts, students' disposition, students' experiences should be considered while choosing a particular approach for teaching business communication (p. 59).

Business communication courses aim at training the learners' communication skills to help them perform and compete effectively in their future venture (Orban, 1994, p. 422). Jendrych (2011) recommends that individuals should be taught "the basic rules of business etiquette such as exchanging business cards, extending invitations and accepting or declining them" to save the company from any possible harms caused through lack of awareness (p. 409). The graduates with effective communication skills are advantaged in their social/community conversations, in getting a job, and in professional correspondence at the workplace (Cox, Ortmeier-Hooper, & Tirabassi, 2009, p. 80). The literature on corporate communication requirements reveals that academically acquired learning contributes to developing professional expertise among the students of business studies.

Students of business studies can be taught what they may need later in their professional careers, and they can be informed of what is happening in those organizations which they are aspiring to join after the completion of their studies. Business graduates need to be "rhetorically savvy" in their communication i.e. they should know the purpose, requirements, demands of the situation, expected audience' response, and suitable genre for a certain correspondence (Cox, Ortmeier-Hooper, & Tirabassi, 2009). Instructors of communication courses can also play their role in preparing their pupils for their future professional communication if they empower themselves with the knowledge on communication requirements of corporate organizations (O'Keeffe & Farr, 2003). For on job training and development, Hyland (1998) asserts that requirements of organizational discourse should be explored and employees' communication should be trained accordingly. In this regard, Clifton (2006) also stresses the need of compiling corpora of business discourse for the instructors of business and management sciences, the students of business studies, academic and corporate researchers of business studies, and other management professionals, consultants, and trainers. Through the review of literature, the researcher is convinced that students of business studies should be prepared for diverse business communication situations of their later professional careers.

2.2.7 Culture and Business Communication

Language and culture are interrelated, and both need to be mastered for effective intercultural communication. Culture is a dynamic set of norms and values and artifacts of a specific community or nation. Culture is a set of behavioural characteristics typical of a group (Murphy, Hildebrandt, & Thomas, 2007). Culture ensembles “social experiences, thought structures, expectations, and practices of action”, and it has “the quality of a mental apparatus” (Clyne, 1994, p. 3). Fernández-Souto, Gestal and Pesqueira (2015) state that “culture is learned and acquired of a particular context, and is reflected in certain situations” (p. 236). Language is ‘culturally relative’ and communicators negotiate meaning according to their culture or cultures in ‘interactional context’ (Granado, 1996, p. 165). Business professionals need (1) awareness of their cultural background, priorities, and attitude of their partners or audience, (2) flexibility and tolerance towards differences in cultures, priorities, and attitudes to avoid any hazards caused through these differences (Jendrych, 2011, p. 409). Jendrych (2011) also recommends that a component on intercultural communication may benefit both the business students and teachers of business English (or other business communication courses) in this regard. People may adhere to their “social identities” during business interactions, and great hard work is required to overcome the possible negative consequences caused through intergroup communication (Hartley & Bruckmann, 2002, p. 48). Culture plays its role in intercultural communication and intercultural pragmatics (Amaya, 2008; Chaney, 2005; Dash, 2004; Shi-xu, 2005). Business professionals can understand a community/nation’s societal needs and problems through their culture and can deal with customers and other stakeholders from them accordingly.

Cultures differ substantially from one another in their communication patterns based on their contexts, situations, and cultural variables. Understanding both the language and culture of the audience makes intercultural communication effective and easier. “A range of important cultural and social differences affect the way we interpret what is meant” (Hartley & Bruckmann, 2002, p. 5). Intercultural competence includes managing similarities and differences between two human groups with ‘background context’ and ‘foreground context’ of their interactions based on their cultural patterns (Shi-xu, 2005, p. 203). Awareness of their cultural variables assists in communication with the audience from other cultures or sub-cultures (Amaya, 2008; Dash, 2004; Stern, 1992). Cultural variables can be divided into two major categories: individual cultural variables and national cultural

variables. National cultural variables comprise education, economics, laws, politics, social norms, religion, and language(s) of a certain community or country. Individual cultural variables include the patterns followed by the individuals of a community regarding time, space/distance, dress, manners, decision making patterns, and verbal and nonverbal communication (Murphy, Hildebrandt, & Thomas, 2007; Chaney, 2005; Ferraro, 2005). Intercultural differences can be better managed in business communication through developing an understanding of these cultural variables.

Cultural variables influence the individuals and their ways of performing their roles as professionals (Frey-Ridgway, 1997; Hofstede, 1980). Cultural diversity among an organization's personnel can be utilized for enhancing creativity (Trompenaars, 1994). Culture-specific and cross-cultural differences can be understood through pragmatics (Lin, 2007). Walkó (2007) is also convinced of the usefulness of pragmatics in choosing appropriate conversational patterns of directness/indirectness and 'face wants' (Walkó, 2007). These pragmatics concepts can be useful for business professionals in interacting with their audience from diverse ethnolinguistic backgrounds. The knowledge and application of pragmatics concepts can assist business professionals in coping with cultural diversity by shaping their communication accordingly.

2.2.8 Components and Models of Communication and Basic Pragmatics Concepts

'Communication cycle model' and its components are extensively discussed in books and contents of communication skills and business communication. Components of communication include (1) sender, (2) message, (3) receiver, (4) feedback, (5) channel/medium, and (6) context (Hartley & Bruckmann, 2002; Murphy, Hildebrandt, & Thomas, 2007; Quible, 1991; Roebuck, Sightler, & Brush, 1995; Overton, 2003). These components are often portrayed in the form of a cycle and are, then, called 'communication cycle'. These components are closely similar to basic pragmatics concepts on a sender's intended meaning and desired message, a listener's expectations and interpretation, pragmatic context, and language contents.

Context: In business communication, context may include "country, culture, organization, and external and internal stimuli" (Murphy, Hildebrandt, & Thomas, 2007, p. 11). The conventions of country, culture, or organization have their impact on formulating and processing a message and communicating it to the audience. The sender needs to know all these dimensions while planning, designing, and communicating a message after selecting

a suitable and effective medium/channel (Murphy, Hildebrandt, & Thomas, 2007, p. 12). External stimulus may influence the selection of genre (i.e. memorandum, letter, office note, email, telephone call, official or informal meeting) for conveying a message whereas internal stimuli may influence encoding or decoding of a message as one's opinions, attitudes, sentiments, previous experiences, preferences, academics, job profile, expertise in communication influence communication patterns, on one hand. On the other hand, understanding the receiver's culture, mindset, skills, abilities, status, intellectual ability, experiences, and expectations is also important since they influence the probable interpretation of the message by the receiver (Murphy, Hildebrandt, & Thomas, 2007, p. 12). The context of 'communication cycle' is closely associated with the 'context' in pragmatics. In pragmatics, context (pragmatic context) is also a major component. A context itself can create communication and vice versa (Faber, 2009, p. 72). The 'context of communication cycle' has not been theoretically/empirically studied to explore its relation/similarity with 'pragmatic context', and thus their similarity is being investigated in the present research.

Sender: The writer or speaker is termed as sender/encoder in 'communication cycle'. The sender is responsible for choosing the oral, written, or nonverbal symbols to convey his/her intended message to the receiver. The factors narrated in 'communication context' also influence what, how, and why a sender conveys a message. Sender/encoder is associated with what in pragmatics is termed as a speaker, whose intended meaning is vital in understanding pragmatic meaning. In pragmatics, a sender is responsible for observing Gricean maxims to convey the receiver in interpreting the message.

Message: The contents conveyed during a communicative event through oral, written, or nonverbal symbols are termed as 'message' in the communication cycle. Verbal or nonverbal signals can be used to send a message through a channel to the receiver with a purpose to share or exchange information (Overton, 2003, p. 13). What a receiver interprets from a message and how this perception/interpretation affects the relationship between the sender and receiver is important in business communication (Murphy, Hildebrandt, & Thomas, 2007, p. 12). Verbal and/or nonverbal symbols are also used to share information through a message. A message should be easy to understand and should also convey the desired contents to make the desired impact on the receiver. Like pragmatics, in business communication, a message is also highly context-dependent. 'Message' as a component of the communication cycle in business communication is closely linked with many concepts

of pragmatics e.g. language contents, entailment, Gricean maxims, flouting, and implicature.

Medium: Contextual factors determine the choice of medium for relaying a message through email, printed words, or oral communication. Medium is also decided as per the importance of contents, number of audience and relationship with them, sender's preferences, and organizational culture. Generally, for long professional and formal messages, they are documented and then sent in printed form or through electronic media to maintain a permanent record; for more urgent, personal, semi/informal messages and immediate feedback, spoken media is preferred (Murphy, Hildebrandt, & Thomas, 2007, p. 13). For the latter, nowadays, social media e.g. Whatsapp or alike are also frequently used.

Channels and genres vary for internal and external organizational communication. For internal communication, staff meetings and discussions, briefings and presentations, internal telephones, conferences, etc. are the most used media. The choice of the genre also depends on if a message is sent inside the organization or outside. Generally, for inside the organization, memoranda, job descriptions, notices, employee manuals, electronic display boards, internal faxes. Written correspondence, oral briefings or presentations, discussions and meetings, teleconferences and videoconferences, print and electronic media, and social media are the channels/media for external communication. For communicating outside the organizations, proposals, reports, letters, contracts, advertisements, brochures, catalogues, and news releases are used.

Receiver: Listeners, hearers, over hearers, readers, and viewers are termed as receivers/audience. Like the sender, the receiver is also influenced by contextual, cultural, nonverbal, sensual, intellectual, and personality factors; consequently, a receiver's interpretation can differ from the sender's intended meaning (Amaya, 2008; Chaney, 2005; Clyne, 1994; Hartley & Bruckmann, 2002). Like business communication, the receiver/audience is an important component in pragmatics, where mostly this component is discussed in terms of listener's expectations, listener's probable interpretation, listener's schemas, and frame.

Feedback: A receiver's desired or undesired reaction or response (in oral, nonverbal, or written form) to a sender's message is termed as feedback. Feedback also depends upon the type of medium and genre, urgency, receiver's ability to act upon the message, and other

contextual factors (Fernández-Souto, Gestal, & Pesqueira, 2015; Murphy, Hildebrandt, & Thomas, 2007). Feedback is itself a message.

One model which comprehensively encompasses communication is the 'Rhetorically Based Model' for business communication. This model seems very close to many major concepts in pragmatics. 'Purpose' is relevant to the speaker's intended meaning (direct or relational). The second component of this model i.e. 'audience' relates to the listener's interpretations and expectations. 'Genre' relates to the sender/speaker's choice of conveying the message. 'Contexts' have also a significant place in pragmatics since various types of contexts e.g. physical context, co-text, etc. are considered an important component. The students are prepared to communicate with the community to live in and the workplace they are to serve. The learners need to be trained for a 'rhetorically based model' which focuses on purpose, audience, genre, and contexts (Cox, Ortmeier-Hooper, & Tirabassi, 2009). The purpose of a business correspondence can be 'to inform' or 'to persuade' along with an indirect purpose of 'to create goodwill' or 'to contest' (Murphy, Hildebrandt, & Thomas, 2007). The audience can be from the specific field or general public, informed or uninformed, willing to receive or reluctant or resistant, able to act or otherwise. The genre can be letters, memos, reports, proposals, press releases, minutes of a meeting, menus, brochures, websites, flyers, etc. Melaia, Abratt and Bick (2008) identified "presentations, marketing communications, reports, advertising, investor communications, and electronic communications" for the professionals with marketing portfolios (p. 238). Context can also be of varied nature. The learners may also be trained on word choice, tone, and a writer's concerns while writing in the classroom or for later community or workplace correspondence (Cox, Ortmeier-Hooper, & Tirabassi, 2009). Dias et al. (1999) propose a 'process model' for writing instructions as a supplement to the 'rhetoric model'. The 'process model' focuses on (1) selection of appropriate topic, (2) a well thought brainstorming, (3) ardent composing, (4) proper revising, (5) exquisite evaluation and 6) dynamic follow-up (p. 156). Regarding afore-narrated components of rhetoric requirement, the students need to develop thinking and analytical expertise that they can negotiate at varying levels and according to multiple expectations (Cox, Ortmeier-Hooper, & Tirabassi, 2009, p. 74). There can be certain macro-social variations (i.e. social, regional, ethnic, generational differences) and contextual/micro-social variations (i.e. communicators' relative social status, social or psychological distance, extent of imposition) in terms of pragmatic norms (Ishihara, 2009, pp. 446-447) for the components

mentioned in ‘rhetoric model’ and ‘process model’. Rose (2005) suggests the instruction of sociolinguistic, discursal, and pragmatic features including pragmatic routines, discourse markers, discourse strategies, discourse characteristics, speech acts, and overall pragmatic comprehension to aware the learners of pragmatic norms. Rose (2005) advocates the instruction of pragmatic according to communication needs in an educational context. This study assumes that awareness of pragmatics may benefit business students in learning appropriate communication skills for their later workplace needs.

Components of communication are relevant with many prominent concepts from pragmatics i.e. speaker’s intentions, listener’s interpretation, context, entailment, cooperative maxims, and implicature. The perusal of existing literature on both areas, there seems a close relationship between communication components and pragmatics concepts. This relationship will be further explored and discussed in the present research.

2.2.9 Seven Cs of Business Correspondence and Gricean Cooperative Maxims

In parallel to Gricean cooperative maxims in pragmatics, many books on business communication include seven fundamental principles called 7Cs: completeness, conciseness, consideration, courtesy, clarity, correctness, and concreteness (Hartley & Bruckmann, 2002; Murphy, Hildebrandt, & Thomas, 2007; Quible, 1991; Roebuck, Sightler, & Brush, 1995). These principles are recommended for all kinds of verbal and nonverbal communication. They are considered equally fruitful for effective speaking and writing. The knowledge and use of these principles facilitate in formulating a business message with a clear identification of purpose for a specified/general audience. These principles convene the audience in understanding business messages. Cleland (2003) narrates the very nature of business correspondence:

Most business professionals understand that the ability to communicate clearly and concisely is not an optional business skill—it’s a critical one... At its best, it’s conversational without being chatty, accessible without being too familiar, clear without being overly simplistic, and professional without being stuffy. (p. ix)

Cleland’s afore-narrated reservations on chattiness, over simplicity, and non-novelty are aptly overcome through seven Cs which make a message clear and concise, comprehensible, proficient, and sophisticated. The seven principles are discussed below:

Completeness: The principle of completeness insists on including all necessary information in a message which conveys a sender’s intended meaning on one hand, and

convenes a receiver to understand and act accordingly on the other hand. One easy way to bring completeness in a business message is to put answers to all such questions which the receiver has either asked explicitly or may have in his/her mind to interpret the message. Putting facts, illustrations, tables, relevant examples can contribute towards making a message complete. Completeness in business messages brings required results through conveying a message; otherwise, the receiver fails either to understand the message or to perform as is desired. Thus, completeness contributes to making a business message effective and helps in avoiding the hazards caused by missing information.

Conciseness: Conciseness complements completeness, and focuses on including only relevant information and avoiding unnecessary repetition, redundancy, wordiness, and verbosity in a business message. Conciseness contributes to time-saving, cost-saving, and misinterpretation-avoidance. A concise message appeals to the audience since it is brief and comprehensible. Conciseness can be achieved and retained if one is brief and conveys in the fewest possible words. Both completeness and conciseness closely resemble Gricean maxim of quantity.

Consideration: The principle of consideration binds a sender to consider the receiver and adopt a 'you-centered attitude' while composing and conveying a message. This principle requires avoiding accusation or blame, abstaining from an emphasis on negative and unpleasant, being realistically and positively tactful and thoughtful, showing the audience's benefits and interests. 'Consideration' also endorses empathy i.e. to have a feel of being receivers via anticipating their troubles and tribulations, requirements, desires, sentiments, and reactions. The principle of consideration emphasizes realizing various dimensions of 'human nature' in business correspondence.

Courtesy: 'Consideration' is closely associated with 'courtesy'. Courtesy is an important instrument of building and retaining goodwill, and strengthening relationships in organizational as well as in personal perspectives. Courtesy is brought through an appreciative attitude and being aware of the receiver's perspectives, feelings, and sincerity. Being courteous requires considering the receiver's perceived respect and honor, both tactfully and thoughtfully. Offensive, derogatory, irritating, self-focus expressions make a business message discourteous. Business communicators need to be cautious of these hazards. Pragmatics concepts face, face saving acts, face threatening acts, and politeness seem similar to 'consideration' and 'courtesy'. It needs further investigation whether these concepts can make value addition in learning and practicing '7 Cs'.

Concreteness: The principle of concreteness endorses a message to be definite, vivid, specific, simple, convincing, understandable, and ‘actable’ and not obscure, vague, and generalized. Use of active voice (‘The teacher administered the quiz.’ in place of its passive voice version ‘The quiz was administered by the teacher.’), image building diction (e.g. ‘a classroom with 20 feet width and 40 feet length with a seating capacity for fifty students’ rather than ‘a big classroom’), sensory appealing language (e.g. lush green velvety grass), avoidance from noun clusters unfamiliar jargons (e.g. terms like ‘glass ceiling’), literary and figurative language (e.g. analogies through similes and metaphors) bring concreteness into business correspondence. Concreteness has a close resemblance with Gricean maxim of ‘manner’ since concreteness also contributes to the explicitness of the message.

Correctness: Correctness implies that a business message should be correct from every possible aspect. Correctness endorses grammatical soundness; verification and double-check of statistics; inclusion of updated information; appropriate level of formality/semi-formality/informality; ‘right level’ of language; including effectual writing mechanics and procedures and diction; accuracy of presented facts and figures; message formulation according to power dimensions of sender and receiver. Correctness adds credibility to the source/sender as well to the message itself. Correctness is vital in day-to-day organizational communication as well as in communication for strategic planning and decision making. An incorrect message may spoil the goodwill and image of an organization. Correctness resembles Gricean maxim of quality which also endorses putting authentic and truthful information with ‘adequate evidence’ in an utterance.

Clarity: Clarity pertains to making a message easily understandable, with all intended ideas and thoughts appropriately conveyed through precise and concrete expressions. A message comprises familiar words, effective writing mechanics of sentence and paragraph structure, easy reading devices, along with the desired amount of examples, details, and illustrations/visual aids. ‘Clarity’ requires that a sender’s message should be understood or interpreted by the receiver as the sender has intended, and thus clarity is closely related with some contents from pragmatics e.g. speaker’s intentions, listener’s interpretation, entailment, implicature, pre-existing knowledge structures, frame and schemata, and Gricean maxim of manner. The principles of concreteness, correctness, and clarity (of Seven Cs) seem closer to Gricean maxims from pragmatics.

The close examination of both Seven Cs and Gricean maxims establishes their relevance with each other. Further empirical studies are needed to explore the implications

of the relationship between them. The researcher has addressed this need in the present research.

2.2.10 Credibility in Business Correspondence

Murphy, Hildebrandt and Thomas (2007) identify some measures for producing/gauging credibility in business correspondence. These measures are 'competence', 'character', 'composure', 'sociability' and 'extroversion' (Murphy, Hildebrandt, & Thomas, 2007, p. 33). Competence concerns the knowledge, skills, and abilities of a sender regarding the message she/he is conveying. Competence is also decided if the sender can perform the task assigned and can understand the particular business task, and has a positive track record of performing similar tasks assigned. 'Competence' can be supplemented through pragmatics concepts on speaker's capability of conveying the desired message with appropriate language contents, use of presuppositions, and catering to receivers' frame and schemas. 'Character' is a sender's image of being honest and upright. A sender/professional is judged if s/he fulfills his/her commitments along with high regard to ethical and moral values for either communicating a message or performing an assigned task. Observance of Gricean maxims can contribute to the credibility measures. The maxim of quality can contribute to 'character'.

'Composure' is related to 'calm' and 'collected' attitudes and impressions of an individual during stressful circumstances. Considering the audience's positive face and use of face saving acts can support a sender in 'composure'. 'Sociability' of a communicator is decided based on his/her being a likable individual among communicators. Pragmatics concepts on catering to receivers' expectations and needs of their 'face' can assist communicators in 'sociability'. 'Extroversion' is decided based on a sender's outgoing tendencies and openness in communication than timidity (Murphy, Hildebrandt, & Thomas, 2007, p. 33). A sender's overall pragmatic competence gained through knowledge and application of pragmatics can contribute to increasing his/her extrovert attitude in a communication event. Afore-narrated credibility measures can influence a receiver's interpretation while decoding a message. Overton (2003) also identifies some factors which can contribute towards making a business message credible and persuasive: knowledge, speech, voice, appearance, relationships, self-confidence and sincerity, praise and grace under pressure circumstances (p. 10). Overton's propounded factors can also be supported through pragmatics concepts about interpersonal communication. Communicators'

capacity of producing/gauging ‘credibility measures’ can be addressed while explicit instruction of pragmatics for improving students’ business communication skills.

2.3 Interface of Business Communication and Pragmatics

This section reviews the literature on the interface of pragmatics and business communication. The role of pragmatics and its explicit instruction has been discussed in communication, business communication, second language, and foreign language. The case of explicit instruction has been presented in the light of extant literature. The studies available closer to the topic of present research have been reviewed to identify the gap in the literature. In the end, the case of teaching pragmatics to business students has been presented in the light of the gap in the literature.

2.3.1 Pragmatics and Business Communication

Business communication deals with business/professional settings (i.e. a particular field) whereas pragmatics deals with all human communication. Business professionals/administrators often communicate with such audiences whose communication patterns are different from theirs (Bargiela-Chiappini & Harris, 1996; Clyne, 1994; Davis, 2010; Murphy, Hildebrandt, & Thomas, 2007). Pragmatics facilitates in acquiring the pragmatic competence needed for communicating with an audience from different cultural/linguistic backgrounds (Istifçi & kampusü, 2009). Learning pragmatics can also contribute to developing socio-cultural competence among business students for their later professional careers (Jendrych, 2011). Haase (2013) views communicative competence as a means of communicative performance through traditional and digital modes in the corporate world (p. 60). The present day organizations are facing globalization as a challenge as well as an opportunity (Murphy, Hildebrandt, & Thomas, 2007). Globalization also leads to interlingua/intercultural communication situations. Nations cannot live in isolation from the rest of the world and so do corporate organizations, and avoidance from this isolation requires an understanding of others and their communication patterns (Feng, 2009). “The global economy today has implied a number of trends that corroborate the need to internationalize companies carrying out business in the global context” (Fernández-Soutoa, Gestal, & Pesqueira, 2015, p. 235), and communication plays a major role in corroborating internationalization (Murphy, Hildebrandt, & Thomas, 2007). Pragmatics can play a significant role in globalization pursuits since it addresses communicators’ intent and interpretation, context, and other hidden dimensions of communication and helps meet the globalized communication needs.

Business Communication includes all kinds of oral, written, and nonverbal communication used in the business world. Business communication, as an academic discipline, aims at preparing business students for effective professional communication in their future careers. Business organizations demand effective communication from their employees while transacting commercial messages to attain predetermined purposes (Husain, 2013). Clifton (2006) stresses compiling a pool of business discourse to facilitate trainers, researchers, and practitioners of the business world to work according to their areas of interests/needs. Since “there is no universal means of structuring knowledge above the social practices of the particular disciplinary communities which bestow meaning, legitimacy and appropriacy on discourse forms” (Hyland, 1998, p. 448), it is important to explore the actual discourse of business settings and potential effectiveness of pragmatics in business discourse. Jendrych (2011) recommends that business students should learn about effective layout, tone, and style along with structure, organization, and sequence of information they are to convey to their audience (p. 409).

Business communicators often face challenges in the form of different cultural patterns of communication, different norms of politeness, varying dimensions of interpersonal relationships, diverse linguistic features; a sound knowledge of both pragmatics and principles of business correspondence can shed off many complex problems arising in business settings (Zhu, 2005). The knowledge of pragmatics can facilitate in understanding the intended meaning, underlying assumptions, purposes, and goals, speech actions through various linguistic forms in a conversation (Yule, 1996a, p. 4). Moreover, a certain tense carries pragmatics references besides merely conveying the time of an utterance. Pragmatics assists learners in using “language appropriate to particular communicative events”, in using “the relevant utterances necessary for being considered a competent conversant”, and “interpreting meaning contextually” (Brock & Nagasaka, 2005, p. 18). Thus acquired knowledge is imperative in business communication: “People understand each other in conversations by gathering evidence about each other’s intentions” (Schober & Clark, 1989, p. 211). Gallo (2006) advocates an audience-oriented message: “Whether you’re talking to your boss, a prospect, or colleagues, your listeners want to easily grasp the message behind your service, product, company, or cause. They want it clear and they want it fast” (p. 106). For effective communication, learners must be aware of ‘socially appropriate ways’ (Vasquez & Sharpless, 2009, p. 6) for which they need pragmatic competence.

2.3.2 The Place of Linguistic Pragmatics in Business Communication

The role of business communication courses is vital for business students. Ponomarenko and Malyuga (2012) view business communication courses as helpful for graduates in dealing with problems likely to occur in professional communication. Ponomarenko and Malyuga (2012) further suggest the incorporation of stylistic and rhetoric aspects from linguistics into business communication courses. Devimeenakshi and Tyagi (2013) advocate the incorporation of useful linguistic elements into business communication courses. Danyushina (2011) advocates introducing a new discipline of business linguistics to benefit business professionals and students.

Business communication is an important phenomenon in the business world for which communicative competence is essential. For the development and enhancement of exquisite communicative competence, various researchers have emphasized the importance of pragmatic awareness for business professionals. Haase (2013) states that business communication is widely used in administrative/managerial duties, business writings, interaction in foreign languages, intercultural skills, and in many other business operations (p. 76). Köksal (2000) states that pragmatics concepts such as pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics are helpful for business professionals in communicating with the audience from different cultural backgrounds. He points out difficulties arising in cross-cultural communication and stresses the importance of pragmatics for professionals interacting with diverse internal and external public to save these professionals from pragmatic communication failures. For effective pragmatic communication, he advises to have sufficient awareness of pragmatics concepts on speaker's intentions, effects of an utterance on listeners in terms of their expectations and interpretations, the afterward implications of a certain utterance, and schematic information of communicators on their beliefs and presuppositions. He asserts that pragmatic communication failures cause substantial losses in the business world. His study opens the horizons for further researches on the interrelationship of pragmatics and business communication for the successful conduct of commercial operations.

Lack of awareness and application of pragmatics causes immense loss to intended business communication in interlanguage/intercultural scenarios. Pakistani business professionals often interact with diverse audiences since Pakistan is a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multilingual country. Johnson, Lenartowicz and Apud (2006) emphasize upon business professionals to meet the needs of cross-cultural communicative competence for

successful business performance. The available literature on pragmatics and its role in enhancing communication skills, abundantly presented in section 2.1 of this chapter, affirms that awareness of pragmatics can benefit business graduates in meeting diverse communication requirements. In the afore-narrated context, Prabhakaran (2017) argues that linguistics has immense significance in business communication regarding its usage in the business world. Highlighting the role of English as the lingua franca for business communication, Prabhakaran (2017) says that it is “the mode of communication between two people with distinct mother tongue” (p. 207). When one language, for example, English as an international lingua franca or Urdu as national lingua franca (i.e. in the case of Pakistan), is used by communicators (with different mother tongues and other ethnic diversities), certain issues may hinder the smooth flow of communication owing to a gap between a speaker’s intended meaning and a listener’s interpretation. Such a gap is owing to unawareness of each other’s pragmatic communication patterns. The knowledge of pragmatics sensitizes the communicators about each other’s different schematic patterns. Verma (2013) sees communication breakdown in the business world as a ‘pragmatics problem’. Verma (2013) states that business companies face severe problems when their managerial-level professionals fail to deliver the desired results owing to poor pragmatic competence. Verma (2013) suggests the compatibility of a speaker’s intentions with the listener’s recognition of a message according to the context. Such compatibility reduces communication problems and enhances the efficacy of communication. Verma’s (2013) findings support the notion presented in the present study that business professionals need be aware of pragmatics concepts for effective business communication. Husain (2013) also affirms that business organizations require effective communication from their employees while performing commercial activities. Haase (2013) emphasizes the communicative competence of business professionals since “knowledge in the business world is determined by its relevance for the conduct of business” (p. 60). The knowledge of pragmatics (and the consequent ability of its application) helps an individual for successful communication (Yule, 1996a & 1996b); likewise, it is expected to benefit the business professionals while communicating with diverse audiences.

Business professionals often communicate with the audience from different cultures (Hartley & Bruckmann, 2002), and pragmatics can assist in getting familiar with the cultural differences and altering communication accordingly (Lin, 2007). Realizing the intercultural differences in interactional behaviours, cultural meanings, cultural values, and

negotiation patterns are vital for managers working in culturally diverse organizations. Wilczewski (2015) recommends business managers be aware of the cultural diversity of their co-workers. Haase (2013) states that “at the specific local and cultural level of the communication in a business might be determined by cultural habits and customs of the culture” whereas “in globalized settings the communication style and customs are different and follow international habits” (p. 59). Riddiford and Joe (2010) find that less pragmatic knowledge hinders interacting with persons from different pragmatic backgrounds and that professionals with less pragmatic awareness are under-rated by their employers and peers. To overcome pragmatic communication incompetence, Riddiford and Joe (2010) emphasize educating and training professionals with sociopragmatic skills. Similarly, Köksal (2000) also supports equipping business professionals with “socio-cultural, socio-pragmatic and pragma-linguistic information” to enhance their communication competence and to save them from communication failures (p. 630). In view of the aforementioned studies on the need for pragmatics in business communication, the present research sees pragmatics as a vital component of business communication and advocates its inclusion and instruction in business communication courses to enable business graduates to use pragmatics effectively in the real workplace.

2.3.3 Interlanguage Pragmatics Acquisition

Different languages have their particular patterns of pragmatics. “Differences in language will create misunderstanding and difficulty in communicating between the internal and external stakeholders” (Johan & Noor, 2013, p. 1231). Olshtain and Cohen (1990) find that speech act behaviours of native speakers and non-native speakers may considerably differ e.g. a non-native speaker may say ‘sorry’ to apologize whereas a native English speaker may say ‘excuse me’ or any other expression according to his/her inclination on word choice or conversational situation (p. 50). In this regard, Kasper and Rose (1999) opine that pragmatic ability in a language other than one’s L1 is teachable. Lingli and Wannaruk (2010) assert that while teaching pragmatic competence the methodology of teaching and selection of contents to be taught is of vital importance (p. 94). Kasper and Rose (2002) state that pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic features can be inculcated through pragmatic instruction while developing learners’ skills to use interlanguage pragmatics.

L1 has a significant impact on any other language that one may acquire/learn later in one’s life; learning of L2 is easier as compared to a foreign language because for L2

there are more real-life situations available for learners (Kasper, 2001). Many researchers believe in the learning of L2 rather than its acquisition like L1. The notion of learning L2 has been rarely negated yet some researchers find that pragmatics of L2 can be acquired as that of L1 besides some explicit attempts to teach pragmatics of L2 (Bardovi-Harlig, 2013; Kasper & Rose, 1999; Pearson, 2006; Brock & Nagasaka, 2005). Grammatical competence is a supplement for developing L2 pragmatics in aforementioned studies, though there is still varying evidence on ‘whether grammatical competence is developed first or pragmatic one’, yet there is a strong influence of L1 competencies in learning L2. Pragmatic competence comprises the use of language appropriate in a social context (Taguchi, 2011). L2 learners can acquire pragmatic competence through explicit instruction (Farahian, Rezaee, & Gholami, 2012). Pragmatics of both L1 and L2 influence each other (Su, 2010). The researcher views that Pakistani university students have already learnt the pragmatics of their mother tongue (L1) or national language i.e. Urdu before they face English as a medium of instruction (SL) for higher education. Thus these learners may have the influence of pragmatics of their L1, L2, or L3 on their communication or business communication (in English) at the undergraduate level.

The teaching of a foreign language or any other language demands equipping the learners with its certain aspects: grammatical competence, diction, and pragmatic competence (Félix-Brasdefer & Cohen, 2012). Mere lexical/grammatical competence alienates a speaker in a non-native environment since a native speaker would instantly consider such a non-native as an ‘out-group’ (Yule, 1996a). The explicit knowledge of sociopragmatics can convene such an ‘out-group’ member with the natives (Mirzaei, Roohani, & Esmaeili, 2012; Riddiford & Joe, 2010). Su (2010) asserts that exposure to the ‘target language environment’ at learners’ early age, and/or exposure to the target language for a long time can contribute to the acquisition of both language and its pragmatics. The knowledge/expertise of ‘grammatical competence’ serves as a communicative resource for teaching pragmatics (Félix-Brasdefer & Cohen, 2012). Hymes’ (1964) also supports the view that a sender’s awareness of relevant linguistic rules and socio-cultural rules facilitates him/her in appropriate communication. Business students get exposure to business and management through books and other academic materials in their academics, and later through infield exposure to professional communicative situations (Cleland, 2003). This study explores business professionals’ situation-oriented use of pragmatics in business

settings and seeks their views on explicit instruction of pragmatics to learners at their business schools.

2.3.4 Role of Explicit Instruction in the Acquisition of Pragmatics in Foreign Language/Second Language

There exist a few empirical investigations closer to the topic of the present research, on the role of explicit instruction of pragmatics in improving learners' foreign language (FL), second language (SL), and communication skills. Eslami-Rasekh, Eslami-Rasekh and Fatahi (2004) investigated the effects of explicit metapragmatic instruction on speech act awareness of undergraduate EFL (English as Foreign Language) learners. Eslami-Rasekh, Eslami-Rasekh and Fatahi (2004) assert based on their investigation that learners' speech act comprehension significantly improves through explicit instruction of metapragmatics. Their study also supports the notion that pragmatic competence is enhanced through explicit metapragmatic instruction. In line with Eslami-Rasekh, Eslami-Rasekh and Fatahi (2004), the present study investigates the explicit instruction of pragmatics concepts along with ESP (English for Specific Purposes) courses on business communication skills taught to undergraduate business students. Davies (2004) investigated the role of teachers' pragmatic competence/awareness in developing learners' awareness of cross-cultural pragmatics. Based on her study, she emphasizes the need for the inclusion of pragmatics in teachers' education and training programmes. Similar to Davies' (2004) notions on the inclusion of pragmatics in education and training programmes for teachers, this study advocates the inclusion of relevant pragmatics concepts in the course contents of business communication skills for the improved communication skills of future business professionals. Brock and Nagasaka (2005) claim that explicit instruction of pragmatics is manageable in the EFL classroom. They assert that explicit instruction enhances learners' communicative competence in terms of appropriate expressions, accurate interpretations, and proper understanding.

For improving communicative competence, the role of awareness from pragmatics has been widely endorsed by various researchers. Eslami-Rasekh (2005) suggests raising pragmatic competence through developing sociolinguistic and pragmatic knowledge. He recommends informing learners about the situation-appropriate language to avoid communication misunderstandings, communication breakdown, stereotypical labels, and other such failures. He stresses upon informing the learners about options available in the pragmatic system of the target language. He further emphasizes pragmatic awareness and

its effective use outside the classroom in fast-expanding globalization. Though his study is in the context of EFL/ESL (English as Second Language), the findings of his study endorse the importance of developing learners' pragmatic ability to communicate in diverse situations. Thus, his study supports the notions propounded in the present research. Celce-Murcia (2007) recommends the language instructors be aware of relevant socio-cultural behaviours, and accompanied expectations. Félix-Brasdefer and Cohen (2012) and Taguchi (2008) are also convinced of the importance of pragmatics in teaching a foreign language. Based on the findings of a study comparing the explicit instruction of pragmatics with implicit instruction for metapragmatic communicative components, Félix-Brasdefer (2008) recommends language educators complement FL instruction with pragmatics concepts. Castillo (2009) also emphasizes teaching pragmatics to SL users to make their communication more compatible and synchronized to the communities they interact with. Taguchi (2011) conducted a single-subject experiment to investigate the dynamic and complex nature of pragmatics development among Japanese EFL learners. She used oral DCTs (discourse completion tasks) for measurement. Her study aimed at tracking the changes in the learners' ability to communicate their intentions appropriately in a given situation. The results of her study reveal more increase in low-imposition speech acts than high-imposition acts. Bardovi-Harlig (2013) suggests that pragmatic development is a potential area in language research. Félix-Brasdefer and Cohen (2012) even suggest teaching pragmatics from earlier levels in an FL classroom. Gholamia and Aghaeib (2012) investigated the comparative results of explicit vs. implicit teaching of pragmatics on Iranian EFL learners and found that explicit instruction is more helpful in the production and recognition of language functions. Afore-narrated studies endorse the notion of inclusion and explicit instruction of pragmatics concepts to improve the learners' communication skills. The perusal of the literature exhibits a gap in investigating the inclusion and explicit instruction of pragmatics concepts in business communication courses.

2.3.5 Case of Explicit vs Implicit Instruction of Pragmatics

Available literature provides a strong case for the explicit instruction of pragmatics for learning a particular language as well as communication skills in general. Pragmatics assists communicators in developing a grip of the language of use. Pragmatics helps in learning "how-to-say-what-to-whom-when" (Bardovi-Harlig, 2013, p. 68) and is expected to be helpful for learners to meet the communication challenges in their day-to-day

interactions in diverse situations. Bardovi-Harlig (2013) contrasts between implicit and explicit knowledge:

Implicit knowledge is taken to be procedural and unconscious whereas explicit knowledge is thought to be analyzed knowledge that can be articulated....Explicit pragmatic knowledge has been largely overlooked in the development of tasks designed to elicit language samples for empirical studies. There is no tradition of explicit pragmatic teaching the way there is in grammar teaching. (p. 73)

The explicit knowledge of pragmatics helps communicators behave both socially and linguistically according to the norms of society (Othman, 2011, p. 101). Focusing on the distinct syntactical and lexical features of the English language, Su (2010) asserts that English has its patterns based on 'syntactic devices', 'tense and aspect', 'subjunctives' and 'conditional' which differ entirely from other languages, especially many languages in Asia (p. 90). Explicit knowledge of pragmatics can assist learners in making explorations regarding the complexities which are involved in the targeted use of language, and in doing so, the learners also refine and upgrade their understanding of the use of desired linguistic patterns in a new communicative event (Moody, 2014). Moreover, pragmatics assists in making socio-culturally appropriate linguistics choices. Communication, oral or written, requires adjustments from participants through self-monitoring. It is important for communicators to "stay alert and edit thoughts before expressing them" (Wood, 2007, p. 38) which can be boosted through explicit learning. During the pilot study of the present research, the researcher noted that many of the books used for business communication are written by Western authors. Su (2010) states that there are differences in communication patterns between Asians and Westerns. These differences can be on power and solidarity, closeness in terms of familiarity or social relations, probable acceptance of a request, or other speech acts: Westerns are direct whereas Asians are indirect. The Asian cultures are more prone to 'relational hierarchy' in family or society (Su, 2010, p. 90). This study assumes that explicit awareness from pragmatics can be useful in understanding the differences of Asian and Western cultures and this awareness can benefit the business students in later professional communication. The assumption is supported by a study conducted by Riddiford and Joe (2010) with the findings that learners can demonstrate better workplace communication through explicit awareness of pragmatics (p. 204).

Explicit instruction is the one in which an instructor explains the particular rules to learners (Doughty & Long, 2003). Explicit instruction of concepts has proven more

effective than implicit instruction (Vasquez & Sharpless, 2009, p. 7). Implicit instruction has not been very fruitful in many cases in terms of learning rules and specifically in communication activities related to acquisitional processes (Scheffler & Cinciała, 2011). Granado (1996) recommends that “academic language teaching can be supplemented with other components of language knowledge and use” (p. 165). Though instructors can adopt a combination of implicit-explicit methods for teaching pragmatics for “target form–function–context mappings” yet explicit instruction has explicit effects (Gharibeh, Mirzaee, & Yaghoubi-Notash, 2016, p. 174). Explicit or direct instruction is also endorsed in cognitive psychology (Farahian, Rezaee, & Gholami, 2012). The instruction of pragmatics is recommended at all levels of language teaching (Félix-Brasdefer & Cohen, 2012). Explicit instruction of pragmatics is helpful in a language classroom for teaching desired communication patterns (Moody, 2014). Rose (2005) also affirms, after a thorough review of researches on pragmatics, that (1) pragmatics is teachable, (2) instruction has a positive impact on the development of pragmatics, (3) various aspects of pragmatics e.g. speech acts, discourse markers, pragmatic comprehension can be better taught through explicit instruction, (4) results of explicit instruction of pragmatics are far better than its implicit instruction and learning.

Explicit instruction has its merits and demerits. Rose (2005) considers some obstacles in effective learning through explicit instruction e.g. too long or too short duration of instruction, proficiency level of learners, and intricacy of learning targets can limit explicit instruction (p. 395). However, Lingli and Wannaruk (2010) opine that explicit instruction of pragmatics produces better results in terms of “amount of information, strategy choices, and level of formality” (p. 93). Lin (2007) considers the teaching of pragmatics “necessary and important in our globalized world” (p. 91). Rose (2012) states that knowledge of pragmatics facilitates making adjustments in specific social, cultural, and cognitive situations for the production and comprehension of language.

Explicit instruction can render multifaceted advantages in improving communication skills. To produce the desired pragmatic competence among the learners, explicit instruction of pragmatics in the classroom is highly beneficial (Kasper, 1997; Kasper & Rose, 1999, 2001). Rueda (2006) recommends pedagogical intervention for the systematic development of pragmatic ability through classroom instruction and classroom activities. Pragmatics helps the instructors convey “the potentially inflammatory information” related to an entity e.g. why noun plurals, comparative adjectives, or certain

tenses are used at a certain point (Swan, 2007). Explicit pragmatic instruction can be included in course contents (Riddiford & Joe, 2010, p. 204). Cohen (2008) is also convinced of the positive output of explicit instruction for enhancing pragmatic performance, and this pragmatic performance can save communicators from pragmatic failure. Bardovi-Harlig (1996) views pragmatic competence as important for communication skills. She considers the classroom instruction/activities as vital input sources of pragmatic development. She emphasizes bringing pedagogy and pragmatics together. Félix-Brasdefer (2008) conducted an empirical study to compare the results of explicit vs. implicit instructions of pragmatics. The findings of his study show that explicit instruction of pragmatics is more fruitful than implicit one. Vasquez and Sharpless (2009) are also convinced of more fruitfulness of explicit instruction of pragmatics than implicit one. Xiao-le (2011) experimented on two groups of EFL learners to compare the effectiveness of explicit instruction of pragmatics with implicit instruction. The results of Xiao-le's (2011) empirical study show that the explicit group showed greater improvement in communication skills as compared to the other group. Based on his findings, Xiao-le suggests the incorporation of explicit instruction of pragmatics through classroom activities. Xiao-le's (2011) findings endorse the explicit instruction of pragmatics to enhance learners' awareness of pragmatic knowledge on converting input into output. Rose (2012) also advocates explicit instruction as pragmatics is better understood when learnt in a specific framework of a speech act or communicative act. Riddiford and Joe (2010) deem that real-life communication can be better mastered through explicit awareness of pragmatics. Riddiford and Joe (2010) advocate the inclusion of pragmatics in professional training programmes (p. 204). Kasper (1997) and Kasper and Rose (1999; 2001) also assert that explicit instruction of pragmatics is more beneficial in producing communicative competence among learners. Swan (2007) recommends the language instructors convey "potentially inflammatory information" on grammar through pragmatics (p. 7). Farahian, Rezaee and Gholami (2012) also assert that awareness gained through explicit instruction is more promising in developing pragmatic competence. The findings of an empirical study conducted by Gholamia and Aghaeib (2012) also suggest classroom instruction of pragmatics to develop greater pragmatic competence. Afore-narrated studies support the notion of explicit instruction of pragmatics to prepare future professionals for their real workplace-oriented communication skills.

2.3.6 Pragmatics from the Perspective of Communication in General

Pragmatics as a branch of linguistics seems the most relevant to human communication as this branch addresses some core communication issues. Gauker (2008) highlights certain communication facets included in pragmatics as core concepts: (1) speaker's intentions and their incorporation in a message, (2) aspects and involvement of contexts in communication, and (3) a competent audience's interpretation of the received message. Kasper (1997) and Crystal (1987) view communication as an instrument of performing social interactions. These social interactions have their effects, based on linguistic choices and factors involved in making these choices. Griffiths (2006) regards pragmatics as helpful in making choices from available linguistic options, in interpreting communicators' choices of linguistic patterns, and in identifying the role of context. Rose (2012) deems that pragmatics, as a branch of linguistics, is all about human communication and speech acts. Yule (1996a) sees communication as complex phenomena comprising ambivalences in 'what is said', 'what remains unsaid', 'what is meant', 'what is interpreted'; and in all such ambiguities pragmatics can help communicators in sensing each other 'linguistically' (p. 4). Yule (1996b) considers the knowledge and application of pragmatics as a facilitative instrument in apparent as well veiled aspects of communication. Though apparently communication seems a simple phenomenon of "transfer of ideas, thoughts or feelings by the sender to the receiver via verbal or nonverbal means" yet there are plentiful intricacies involved in it (Genç, 2017, p. 511). The available literature on the role of pragmatics in communication affirms that pragmatics can help in resolving all such intricacies; knowing pragmatics eases in understanding a sender's intended meaning, underlying assumptions of a message, and purposes and goals of a piece of communication.

2.3.7 The Role of Pragmatics Instruction in Communication Skills

Pragmatics is useful in different levels/types of communication owing to its role in shared knowledge and other assumptions which assist in determining the communicative intent. The courses on communication skills need to be empowered to enable the learners for their future professions (Korn, 2004, p. 589). Organizational communication is multidimensional: internal communication can be: upward i.e. with seniors or bosses; downward i.e. with subordinates; lateral i.e. with peers; and external communication can be with customers, vendors, service suppliers, etc. (Genç, 2017, p. 512). Pragmatics helps the instructors convey "the potentially inflammatory information" related to an entity e.g. why noun plurals, comparative adjectives, or certain tenses are used at a certain point

(Swan, 2007). Swan (2007) addresses core contents of pragmatics in his notion of ‘Pragmatics A’: 1) The contribution of context and shared knowledge, familiarity with the conventional schemata, routine, and genre towards framing and interpreting utterances, 2) Gricean cooperative maxims for successful communication and 3) The role of ‘implicature’ to interpret the flouting of Gricean principles. These three components of ‘Pragmatics A’ can play a vital role in the appropriate encoding and right decoding of a message. Thomas (1983) opines that “pragmatic failure stems from the inability to understand what is meant by what is said” (p. 92). To address communication failures, Blum-kulka (1987) suggests explicit instruction of pragmatics to minimize the risk of pragmatic failures in personal, social, or professional conversational situations.

2.3.8 The Role of Pragmatics in Cross-Cultural/ Intercultural Communication

Pragmatics assists in realizing and compensating culture-specific and cross-cultural differences in intercommunity conversations. “It is the cultural assumptions in our communication that raise difficulties when we communicate across cultures” (Hartley & Bruckmann, 2002, p. 52). Pragmatics helps in getting familiar with the cultural differences and shaping discourse accordingly and mitigates “the difficulties of international communications for both native and non-native speakers” (Lin, 2007, p. 91). Certain cultures promote indirectness in interactions in a systematic way of attending to the audience’s face wants, and familiarity with the pragmatics concepts may assist in shaping utterances according to the audience (Walkó, 2007, p. 1). It is difficult to compose and present a message to an audience with diverse demographics in an organizational/business context, and a sender needs “to craft the message so everyone can grasp its implications” (Gallo, 2006, p. 108). As pragmatics helps in learning “how-to-say-what-to-whom-when” (Bardovi-Harlig, 2013, p. 68), thus it is very important in cross-cultural communication. Zhu (2005) emphasizes understanding “cross-cultural genre conventions for effective communication” through identifying socio-cultural variables, and these variables can be better perceived through contextual dimensions of socio-cognitive systems (p. 24). Pragmatics assists communicators in developing a grip of the language of real-life use, and the explicit knowledge of pragmatics helps communicators behave, socially and linguistically, according to norms of society (Othman, 2011, p. 101). Communication requires adjustments from participants through self-monitoring, whereas pragmatics assists in this process of ‘self-monitoring’.

There is a space for applied linguistics in understanding and performing intercultural communication, specifically corporate organizations may hire consultants and trainers who can train employees to manage and benefit from cultural differences (Pikhart, 2014, pp. 950-951). Feng (2009) argues that cultural diversity among employees may create possibilities of openness, healthy curiosity, and mutual understanding which can ultimately benefit an organization. Language instructors need to empower themselves to work according to the requirements of the modern world (O'Keeffe & Farr, 2003, p. 389). The knowledge of pragmatics empowers the instructors in teaching with the relevant cultural, social, professional perspectives. Delivering education in a cultural context is vital in the present era (McCarthy, 2001, p. 125) to enable learners to cope with challenges after the completion of their studies. In the course of business communication skills, students are given cases or situations and are required to produce written solutions (Murphy, Hildebrandt, & Thomas, 2007). Learners are better trained if they work in simulated or artificial situations (Uworwabayeho, 2009, p. 324). The knowledge of pragmatics may help the students of business studies to handle the cases and situations and beware of real-life communication.

Language users need to be familiar with the use of individual words, their predictable combinations, and cultural encapsulation of these combinations to convey the intended meaning (Stubbs, 2001, p. 10), and the knowledge of pragmatics enables the communicators to grip these facets. Humans are social beings and survive through interacting with others, and communication is an inevitable phenomenon in their lives. "Communicating with others allows us to meet basic needs for survival and safety as well as more abstract human needs for inclusion, esteem, self-actualization, and effective participation in a socially diverse world" (Wood, 2007, p. 41). The use of pragmatics, especially Swan's (2007) 'Pragmatics B', expands the horizons of various segments of learning communication skills. Learners may be trained to grasp, for example, how the use of a certain tense carries pragmatics references besides merely conveying the time of an utterance. "Pragmatics is studied in the framework of a communicative act or a speech act sequence" (Rose, 2012). Explicit instruction of pragmatics may help the learners in the communicative events they encounter.

Pragmatics focuses on the language in use, the traditional or the novel, the typical or the circumstantial. Pragmatics assists in realizing and compensating the culture-specific and cross-cultural differences in intercommunity conversations. Pragmatics helps in getting

familiar with the cultural differences and shaping discourse accordingly. Pragmatics mitigates “the difficulties of international communications for both native and non-native speakers” (Lin, 2007, p. 91). Knowing the cross-cultural differences is of vital importance for the students of business studies (Murphy, Hildebrandt, & Thomas, 2007). Certain cultures promote indirectness in interactions in a systematic way of attending to the audience’s ‘face wants’ (Walkó, 2007, p. 1). Brown and Levinson (1987) identify various ‘face wants’ in different kinds of social acts. Various features of positive face and negative face are important in interactions (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Pragmatics facilitates the pupils to learn various social communicative functions e.g.

greeting, enquiring about health, leave-taking, thanking, expressing regret, eliciting and giving information, offering, requesting goods and services, proffering, self-identification, asking for more precise information, confirming what has been said, exhortation, identifying and naming, agreeing to carry out instructions, and enquiring about plans. (Swan, 2007, pp. 7-8)

It is important to pay due care to pragmatics in cross-cultural correspondence as Pilegaard (1997) identifies that “communicative failure may be related to differences in usage which preserve the semantic meaning at the expense of pragmatic intent” (p. 243). In the light of afore review of literature, it appears that familiarity with pragmatics concepts can assist business professionals/administrators in formulating their messages according to their audience.

2.3.9 Interpersonal Respect, Politeness, and Conflict in Business Settings

Interpersonal skills are very important in daily life as well as in professional settings. Raina and Pande (2012) state that the corporate sector demands interpersonal communication skills from their employees to perform their organizational tasks effectively. In interpersonal communication, pragmatics concepts of respect, face, politeness, etc. can help in framing appropriate utterances in business discourse. Pragmatics ensures that there occurs no obstacle in the smooth flow of an argument, and no misunderstanding is caused. For the sake of the smooth flow of communication, appropriate structuring conventions, anaphoric elements, and discourse marker are used in conversations among peers from diverse linguistic backgrounds. Business professionals need to use various “positive politeness strategies” owing to many “extra-linguistic” and/or “situational constraints” (Pilegaard, 1997, p. 242). Pragmatics can facilitate learners (in this case, business students) in mastering various social communicative functions (Swan, 2007).

Business professionals often face situations where they use effective communication to handle conflicts. It is foremost to understand the reason for the emergence of conflict and then the ways to achieve compatible resolution (The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Pakistan, 2015, p. 51). Conflicts can arise from perceptions based on prejudices and stereotypes (Pino, 2017). Humans may adopt a confronting, distancing, or cooperating communication behaviour in a communication situation, and among these three behaviours conflicts may arise “where participants express their reaction of disagreement either physically or verbally” (Fomin & Yakimova, 2016, p. 66). Individual perceptions can be biased and lead to prejudices and discriminations for others; and these influenced perceptions can cause ‘antagonistic’ and bigoted communicative behaviours, which may escalate interpersonal/organizational conflicts (Hartley & Bruckmann, 2002, p. 48). Interpersonal conflicts can be analyzed in the perspective of power (asymmetrical) and solidarity (symmetrical) relationship among communicators when they (communicators) use ‘power’ to control others, or use ‘solidarity’ to facilitate others (Johnstone, 2002, pp. 113-114). Business correspondence often uses conventional indirectness or other politeness strategies for “the success of the conduct of business contacts, the handling of negotiation-processes, and the management of conflicts” (Pilegaard, 1997, p. 242). Power (asymmetrical) attitude can lead to conflicts whereas solidarity (symmetrical) attitude can lead to harmony and resolving conflicts among the communicators. Pragmatics/Discourse features of ‘power’ and ‘solidarity’ can convene business professionals in manipulating and resolving conflicts with peers or competitors.

Conflicts may arise for certain reasons. Overton (2003) identifies that ‘different goals’, ‘indirect opposition’, ‘justifiable opposition’, and ‘unjustifiable opposition’ can hinder cooperation among peers (p. 11). Socialization arises through common goals, ethnocultural affiliations, linguistic harmony, mutual interest and benefits, non-competitive growth opportunities, and collegial support among peers at the workplace (Clyne, 1994; Cohen & Kassis-Henderson, 2012; Hartley & Bruckmann, 2002; Murphy, Hildebrandt, & Thomas, 2007; Overton, 2003). Socialization occurs to satisfy one’s esteem needs and love and belongingness needs. The differences in language, personalities, affiliations, and identities can be overcome or mitigated through appropriate language strategies and linguistic choices which can assist in establishing and managing relations among individuals (Cohen & Kassis-Henderson, 2012). Pragmatic understanding of ‘self’ and

‘otherness’ can effectively contribute to avoiding, preventing, managing, or resolving conflicts at the workplace.

2.3.10 Routine and Genre of Business Communication and Pragmatics Perspective

The common experiences of communicators assist them in relating a specific symbol to a referent (reality) for semantic or pragmatic meanings (Murphy, Hildebrandt, & Thomas, 2007). The modern day workplace has become communicatively complex and demands more communication in less time, and officials may switch from one medium (e.g. face to face interactions, electronically mediated communication, written correspondence) to another (Gimenez, 2014). Business professionals may online access or deliver information to other employees, customers, mass media, or competitor firms through newsletters, magazines, memos, letters, press releases, reports, etc. (Agarwala, 2002; Cleland, 2003; Hartley & Bruckmann, 2002; Overton, 2003). The need and frequency of such documents increase with the growth of an organization (Srimannarayana, 2006). For an appropriate selection of genre, students need to know requirements on process, formality, rhetorics, and subject-need (Zhang, 2013, p. 145).

It is important to carefully select the jargon, medium, and genre while communicating a business message. Commenting on any possible carelessness in regard, Gallo (2006) says: “Great business communicators avoid mind-numbing jargon, especially when delivering to outsiders the message behind their service, product, company, or cause” (p. 114). “The medium is the physical system which carries the message from sender to receiver, which can vary from the air carrying the voice between two speakers to something like an email where the author is separated from the reader by complicated electronic processes” (Hartley & Bruckmann, 2002, p. 18). ‘Routine’ may comprise the medium and mode of conveying a certain utterance. Furthermore, ‘routine’ may include the choice of a channel for accomplishing a communicative event. “At a general level, genre refers to linguistic expression conventionally associated with certain forms of writings (for example the Letter to the Editor)” (Hatim, 1998, p. 68). ‘Genre’ of a communicative event may include the choice of conveying a message through spoken words, gestures, written/electronic message. Business professionals should develop their skills in “communication, collaboration, and interaction at a variety of levels using different media and communication patterns” (Pickering, 2009, p. 169). An understanding of both ‘routine’ and ‘genre’ is needed for business administrators (Bargiela-Chiappini & Harris, 1996). Knowledge of textual, contextual, and intertextual features are also useful for the selection

of routine and genre (Zhang, 2013, p. 146). The communicators may convene themselves through practicing pragmatic principles with their peers from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

2.3.11 Indigenous/Regional Studies Related to the Topic of Present Research

A few Pakistani and Asian researchers have conducted empirical studies on business communication. Kakepoto (2013) conducted an academic investigation on oral presentation and communication skills in the workplace environment among engineers and engineering students in Pakistan. He finds that poor knowledge, low self-confidence, stress, and low motivation hinder learners' performance. Anver (2017) emphasizes developing a need-based course for professionals working in the banking industry. He suggests redesigning business communication syllabus as per the specific requirements of a particular industry. Abrar-ul-Hassan (2005) emphasizes focusing on reading and writing skills in business English courses. He also recommends using business English courses as a platform to improve learners' communication skills while considering the "development of linguistic skills" as an objective of these courses (p. 311). Asif, Deng and Hussain (2019) investigated the phenomena of pragmatic failure in Pakistani ESL learners. Asif, Deng and Hussain (2019) find that Pakistani ESL learners face problems in pragmatic competence and language proficiency; and thus there is vital relation between awareness/application of pragmatics and communicative proficiency. Alali (2019) stresses the need of utilizing the communication experiences of business professionals working in multilingual-multicultural organizations. Alali (2019) further states that "working with people from different countries, generations, race, gender and who speak different languages could create complications amid the ever-changing expectations for adaptability and productivity in the workplace" (p. 12). Alali (2019) further emphasizes on "self-awareness of language proficiency, individual and cultural communicative style and cultural competencies", and sees "linguistic performance" as an instrument to handle multiple challenges faced during professional communication (p. 12). Sim and Pop (2019) state that the syllabus and contents of business communication need continual updating as per the emerging requirements of the business world. Prabhakaran (2017) emphasizes linguistic investigation of ESP courses since these courses are meant to prepare business students for effective communication in their later business careers. Liton (2015) emphasizes that ESP courses should be taught to business students as per their later workplace needs. Liton (2015) also emphasizes a constant need analysis to prepare the students for their later pragmatic communication

needs. Furthermore, he suggests adapting study materials according to workplace needs. EL-Sakran (2018) emphasizes catering to pragmatic sensitivity in workplace communication, especially in computer-mediated communication. He also stresses training business students on contemporary communication styles for efficient and appropriate communication. Khan and Anwar (2013) emphasize enhancing the industry-academia relationship for the advancement of knowledge and to address the weak areas in the scheme of studies of degree programmes. Khan and Anwar (2013) further advocate the constant consultation with infield professionals to upgrade the knowledge as per the emerging needs in the business world. Akhtar and Hussain (2019) emphasize experiential learning strategies for improving business communication skills. Akhtar and Hussain (2019) further highlight that skills development can enhance business students' employability. Najeeb-us-Saqlain, Qazi and Simon (2012) investigate the teaching methodologies used in business communication classroom and their effects on BBA students in Pakistan. The results of their study reveal the effectiveness of simulation method in contrast to the traditional lecture method in terms of clarity of theoretical and practical aspects of business communication. The present study also uses simulation tasks as WDCTs to compare the learners' performance before and after the explicit instruction of pragmatics in business communication classroom. Aimoldinaa, Zharkynbekovaa and Akynovaa (2016) investigate the contents and language of Kazakhstani professionals' business letters to explore pragmatic failures. They notice that unawareness from linguistic and cultural contexts can complicate official correspondence. Saleem, Anjum and Naz (2018) investigate the phenomenon of pragmatic transfer as an impact of social power on apology responses of Pakistani English speakers. Afore-narrated indigenous/regional studies highlight the importance of conducting further research on business communication. Owing to the gap in the literature on the interface between pragmatics and business communication, the researcher has ventured to conduct this study on the inclusion of pragmatics concepts in the course contents and their explicit instruction to business students.

2.3.12 Case of Teaching Pragmatics to Business Students

Pragmatics assists in developing and refining communication skills. The researcher finds a stronger case for teaching pragmatics to business students to improve their communication skills through inclusion and explicit instruction of pragmatics in the course contents. Rose (2005) considers pragmatics teachable and supports its instruction according to learners' specific educational and communication needs. Rose (2005) further asserts that

the learners, who receive explicit instruction of pragmatics for targeted communication proficiency, do better than others. Köksal (2000) sees the role of pragmatics concepts imperative in business communication such as “the knowledge, beliefs, and presuppositions about the world upon which speakers and listeners rely when they interact” (p. 636). Köksal (2000) believes that pragmatic communication failures can cause big losses in the business world, and suggests taking measures to avoid communication failures in the business world. Köksal’s emphasis on the importance of pragmatics provides a base for the present research which advocates the inclusion of pragmatics concepts in the course contents and their explicit instruction to equip the learners with pragmatic awareness for their later professional communication needs. Based on their empirical investigation, Riddiford and Joe (2010) find that sociopragmatic competence can be developed through explicit instruction and training. They perceive sociopragmatic skills as imperative for successful communication at the workplace. Thus, they recommend educating/training professionals through explicit instruction of pragmatics concepts for efficient communication with their colleagues from different pragmatic backgrounds. For pragmatic communicative competence, Riddiford and Joe (2010) also recommend ‘classroom-based’ guidance to develop the targeted communication proficiency among professionals. Farahian, Rezaee and Gholami (2012) find that explicit instruction of pragmatics is productive in enhancing communicative competence. Shokouhi and Rezaei (2015) highlight that lack of pragmatics awareness can cause a communication failure. They view that knowledge and experience are the requisites for pragmatic competence. Based on experimental research, Gharibeh, Mirzaee and Yaghoubi-Notash (2016) also recommend the explicit instruction of pragmatics to develop pragmatic communicative competence among learners for intercultural and cross-cultural communication. Aligned with the findings and assertions of the aforementioned studies, the researcher assumes that knowledge of pragmatics can contribute significantly in developing/improving learners’ pragmatic competence as a component of business communication skills. The researcher advocates classroom explicit instruction of pragmatics to improve learners’ business communication skills.

2.4 Conclusion

The review of the literature identifies the importance of pragmatics in learning business communication skills effectively through the incorporation and explicit instruction of these concepts. The explicit knowledge of pragmatics can assist the learners

in handling complicated communication issues. The available literature reveals no study particularly on improving business communication skills through teaching pragmatics concepts explicitly along with the course contents. Many empirical studies have been conducted regarding pragmatics and its contribution to communication skills. Various linguists have also contributed to theoretical literature in this context. Likewise, various theoretical and empirical studies are available on business communication skills. Through reviewing the literature, it is revealed that the area addressed in this study has not been explored in Pakistani context. To address the gap in the existing literature, the present study examines the usefulness of explicit instruction of pragmatics concepts in business communication courses.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter comprises the research design of the present study. A narrative for choosing mixed method approach for this research has been provided. The theoretical framework is built upon Swan's (2007) notions of 'Pragmatics A' and 'Pragmatics B'. Tools for data collection which include 'Adapted Model for Comparative Analysis of Course Contents vis-à-vis Selected Pragmatics Concepts', single-subject experimental design to collect data from students in the form of written discourse completion tasks (WDCTs), teachers' interviews to seek their reflections and opinions, business administrators' interviews for their reflections on their day-to-day communication and their opinions on inclusion of pragmatics in business communication. The selection, development, justification, validation, and procedure of the use of these instruments for data collection have been discussed.

3.1 Research Design

This study aims at investigating the effectiveness of teaching pragmatics concepts explicitly along with the prescribed course contents of business communication. Qualitative methods for data collection have been chosen for this study to identify and verify the relevance and effectiveness of pragmatics concepts with course contents of business communication skills. Qualitative research is intimate, open-ended, descriptive, non-numerical, insightful, understanding-providing, problem-specific, and resolution-oriented (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012, p. 142). Qualitative and pluralistic methodological approaches are gaining popularity in research in business and management during recent years since they provide a better and scientific comprehension of underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations of a given communicative response in a specified setting (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012; Gummesson, 2005; Sinkovics & Alfoldi, 2012). Since one segment of data (i.e. WDCTs obtained through single-subject experiment) the WDCTs scripts have been evaluated in quantified terms, therefore, mixed method approach has been used in the present research (later elaborated as QUAL-quan approach).

For the present research, "QUAL-quan model, also known as exploratory mixed methods design" is chosen since most of the data are qualitative in nature; in this design of

research, “qualitative data are collected first and are more heavily weighted than quantitative data” (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012, p. 485). Data collected in layers to validate findings of field research is appropriate in qualitative research (Assimakopoulos, 2007). Ritchie (2003) asserts that the use of both qualitative and quantitative approaches is more effective to generate better intelligence into the study subject (p. 38). The present study is a mixed method research since the data have been collected from four different tools/sources: (1) comparative analysis of HEC recommended course contents for business communication at BBA level vis-à-vis selected pragmatics concepts, (2) WDCTs of students, taught as single-subject experimental group, (3) semi-structured interviews of teachers of business communication skills, and (4) semi-structured interviews of business administrators (with a background of business studies and working in different business organizations). The tools employed for this study form a wide-range interpretive methodology which is in the qualitative tradition and is considered suitable for generating useful data to address research questions through a pluralistic approach which is highly recommended by many researchers and theoreticians of recent times (Bisesi & Raphael, 1995; Creswell, 2014; Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012; Lingard, Albert, & Levinson, 2008; Neuman, 2013; Ritchie, 2003).

Mixed method research is highly appreciated by many theorists and empirical researchers. “The purpose of mixed method research is to build on the synergy and strength that exists between quantitative and qualitative research methods to understand a phenomenon more fully than is possible using either quantitative or qualitative methods alone” (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012, p. 481). Lingard, Albert and Levinson (2008) also support mixed method approach as it “combines elements from both qualitative and quantitative paradigms to produce converging findings in the context of complex research questions” through combining “inductive-subjective-contextual approach” of qualitative research and “deductive-objective-generalising approach” of quantitative research (pp. 3-4). Since this study explores the usefulness of pragmatics in communication skills in the field of business and management, therefore, mixed method (pluralistic approach) for data collection has been adopted.

3.2 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework is built upon Swan’s (2007) notions of ‘Pragmatics A’ and ‘Pragmatics B’. ‘Pragmatics A’ focuses on ‘what is not encoded’ in an utterance,

whereas ‘Pragmatics B’ addresses ‘what is encoded’ in a communication. To interpret the ‘not-encoded part of an utterance’, Swan suggests a three-component framework:

- (1) A collective contribution of context and shared knowledge, and familiarity with the conventional schemata, routine, and genre towards framing and interpreting utterances
- (2) Gricean cooperative principle for successful communication
- (3) The role of ‘implicature’ to interpret the flouting of the Gricean principle.

The communicators in a conversation are assumed to have the ability to understand and appropriately incorporate the above-narrated components for correct encoding/decoding. Highlighting the importance of correct encoding/decoding, Swan (2007) states that “Correct interpretations of utterances can indeed take us a very long way away from their surface encodings” (p. 3). The first component of the above framework is a shared responsibility of both sender and receiver to make a communicative event successful. The second component lays more responsibility on the sender for incorporating the cooperative maxims of quantity, quality, relevance, and manner to facilitate the receiver in decoding a message. In case the sender is not explicitly cooperative in observing Gricean maxims, the receiver has to rely more on implicature to interpret the message. Since appropriate encoding/decoding and exquisite formulation/conveyance/interpretation of a business message are vital in business communication, therefore Swan’s (2007) ‘Pragmatics A’ is quite relevant to the present study.

In business communication, ‘context’ comprises the situation in which a communicative event takes place. ‘Shared knowledge’ includes what both the sender and receiver are equally aware of. Schemata help in interpreting the unsaid or unwritten part of an utterance (written or spoken). Pre-existing knowledge structures help in interpreting new experiences relating them with previous experiences. In business communication, there exist several such concepts (e.g. rental amount, salary, perquisites... on per week, per month, per year basis) which are based on an individual’s pre-existing knowledge structures. ‘Conventional schemata’ in business communication discourse may comprise such jargon which is easily understandable among a particular community. Conventional schemata may include all such symbols (written, oral or nonverbal) as are used while encoding a message. A sender is responsible for using symbols that, on one hand, convey the message and, on the other hand, are easily decodable for the receiver. The common experiences of communicators convene in relating a specific symbol to a referent/reality

(Murphy, Hildebrandt, & Thomas, 2007) for semantic or pragmatic meanings. ‘Routine’ may comprise the medium of conveying a certain utterance, and also the choice of a channel for accomplishing a communicative event. Business communication occurs in spoken or written form, it can be face to face (meetings, interviews, oral briefings, etc.) or through some electronic channels (email, video conferencing, fax, etc.). ‘Genre’ of a communicative event may include the choice of sending a message through a report, letter, memorandum, brief, proposal, notice, etc. for a written message, and a telephone call, face to face meeting, or electronic communication (through software/service providers e.g. ‘Skype’) for oral interaction. The communicators of a business communicative event may convene themselves through the pragmatics concepts presented in Swan’s notion of ‘Pragmatics A’.

Gricean cooperative principle is also related to the requirements of business communication discourse. The maxim of quantity concerns the size of information and endorses that a business message should be complete and concise. A sender should contribute as much as is required for the specific purpose of the communicative event. Neither a business message should contain any irrelevant or extra information nor should it be devoid of required contents for interpretation. The maxim of quality requires a business message to comprise correct and truthful content. A sender should not communicate false, doubtful, evidence-lacking contents. Furthermore, a business message should consist of supporting evidence for conveying the intended meaning. The maxim of relevance stipulates only such contents which convey the intended message to the expediency of the audience and situation. The maxim of manner ensures a business message reflects clarity, and a sender avoids obscurity of expression, ambiguity, unnecessary wordiness and verbosity, and poor orderliness (Yule, 1996a, p. 37).

The third component of ‘Pragmatics A’ i.e. ‘implicature’ is frequently employed in decoding. The non-observance of Gricean maxims is compensated through implicature to interpret the non-existent, extra, irrelevant, obscure segment of a message. The communicators in business communication discourse may convey more than what is said or written. In such a case, the receiver has to rely on implicature to interpret the unsaid or unwritten part of an utterance. The receiver draws certain inferences from an utterance to derive additional meaning to understand what a sender implies, suggests, or means apart from the tangible words. Implicature is more a pragmatic meaning than a semantic one in decoding a message. The receiver needs awareness of the contextual, conventional, and

literal facets of words and phrases in an utterance to develop a precise implicature (Brown & Yule, 1983, p. 33).

‘Pragmatics B’ addresses “what is encoded” in communication. In interpersonal communication, ‘Pragmatics B’ helps in framing utterances with pragmatics concepts of respect, face, politeness, etc. Furthermore, the complex phenomena of speaker/writer’s intentions and listener/reader’s interpretation are also considered. There should be no obstacle in the smooth flow of an argument, and no misunderstanding should be caused. For the sake of the smooth flow of communication, appropriate structuring conventions, anaphoric elements, and discourse markers should be appropriately used (Swan, 2007).

The researcher has chosen Swan’s (2007) ‘Pragmatics A’ and ‘Pragmatics B’ for their close relevance with the composition and interpretation/perception of business messages. Moreover, for the comparative analysis of course contents (with the concepts from pragmatics) and for preparing the modified lectures, Swan’s (2007) model of ‘Pragmatics A’ has been used along with relevant pragmatics concepts. Pragmatics concepts presented in Swan’s (2007) ‘Pragmatics A’ seem more relevant with business communication. ‘Pragmatics B’ seems useful in training business students for interpersonal communication skills. In line with the role of pragmatics in human communication, both general as well as specific, an in-depth perusal of Swan’s (2007) notions of ‘Pragmatics A’ and ‘Pragmatics B’ reveal that these notions can help language users in making their utterances compatible with acceptable social/interpersonal/organizational/professional norms. The adapted model (presented below in Table 3.1) is built upon Swan’s (2007) afore-narrated notions and business communication course contents (extracted from ESP/business communication courses prescribed in BBA scheme of studies). The model has been used to compare business communication course contents with relevant pragmatics concepts. The comparison has been conducted to find the compatibility between the two fields i.e. business communication and pragmatics. Swan’s (2007) ‘Pragmatics A’ and ‘Pragmatics B’ are relevant with the primary notion presented in this study i.e. through incorporating pragmatics into the course contents of business communication skills and its explicit instruction, the learners are expected to better meet the professional communication requirements.

3.3 Tools of Data Collection

Data have been collected through (1) comparative analysis of HEC recommended course contents for business communication at BBA level in comparison with selected pragmatics concepts, (2) WDCTs of the students, taught as single-subject experimental group, (3) semi-structured interviews of the teachers of business communication, and (4) semi-structured interviews of business administrators (with a background of business studies and working in different business organizations).

3.3.1 Comparative Analysis of the Course Contents vis-à-vis the Selected Pragmatics Concepts through the Adapted Model

The research process opted for this study is shown in Figure 3.1 below:



Figure 3.1: The steps followed to explore the relationship between the two distinct fields

Instrumentation: This segment of the research compares HEC (2012) recommended course contents for business communication skills and relevant pragmatics concepts. The course contents (from the four ESP/communication courses i.e. ‘English I’, ‘English II’, ‘Oral Communication’ and ‘Business Communication I’) have been compared with pragmatics concepts in the light of the theoretical framework. By perusing the course contents of business communication and pragmatics concepts, thematic headings have been generated (based on the adapted model in Table 3.1). The researcher has taken inspiration from Pickvance (2001) and Ross (2005) for this mode of comparative analysis. Pickvance (2001) recommends comparative analysis to explain similarities or differences and to “explore a theoretically postulated relationship” between two or more cases (2001, p. 15). Pickvance (2001) further asserts that two conditions should be fulfilled for comparative analysis: (1) “Data must be gathered on two or more cases”, as in this research data are from BC-Skills course contents and pragmatics, (2) “There must be an attempt to explain

rather than only to describe”, as in this research, theoretical compatibility has been explored (p. 11). In the light of Pickvance’s recommendations, similarities/compatibility between pragmatics concepts and BC-Skills course contents have been explored, and implications have been drawn for the inclusion and explicit instruction of pragmatics concepts in business communication courses. Ross (2005) considers an investigation into a curriculum as a qualitative inquiry and stresses upon focusing on context, significance, and elucidation of a phenomenon through evaluation and appraisal to develop an understanding of particular problems and to devise their solutions. Ross (2005) believes that this sort of inquiry “can enable practitioners to increase their consciousness about various educational phenomena”, and that such investigations can bring improvements in educational policies and practices (pp. 170-171).

Development of the Instrument: A thorough investigation of the course contents was conducted to find out the explicit and implicit presence of various concepts of pragmatics in the course contents recommended by Higher Education Commission of Pakistan (2012). Through a rigorous review of relevant literature on pragmatics and business communication skills, the researcher identified the BC-Skills course items compatible with pragmatics, and an adapted model has been devised.

The adapted model is presented in Table 3.1 below:

Table 3.1

Adapted Model for Comparative Analysis of Business Communication Course Contents and Pragmatics Concepts

Column A: Business Communication Course Contents	Column B: Relevant Pragmatics Contents as per the Theoretical Framework
Language as a means of communication	Pragmatics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication cycle • Verbal and nonverbal Communication • Benefits of communication for individuals and organizations 	Sociopragmatics, pragmalinguistics, and metapragmatics Cross-cultural awareness through pragmatics Pragmatic meaning
Barriers in communication	

Interpersonal communication	Pragmatic context & shared knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflicts, conflicts resolution, negotiation, • Politeness • Bias avoidance • Disclosure and trust 	Speaker's intentions and listener's interpretation Presupposition Frame and schemata Routine and genre
Cultural variables and cultural diversity	Gricean cooperative principle/maxims
Business correspondence principles	Flouting of cooperative maxims
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seven Cs • Prewriting, drafting, and post writing • Audience analysis • Good news, bad news, neutral news (organizational plans) 	Implicature Entailment Politeness Face, Face Saving Acts, Face Threatening Acts

Table 3.1 presents the items from both business communication (extracted from the four ESP/business communication courses from HEC's (2012) prescribed curriculum) and pragmatics to establish relevance between the two fields. The table provides a base for the comparative analysis i.e. compatibility/relevance between pragmatics concepts and BC-Skills contents.

Procedure: The relevant pragmatics concepts and BC-Skills contents have been discussed under devised thematic heads (see section 4.1 in Chapter 4). An overview of the procedures adopted for this segment of research is presented in Figure 3.2 below:

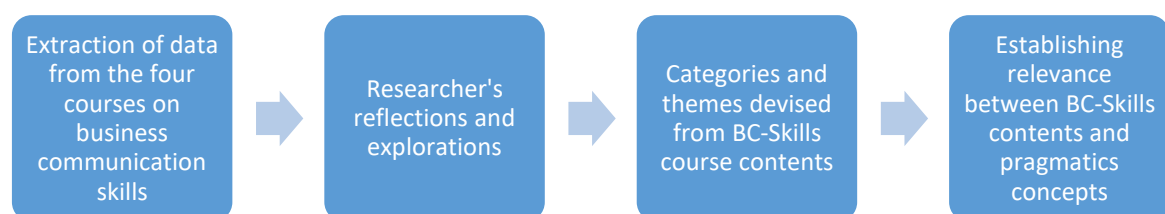


Figure 3.2: An overview of procedures for the comparative analysis

An overview of section 4.1 (in Chapter 4 of Data Analysis) comprising results and analysis pertaining to this section 3.3.1 is shown as under:

Table 3.2

The Comparative Analysis of BC-Skills Contents and Pragmatics Concepts

Sr.	Analysis and Interpretation of BC-Skills Relevant Contents vis-à-vis Pragmatics Concepts
i.	Extraction of contents in relation to business communication skills (BC-Skills) in the four ESP/business communication courses
ii.	The proportion of the BC-Skills contents in the courses
iii.	Classification of BC-Skills contents in spoken/written/nonverbal communication genres
iv.	Comparative analysis of the BC-Skills contents vis-à-vis pragmatics concepts
v.	Discussion on the compatibility of the BC-Skills contents and pragmatics concepts (and their explicit instruction)

3.3.2 Students' Written Discourse Completion Tasks (Data collected through single-subject experimental design from students in the form of WDCTs)

Instrumentation: In this segment of the study, the students of BBA (of single-subject experimental group) were taught the pragmatics concepts relevant to business communication. For this purpose, modified lectures were prepared. The literature reveals that many researchers have employed such methods for data generation/collection in empirical studies on pragmatics and they are convinced that methodology adopted for improving learners' pragmatic competence has a significant role (Gharibeh, Mirzaee, & Yaghoubi-Notash, 2016; Krisnawati, 2011). Explicit instruction is also deemed beneficial since "the role of explicit teaching is primarily to facilitate awareness-raising" (Moody, 2014: p. 41). The students were assigned to write four WDCTs as a pretest, and the same as posttest after the treatment which included explicit instruction of pragmatics concepts along with relevant BC-Skills contents. The WDCTs required the students to write two

letters, one memorandum, and one memorandum report in response to a case for each. Thus, the four WDCTs are instruments of data collection, and the learners' produced scripts of pretest and posttest are the data.

Selection of Sample: For the present research (in terms of data collection from students), the researcher has to rely on “accessible or available population”, as Gay, Mills and Airasian (2012) assert that “a distinction is made between the population to which the researcher would ideally like to generalize study results, the target population, and the population from which the researcher can realistically select subjects” (p. 130). Gay, Mills and Airasian (2012) further assert that collecting data from a true representative sample or entire population “is near impossible” and thus a researcher may rely on accessible population.

Owing to the limitations on accessing the whole population, the researcher employed the convenience sampling technique which “is the process of including whoever happens to be available at the time” (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012, p. 140). Convenience sampling is advantageous since it is simple and it allows the available participants to be taken as sample, with a limitation of providing a “description of population” from which the sample is chosen and optimizing generalizations of the results (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012, p. 141). For the collection of data from students, a sample of 34 students of BBA level was accessible for the researcher. Each learner was administered four WDCTs in the pretest and the same four WDCTs in the posttest, and thus a total number of 136 WDCTs of the pretest were available to be compared with 136 WDCTs of the posttest.

Selection of Single-Subject Experimental Design: Single group experimental design, also called ‘single-subject experimental design’, has been used to collect data from the students. Gay, Mills, and Airasian (2012) opine that either an individual or a group of individuals can be considered as ‘subject’. This design (used in the present study) is also called “one group pretest-posttest design” in which the learners are pretested, undergo treatment, and are posttested. Neuman (2013) also recommends this research design as it can measure “the dependent variable before and after the treatment” (p. 293). Single-subject (or single group) experimental design focuses on tracing the effects of intervention or treatment on the dependent variable; data analysis can be personalized in this research design; repeated measurements can be used; tactful instruments can be used to effectively measure the learners' performance in quantifiable terms before and after the intervention (McCormick, 1995; Bisesi & Raphael, 1995). In this research, a group of thirty four learners of business communication is taken as the ‘single-subject experimental group’.

Justification of Research Design and Instrument: Single group experimental design is considered highly effective since the participants remain the same and thus the same group serves the functions of control and experimental group, since only one variable is examined during the experiment in response to a specific treatment, and replication and variability can be located within and across the individuals for the sake of generalization (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006; Palincsar & Parecki, 1995). Creswell (2014) and Neuman (2013) also consider ‘single group pretest-posttest design’ effective as learners’ evaluations can be effectively conducted before and after the treatment. In the light of these theoreticians’ assertions: (1) pretest and posttest of the ‘single group’ were collected before and after the treatment, and (2) the scores of these pretest and posttest were compared. The obtained results are presented and analyzed in section 4.2.2 (of Chapter 4) and findings are drawn.

Single-subject experimental design, owing to the availability of pretest-posttest in the pre-treatment phase and post-treatment phase and pretest-posttest scores for comparison, overcomes the problems related to not having a control or comparison group. The same experimental group serves the purpose of both the control group and the experimental group. The participants in single-subject experimental study are the same and the effects of treatment on them can be measured and analyzed. The impact/effectiveness of training, instruction, change, treatment, or any other interruption can be measured in before-treatment and after-treatment phases; such impact can be in the form of change in behaviour, perception, or performance (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012).

For pretest and posttest, four written discourse completion tasks (WDCTs) have been used. Bardovi-Harlig (2013) endorses the use of WDCTs and defines them as “written production questionnaires which provide scenarios to which participants respond” (p. 71). Cohen and Shively (2007) also support the use of WDCTs and consider them as “an indirect means for assessing spoken language in the form of a written production measure” (p. 196). Bardovi-Harlig (2013) favours designing and evaluating pragmatics tasks in the form of simulations to examine the subjects/learners’ implicit and/or explicit knowledge and for “the measurement of pragmatic development” (p. 68). Su (2010) also advocates the use of WDCTs as they are less complex and more elaborated and they provide a wider amount of useful data to make further explorations. Bardovi-Harlig (2013) further asserts the importance of language samples for data collection and analysis to trace content variables in such samples (p. 70). Thijittang (2010) also favours the use of WDCTs as they provide the participants’ written responses much similar to those of their expected spoken responses

in a similar situation (p. 49). WDCTs and other forms of DCTs have been used in many empirical studies on exploring the impact of instruction of pragmatics e.g. Xiao-le (2011), Gholamia and Aghaeib (2012), and Mirzaei, Roohani and Esmaeili (2012). Effectiveness of instruction can be measured through an analysis of the learning process; the success of instruction can be gauged how explicit instruction has produced an impact; the improvement caused by instructional intervention can be investigated through both quantitative and qualitative ways; sociopragmatic base may be broadened through explicit instruction of pragmatics for the development of target communication patterns (Moody, 2014). In line with afore-narrated studies, the researcher assumes that WDCTs allow for control over contextual variables (e.g. status, power, and gender) and data can be collected as a consistent body of tangible materials for the investigation of the impact of explicit instruction on the learners' performance. In the present study, the selection of WDCTs as primary data collection tool is made due to their applicability to the research design as well as their advantages, specifically in terms of measuring the learners' performance. The WDCTs used in pretest and posttest are attached as Appendix-IV.

The rationale for Choosing Letters and Memoranda as WDCTs: Written business communication is performed in the form of letters, memoranda, emails, reports, press releases, etc. These genres also make a significant part of the course contents of ESP/business communication courses (see Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1 in Chapter 4). WDCTs are widely used and supported by various empirical researchers. "Written production tasks provide greater opportunity for learners to draw on explicit knowledge" (Bardovi-Harlig, 2013, p. 74). Business documents e.g. letters, memoranda can be used as data to analyze the implicit or explicit presence of pragmatics in them (Bargiela-Chiappini & Harris, 1996). To maintain variety, four WDCTs (two letters and one memorandum and one memorandum report, all of different nature) have been used as instruments, as Bardovi-Harlig (2013) recommends: "Changing the features of a task may promote the use of learners' explicit pragmatic knowledge" (p. 74).

Development of the Instrument and Procedure: Lesson plans (attached as Appendix-I) were developed with the help of the theoretical framework. The researcher himself taught these modified lectures to the experimental group. The students were administered WDCTs as pretest and posttest, before and after the treatment respectively. The data have been analyzed to identify the presence/reflection of pragmatics concepts with the help of a rubric

evaluation (attached as Appendix-II) to ascertain improvement in the learners' performance as a result of the treatment.

The students in the experimental group were of BBA third semester. The students were already exposed to the contents of business communication in their first and second semesters. Before the experiment, they had studied another course of business communication in their third semester. It is assumed that they were implicitly matured enough to understand pragmatics concepts. The experiment period comprised ten classes (two for pre-test, six classes for treatment i.e. explicit instruction of pragmatics concepts, and two for post-test). During the treatment period (of six classes i.e. 3-4 weeks), the students were involved in classroom discussions and were also encouraged to make exploration on pragmatics concepts from the business community (see Appendix-III). It is assumed that these comprehensive measures contributed to their improvements in large proportions.

The sample was taken from one university in Islamabad: COMSATS University Islamabad. The researcher himself taught the students and collected the data on the pattern of pretest-treatment-posttest. This segment of the research aims at exploring the impact of teaching explicit teaching of pragmatics on the students' learning performance in the WDCTs. For the analysis of data thus obtained, Lingli and Wannaruk's (2010) recommendations were followed: while analyzing data of WDCTs, the focus should be on learners' performance in the form of appropriate contents, approaches, and procedures, and should not be on correct expression. The WDCTs were evaluated on a 10 point rubric and the quantified results have been analyzed through SPSS.

In this study, there were many factors beyond the researcher's control e.g. students' interest in business communication and classroom activities, their interest/inclination towards attempting WDCTs, their linkage with business in the form of a family business or as a freelancer (though it is assumed as a positive point), their awareness of the business world through practical involvement or information sought through acquaintances, their understanding and application capability of other relevant subjects on business and management, their attitude towards learning any extra contents (e.g. pragmatics concepts are used in this experiment), their interest in their field of studies (i.e. BBA, in this case), and their level of motivation while attempting pretest and/or posttest.

Like other experimental designs, single-subject experimental design ('single group' or 'one group pretest-posttest') is not void of limitations. The available literature on exploring the effects of explicit instruction of pragmatics also comprises certain examples of using single-subject experimental design. Riddiford and Joe (2010) used a single-subject experimental group with a smaller sample of 11 participants to track the development of sociopragmatic skills. They used more than one measurement to overcome the limitations of this design. Taguchi (2011) also used a single-subject experimental design with a smaller sample of 48 students, in a qualitative investigation of the dynamic and complex nature of pragmatics development among learners. In the present study, four WDCTs have been used both in pretest and posttest to overcome the limitations of this design. All the WDCTs have been assessed with a 10 points rubric on a 1-5 scale. Descriptive statistics (Exploratory Factors Analysis in SPSS) have been used to explore the impact of explicit instruction of pragmatics on learners' performance in pretest vs. posttest. Moreover, this segment of the present study is one among the four segments. Thus, it is assumed that the limitations of single-subject design have been overcome to a greater extent.

3.3.3 Teachers' Interviews on their Reflections and Opinions

Instrumentation: Semi-structured interviews have been employed to collect teachers' opinions on the effectiveness of inclusion and explicit instruction of pragmatics for improving business communication skills of business students. For this purpose, a purposive sample of fifteen teachers was chosen, who have taught business communication courses at the university level. Gay, Mills and Airasian (2012) favour a smaller sample for qualitative research owing to participants' availability, willingness, and utility for the research (p. 142). Here, in this case, the larger group i.e. population comprises all those teachers who have taught the relevant courses, and the sample comprises those teachers who volunteered and were interviewed as respondents.

Justification of the Sample: A purposive, convenient, volunteer sample of fifteen teachers, who have recurrently taught business communication skills, were interviewed to seek their opinions on the utility of pragmatics contents in business communication courses. The sample of TBCs meets multiple forms of purposive sampling (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012): (1) It is partially intensity sampling as the respondents' reflections on various levels of the research topic are available e.g. on classroom existing situation, students' future aspirations of their careers and their communication needs, teachability of pragmatics and its effectiveness; (2) It is criteria sampling as the sample of TBCs is chosen on certain

criteria i.e. they have studied pragmatics (they have an MPhil/MS degree in relevant field) and have taught at least three courses on business communication skills to students of business studies; (3) It is also homogenous sampling as the TBCs-respondents are almost similar in their experience and education; (4) It is also random purposive sampling as they are purposively selected from various universities of Islamabad/Rawalpindi.

Description of the Instrument: The purpose of collecting data through teachers' interviews is to seek their opinions on: (1) aims of business communication skills courses and the ways and methods they use in this regard, (2) compatibility between recommended text/supplement books and course contents, and students' later professional needs, (3) effectiveness of including pragmatics concepts and its explicit instruction in business communication courses to improve the students' business communication skills, and (4) suitable teaching methodology for explicit instruction of pragmatics (see Appendix-V). TBC's interviews have been audio-recorded, transcribed, and analyzed under thematic headings in Chapter 4 (see section 4.3).

3.3.4 Business Administrators' Interviews for their Opinions on Inclusion of Pragmatics in Business Communication

Instrumentation: In this research, those professionals are considered as business administrators (BAs) who are working at administrative/management positions in business organizations, and they have a relevant business education i.e. BBA/MBA or similar qualification. Since, lived experiences of users are the most valuable sources of data (Gill, 2013, p. 79), thus, business administrators have been interviewed to seek their experience-based reflective views to identify pragmatic communication requirements in the contemporary indigenous organizations. Hutchinson (2005) opines that field experts can provide an in-depth insight into the matter under exploration since they "order and make sense of their environment" and their interviews help a researcher "to verify, clarify, or alter what they thought happened, to achieve a full understanding of an incident, and to take into account the 'lived' experience of participants" (p. 124).

The sample of BAs-respondents is as per the pattern of random purposive sampling as Gay, Mills, and Airasian (2012) recommend this technique to add credibility to the study when the sample size is smaller. Elo, et al. (2014) opine that "purposive sampling is suitable for qualitative studies where the researcher is interested in informants who have the best knowledge concerning the research topic" and that the researcher can decide on a sample,

the form of sampling, participants, and sites, etc. (p. 4). A smaller sample of suitable key-informants is enough to have their thoughtful reflections in response to the researcher's queries as per research objectives: the "participants' perspectives, as described by the researcher, form the very core of a qualitative research study" (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012, p. 142). In this study, the sample size of BAs-respondents is 15. The respondents have been chosen on the criteria: (1) they have a degree in business studies so that they know business management and business communication, thus they are alumni of business communication, (2) they are working at administrative positions with a minimum experience of three years or running their own business as an entrepreneur or working in both afore-narrated roles.

Justification: Interviews help collect information as (1) they are a flexible and economical means for collecting data on ethnographic, social, and anthropological perspectives of a specific community; (2) they are useful to evaluate findings while doing field research; (3) they provide in-depth and additional insight into community events; (4) they assist the researcher in extending the contact list of further data sources (individuals, groups, organizations, etc.); (5) they help to explore how the respondents/interviewees are influenced by their peers and context (Assimakopoulos, 2007, p. 12). Bardovi-Harlig (2013) endorses data collection from the people of specific research fields to explore their constraints, choices, interactions, peer influence, and effects of their actions. Ritchie (2003) also advocates the use of interviews in qualitative research to investigate "people's personal perspectives", "personal context within which the research phenomena are located", "detailed subject coverage", and "responses to complex systems, processes or experiences" (pp. 36-37).

Development of Instrument: The queries asked from business administrators focus on their insightful reflective views on business communication, the role of academic learning, and needed revisions in the course contents. The BAs-respondents' views are valuable on inclusion and explicit instruction of pragmatics in the courses on business communication skills. Their implicit learning of pragmatic communicative competence has also been explored.

Procedure: Those business professionals were contacted who have a relevant degree in business administration/management sciences and have studied business communication courses, and are currently working at administrative positions in local business organizations or Pakistani chapters of multinational corporate organizations. The

respondents were informed of the purpose of the research. They were informed of the present course contents. Basic pragmatics concepts were introduced and explained to them. These business professionals were interviewed to seek their opinions and reflections on the role, importance, requirements, and professionals' preferences of communication skills. The researcher also sought their opinions on the contribution of business communication courses in their day-to-day business dealings, and their recommendations to modify these courses. Their opinions and suggestions on explicit inclusion of pragmatics were also sought. (The interview guide developed for this purpose is attached as Appendix-V).

The steps adopted for data collection from key-informants (i.e. teachers and business professionals) are shown in the figure below:

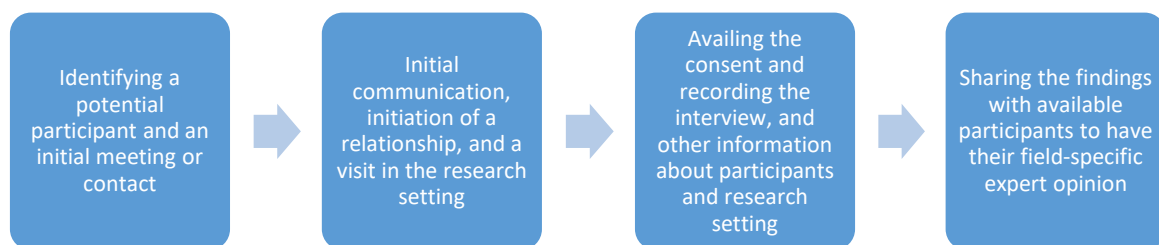


Figure 3.3: The steps adopted for data collection from TBCs and BAs, adapted from Gay, Mills and Airasian (2012)

A preliminary session, before the formal conduct of the interview, was held with each respondent. The course contents and pragmatics concepts were shared and discussed. Only those respondents were selected who felt comfortable answering the queries. Moreover, only diversely experienced professionals working in administrative positions were selected as respondents. Owing to their vast/diverse experience, the selected respondents could conveniently answer the queries both on course contents as well as on pragmatics. The researcher contacted 35 prospective respondents, but only those 15 respondents were selected who were both willing/available and were at ease in responding to the queries asked in semi-structured interviews.

3.4 Triangulation of data and Synthesis of Results/Analyses

Triangulation is often used in qualitative researches. In triangulation, multiple methods are used, diverse data collection strategies are employed and varied data sources are approached. The purpose of triangulation is to obtain a comprehensive picture of what is being investigated or studied and to 'cross-check' the obtained information. The potency of a mixed method design lies in gathering information in many ways, rather than relying

on one method, often two, three, or more methods are used in such a way that the strength of one method/tool compensates the weakness of the others (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012, p. 393).

The data have been triangulated in the present study since triangulation is the “use of varied data sources in a study” to “search for convergence of, or consistency among, evidence from multiple and varied daily sources (observations/interviews; one participant and another; interviews/documents)” (Gast, 2010, p. 12). Seliger and Shohamy (1989) also approve collecting data through various methods because a researcher can “validate the findings through triangulation” and “the reliability of the conclusions” is ensured. (p. 123). Gay, Mills and Airasian (2012) also recommend the triangulation of data for its diverse traits of “multiple methods, data collection strategies, and data sources to get a more complete picture of the topic under study and to crosscheck information” (p. 427). Ritchie (2003) also supports triangulation in qualitative studies owing to its “use of different methods and sources to check the integrity of, or extend, inferences drawn from the data”, its trait of “investigating the ‘convergence’ of both the data and the conclusions derived from them”, and its attribute “of ‘validating’ qualitative research evidence” (p. 43).

The data, collected from different sources and through different tools, are organized, categorized, analyzed, and synthesized. The present research aims at finding ways to improve course contents of business communication to equip the learners with the knowledge, skills, and applicability that they need at their later workplaces. Hutchinson (2005) considers such research with practical implications as applied research. Following activities were performed before, during, or after the collection of data from diverse sources and procedures: detailed descriptive information of respondents was recorded, sub-segments/themes were identified of the data obtained through comparative analysis and interviews. At some places figures/visuals are created, causes and effects are identified where ever possible, analyses and findings are contextualized, and results are synthesized and matched with the theoretical foundations of the study. On the whole, clear links have been established between data, their analyses, and interpretations.

Data have been presented under four segments in Chapter 4. For the analysis and interpretation of the data obtained from TBCs and BAs, thematic analysis has been used and each segment (see sections 4.3 and 4.4) is divided into sub-segments/themes. Gay, Mills and Airasian (2012) believe: “The qualitative researcher constructs meaning by identifying patterns and themes that emerge during the data analysis” (p. 466). Gay, Mills

and Airasian (2012) support (1) data analysis through “cyclical, iterative process of reviewing data for common topics or themes” and interpretation of data for the sake of “connections, common aspects, and linkages among the data pieces, categories, and patterns” to seek answers to four queries: “What is important in the data? Why is it important? What can be learned from it? So what?”, (2) analysis through interpretation involving questions raised by the researcher about the study and “noting implications that may be drawn without actually drawing them”, and (3) connecting the findings and interpretations with the researcher’s personal experience “based on intimate knowledge and understanding of the research setting” (pp. 478-479). At the end of Chapter 4, the obtained results have been synthesized, and thus a fusion of results along with a composite of analyses is presented. The process of analyses for the data obtained from TBCs and Bas has been briefly shown in Figure 3.4 below:

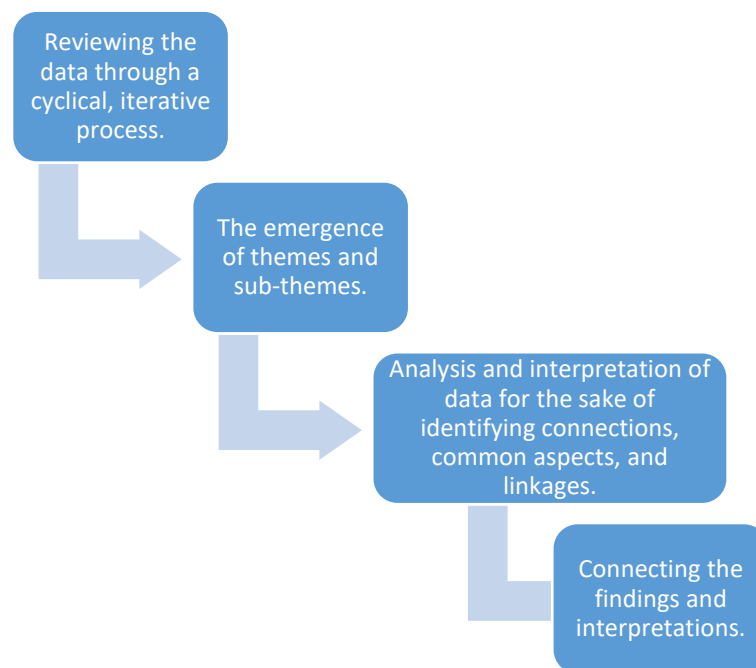


Figure 3.4: The steps adopted for data analyses and interpretation from TBCs and BAs, adapted from Gay, Mills and Airasian (2012)

3.5 Justification for Smaller Sample Size in Qualitative Research

The researcher has chosen a sample of fifteen respondents each for semi-structured interviews of teachers of business communication and business administrators. The sample size in the single-group experimental design is also smaller. Gay, Mills and Airasian (2012) support the smaller size of samples in qualitative research:

- i. The constraints like time, finances, participants' availability, and interest may limit the size of the sample.
- ii. In qualitative researches, smaller sample size does not affect much the reliability and usefulness of the results of a study.
- iii. Smaller representative samples are enough when they provide sufficient information on the research topic for data saturation. (p. 143)

Moreover, in the present study, gender and other demographic variables (other than those mentioned with each instrument of data collection in section 3.3) have not been made a part of data analysis and interpretation since no significant effects of these variables were observed during the data collection process and in the gathered data.

3.6 Validity and Reliability of Instruments

Validity concerns the trait of an instrument to measure what it is meant for and appropriateness of the data collected through this instrument for desired interpretations whereas reliability concerns the consistency of an instrument in measuring the phenomena under-explorations (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012, p. 160). The validity of instruments of data collection in this research is 'Construct Validity' since the contents are mass convergent, and they relate to the evidence obtained from respondents (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012, p. 479). The instruments of data collection aim at obtaining the respondents' (teachers and business administrators) real-time reflective views and perceptions. The opinions of field experts (from education, linguistics, and business administration) are sought to include their experienced insights for the development and refinement of data collection instruments with validity and trustworthiness (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012, p. 479).

In qualitative research, reliability is a synonym of dependability and consistency. To ensure/manage reliability, "variety of techniques (e.g. interviews, participation, photographs, document studies) to record observations consistently in qualitative studies" can be employed to ensure reliability, "range of data sources" and "multiple measure methods" (Neuman, 2013, p. 218). "Reliability is the degree to which a test consistently measures whatever it is measuring" and "In everyday English, reliability means dependability or trustworthiness" (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012, pp. 164-165). The term 'reliability' is often replaced with the term 'trustworthiness' in qualitative research. For ensuring the credibility and trustworthiness of qualitative data, Gay, Mills, and Airasian

(2012) recommend the following checklist, shown in the table below along with the researcher's remarks and comments.

Table 3.3:

Application of Gay, Mills and Airasian's (2012) Recommend Six Points Checklist for Credibility and Trustworthiness.

Sr.	Gay, Mills and Airasian's (2012) Recommend Checklist (p. 479)	Researcher's Remarks	Compatibility
i.	Are the data based on one's observation or hearsay?	The respondents (TBCs and BAs) share their observations and experiences.	Yes
ii.	Are observations corroborated by others?	The respondents in each category are fifteen, and their narrations are corroborated, either fully or with minor variations.	Yes
iii.	In what circumstances was an observation made or reported?	The respondents shared their reflections based on their wide and diverse experiences in their respective fields.	Yes
iv.	How reliable are those (participants/respondents) providing the data?	The respondents meet certain pre-requisites (mentioned in sampling justification).	Yes
v.	What motivations may have influenced a participant's report?	It is assumed that the respondents have given a true picture as field experts.	Yes
vi.	What biases may have influenced how observation was made or reported?	The respondents do not seem to have any biases since they reported?	Yes

are not directly involved in the present research.

For ensuring the trustworthiness of the instruments of data collection, the researcher sought the opinions of six experts: two each from the disciplines of linguistics, business administration, and education. All these experts are PhDs in their relevant fields and are active researchers, practitioners, and educators. The experts' opinions were incorporated to refine the data collection instruments. Gay, Mills and Airasian's (2012) support such efforts in qualitative research for the sake of trustworthiness.

Trustworthiness is also ensured through triangulation in case of many research questions since triangulation helps in addressing those research questions from different perspectives (Gast, 2010; Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012; Ritchie, 2003). In qualitative research, "Qualitative methods (are) used to collect primarily descriptive narrative and visual data; analysis (is) based on identifying themes and patterns; triangulation (is) used to ensure trustworthiness of data" (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012, p. 120). Gay, Mills and Airasian (2012) further opine that "Along with understanding, a feature essential to the validity of qualitative research", trustworthiness "is established by addressing the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of study findings" (p. 633).

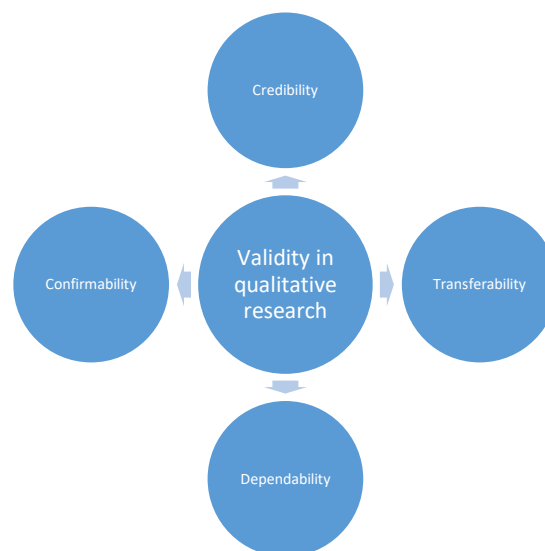


Figure 3.5: Criteria of validity in qualitative research

Gay, Mills and Airasian (2012) assert that credibility is based on a "researcher's ability to take into account all of the complexities that present themselves in a study and to

deal with patterns that are not easily explained”; transferability is based on the “researcher’s belief that everything is context-bound”; dependability is based on “stability of the data”; and confirmability is based on “neutrality or objectivity of the data collected” (p. 393). A respondent’s valid and clear narrative based on his/her lived experiences and triangulation of data also ensures trustworthiness (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012). Neuman (2013) considers validity as ‘truthfulness’ and ‘authenticity’ through knowing the truthful accounts of the life of those people who are spending it in a specific setting. Neuman (2013) further opines: “In most qualitative studies, we emphasize capturing an inside view and providing a detailed account of how the people we study understand the event” through seeking “an insider’s views to others” (p. 218). In the light of the aforementioned views of the theoreticians, the reflective views of infield professionals (teachers and business administrators) as ‘key-informants’ are included in the present research.

3.7 Summary of the Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted before the actual conduct of the present research. A qualitative-pluralistic approach was adopted for the pilot study. A qualitative-pluralistic approach is widely recommended for researches in business and management (Sinkovics & Alfoldi, 2012; Gummesson, 2005). The data collection for the pilot study comprised three major segments: (1) comparative analysis of course contents and pragmatics (this segment is further expanded in the dissertation), (2) semi-structured interviews of business communication instructors, and (3) feedback from 120 students who were taught as treatment group on the pattern of single-subject experimental design. Modified lesson plans with an amalgamation of selected contents from pragmatics relevant to the course contents of business communication were developed for the experiment for explicit instruction of pragmatics.

The following figure presents the procedures adopted for the pilot study:

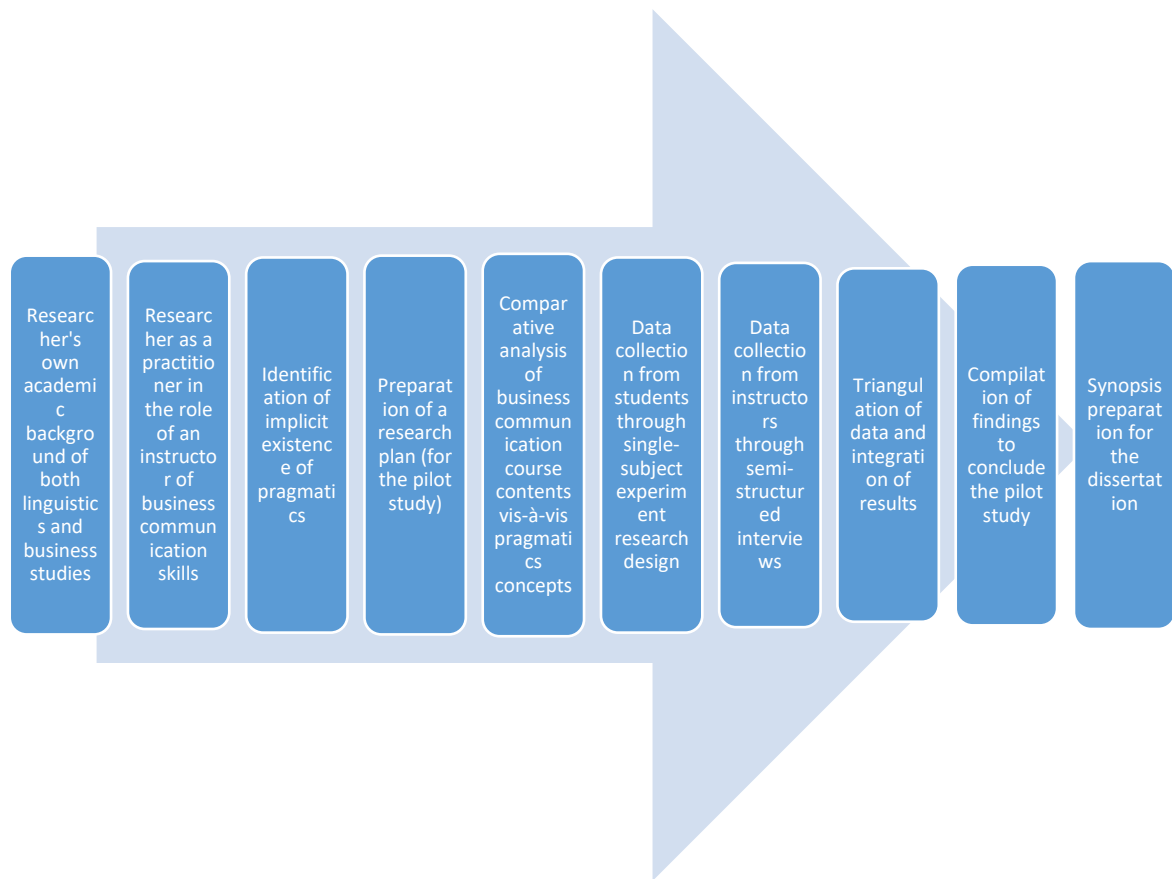


Figure 3.6: Steps from the pilot study to synopsis

The procedures adopted for the collection of data and a brief narration of results and conclusion are presented below:

(1) The pilot study explored the usefulness of pragmatics concepts in teaching business communication. For this purpose, data was generated through the comparison of course contents and selected pragmatics concepts. Through the comparative analysis, pragmatics concepts (e.g. communicators' intentions and interpretations during a communicative event, communication context, cultural schemata, barriers, Gricean cooperative maxims, and their flouting, implicature, and various dimensions of face) were found compatible/harmonized with business communication course contents on communication components, communication cycle, Seven Cs and cultural variables.

(2) The opinions of teachers of business communication were sought through semi-structured interviews. For this segment of the pilot study, a purposive/convenient sample of ten teachers from various universities in Islamabad were interviewed to seek their

opinions on the utility of pragmatics concepts in business communication courses. The teachers were asked questions on the following themes:

- i. Aims of business communication courses
- ii. Recommended textbooks and course contents
- iii. Inclusion and explicit instruction of pragmatics concepts in business communication courses

The teachers shared their opinions on the following themes:

- i. Requirements of contemporary business organizations
- ii. Empowering business communication instructors through the knowledge of pragmatics
- iii. Awareness of relevant cultural, social, professional perspectives while educating business students
- iv. Awareness from pragmatics and its contribution in infield business communication
- v. Delivering education to business students to prepare them for their future roles with explicit instruction of pragmatics
- vi. Developing students' communication skills through simulated situations
- vii. Handling the cases and situations in business

The teachers were found convinced that many of the course/supplement books do not align with the needs of contemporary indigenous business organizations. The teachers also agreed that pragmatics concepts are compatible with business communication and that business students can benefit from explicit instruction/learning of pragmatics both in their academics and in their professional careers.

(3) Through the review of literature, in the light of Swan's (2007) 'Pragmatics A' and 'Pragmatics B', modified lessons were prepared. Communication cycle, Seven Cs, aspects and dimensions of communication—levels and kinds of communication, and intercultural and cross-cultural communication—were selected from business communication. Pragmatics concepts on speaker's intentions, presuppositions, frame, listener's interpretation, schematic differences as barriers/noise, and shared knowledge and context were taught relating them to communication cycle and components i.e. sender, message, receiver, feedback, channel/medium, and context. Gricean cooperative maxims of quality, quantity, relevance, and manner were taught with seven principles of business communication i.e. completeness, conciseness, consideration, concreteness, clarity,

courtesy, and correctness. Pragmatics concepts on schemata, frame, prototypical version, script, cultural schemata, direct and indirect meaning were taught along with course contents on culture, cross-cultural differences, intercultural communication, interpersonal communication, verbal and nonverbal communication. Pragmatics concepts on inference, reference, referring expression, presupposition, entailment, co-text, and context were also related to course contents. In one lecture, an overall relation of pragmatics with the course contents was discussed.

The feedback of 120 business students was sought after they were taught the pragmatics concepts through explicit instruction along with the relevant course contents. This segment of data was collected in the form of answers to open-ended questions. The research design was devised according to single-subject experiment which is 'applied research to evaluate intervention effectiveness with individuals' (Gast, 2010, p. 13). For this study, 120 students of COMSATS University Islamabad (all from BS programmes of business studies) were taken as a convenient sample. These students were taught course contents of business communication skills. Afterward, they were explicitly taught pertinent pragmatics concepts. These participants were, then, asked to answer open-ended questions on the effectiveness of pragmatics concepts in business communication. The students reported the knowledge of pragmatics beneficial in improving business communication skills. They also reported that pragmatics will be helpful in their professional careers to meet the pragmatic communication requirements.

The pilot study revealed that pragmatics concepts are relevant to the course contents of business communication. Since business communication courses aim at producing professional communicative competence among the students of business studies for their future professional roles, the researcher assumes that the contents of such courses need to be redesigned to prepare the learners for the communicative situations they are likely to face during their professional careers. The review of the literature revealed that explicit instruction of pragmatics is beneficial in meeting the real-life communication requirements, the diverse and unfamiliar sociocultural contexts, understanding the socio-cultural communicative differences, and minimizing the misunderstandings in both conveying and receiving business messages. Explicit knowledge of pragmatics also facilitates in understanding the variations of quantity, quality, relevance, manner, politeness, face, face saving acts, face threatening acts, extroversion, proficiency, verbal and nonverbal features. The inclusion of pragmatics concepts in business communication courses and their explicit

instruction are expected to facilitate business students in professional communicative competence.

The pilot study also found (from the instructors' interviews) that pragmatics is useful to better meet the communication requirements of the contemporary business world. It is also revealed that pragmatics is facilitative in improving business communication skills for diverse social, cultural, and professional settings. The knowledge of pragmatics can also help business students in handling the cases and situations in classroom activities. Acquisition and afterward application of pragmatic knowledge can be facilitated through explicit instruction, both through teaching and classroom activities. The instructors emphasized modifying the course contents according to the communicative situations the learners are likely to face during their professional careers. The instructors found pragmatics concepts beneficial in learning diverse aspects of professional communication.

The data obtained from students concerning their perceptions about the inclusion of pragmatics concepts in the course contents also supported the assumption that pragmatics is useful in learning business communication skills. The students find the pragmatics concepts on speaker's intentions, presuppositions, frame, listener's interpretation, barriers/noise, and shared context help understand 'communication cycle'. Gricean cooperative maxims are of great advantage in learning and practicing the 7Cs of business communication. Pragmatics concepts of schemata, frame, prototypical version, script, cultural schemata, direct and indirect meaning—benefit in understanding ethnicity, cross-cultural differences, interpersonal communication, intercultural communication, and verbal and nonverbal communication. Inference, reference, referring expression, presupposition, entailment, co-text, and context are also beneficial in business communication. The students perceive that the knowledge of pragmatics is beneficial in improving business communication skills since it helps in making cautious assumptions on purpose, audience, and occasion.

The data collected during the pilot study were triangulated, and the results were synthesized. The results and findings of the pilot study supported the notion presented in the proposed topic of this research i.e. inclusion and explicit instruction of pragmatics in business communication courses can benefit business students for professional communication competence. In the light of the findings of the pilot study, the synopsis of the present dissertation was prepared. The instruments of data collection were chosen, designed, and rectified (see section 3.3 in Chapter 3).

3.8 Summary of the Chapter

The researcher has presented the research approach and design for the present study. The tools for data collection along with their development, justification, procedures, and sampling have been discussed. A brief account of the pilot study has also been presented. The data have been analyzed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter presents results and analysis of data along with discussion and synthesis of results and composite discussion in the light of research objectives/questions. The first segment of this chapter comprises the comparative analysis of course contents of business communication skills (BC-Skills) and pragmatics concepts. The second segment presents results and analysis of data obtained from students' WDCTs taught through single-subject experimental design. The third segment comprises the data (along with brief commentary, interpretation of responses) obtained through interviews from teachers of business communication (TBCs) and its analysis. The fourth segment comprises the data (along with brief commentary, interpretation of responses) obtained from business administrators' (BAs) interviews and its analysis. At the end of the chapter, the results of these four segments have been synthesized and discussed.

4.1 Analysis and Interpretation of Business Communication Skills

Relevant Contents (from HEC Prescribed Courses) vis-à-vis Pragmatics Concepts

This section corresponds to the first subsidiary question and it explores the pragmatics concepts compatible with the course contents of business communication skills. The relevance of the selected pragmatics concepts with the course contents of business communication skills has been presented through comparative analysis. The sub-section 4.1.1 comprises the results of the exploration of course contents relevant to business communication skills from four courses "English I", "English II", "Oral Communication" and "Business Communication I", recommended by HEC (2012) for the BBA scheme of studies. The first two courses have been selected since "English I" has 37.5% and "English II" has 81.25% of allocated contents (in terms of weeks) relevant to business communication skills (see Table 4.2). Thus, these two courses are related to business communication skills, and they are included in this section. The relevance of pragmatics with the contents from business communication skills has been presented and examined in section 4.1.2 and discussed in section 4.1.3. The following figure shows the contents division for this section 4.1:

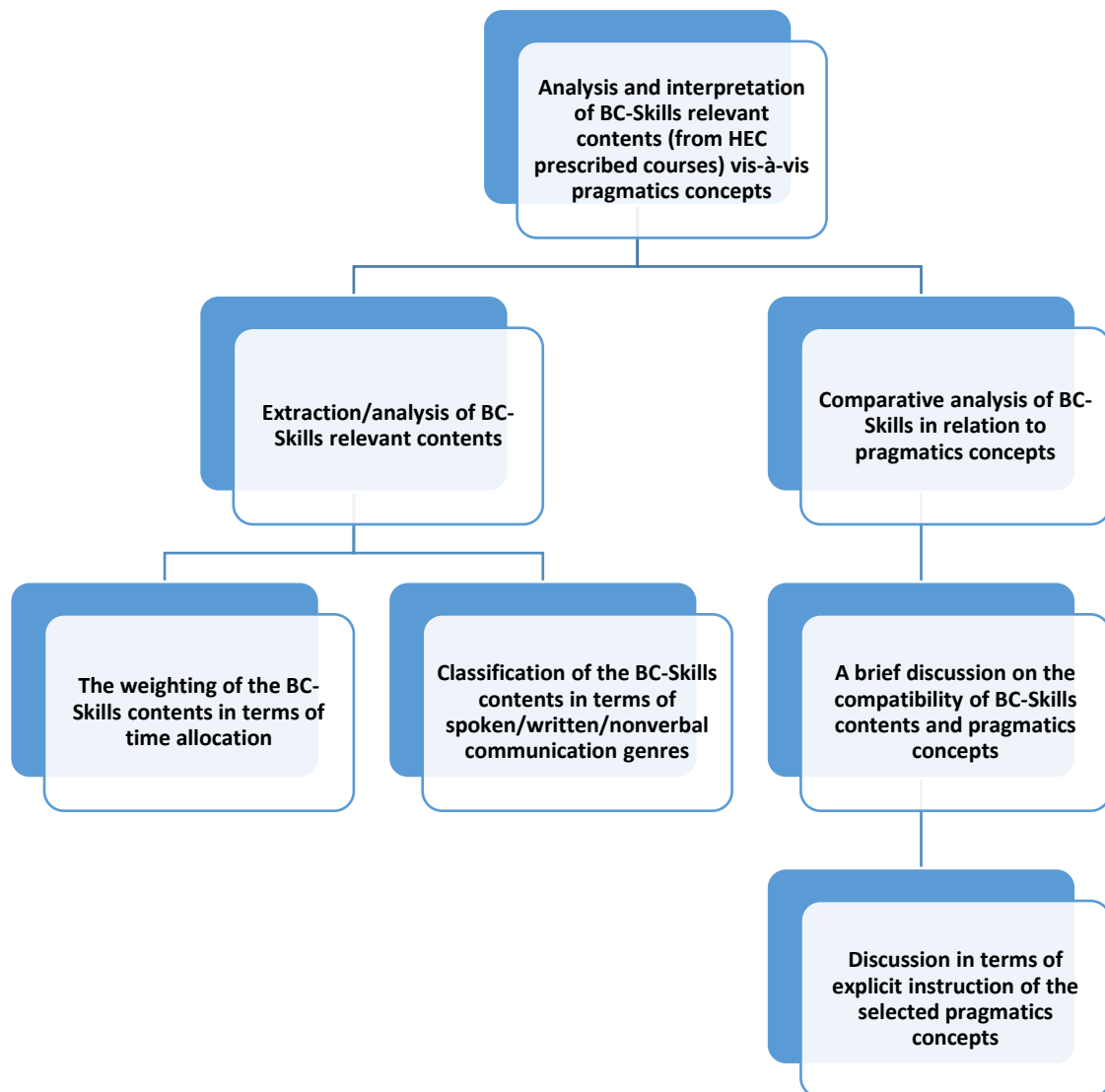


Figure 4.1: Contents division in section 4.1

4.1.1 Contents Relevant with Business Communication Skills in ESP/(Business) Communication Courses—Extraction and Brief Analysis

Higher Education Commission (2012) considers that the foremost learning outcomes of business studies are to enable business graduates to “communicate effectively and professionally and demonstrate the ability to create coherent written and oral statements with the diverse audience across the cultures replicating skills to analyze and synthesize information” (p. 11). For this purpose, 12 credits of four compulsory courses (English I, English II, Oral Communication and Business Communication I) have been designed for ESP/business communication skills in BBA scheme of studies. The following

table shows the extracted contents related to business communication skills from the four courses:

Table 4.1

The Courses, their Contents Related to Business Communication Skills and Allocated Time in Weeks (and the Genres/Skills Focused in the Contents)

Sr.	Course Title	Contents on Business Communication	Allocated Weeks for Teaching	The Focused Contents, Desired Outcomes	Genres/Skills in the
1	English I	Letter Writing, Good News, Bad News, Resume, Emails and Applications, 7 Cs of Communication, Introduction to Communication, Effective Presentation Skills, Public Speaking Skills, Persuasive Speeches	6 out of 16 weeks	Genres: Resume, Emails, Presentations Focused Skills: Writing and Speaking Skills Desired outcomes: General Awareness of the process and principles of communication	Letters, Oral
2	English II	Effective Communication in Business, The 7 C's of Effective Communication, The Process of Preparing Effective Business Messages, Strategies for Successful Speaking and Successful Listening, Strategies for Successful Informative and Persuasive Speaking, Strategies for Successful Interpersonal Communication, Making Oral	13 out of 16 weeks	Genres: letters, resume, meetings, oral presentations Focused skills: writing and speaking/ listening skills Desired outcomes:	

	Presentation, Building Good Will, Public Speaking and Oral Reporting, Additional Oral Communication Activities, Nonverbal Communication, Communications in Group Meetings, Writing Covering Letters and Resume		(i) awareness on the process and principles of organizational communication (ii) preparation and delivery of organizational messages
3	Oral Analyze Your Organization and Environment, Oral and Written Communication: A Comparison, Planning Steps of a Message/Speech, Barriers in Oral Communication, Persuasive Speaking, Oral Communication in Committee, Meetings, Symposia/Workshops, Oral Communication in E-mail and on Internet, Group Discussion/Panel Discussion /Role of Moderator, Facing Media, Communication in Personal Selling, Report Writing and Presentation, Knowing and Analyzing Audience, Motivating Audience, Character and Personality Traits of Audience, Internal and External Audience, Planning a Speech, Choosing the Right Language, Body Posture, Body Language, Proximity to Audience, Panel Discussion and Role Play	8 out of 16 weeks	Genres: letters, meetings, oral presentations, reports, emails, group/panel discussions, role plays events: symposia, workshops Focused skills: interpersonal skills, writing and speaking/listening/nonverbal skills Desired outcomes: (i) effective internal/external communication (ii) audience analysis (iii) awareness on the process and principles of organizational communication (iv) planning/preparation and

			delivery of diverse organizational speaking/writing genres
4	Business Communication I	Communication in Organizations, The basic communication process, Language, Nonverbal communication, Listening, Role of culture and diversity on communication in the workplace, Qualities of communication within business organizations, Methods of communicating in business organizations (Written, Oral, Electronic), Benefits of effective communication in your career, Challenge of communication in the global market, Background to intercultural communication, concept of culture, intercultural communication model, National cultural variables (Education, law and regulations, economics, politics, religion, social norms, language) Business communication and the technology, Managing information within organizations, History of technological developments, Challenges to the organization made by new technologies, E-mail, Understanding the Internet, Establishing Security, Other Communication Technologies, Managing Information outside Organizations, Managing Crisis	The whole course Genres: letters/emails, oral presentations (face to face), interviews, telephonic conversations Focused skills: (i) speaking, writing, nonverbal skills (i) computer skills Desired outcomes: (i) personality development for performing business operations (ii) managing ethnic/demographic diversity and interpersonal communication (iii) dealing with mass media people (iv) awareness on the principles/procedures of organizational communication

Communication, Strategies for Improving Oral Presentations, Strategies for an Effective Nonverbal Delivery, Strategies for Reducing Stage Fright, Signs of Discomfort, Interviewing, Interview Purposes, Interviewee's Responsibilities, Interviewer's Responsibilities, Telephoning, The Process of Preparing Effective Business Messages, Five Planning Steps, Indirect (inductive) Approach, Beginning and Endings and Opening Paragraphs/Closing Paragraphs of Business Messages, Self-disclosure and Trust, Persuasive Communication, Conflict Resolution and Negotiation, Conflict and Negotiation, Working in Teams, Confidence Building, how to be an Impressive Personality

(v) negotiation and conflict resolution

The following themes have been extracted from the course contents presented in Table 4.1 to locate the focused areas of learning outcomes for the students of BBA:

- i. Various aspects and dimensions of language as means of communication
- ii. The components and process of communication
- iii. Barriers and impediments in business communication
- iv. Aspects, dimensions, and hurdles in effective and productive interpersonal communication
- v. Collegial aspects of organizational communication
- vi. Cultural variables and cultural diversity and their role in communication
- vii. Inductive and deductive principles and approaches of business correspondence

The above-presented list of themes focuses on communication (i.e. business communication along with its types, aspects, dimensions, hurdles, outcomes, involved variables, principles, and approaches) which is also the focal point of linguistic pragmatics. Thus, it is inferred that there is an implicit reflection of pragmatics concepts in the course contents on business communication skills (in the four ESP/communication courses of BBA scheme of studies). This implication is further supported by TBCs' and BAs' responses in sections 4.3 and 4.4.

Table 4.2 below shows the focus on business communication (in these four courses) in terms of percentage:

Table 4.2

Percentage-Proportion of Contents of Business Communication in BBA Scheme of Studies

Sr.	Course Title	Allocated Weeks for Teaching	%age
1	English I	6 out of 16 weeks	37.5%
2	English II	13 out of 16 weeks	81.25%
3	Oral Communication	8 out of 16 weeks	50%
4	Business Communication I	16 out of 16 weeks	100%
Total	BC-Skills contents in four courses	43 weeks out of 64 weeks	67.19 %

The researcher has also identified the HEC recommended course contents on business communication skills pertaining to written genres of business correspondence (shown below in Figure 4.1, Column A). Besides written correspondence, some contents focus on certain genres of oral communication (as shown in column B below). Likewise, Column C presents the contents on desired learning outcomes in terms of nonverbal communication.

Column A Written Communication	Column B Oral/aural Communication	Column C Nonverbal Communication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Letters •Applications •Memorandum •Email Messages •Resume/Curriculum vitae •Reports •Proposals •Communication through electronic media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Oral presentations/Oral reporting •Speeches •Formal organizational meetings •Interviews •Group discussion/panel discussion •Listening •Communication with mass media (both print and electronic) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Effective nonverbal delivery •Overcoming signs of discomfort •Reducing stage fright •Appearance

Figure 4.2: Genres of communication in the course contents

4.1.2 Relevance of BC-Skills Contents with Pragmatics Concepts: Brief Discussion on their Compatibility

In this section, selected pragmatics concepts (communicators' intentions and interpretations during a communicative event, communication context, cultural schemata, barriers, Gricean cooperative maxims, and their flouting, implicature, and various dimensions of face) have been correlated with business communication course contents on language as a tool of communication, communication cycle, seven Cs, cultural variables, and communication barriers (extracted/summarized from data presented in Table 4.1). The following table presents a correlation of BC-Skills and relevant pragmatics concepts concerning the thematic discussion headings:

Table 4.3

Thematic Discussion Heads and Relevant Contents/Concepts from Business Communication and Pragmatics

Sr.	Thematic Heads	Discussion	BC-Skills Concepts	Contents/Pragmatics	Concepts
1	Language as a means of communication		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication, and communication • The basic process of communication • Language skills for business correspondence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • oral and written 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language as means of human communication in a specific context • Role of pragmatic competence in human interactions
2	'Communication cycle'/process and components of communication	basic of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sender • Message • Receiver • Feedback • Medium/channel • Context 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaker's intentions, desired meaning • Listener's expectations, probable interpretation • Language (contents of the message), 'said' and 'unsaid' of communication • Pragmatic context, shared knowledge
3	Barriers in communication		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distortion • Physical/technical/ social/psychological noise, • Personal/communal/national differences 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicators' pre-existing knowledge structures

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selective perception based on expectations/ attitudes/ beliefs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sociopragmatics, pragmalinguistics, metapragmatics, • Pragmatic meaning • Pragmatic context, shared knowledge • Speaker's intentions, listener's interpretation, • Presuppositions • Frame, prototypical version, script, schemata, • Implicature, entailment • Face 	
4	Interpersonal communication/skills	Communication between two parties	All basic pragmatics concepts on communication and communicators (presented in the above three blocks)
5	Cultural variables and cultural diversity (ethnolinguistic/ demographic diversity)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National cultural variables/ Demographic variables: education, economics, law, religion, politics, language, social norms • Individual cultural variables: time, space, decision making, social 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face and its types, face saving acts, face threatening acts • pre-existing knowledge structures, frame, and schemata

		manners, acceptable dress, verbal and nonverbal communication	
6	Basic principles of communication/correspondence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seven Cs • Steps of planning, composing, revising, and follow-up • Analyses of the audience, occasion, and purpose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gricean maxims • Basic pragmatics concepts on communication and communicators (presented in the above blocks)

(This narration of similarities and thereby analysis is termed here as ‘Comparative Analysis of BC-Skills Contents vis-à-vis Pragmatics Concepts’. A detailed version of this ‘Comparative Analysis’, established through relevant literature and discussion, is presented in Appendix-VI)

Harmony and compatibility between pragmatics concepts and BC-Skills contents have been explored and discussed under topical headings in section 4.1.3.

4.1.3 Discussion

The discussion is divided in accordance with topical/thematic headings presented in Table 4.3 (The last paragraph presents a summarized conclusive discussion of the whole section 4.1).

Language as means of communication: From the perspective of linguistics, language is means of communication among human beings, and pragmatics helps in using the language of real/ordinary use as per the context. Language functions can be suitably performed through pragmatics owing to their contribution in producing appropriate utterances. Besides, the knowledge of pragmatics helps use appropriate language in a communicative event, and thus it assists in socially appropriate interactions. In business communication, language along with its various aspects and dimensions is considered important for successfully conveying a business message. The proficient use of language is considered important in business communication. Since pragmatics focuses on language in context, and in business communication ‘context’ encompasses organizational communication

policies, audience, purpose, intended outcomes, produced effects of a message and the use of language accordingly, the knowledge of pragmatics can supplement business professionals/ administrators' communicative competence.

Communication Cycle/Process of Communication: 'Communication process/cycle' addresses all kinds/forms/channels of communication: oral interactions, written correspondence, visual or nonverbal communication, and electronically mediated communication between sender and audience. The contents of business communication courses on sender, message, receiver, feedback, channel/medium, and context are highly relevant to pragmatics concepts. The major relevant pragmatics concepts which supplement the 'process/cycle of communication' are a speaker's intentions or intended message and a listener's interpretation/expectations, language (contents of the message), and pragmatic context. The other relevant concepts with the 'communication cycle' are shared knowledge, presupposition, frame and schemata, routine and genre, Gricean cooperative maxims, flouting of these maxims, entailment, and implicature. The knowledge of a speaker's intended meaning, a listener's interpretation, pragmatic context and its role in communication, inference, entailment, and implicature, 'said' and 'unsaid' parts of conversations can assist in producing effective business communication in professional settings.

Barriers in Communication: In business communication, certain barriers/problems do arise e.g. distortion, physical/technical/social/psychological noise, personal/communal/national differences, selective perception based on expectations/attitudes/beliefs, etc. These barriers can be diverse: physical, perceptual, emotional, cultural, linguistic, gender-based, or interpersonal. These barriers can destroy or distort the purpose, intent, effects, and output of a conveyed business message. Awareness and application of pragmatics concepts: sociopragmatics, pragmalinguistics, metapragmatics, pragmatic meaning, pragmatic context, shared knowledge, speaker's intentions, listener's interpretation, presupposition, frame, prototypical version, schemata, implicature, entailment, and face can help in coping afore-narrated problems and barriers in professional communication. Awareness from pragmatics concepts is expected to better sensitize individuals (business students/professionals) in realizing, understanding, and coping with the barriers in infield business communication.

Interpersonal Communication Skills: In business communication courses, interpersonal communication and its various facets are heavily stressed. Interpersonal communication

occurs between two persons, groups, or organizations. Interpersonal communication skills require understanding others' tastes, preferences, attitudes, and behaviours, and thus interpersonal skills contribute to professional success. The communication issues related to business dealings e.g. conflicts, conflicts resolution, negotiation, politeness, bias avoidance, disclosure, and trust can be better understood through pragmatics concepts. Pragmatics concepts on sociopragmatics, pragmalinguistics, metapragmatics, and other basic concepts are helpful in refining interpersonal communication. Sociopragmatics helps in message formulation and decoding through an understanding of variables like relative power, social distance, the extent of imposition; pragmalinguistics assists a sender for lexical and grammatical choices; metapragmatics supports in understanding intentions and effects of communication. Sociopragmatic, pragmalinguistic, and metapragmatic skills contribute to conflict resolution and negotiation. Interpersonal communication skills also help communicators in deciding when and whom to trust or make a disclosure. Pragmatics concepts address all the facets of interpersonal communication skills; awareness and application of these concepts can help business professionals in improving their interpersonal communication skills.

Cultural Variables and Cultural Diversity: Culture has its impact on individuals' work behaviours, and cultural variables influence professionals' personalities and consequently their business interactions and transactions. In linguistics (and in pragmatics as well), language and culture are seen as interlinked and are believed to influence each other. Pragmatics concepts on face and its types, face saving/threatening acts, pre-existing knowledge structures, frame, and schemata can assist in realizing and managing cultural diversity in professional settings. These pragmatics concepts can sensitize one on cultural diversity through an awareness of culture-specific and cross-cultural differences, and the conversational patterns of directness/indirectness and 'face wants'. On these grounds, pragmatics seems beneficial for business professionals interacting with audiences from different ethnolinguistic backgrounds.

Principles of Business Correspondence—Seven Cs: These principles (Seven Cs: completeness, conciseness, consideration, courtesy, clarity, correctness, and concreteness) provide guidance on various steps of planning, composing, and revising and follow-up, analyses of audience and occasion and purpose. The seven Cs of business communication are closely associated with Gricean cooperative maxims of quality, quantity, relevance, and manner. 'Quantity' is a reflection of 'completeness' and 'conciseness', and addresses the

size of information. ‘Quality’ relates to ‘correctness’ since it concerns the truth of a message. ‘Relevance’ is associated with ‘completeness’, ‘conciseness’, ‘clarity’, and ‘correctness’. ‘Manner’ concerns the explicitness of a message and is closely related to ‘completeness’ and ‘clarity’. Pragmatics concepts of ‘face’ and its types, face saving/threatening acts, implicature, and schema are associated with ‘courtesy’ and ‘consideration’. Awareness and application of the relevant pragmatics concepts can supplement Seven Cs and their application.

The above analytical discussion affirms that BC-Skills contents are associated with and can be supplemented through relevant pragmatics concepts, and thus these pragmatics concepts can contribute to improving/developing business students’/professionals’ communication skills. In the preceding sections (4.1.1 and 4.1.2), the investigation of the course contents of “English I”, “English II”, “Oral Communication” and “Business Communication I” reveal the implicit reflection of various concepts of pragmatics in these courses. The course items have been identified (in Table 4.3) which can be better taught/supplemented through adding relevant pragmatics concepts. Based on this harmony and compatibility, it can be asserted that inclusion and explicit instruction of pragmatics concepts in the course contents is expected to benefit business students/professionals/administrators, since pragmatics (its learning and application) assists in effective communication and in managing communication hurdles, especially when the communicators are from different pragmatic backgrounds and possess varied skills. (In the subsequent sections: 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, this assertion has been further explored through the results of explicit instruction of pragmatics on students’ performance in WDCTs, and from the reflective, insightful interviews of business communication teachers and infield business professionals/administrators/entrepreneurs.)

4.2 Analysis of Data from Students’ WDCTs Obtained through Single-Subject Experiment

This section addresses the second subsidiary research question about exploring the impact of explicit teaching of pragmatics concepts on students’ performance in written discourse completion tasks (WDCTs). This segment of the study is designed to trace the development/improvement of pragmatic communication skills through explicit instruction of pragmatics in business communication classroom, through comparing the students’ performance in WDCTs assigned to them before and after the treatment. In the light of the

research design propounded by Gay, Mills and Airasian (2012), single group experimental research design (one group pretest-posttest design) has been employed in which the same group serves the purpose of a control group (before treatment) and experimental group (after treatment). This pretest-posttest design is effective in measuring the impact of treatment on learners by comparing their pretest scores versus posttest scores.

The following sub-segments (pertaining to methodology/procedures) are attached as Appendix-VI:

- i. An overview of research design (phases of the experiment)
- ii. Dimensions for comparing pretest and posttest
- iii. An overview of lesson plans
- iv. Chronology of experiment

The research design for this segment of data collection is of twofold disposition: experimental and exploratory. The data itself is qualitative in nature since it is in the form of WDCTs, whereas these WDCTs have been assessed/graded to get quantified results, which are easy to compare in pretest vs. posttest. From the perspective of quantitative research, this segment of the study has one independent variable i.e. incorporation and explicit instruction of pragmatics concepts in the course contents, and one dependent variable i.e. improvement in students' performance in their WDCTs. Figure 4.3 shows the relationship between variables and treatment during the experimental design.

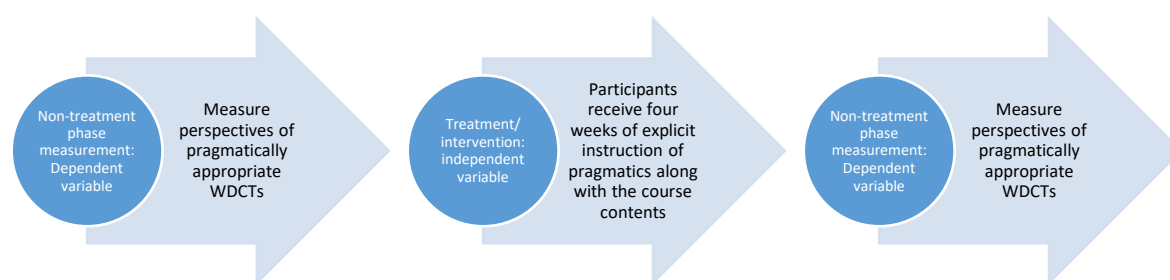


Figure 4.3: Relationship between variables and the treatment

The notions in Figure 4.4 are adapted from “A-B-A Withdrawal Designs” (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012) and “The one-group pretest-posttest quasi-experimental design” (McCaleb, Andersen, & Hueston, 2008).

4.2.2 Results of WDCTs in Pretest and Posttest Generated through SPSS

The learners' scores have been processed through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). To view the data's reliability, Cronbach's alpha has been extracted through SPSS. Cronbach's alpha helps in measuring the internal consistency, in terms of how closely the set of items are related as a group (Taber 2018). Thus, Cronbach's alpha is considered as an authentic measure of 'scale reliability'. The following table shows the value of Cronbach's Alpha for the reliability statistics for the pretest.

Table 4.4

Reliability Statistics for Pretest

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.965	10

Cronbach's Alpha value for pretest is found good since it is near 1.

The following table shows the value of Cronbach's Alpha for the reliability statistics for posttest.

Table 4.5

Reliability Statistics for Posttest

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.963	10

For the posttest, the value of Cronbach's Alpha i.e. .963 is near 1 which is quite good. The data is reliable as per the values of Cronbach's Alpha for both pretest and posttest in the above reliability tests. The values of Cronbach's Alpha show that statistical analysis can be applied to the data.

The following table shows KMO and Bartlett's Test conducted to check the adequacy of the pretest sample. KMO and Bartlett's Test is used to measure the sample adequacy of the data for factor analysis through SPSS.

Table 4.6

KMO and Bartlett's Test for Pretest

KMO and Bartlett's Test (for Pretest)		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.930
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	362.943
	Df	45
	Sig.	.000

The value .930 is found to be satisfactory. Moreover, significance value .000 obtained through Bartlett's Test is also up to the mark.

Table 4.7 below shows the values obtained through KMO and Bartlett's Test for the adequacy of posttest sample.

Table 4.7

KMO and Bartlett's Test for Posttest

KMO and Bartlett's Test (for Posttest)		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.915
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	343.359
	Df	45
	Sig.	.000

The value of KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy .915 is satisfactory and significance value .000 is up to the mark.

Since WDCTs have been used for data collection in this segment, the data in pretest and posttest is primarily qualitative in nature. Non-parametric tests have been applied owing to the qualitative nature of the data. Table 4.8 shows SPSS results on "Paired Samples Statistics". The table comprises the mean scores of various pairs of factors in pretest and posttest and their total scores. WDCTs were evaluated on the following ten factors (extracted from Section 4.1.3):

- i. Sender's desired message (intended meaning)
- ii. Consideration of receiver's expectations
- iii. Contextually appropriate contents (in terms of shared knowledge and presupposition)
- iv. Contextually appropriate language
- v. Gricean cooperative maxims
- vi. Manageability of flouting of the maxims through implicature by the audience
- vii. Consideration of audience's pre-existing knowledge structure, frame, script, and schemata
- viii. Sociopragmatic, pragmalinguistic and metapragmatic aspects
- ix. Cross-Cultural/ cross-communal/ interpersonal awareness
- x. Politeness, face, face saving acts, avoidance of face threatening acts

This method of analysis is commonly known as 'Exploratory Factor Analysis' in SPSS. Each factor was evaluated on a scale of 1-5. The (mean) scores in Table 4.8 are out of 5.

Table 4.8

Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	Std. Deviation
Pair 1	Sender's desired message (in pretest)	2.01	.396
	Sender's desired message (in posttest)	3.74	.325
Pair 2	Consideration of receiver's expectations (in pretest)	1.62	.322
	Consideration of receiver's expectations (in posttest)	3.74	.312
Pair 3	Contextually appropriate contents (in pretest)	1.48	.339
	Contextually appropriate contents(in posttest)	3.64	.307
Pair 4	Contextually appropriate language (in pretest)	1.80	.430
	Contextually appropriate language (in posttest)	3.88	.316
Pair 5	Gricean maxims (in pretest)	1.40	.311
	Gricean maxims (in posttest)	3.65	.343
Pair 6	Manageability of flouting of maxims (in pretest)	1.13	.199

	Manageability of flouting of maxims (in posttest)	3.28	.380
Pair 7	Consideration of audiences' pre-existing knowledge structure, frame, script, schemata (in pretest)	1.64	.352
	Consideration of audiences' pre-existing knowledge structure, frame, script, schemata (in posttest)	3.97	.337
Pair 8	Sociopragmatic, pragmalinguistic, metapragmatic aspects (in pretest)	1.39	.297
	Sociopragmatic, pragmalinguistic, metapragmatic aspects (in posttest)	3.55	.349
Pair 9	Cross-cultural/communal /interpersonal awareness (in pretest)	1.56	.275
	Cross-cultural/communal /interpersonal awareness (in posttest)	3.86	.367
Pair 10	Politeness and face (in pretest)	1.66	.355
	Politeness and face (in posttest)	3.93	.343
Pair 11	Pretest total score	1.57	.291
	Posttest Total Score	3.72	.294

As per the values shown in the above table, there is a significant difference between the learners' performance in their pretests and posttests. There is a considerable increase in the mean score of each factor of posttests in comparison with the pretests. The researcher has taken two sets of measurements (in the form of WDCTs of pretest and WDCTs of posttest) under two different conditions i.e. before the treatment and after the treatment with the same subjects. Paired t-test is considered an appropriate test to understand the effects of treatment on the same subjects under two different conditions (as is this case). Non-parametric paired t-test has been applied here because the data was obtained in the form of WDCTs without a proper scale. (The researcher has not obtained data from the respondents in the form of close-ended questionnaires.)

Table 4.9 of "Paired Samples Test" (below) presents the values of paired differences of means and standard deviations of the pairs (mentioned in Table 4.8) and the values of "t" and values of "Sig. (2-tailed)" for the pairs. The (mean) scores in the table below are out of 5.

Table 4.9

Paired Samples Test

	Paired Differences in Mean	Paired Differences in Std. Deviation	T	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1	-1.723	.324	-31.053	.000
Pair 2	-2.118	.357	-34.628	.000
Pair 3	-2.159	.323	-38.943	.000
Pair 4	-2.074	.387	-31.202	.000
Pair 5	-2.248	.294	-44.564	.000
Pair 6	-2.147	.353	-35.466	.000
Pair 7	-2.326	.357	-37.956	.000
Pair 8	-2.167	.320	-39.505	.000
Pair 9	-2.301	.368	-36.509	.000
Pair 10	-2.267	.326	-40.610	.000
Pair 11	-2.153	.262	-47.937	.000

Means of factors (Pair 1-Pair 10) as well as of total scores (Pair 11) of pretest and posttest depict an obvious difference. The significance value i.e. “Sig. (2-tailed)” in the 5th column of the above table (i.e. .000) for each pair confirms the success of the treatment since all pairs are significantly different. The results depict a significant difference between pairs, and thus the effect of treatment is visible. The results show that the treatment has made a considerable impact on the learners’ scores of their posttests WDCTs in comparison with those of their pretests.

Table 4.10 (below) shows “Descriptive Statistics” with depictions of range, statistic sum (out of 200), standard deviation, and Skewness and Kurtosis of factors in pairs. The (mean) scores in the table below are out of 5.

Table 4.10

Descriptive Statistics

Pair No.	Factors	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis		
		Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Pair 1	Sender's desired message (in pretest)	2	1	3	68	2.01	.396	-.045	.403	-.809	.788
	Sender's desired message (in posttest)	1	3	4	127	3.74	.325	-.384	.403	-.190	.788
Pair 2	Consideration of receiver's expectations (in pretest)	1	1	2	55	1.62	.322	.301	.403	-.502	.788
	Consideration of receiver's expectations (in posttest)	1	3	4	127	3.74	.312	-.166	.403	-.486	.788
Pair 3	Contextually appropriate contents (in pretest)	1	1	2	50	1.48	.339	.529	.403	.359	.788
	Contextually appropriate contents(in posttest)	1	3	4	124	3.64	.307	.098	.403	-.906	.788
Pair 4	Contextually appropriate language (in pretest)	2	1	3	61	1.80	.430	.006	.403	-.904	.788
	Contextually appropriate language (in posttest)	1	3	4	132	3.88	.316	-.473	.403	-.966	.788
Pair 5	Gricean maxims (in pretest)	1	1	2	48	1.40	.311	.809	.403	.018	.788
	Gricean maxims(in posttest)	1	3	4	124	3.65	.343	-.018	.403	-.361	.788

Pair	Manageability of										
6	flouting of maxims (in pretest)	1	1	2	39	1.13	.199	1.677	.403	2.438	.788
	Manageability of										
	flouting of maxims(in posttest)	1	3	4	112	3.28	.380	-.270	.403	-.894	.788
Pair	Consideration of										
7	audiences' pre-existing knowledge structure, frame, script, schemata (in pretest)	1	1	2	56	1.64	.352	.281	.403	-.368	.788
	Consideration of										
	audiences' pre-existing knowledge structure , frame, script, schemata (in posttest)	1	3	5	135	3.97	.337	-.402	.403	-.501	.788
Pair	Sociopragmatic,										
8	pragmalinguistic, metapragmatic aspects (in pretest)	1	1	2	47	1.39	.297	.572	.403	-.101	.788
	Sociopragmatic,										
	pragmalinguistic, metapragmatic aspects (in posttest)	2	3	4	121	3.55	.349	-.358	.403	-.182	.788
Pair	Cross-cultural/										
9	communal /interpersonal awareness (in pretest)	1	1	2	53	1.56	.275	.259	.403	-.010	.788
	Cross-cultural/										
	communal /interpersonal awareness (in posttest)	1	3	4	131	3.86	.367	-.161	.403	-.531	.788
Pair	Politeness and face (in										
10	pretest)	1	1	3	56	1.66	.355	.525	.403	-.311	.788
	Politeness(in posttest)	1	3	4	134	3.93	.343	-.056	.403	-1.100	.788
	Pretest total score	1	1	2	53	1.57	.291	.445	.403	-.226	.788

Pair	Posttest total score	1	3	4	127	3.72	.294	-.080	.403	-.779	.788
11											

The results in the above table (Table 4.10 on 'Descriptive Statistics') show a considerable increase in posttest mean scores which imply that treatment has proven effective and the learners' performance has improved as a result of the treatment.

Figure 4.4 below presents a comparison between mean scores of the factors in pretest and posttest in the form of Bar graph. The mean scores are shown out of 5.

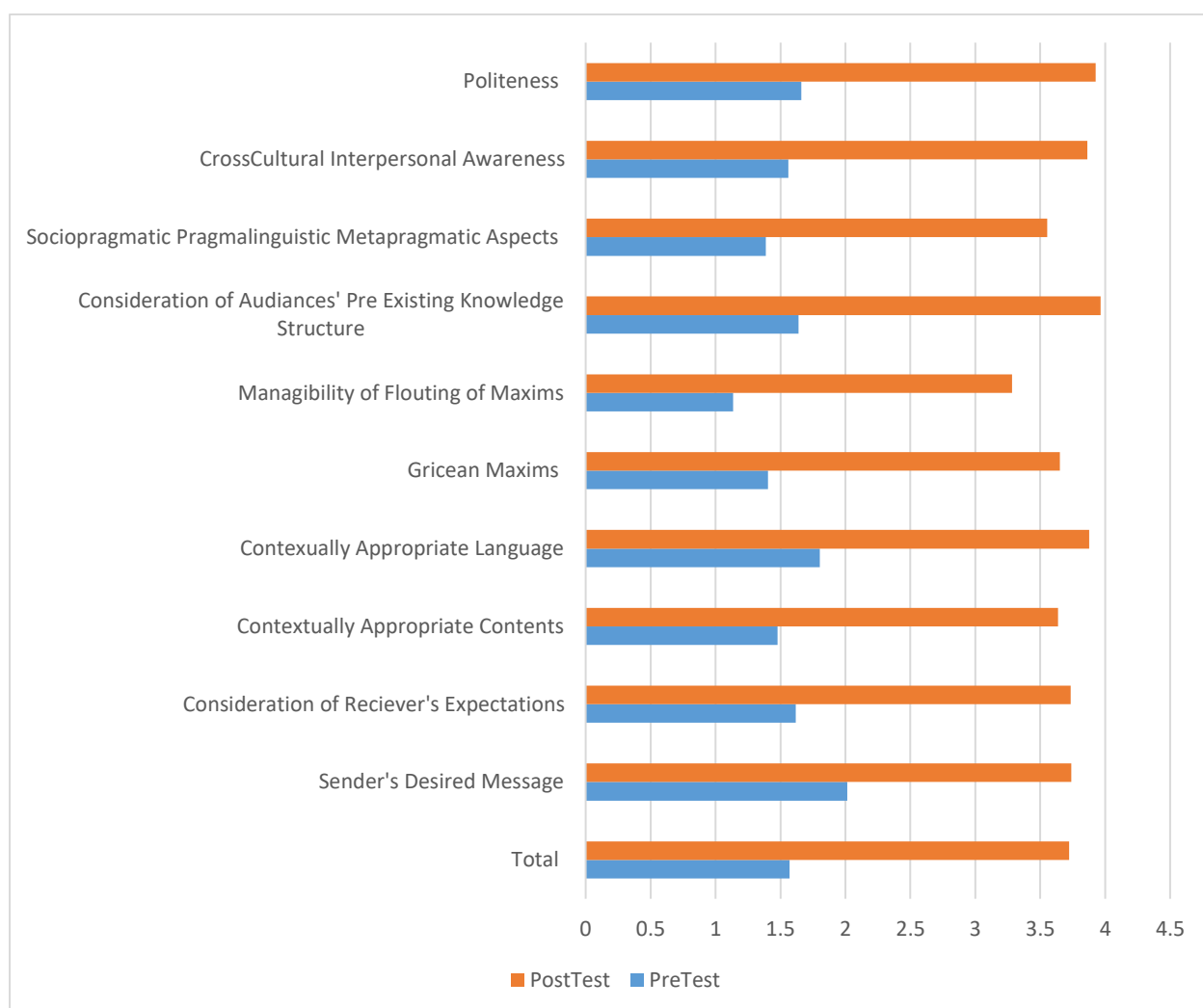


Figure 4.4: Comparison of mean scores of factors in pretest and posttest

The learners were assigned four WDCTs in their pretest and posttest. Each WDCT is marked out of 50 marks and thus making a total of 200 marks in the pretest and 200 marks in the posttest. The table below (Table 4.11) presents each learner's total pretest score, posttest score, and relative improvement.

Table 4.11

Learners' Individual Total Pretest Score, Posttest Score, and Relative Improvement

Learner's Code	Pretest Total Score (out of 200)	Posttest Total Score (out of 200)	Relative Improvement in %age
1	84	152	81%
2	49	96	96%
3	43	101	135%
4	47	109	132%
5	55	118	115%
6	69	127	84%
7	46	115	150%
8	52	119	129%
9	48	103	115%
10	53	116	119%
11	49	120	145%
12	37	111	200%
13	48	125	160%
14	35	100	186%
15	58	125	116%
16	37	105	184%
17	35	106	203%
18	53	117	121%
19	44	120	173%
20	34	95	179%
21	42	120	186%

22	60	127	112%
23	42	114	171%
24	42	109	160%
25	60	119	98%
26	41	108	163%
27	57	113	98%
28	48	114	138%
29	42	106	152%
30	48	101	110%
31	41	114	178%
32	33	109	230%
33	51	105	106%
34	42	100	138%
Mean	48	113	135%

The above table shows a significant difference between the total pretest and posttest score of each learner. Improvement ranges from 81% to 230% with a mean of 135%. The differences are obvious and affirm the success of the treatment. The differences in performance of learners have been attributed to certain factors in the existing literature e.g. perceptual performance, the extent of exposure to the relevant field, family background, motivation, and many other factors (Félix-Brasdefer, 2008; JilardiDamavandi, Mahyuddin, Elias, Daud, & Shabani, 2011; Rahimpour & Zakeri, 2011).

4.2.3 Discussion

The results of the experiment depict that learning of pragmatics concepts is facilitated through its explicit instruction, both through teaching and assigned tasks (as in this experiment, WDCTs are used). The learners' already existing knowledge of implicit pragmatics provides them foundations for learning pragmatics explicitly and in improving communication competence. Exposure to pragmatic variations (since the students were

provided four different WDCTs in pretest and posttest) has also facilitated the learners in acquiring and applying the knowledge of pragmatics. It is inferred that through explicit instruction of pragmatics concepts along with relevant course contents, the learners can better acquire the required pragmatic communication competence during their academics. (Such effects of explicit instruction of pragmatics concepts validate the assumption propounded in this study, and is highly comparable with BAs' responses (in section 4.4.) that it takes longer time for them (BAs) to learn and apply pragmatics implicitly in their professional careers.)

The results of this study (section 4.2) also align with existing literature (based on both theoretical/philosophical notions and empirical investigations). Various pragmaticians and empirical researchers from an early era e.g. Hymes' (1964) to recent times e.g. Hudson (2001), Dash (2004), Brock and Nagasaka (2005), Vasquez and Sharpless (2009), Mirzaei, Riddiford and Joe (2010), and Roohani and Esmaeili (2012) are convinced that communicators' awareness of relevant linguistic rules and socio-cultural norms (i.e. pragmatics concepts) facilitates them in effective communication. These theoreticians' and empirical researchers' assertions also imply that learners can improve/develop their communication skills through situation-oriented learning and the use of pragmatics (during academics or professional careers) when these learners are given explicit exposure to pragmatics. The results of the study are comparable with previous studies on the development of learners' pragmatic communication competence (Amaya, 2008; Bardovi-Harlig, 2013; Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Brock & Nagasaka, 2005; Cohen A. D., 2008; Farahian, Rezaee, & Gholami, 2012; Félix-Brasdefer, 2008; Félix-Brasdefer & Cohen, 2012; Moody, 2014; Rueda, 2006; Rose, 2012; Taguchi, 2011). The results of this study accentuate that explicit instruction of pragmatics improves learners' business communication skills. On the whole, this study (i.e. section 4.2.) supports the notion that the inclusion of pragmatics concepts in the course contents and their explicit instruction would benefit business professionals/administrators in professional communication, and would help them achieve their communication objectives (see section 4.4).

4.3 Analysis of Data from Teachers' Interviews

This segment of data collection is related to the third subsidiary question of this study which aims at exploring the perceptions of teachers of business communication courses (TBCs) about the inclusion and explicit instruction of pragmatics concepts in the course contents. These instructors are teaching business communication courses in various

universities located in the research setting i.e. Islamabad Capital Territory (and its twin city Rawalpindi). TBCs are important stakeholders; they are at the frontline in teaching and managing students and syllabi. Their feedback on course contents/material and revisions (any inclusion, addition, or omission) are significant since they will be the frontline agents of change. In the light of these TBCs' teaching experience and interaction with the students of business studies, their responses are important data for this research.

This segment (section 4.3) comprises selected extracts from the interviews of teachers of business communication (TBCs), both in verbatim and in summarized form, along with the researcher's commentary and interpretation. The TBCs' responses mainly comprise the potential benefits of incorporating pragmatics in the course contents and classroom teaching. The questions in the semi-structured interviews from these respondents mainly concern the following main areas:

- i. Aims and perspectives of business communication courses
- ii. Recommended textbooks, course contents, and other supplement course materials
- iii. Inclusion and explicit instruction of pragmatics concepts in business communication courses

The queries on the first two areas have been included to explore the grounds for the third point of investigation.

Extensive data have been obtained through the TBCs' responses. The data were perused to explore themes and their subthemes through thematic analysis (after the audio-recorded responses were transcribed). After a comprehensive perusal of transcribed text of the TBCs' interviews, the following broader themes and sub-themes emerged:

Table 4.12

Broader Themes and Sub-themes Emerging from TBCs' Responses

Sr.	Broader Themes	Sub-themes
1	Importance of communication skills for the students of business studies	

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| 2 | Challenges and issues faced in teaching business communication
(Difficulties in teaching business communication) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students' attitude challenges in the classroom • Diversity among students • The rationale of prioritizing English over indigenous languages • The existing course contents, their adequacy, and deficiencies • Foreign books and foreign authors • Students' aspirations of their future jobs/careers • Impact of teachers' academic qualification on their teaching methodology |
| 3 | The rationale of explicit inclusion/instruction of pragmatics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implicit reflection/presence of pragmatics in existing course contents • Benefits of pragmatics in communication • Benefits of explicit instruction of pragmatics in business communication • Suggestions for teaching pragmatics • General suggestions |
-

The relevant extracts are presented under each theme. At the end of each subsection, an interpretation of TBCs' responses is presented (either in one paragraph or in bulleted points). Each respondent is quoted with a certain code e.g. TBC1-AA.

4.3.1 Communication Skills and their Importance

Among the respondents, one instructor (TBC1-AA) is convinced of the importance of communication skills for the students of business studies. Reflecting upon the importance of communication skills, he opines that communication skills are of vital importance for the students of business studies during their course work at the university as well as in their professional careers where "in order to communicate effectively, they have to learn (infield) communication skills".

Another instructor (TBC4-AZ) reflects that communication skills courses are important since the students are prepared (during the four years of BS studies) for their future specialized fields (i.e. business and management). Based on her vast teaching experience, the instructor finds that communication skills have become more important (in the present era of information communication technologies) since many employment advertisements specifically mention good communication skills along with other specialized expertise. In line with TBC1-AA, this instructor (TBC4-AZ) is also convinced that sound learning and performance of communication skills can make a positive impact on students' performance in other academic subjects because "when their communication skills are groomed, it does have an academic improvement in other subjects".

Another instructor TBC5-FB states that business communication courses enable the students "to speak properly", "to comprehend the things", "to write properly", and "to respond to other people in proper way". The instructor teaches business communication at a public sector university and he observes that the students of BBA "come from different backgrounds and if they don't perform well in communication skills, obviously they will have problems in future (in seeking a suitable employment), that's why teaching communication skills is very important because it is the backbone of their future, and if they are good at communication skills, then, they can make their future bright, they can get good jobs".

One instructor (TBC6-KS) has taught at a university well known for engineering and technology and other professional degree programmes. He observes that "Communication skills, particularly, business communication is an essential part in the life of professionals, particularly students of business studies, management studies, (and) engineers, (and) they really need communication skills. It is not possible for them to carry on with their everyday business affairs without learning and without acquiring good business communication skills. That is, of course, an important part of their professional expertise". Emphasizing the importance of communication, the instructor says: "every business student is supposed to be a good communicator, every professional is supposed to be in management". The instructor sums up that communication skills should be particularly groomed because these skills are essential for professional success along with field-specific expertise.

One instructor (TBC7-KM) observes that courses on communication skills equip the students with the communication competence needed for their employment. These

courses enable the students in producing “different kinds of (business) writings that includes report, letters, email, so many other things”. Highlighting the importance of these courses on providing theoretical knowledge, the instructor opines that these courses “give them (students) strong theoretical concerns (i.e. foundation) with competence that is needed in the market”.

Another instructor (TBC8-MA) sees communication skills as a window to success for business professionals. He emphasizes: “The students need to develop their communication skills, otherwise they might suffer in future during their professional career”. He further states: “Even if you have got a lot of knowledge and if you are not able to communicate it in a language which is either Urdu or English, whatsoever the requirement is, your knowledge cannot be proven fruitful for you”. He further emphasizes the importance of communication skills for BBA/MBA graduates since communication is an integral part of their roles and responsibilities.

Another instructor (TBC9-SM), who has taught Functional English courses for many years, considers communication skills vital for business students: “To survive in the business world, it is essential for a student to have good and strong communication skills and these skills can be polished by providing communication opportunities to students. They can be provided platforms to practice all the language skills in all the possible ways either to work with peers or in groups or as individuals”. The instructor believes that good communication skills can facilitate business graduates in their professional ventures.

One instructor (TBC10-SF) considers that business communication courses contribute to learning “letter writing, report writing, (and) proposals” which will help these students in professional correspondence. Her comments imply that these students learn to write letters (or emails), reports, proposals, or deliver oral presentations, which will help them significantly in their professional careers.

Like other respondents, one instructor (TBC11-SA) opines: “Communication skill is no doubt very important subject as far as academic learning of students is concerned”.

Another instructor (TBC12-SZ) emphasizes the importance of communication skills for business students: “They really need communication skills as they are to plunge into the world of business and profession, they rather need to develop excellent communication skills, their total progress and success depend on communication skills. A professional with good communication skills and command on language is with definite

eligibility criteria to be a successful business professional”. The instructor (TBC12-SZ) shares the feedback which he receives from graduated students that business communication courses help them in ‘Marketing’, in ‘Human Resource Management’ and in their private business careers.

One instructor (TBC13-TA) asserts: “Communication should be taught because students are not prepared to communicate practically” during their previous classes. He further comments: “communication skills in practice...are very important, and these skills must be taught at this level so that they (students) become ready for the profession they are going to undertake”.

Another instructor (TBC14-UK) considers business communication courses vital for business students “because they do marketing and they have to deal with their clients”. Highlighting the desired outcomes of communication, the instructor opines: “Their communication has not to be based (only) on good language skills, but also communication in terms of persuasion, motivation, understanding the meaning of language, how language affects their clients’ mind, they can better persuade”.

One instructor (TBC15-ZS) reflects on classroom communication: “Communication of a teacher and a student is a two-way traffic, they are sharing their experiences and feelings, whatever the teacher is expecting, the student will also have to respond”. Thus, the instructor emphasizes catering to the effective flow of communication between a teacher and students for classroom activities.

Interpretation of TBCs’ Responses and Discussion: The TBCs are convinced of the influential role of students’ learning and acquiring of communication skills for their successful future. The teachers’ responses reveal that they are convinced of the importance of communication skills in students’ capacity building for their later professional careers. The following points are inferred from TBCs’ responses:

- i. Effective communication skills contribute to students’ academic learning.
- ii. Effective communication skills boost the students’ confidence to positively participate in classroom activities and contribute to their capacity building.
- iii. Communication skills are among the vital requirements of their later professions.

- iv. Proficient communication skills enable the students for professional eloquent oratory, exquisite written expression, and thoughtful responses in a communication situation.
- v. It is through communication skills that business professionals can demonstrate their imperceptible skills and capabilities.
- vi. Adept communication is a major requirement for securing a place in the business world, in competing with peers, in playing an effective role as managers/leaders, and for excelling in their respective fields.
- vii. Communication skills are weighted heavily in the job recruitment and selection process.
- viii. In present day business world with extensive use of communication technologies, effective communication skills are essential for optimum performance in the workplace.
- ix. Communication skills contribute to the growth of private businesses as well.
- x. Business professionals perform more through their communication skills than physical actions. With effective communication, they can convey, convince, motivate their internal public—bosses, peers, and subordinates, and their external public—customers, vendors, etc.

4.3.2 Issues and Challenges in Teaching Business Communication

This broader thematic head includes the following sub-themes:

1. Students' attitude challenges in the classroom
2. Diversity among students
3. The rationale of prioritizing English over indigenous languages
4. The existing course contents, their adequacy, and deficiencies
5. Foreign books and foreign authors
6. Students' aspirations of their future jobs/careers
7. Impact of teachers' academic qualification on their teaching methodology

4.3.2.1 Students' Attitude Challenges in Classroom

During their interviews, the TBCs also reflected upon the various challenges they encounter in business communication classroom regarding students' attitudes towards these subjects, and the effects of their academic background on their learning/ performance. Their responses on issues and challenges are presented below to make a holistic picture of what happens in the classroom.

Since the courses on communication or business communication skills are taught by the teachers from the English/Allied department, the students perceive these courses as auxiliary ones. One instructor (TBC1-AA) highlights that business students focus more on “their main subjects” and “focus less on the other courses which are not directly related to their field, and same is the case with English (since the students perceive business communication courses as of English)”.

Another instructor (TBC4-AZ) highlights that the semester system has a big limitation of time shortage. The instructor’s comment implies time restrictions for both teachers and students.

Pointing out the differing backgrounds of students, the instructor (TBC8-MA) states: “There are number of problems in their written expression, there are number of problems in their pronunciation...Even they can’t write a declarative sentence, a compound sentence, they don’t have understanding of a complex sentence”. (TBC8-MA) The instructor has taught in a public sector university where he observes that students’ less competence in both productive and receptive skills poses problems in classroom learning.

Another instructor (TBC11-SA) sees it as a sad demise that “students simply take the subject, because it is part of the academic course, but as far as their real learning is concerned, I don’t think so that they practically learn a lot...Actual thing is the practical use of business English, but...students are studying this course for academic achievement”. The instructor (TBC11-SA) seems to suggest that students should adopt a practical approach to this subject since it is going to help them in their later professional communication.

One instructor (TBC3-AN) narrates that some of the students, who are involved in their family businesses (they belong to economically well-off families), take more interest in business communication courses and perform better in classroom activities. The instructor (TBC3-AN) teaches at a university where the business students are usually from economically well-off families. Contrary to the instructor (TBC3-AN), another instructor (TBC12-SZ), who teaches at a university with students of less economically well-off backgrounds, has a differing stance; he (TBC12-SZ) opines that the students’ low socioeconomic and educational backgrounds and consequent lack of exposure and less comprehending skills hinder their pacing with their class fellows: “we devise different techniques and strategies to take along all of our class, and it also restricts our discussion

and activities”. Reflecting upon the implicit presence of pragmatics concepts in course contents, he (TBC12-SZ) states: “when it comes to understanding, vocabulary of business students, freshmen or sophomore is restricted, and they are only able to understand literal meaning, but pragmatics, it is the meanings which speaker wants listener to understand, and it becomes little difficult...Today, I was talking of something conditioning, and conditioning is different in different contexts. Conditioning in listening is a phenomenon, and in psychology it is a different phenomenon, and it comes to business it has totally different meaning. So, there is problem of pragmatics, but to bring students to the level of understanding of different vocabulary items, it is very difficult”. The instructor (TBC12-SZ) seems less satisfied with the only implicit presence of pragmatics in the course contents/materials.

Another instructor (TBC14-UK), who has taught in public sector universities, has also similar observations. She (TBC14-UK) states that students’ poor English communication skills pose a big issue in the classroom: “Most of the students were OK in writing; at least somehow they could produce, but, while they were to communicate like (oral) presentations (and there they fail)”.

Another instructor (TBC15-ZS), who is teaching students of a public sector university, states: “All the students are not the same in the class.... that the students are not checked properly during their interview and tests that the students are sent (or) allocated in appropriate class that they may get proper education”. The instructor implies that inappropriate admission criteria influence students’ attitudes and aptitude both.

Interpretation of TBCs’ responses and brief discussion: The TBCs’ responses imply that the following major issues hinder the smooth classroom activities:

- i. The students do not consider business/communication skills as the courses of core importance like their field-specific courses, e.g. marketing, management, human resource management, finance, etc. Owing to the students’ perceptions regarding business communication courses, they take these courses only as a part of their academic requirement, and not as courses helpful for their communication caliber which they need in their later professional careers.
- ii. In most business schools, business communication courses are taught by faculty members from English Departments or Humanities Departments. Thus, these

courses are taught by the instructors who themselves have not studied and practiced business communication.

- iii. The students' differing linguistic caliber (especially of those with poor language skills) also hinders the teaching/learning in business communication classroom. Consequently, the students with deficient language skills do not pace with classroom activities. Moreover, time restrictions of the semester system also limit academic activities intended by the instructors.

It is revealed that the TBCs' less relevant academic qualifications and the students' perceptions of business communication courses hinder the desired outcomes in business communication classroom. The students' linguistic skills and their socioeconomic backgrounds also affect their performance in business communication classroom.

4.3.2.2 Diversity among Students

This thematic head includes the TBCs' responses on diversity among their students in business communication classroom. One instructor (TBC1-AA), who has taught in public sector universities in Islamabad, with students from all over the country, reports: "They (students) come from far of places of Pakistan and other countries also. They have their own academic backgrounds, social status, that definitely affect their communication, business communication and actual communication outside the classroom and inside the classroom". The researcher infers that the currently used books for business communication do not cater to diversity among students which the instructor (TBC1-AA) has pointed out.

One instructor (TBC2-AS), who teaches in a university where the students are from all over the country as well as from all over the Islamic world, observes that these students have multiple issues—psychological problems, introversion, individual problems, different academic backgrounds, different geographical backgrounds. This instructor (TBC2-AS) has pointed out another aspect of diversity among students. The instructor deduces that these differences can hinder these students' oral communication skills, both in the classroom and in their professional careers.

Another instructor (TBC3-AN), who teaches at a university with economically well-off students and many students are already in contact with their family businesses, states that the students "who are already in business, they know plenty of things already (about indigenous business practices); so, they are good at business communication", the other students "who have taken this course (just as a degree requirement)—most of the

students of BBA, they end up in BBA because they don't find admission in any university or any other field, so they end up in BBA, most of them lack interest in studies, particularly, when it comes to humanities subjects, business communication is one of them". In this instructor's (TBC3-AN) university, business communication and other Functional English courses are taught by Humanities Department (a department for allied courses), and BBA students perceive these courses as auxiliary courses only. The instructor tries to involve students in learning, but (1) academically weak and slow learners do not fit well in group work, and (2) uninterested students deter the smooth conduct of activities.

Another respondent (TBC4-AZ), who teaches in a public sector university, states that she needs to put efforts to teach students with differing academic capabilities associated with the nativity, schooling, and linguistic skills/background. She states: "it depends on the teacher how teacher accommodates different levels of students who are having different levels of proficiency". She perceives "Diversity is beauty...(as well as) it is a challenge but this challenge can be addressed". The instructor (TBC4-AZ), is a PhD scholar in English Linguistics and having studied pragmatics, refers to the role which pragmatics can play in managing diversity among the students, especially in the context of nativity and ethnicity.

One instructor (TBC6-KS), who has taught students from other provinces as well, opines: "Since, the Pakistani society is very diverse in nature, and same is the case with my students, particularly at Open University, they are coming up from very heterogeneous backgrounds, some of them are from city areas, they are from educated families, and some of them are from urban background with very little knowledge of Business English". based on his exposure to diverse students, this instructor (TBC6-KS) states that it is difficult to manage to teach the students of different capabilities and "to cater the needs of every level".

Another instructor (TBC7-KM), from a large public sector university, states: "We have most of the students at Islamic University, they are Pukhtoons...from Sindh...from Balochistan, mostly, they are from very remote distant areas. So, it is very difficult for them, even to comprehend sometimes". The instructor (TBC7-KM) finds that linguistic diversity creates "linguistic barriers" and mars the students' "caliber to comprehend, (and) to speak" while they are communicating with their peers and teachers.

Another instructor (TBC8-MA) also from a public sector university has similar views: "Pushto speakers, Punjabi speakers, Hindko speakers, we have even Sindhi speakers in Federal Urdu University especially. Students from various ethnic backgrounds and their

accent is different...There are problems due to multilingual classes or students from multilingual backgrounds”. This instructor (TBC8-MA) opines that linguistic diversity among students can be converted into an opportunity since these students can get exposure to various accents, dialects, idiolects, and sociolects from their class fellows (which can help these business students later in their professions in interacting with the audience from diverse ethnolinguistic backgrounds). Both the respondents (TBC7-KM and TBC8-MA) are PhDs in linguistics, and thus they realize the role of linguistic diversity and of pragmatics in managing this diversity.

Another instructor (TBC10-SF) from an Islamabad based public sector university, where the students come from different regions, has similar views: “They (students) are from different cultural backgrounds...they are from different provinces of Pakistan... there is a lot of diversity within Pakistan in these provinces”. The instructor (TBC10-SF), being a PhD in linguistics and having command over pragmatics, comments: “I haven’t really felt any difficulty regarding dealing with them, with students from different backgrounds”. Supplementing her teaching with her knowledge of linguistics, the instructor (TBC10-SF) successfully manages the linguistic diversity among her students.

Another instructor (TBC11-SA), who has taught in both public and private universities and higher education institutions, comments: “When the students are from diverse academic background, their previous knowledge is different, they belong to different culture; it is definitely difficult to make them understand”. The instructor (TBC11-SA) himself has studied linguistics and literature, and education. His comment reflects his concerns as an educationist who has dealt with students from diverse backgrounds.

Another instructor (TBC13-TA), who has taught at a private university and some public sector education institutions, comments: “We are nation, we are homogenized set of people” in terms of “socio economic background” and “lingual background”. The instructor (TBC13-TA) feels that “it becomes really daunting task for the teacher to meet the requirements of the course, and creating a kind of homogenous environment in the class” because of multifaceted diversity among students in business communication classroom. The respondent is convinced that pragmatics (its knowledge and application) can contribute to coping with this diversity effectively.

Another instructor (TBC14-UK), from a large public sector university, states that the students from the public sector and Urdu medium schooling have more deficiencies in

their communication skills and in performing the assigned oral communication tasks. On the other hand, the students from urban areas of big cities and with better private schooling demonstrate better performance in business communication classroom.

Another instructor (TBC15-ZS) from a public sector university highlights that issues arise in business communication classroom owing to the diversity in terms of socioeconomic class, urban/rural nativity, and academic proficiency.

Interpretation of TBCs' responses and brief discussion: Pakistan has a lot of ethnolinguistic diversity, so is the case with the students at business schools. This diversity is of multiple shades: lingual, social, economic, academic, geographic/regional. There is also a great diversity among their aspired professions. There is diversity in students' interest and motivation towards business communication courses. Differing academic proficiencies adversely influence classroom activities. The majority of TBCs find this multifaceted diversity as a hurdle in classroom activities; whereas a few TBCs claim that they use this diversity for benefiting the students.

4.3.2.3 The Rationale of Prioritizing English vs. Indigenous Languages

Business communication courses (ESP/Business English/Communication skills) are offered in English. On the other hand, the majority of business students, as narrated by the TBCs, come with varying linguistic backgrounds, and a large number of these students are well-versed only either in Urdu or/and their mother tongue. In this perspective, one respondent (TBC1-AA) shares his assumption that the teachers usually take it for granted that their students have sufficient knowledge and expertise in regional languages (their mother tongue); so the teachers' focus is on English language communication skills only in business communication classroom.

Another instructor (TBC3-AN) observes that business communication courses are in the English language, whereas English is not the students' first language. Consequently, many of the students fail to communicate efficiently in English because of differing connotations and expressions.

Another instructor (TBC8-MA) observes that mostly Urdu or regional languages are used for oral communication at work centers in Pakistan, "but... when it is a case of written communication, they (business professionals) use English preferably, because it (English) is international lingua franca and for international communication and for communication among organizations they have to use English". The respondent (TBC8-

MA) further states: “When you talk at your work centers, there is an objective behind it, if you achieve your objective through your communication; it means we have got the successful communication”. This instructor’s (TBC8-MA) comments imply that it is pragmatic communication that matters in oral communication at the workplace. This instructor’s (TBC8-MA) assumptions are also supported by the BAs’ responses (see section 4.4.2.2) that written official communication is in English whereas oral communication is mostly in indigenous languages.

One respondent (TBC10-SF) highlights an important aspect that business communication is entirely a new discipline for fresh students at university. She mentions her efforts to convene the students: “As a teacher of this particular subject, I try my best, first of all, to make them feel comfortable, because, mostly they come from such an academic background, where they don’t feel comfortable to communicate”.

Interpretation of TBCs’ responses and brief discussion: The TBCs’ responses and the information got on their demographics reveal that most of the teachers of business communication are from one particular academic background i.e. English (linguistics/literature). Thus, in business communication classroom, TBCs’ main focus is on students’ communication skills of the English language (though one respondent shares his reflections on workplace communication requirements in indigenous languages). The main implications derived from TBCs’ responses are as under:

- i. There is no or less focus on communication skills in indigenous languages; some teachers strongly restrict their classroom activities to the English language only. On the other hand, the data received from business professionals reveal that much of the oral communication in the field occurs either in regional languages or in the Urdu language.
- ii. The students’ lack of exposure (in the case of undergraduate studies) to this particular subject in their previous education also poses issues for the teachers since they have to introduce this subject from the very beginning.

4.3.2.4 *The Existing Course Contents (Books/Materials), their Adequacy and Deficiencies*

This thematic head presents TBCs’ responses to existing course contents. A brief interpretation also accompanies these responses. The TBCs have certain reservations on the course contents/books/materials. One teacher (TBC1-AA) states: “The existing course contents of business skills, they meet their needs to some extent, but definitely further

efforts and further steps need to be taken, in order to prepare our students, in order to prepare real-life communication needs...the course outline that is prepared for such courses that is not prepared after practically visiting the business market, and these are the courses which are generally prepared by the Higher Education Commission, and in collaboration with the teachers, and I think further steps need to be taken if we want our students successfully communicate when they are involved in any kind of profession or job". The instructor perceives that many of the course contents taught are quite old, and are not used in present day corporate world: "Formats of application and business letters, they keep on changing, and it might happen in organizations that such formats (as are present in the books) are not used. So, further steps are needed to meet the practical professional needs of students for their later professional life". It is inferred from the TBC's responses that there exists a space for improvement. Such improvements can be brought through industry-academia consultation.

Regarding the relevance of existing course contents with professionals' communication requirements, one respondent (TBC2-AS) opines: "I am not satisfied that they (course contents) fulfill their future needs, it is just a kind of introduction, but they do practice when they become the member of that community or corporate sector, then, they have to learn many things at their workplace". The instructor suggests incorporating field-specific content to prepare students for their professional communication requirements.

Reflecting upon the preparation of course contents, one instructor (TBC3-AN) shares her perception: "They (people in academia) have just prepared the course outlines on their own, and we are bound to follow the course outlines which are already existing". She also highlights that overlapping various contents in different courses is also an issue. She (TBC3-AN) seems to suggest the course contents be prepared through consulting both business professionals and instructors. She (TBC3-AN) also highlights that business communication courses are in English, whereas English is not students' first language and many students fail to communicate efficiently in English because of differing connotative meanings of expressions. Reflecting upon the core purpose of business communication courses, the instructor (TBC3-AN) says that these courses should address the communication needs of "multinational companies and larger businesses". The TBC (TBC3-AN) sees the present course contents of business communication skills only partially helpful and adequate to the needs of the business world.

Another instructor (TBC4-AZ) sees the role of business communication teacher as more important than courses contents. She (TBC4-AZ) states that there are contents that address future needs, but that depends on “the teacher’s learning style...the teacher’s teaching methodology...what kind of activities the students are engaged in is an important area...whether that is fulfilling their requirements or their future requirements”. Her comment implies that trained, committed and qualified teachers can prepare their pupils for their future communication roles.

One instructor (TBC6-KS) opines that each teacher should revise course contents at the end of every semester with the help of his colleagues for the upcoming semesters. The instructor (TBC6-KS) perceives that such revising will help in meeting “the demands of these local (business) communities, local companies”. The instructor further opines that such content updating and indigenizing of the courses will help students in “facing challenges in practical life after completing their degree”. The instructor suggests: “if your department, your faculty members sit together at the end of course, and they give review to the contents of the course. Then, there is no doubt that they will handle the challenges and needs of the local (business) market”. He shares his practice in this regard: “I used to do this, and I am still doing this at the end of every semester I sit together with my colleagues and discuss which contents to be updated”. The respondent (TBC6-KS) also appreciates the role of National Business Education Accreditation Council (NBEAC) in devising the course contents. The instructor (TBC6-KS) seems convinced of continual revising, updating, and indigenizing the course contents to prepare students for their professional life.

Commenting upon the balance between theoretical concepts and practical contents, one respondent (TBC7-KM) opines: “As far as course contents are concerned, they, in theory, meet and satisfy the professional needs of students, in theory, but, practically, what happens over there, that is different”. The respondent (TBC7-KM) recommends that “there is need for course for Business Communication that should be devised especially for Pakistani students with examples of our own country, our own culture, our own business communication, business community and our own industry”. The instructor feels that the current course contents are influenced by foreign authors: “They need a thorough revision...with respect to Pakistani culture, with respect to Pakistani business community, because the example those are given, those are valid in foreign settings, but in our context, they need a lot of revision”. This instructor (TBC7-KM) seems to agree with one notion of

the present research that course contents need to be revised in accordance with contemporary indigenous business requirements.

One instructor (TBC8-MA) perceives that business communication courses have been only designed to meet some academic requirements and procedures “and needs of the students in the current (job) market have not been taken into consideration”. Thus, he (TBC8-MA) endorses modifying the course contents as per the needs of the jobs market. The instructor (TBC8-MA) shares his perception on how the course contents are usually framed: “It is a practice that you go to the table of contents or contents and you select different topics for the course outline”. He believes that course contents have been taken from books written by foreign authors: “the topics are there in the course outline which you can also read in the books written by foreign authors”. He sees it important to consider the students’ current academic and future professional needs while devising course contents. He (TBC8-MA) perceives that course contents seem “not actually designed to meet the needs of the local market, they are basically designed, I feel, for international students who have to interact internationally, because the focus is English language (since the foreign authors focus on communication needs of international markets)... course outline doesn’t address the need of current market, and I think it is not developed according to the indigenous market, according to the requirements, according to the business needs of indigenous market”. He (TBC8-MA) perceives that the course contents have not been prepared through industry-academia collaboration and consultation: “No consultation with the professionals who have experience of 25 years or 10 years...It needs good revision, I would say a thorough revision because it is not as per the need of the indigenous market, requirements of the local market”. The respondent (TBC8-MA) carries the perception that the course contents, with a target to prepare students for the international market, are less useful for Pakistani students since a majority of them would join Pakistani local organizations.

One respondent (TBC10-SF) states: “I try my best to teach them in a way that it would be generally beneficial for them”. It implies that the course contents are general and only meet the basic requirements of jobs/professions.

On the adequacy of course contents, one instructor (TBC11-SA) opines: “The course contents don’t fulfill 100% of our market needs, our students are studying about foreign markets and business in foreign countries; our local needs are different; our business is also of different patterns; our NGOs or our management are demanding different

sort of stuff”. This instructor (TBC11-SA) seems dissatisfied with foreign authors (and course contents, influenced by their books) as they do not cater to what is required in local business organizations. The respondent (TBC11-SA) is in favour of indigenizing the course contents, materials, and books to better prepare our business graduates for the local job market.

One instructor (TBC13-TA) sees the course contents insufficient (yet with a vital contribution) since they provide the students “minimum exposure of the job market...but through this course, they have at least some exposure, some sort of knowledge, some sort of understanding, that they do not put their foot on an alien island”. He (TBC13-TA) feels that the current course contents are “mostly borrowed from here and there from the other world, may be (from the books authored in) the developed world”. The respondent (TBC13-TA) seems to suggest the inclusion of materials from the indigenous business world into the courses.

Another instructor (TBC14-UK) states that universities only provide course contents to instructors, whereas the instructors are at liberty in choosing materials and supplement materials. Yet, for the provided course contents, the respondent (TBC14-UK) opines: “I don’t think they are OK. There is always room for improvement, and I think there should be some modifications, because there are more international contents, because we usually follow international books, and we as teachers have to add some contents to indigenize it. I think there is a need for localization, in those contents in terms of activities, may be teaching the same English writers’ theories, but tell them (students) how to apply in the local context”. The instructor’s comments also imply accommodating indigenous business practices in the courses. The respondent (TBC14-UK) also perceives that the course contents are not prepared through industry-academia consultation. She suggests the inclusion of “some linguistic perspective, pragmatics and semantics contexts...intercultural communication skills—that how in different cultures, verbal and nonverbal communication is being interpreted... (and) some contents related to local communication needs” while revising the present course contents.

One instructor (TBC12-SZ) admits: “I feel myself deficient of the real picture because I don’t have an exposure of the local market, first, and my students, a few of them can tell us that what are their needs, their future needs”. Thus, the respondent restrains commenting on the adequacy of the course contents of business communication skills. The respondent comments on the role of the teacher: “This is up to the teacher to carry on an

analysis, arouse them to speak out what are their needs, but they (students) really don't know, because our educational system does not prepare them for the goals in real terms". Regarding the course contents, he perceives that they are "bit outdated" and "need to be localized". He (TBC12-SZ) stresses upon industry-academia consultation: "I try my level best to apprise my students to with their needs but my exposure is limited. I really don't know the current market trends. In the same way, I feel, the course is not adequate, but at the same time, I and my students don't know what really their requirements are". Regarding industry-academia collaboration, he perceives: "There is no such collaboration; there is no consultation from the people from the market. They (the course contents) are prepared by academia, mostly the people from English background". On increasing industry-academia collaboration, he (TBC12-SZ) states: "I think it must happen (as) joint venture between management people and language people. What I could get out of the course contents, it is solely based on the practices on English as communication and English as subject". He considers HEC's designed course contents good: "I would say more than 90% contents and curriculum are all right, but depends on how carry out that curriculum or that syllabus, that can be an issue, otherwise there is no problem in contents". He sums up that there are deficiencies in course contents in terms of industry-academia collaboration/consultation, and further efforts are needed for improving the course contents and materials.

Reflecting upon the vast course contents, materials, supplement materials, classroom activities, field assignments, one instructor (TBC15-ZS) views 'Business Communication' as a universe in itself.

Interpretation of TBCs' responses and discussion: The majority of the respondents consider the course contents insufficient for the students' future needs. Some business graduates may initiate their businesses or join their family businesses whereas others may work for local or multinational organizations. There is scarcely any reflection of industry-academia consultation in these course contents; these course contents carry an impression that they are designed by academicians to fulfill the required number of courses on language and communication skills. The teachers have also shown their concerns that these course contents mainly address students' communication skills in the English language, whereby the students with a weaker academic background remain either low learners or slow performers. Some teachers try to address the gaps between course contents and actual needs through different measures. Books written by well learnt and well experienced local authors are also needed.

The following points are deciphered from TBCs' responses regarding the sufficiency of course contents and other available materials:

- i. The majority of the respondents are not satisfied with the course contents.
- ii. Some respondents perceive the deficiency in course contents as a result of the lack of industry-academia connections.
- iii. The course contents and other materials do not suffice the communication needs of local business organizations.

From the TBCs' responses, it is inferred that the course contents partially meet the future needs of students. These contents do not reflect alignment with on-ground business practices and communication needs. Many of the course contents on letter writing, application writing, memo writing, etc. and their formats have almost gone obsolete in the business world. A significant number of Pakistani students either join local business organizations or start their proprietorship, where their academic knowledge of business communication is of a little use, especially of the contents which address multinational organizations of developed countries (These results comply with BAs' responses, see section 4.4.1.3). Business communication courses seem designed to fulfill academic requirements, rather than training the students for their future communication requirements or encouraging them in learning actual communication patterns of the business world (see sections 4.4.2.2 and 4.4.2.3).

4.3.2.5 Foreign Books and Foreign Authors (Teachers' Comments)

From the perusal of HEC's recommended courses contents and the TBCs' responses, it is revealed that the majority of the books used for teaching business communication are authored by writers from western countries. In this regard, one instructor (TBC2-AS) views that foreign authors have "their own philosophy in business communication, they have same traditional things—Seven Cs, types of communication, letter writing", whereas practically "the world is like a global village, and in Pakistan we have a lot of multinational companies, and they follow the documentation style of the west, so, in a way that book ('Effective Business Communication' by Murphy et al.) is not that much bad". The respondent's comment implies that foreign authored books do not fully match with local business settings.

Another instructor (TBC3-AN) states: "They (the recommended books) are written by foreign authors, but, I try to make sure that they (students) actually can implement them

(contents) according to the context of Pakistan...(since) the material that is written there (in the books) and the material that is introduced there, that is situational”. The respondent’s comment implies the need of indigenizing the contents/cases of foreign authored books.

Another instructor (TBC4-AZ) opines that “this book (‘Effective Business Communication’ by Murphy et al.) is quite relevant and quite practical for the students” since its “8th edition” is now available “that means it is continuously revised, updated according to the new demand and that is itself an evidence that the book is updated”. The respondent views that a foreign book can or cannot be relevant in the local context “but the teacher knows how to maneuver, how to handle, and how to be flexible”.

The course contents, as well as books, have both theoretical concepts and cases/situations (for producing letters, reports, proposals, etc.). Regarding the second aspect, one instructor (TBC5-FB) narrates: “If you give them (the students) question that is based on practical situation, they pathetically fail in it, but if you give them question that is perfectly bookish (based on theoretical concepts), they perform very well. So, the books are not the problem, the problem is proficiency of students. I think books fulfill the requirements of the students”. It implies that the respondent (TBC5-FB) stresses more upon the students writing skills and comprehension skills than emphasizing business communication.

One respondent (TBC6-KS) considers a specific book appropriate (that he recommends to his students) since this book is quite updated, and the author maintains a blog and provides updated supplement materials. He (TBC6-KS) considers the book “to-the-point because it’s been taught in major business schools of the leading universities, and I remember the writer of the book, she also maintains some websites, so there are some activities available and supplementary material is available”.

Another respondent (TBC7-KM) has a differing opinion than those presented above. He opines that many obsolete books are still being used in Pakistan. It implies that the respondent (TBC7-KM) is not satisfied with the majority of available books for business communication. He shares another perspective: “The teachers have a lot of autonomy as far the course contents are concerned. Even the universities ask them to have alterations or modifications according to your needs”. The respondent encourages his students for multiple sources: “I give them full-fledge list of databases, websites, online books, and even online resources, which are contemporary, which they can consult. First,

there is one key book, but, to supplement that I also recommend them different other books and resources, digital resources”. This instructor relies more upon his teaching approach than the prescribed course contents and available books.

Another instructor (TBC8-MA) also advocates that a teacher should make multiple efforts: “it depends upon the teacher, how does he teaches that book, because that book, it is reference book, material is there, but the teacher has to make it beneficial for the students, he has to arrange lessons, he has to teach it in a way that it becomes useful for the students”. It implies that this instructor (TBC8-MA) also relies more upon his teaching methodology than the available books. On the present course contents and books, he opines: “It is meant for international business requirements, and unfortunately we aren’t producing such graduates in Pakistan who are joining international market in abundance, they are only a few”. It implies that course contents/books/materials need revisions as per local business needs.

One respondent (TBC9-SM) shares a different practice: “Usually I don’t follow any specific book for business communication rather material from different sources is selected which is given a shape of a booklet or a reader. That booklet or reader contains the works of local as well foreign writers”. This instructor (TBC9-SM) teaches at a university where a ‘comprehensive booklet’ is prepared by the instructors and is provided to the students as an alternate of one core textbook.

Another instructor (TBC10-SF) states that she is not satisfied with the recommended book because “the book is not up-to-date” and does not fulfill indigenous needs. It implies that a recommended book should address local job/business market needs.

One more instructor (TBC11-SA) is also not satisfied with the recommended book: “Honestly speaking, the book is not meeting the requirement of the local market because first of that book was published (quite earlier and its) last edition came in 2007, and contents are according to foreign market. They are not addressing the needs of local market”. It implies that a recommended book should address contemporary/indigenous business needs.

Another instructor (TBC12-SZ) is also less satisfied with the foreign books: “The setting of the books (written by foreign authors) is least with the requirements of Pakistani business students”. He states his methodology: “I prepare my own notes-lecture from all of those books, and from the relevant material and I try to localize everything... if you ask me any book, ‘Business English’ by Lyn R. Clark, is a very good book...and its setting is

totally different. Book by Mary Munter is a very informative book, though it is not up-to-date...Book by Ketty is a compendium which is remarkable, and there are many others which I can mention. But, for me it is not a matter of book or books, it is involving people in business oriented communicative situations, which is devised by teachers, depending upon the setting, the needs of the students, and also keeping in mind the comprehension level of the students". This instructor (TBC12-SZ) inclines towards compensating the limitations of the books written by foreign authors.

One respondent (TBC13-TA) states: "Book written by Sara Gerson, that is, I think, quite helpful in teaching the students: what are the necessities, what are the requirements of business world, so that they prepare themselves accordingly". The respondent shares his general perception: "the books written by foreign authors, they do not fulfill all the requirements of own environment...local authors should also be contributing...the case studies...business situation...directly related to our own business environment instead of learning things in abstraction". This instructor (TBC13-TA) also seems less satisfied with the available books and seems to suggest that an instructor should compensate the shortcomings of the books with their methodology.

Reflecting upon the gaps between indigenous organizations' needs and materials/contents of foreign books, one respondent (TBC14-UK) says: "Of course, there are some differences". Her comment implies a gap between foreign books and contemporary business needs.

The majority of available books are authored by foreign writers, since one respondent (TBC15-ZS) states: "We follow the books of the foreigners, that is the original source". This respondent (TBC15-ZS) sees some books or material relevant "(authored) by Pakistanis or Indians, because they belong to this locality, this culture and they are so close to us". The respondent (TBC15-ZS) says: "They (foreign books) are excellent, they are good books, but we (should) follow local indigenous books as well because they also have their specialty (as they are more relevant to our local needs). But, I would like to say, 30% we follow indigenous books and 70% foreigners, and foreigners are very well, they fulfill the aims". It is inferred from his (TBC15-ZS) views that a blend of both local and foreign books/materials can better contribute to students' professional development.

The TBCs' responses are also supported by the following list of books recommended by HEC (2012) (Retrieved from

<http://hec.gov.pk/english/services/universities/RevisedCurricula/Documents/2011-2012/BusinessAdmin-2012.pdf> on April 22, 2019) for BBA. The list shows that all the recommended books are written by foreign authors:

Recommended Textbooks: (for courses ‘English 1’, ‘Oral Communication’, and ‘Business Communication I’)

- i. Murphy, Effective Business Communication, 7th edition
- ii. Stuart Sillar (1988) Success in Communication, Jhon Murray Publishers
- iii. Court Bovee, John Thill, Business Communications Essentials, Prentice Hall, Latest Edition

Additional Readings: (for courses ‘English 1’, ‘Oral Communication’, and ‘Business Communication I’)

- i. Murphy & Hilderbrant (1991) Effective Business Communication, 6th Edition, McGraw-Hill
- ii. Raymond V. Lesikar (1996) Business Communication, Richard D. Irwin, Inc.
- iii. Bovee & Thill (1995) Business Communication Today, 4th Edition, McGraw-Hill
- iv. Shirley Taylor (1994) Communication for Business-A Practical Approach 2nd Edition, Pitman Publishing

The outdatedness of these books is also visible in their year of publishing e.g.1988, 1991, 1994, 1995, 1996.

Interpretation of TBCs’ responses and brief discussion: The TBCs’ responses and perusal of HEC’s (2012) scheme of studies (for BBA) reveal the following aspects:

- i. The books recommended either as a core textbook or supplement books are written by foreign authors (from western countries).
- ii. The TBCs find the theoretical concepts in these books effective, yet they feel that the case studies, examples, and other materials in these books mainly relate to business settings of Europe, the USA, and alike developed countries.
- iii. The TBCs perceive that these books rarely address the communication needs of professionals working in indigenous business organizations, though these books can partially benefit the professionals working in the Pakistani chapters of multinational organizations.
- iv. The availability of updated and recent editions of these books is also a challenge. To overcome the aforementioned hurdles, TBCs use some supplement materials

from online sources. Only one of the respondents claims to be satisfied with the book he recommends, as the author continuously updates the book and maintains a 'blog' where she places updated and recent materials.

- v. The TBCs make their efforts to indigenize the contents, cases/situations, or examples on their own.
- vi. The students with less comprehension capability face hurdles in understanding these books, and in performing during examination since these books comprise fewer contents on local settings.

4.3.2.6 Students' Aspirations of their Future Jobs/Careers and Respective Communication Requirements

The teachers have first-hand interactions with their students to know their aspirations of future careers. One respondent (TBC1-AA) reports that his students are mostly interested in banking jobs, marketing jobs, or public sector jobs after their business studies.

Another respondent (TBC2-AS) reports that his students of business studies aspire to have managerial jobs related to HR, Finance, Marketing, or public sector jobs. The respondent perceives that these jobs have different demands: in HR, they need to interact frequently with internal public whereas in finance type jobs their interaction is quite limited; in marketing type jobs they need to interact frequently with external public. Thus, their future communication requirements are quite diverse as per their career aspirations. The respondent (TBC2-AS) perceives that a teacher's approach of teaching business communication influences his pupils: "If a teacher doesn't have the knowledge of future needs (of his students), then it is very difficult for him to incorporate (changes according to) those needs". The respondent also reports that TBCs, since they are mostly from English departments, lack connections with people from the business sector; whereas faculty in management sciences departments have these connections and they can help TBCs in devising relevant methodology and course materials.

One respondent (TBC3-AN) reports that a few of her students have their businesses or family businesses which they intend to join after their studies (and with which they are partially involved in their free times), whereas the others "imagine in their minds that there is going to be a bigger organization or a bigger setup where they will be working as Marketing Manager or Sales Officer or something like that". The instructor (TBC3-AN)

comments on some of her female students' career aspirations: "girls in BBA, they are interested in working in NGOs". The respondent's (TBC3-AN) comments imply that the students with a business family background are comparatively realistic towards business communication courses than the others.

Another respondent (TBC5-FB) reports that mostly the students wish for jobs in HR, marketing, finance, but practically "First priority of the students is whatever comes in the way; they try to pick it up (owing to massive unemployment/underemployment in the country)".

Another respondent (TBC6-KS) reports his students' job aspirations: they "want to join banks, want to apply for multinational companies in Pakistan like IBL, or popular national companies like Chalas Cement, and also they want to join teaching profession".

Another respondent views: "The students of business studies mostly aspire for managerial jobs in different organizations".

One respondent (TBC8-MA) observes that students' careers are linked with their competence: "Students do aspire good jobs for them. But it depends on how much they are competent, how much knowledge they have, and how much they are proficient in their areas".

Another respondent (TBC10-SF) reports her students' aspired careers: "They want to go to the banking side, and they want to have their own businesses".

Another respondent (TBC11-SA) reports: "They (business students) are interested in management; some of them want to join NGOs, marketing or different types of jobs".

One respondent (TBC12-SZ) reports: "Most of them... (in terms of their preference) top of that 'Banking', then, 'Human Resource Management', they are least interested in 'Finance' and 'Marketing'...most them...they want to plunge into private sector, they are least interested in government sector jobs...They are more interested in running their own private companies, most of them they talk of starting their own private businesses".

Another respondent (TBC13-TA) highlights the problem of unemployment and difficulties in finding an aspired career: "Ours is country where there is a big problem of unemployment...most of the families want their children to be employed somewhere. Only the highly capable graduates manage to get a career of their own choice, whereas majority

of them grab any job they get”. The respondent’s comments imply that business students should be trained/prepared for diverse roles (to enable them perform in any job they manage to secure, after the completion of their studies).

Another respondent (TBC14-UK) narrates business students’ career aspirations: “Most of them (students) go for being bankers and some of them in other jobs too...If they are bankers, they would have somewhat direct contact with the clients... for business students, business (during classroom teaching and related activities) was more focused, business communication was more focused”.

One respondent (TBC15-ZS) narrates: “Being business students...their natural trend is towards business, they definitely go for business. So, during their studies, we train them for entrepreneurship, we give them opportunity to be a practitioner, sometimes through different fairs, different workshops, etc. So, these students go for business firms and business areas for jobs...If the student is not careless, if he is not oblivious to the demands of their career, so they are around 80-90% they are well prepared for their purpose of business and they go ahead successfully”. The respondent’s comments imply that the students can prepare themselves better for their future careers if they focus on their studies and other assigned academic activities.

Interpretation of TBCs’ responses and brief discussion: A majority of business students want to join business sector jobs:

- i. HR
- ii. Marketing
- iii. Finance
- iv. Management
- v. Banking
- vi. Public sector
- vii. NGOs

The TBCs’ responses generate the following implications:

- i. Communication requirements for each job are different, and the students need to be trained accordingly, whereas the course contents are quite general and do not prepare students for a particular field.
- ii. The students with family businesses or well-off financial circumstances intend to have their businesses. These students need to be trained differently since they are

aware of the realities of the business world, they take more interest, and need to be trained rather than merely taught. These students can help other students as well in knowing the realities of the business world.

- iii. Some students also intend to join public sector jobs, whereas a small number of students (mostly females) aspire to join NGOs. Some contents need to be added accordingly.

In the light of the TBCs' responses, the following table shows problems faced in business communication classrooms:

Table 4.13

Problems in Business Communication Classroom (a Synthesized Picture), Reported by TBCs

Sr.	The Problems/Issues in Business Communication Classroom
1	Ethnolinguistic diversity among students
2	Students' poor English language skills (comprehension, oral/written expression)
3	Students' diverse aspirations for their future careers
4	Inadequacy and outdatedness of course contents
5	Books/materials written by foreign authors, with cases and examples of the developed world
6	Difficulties in comprehending the foreign authors' books, and failure in correlating them with the local context

4.3.2.7 In-Vogue Teaching Practices and Impact of Teachers' Academic Qualification on their Teaching Methodology

In continuation of the previous thematic head on the issues and challenges in business communication classroom, this sub-section discusses TBCs' methodology for teaching business communication. The TBCs' responses, presented and interpreted here,

particularly pertaining to their approaches for teaching business communication courses. The glimpse of their academic qualification on their teaching methodologies is also visible.

One respondent's (TBC1-AA) comments reflect his academic qualification in his teaching methodology since he (TBC1-AA) views that business communication skills can be refined through many other supplements e.g. vocabulary, accent, and pronunciation. (His particular background is English Linguistics). This instructor (TBC1-AA) also mentions his methodology to involve the students in business communication-related classroom activities: "They (students) play the role of a manager or an accountant or any other related job. This is how they try to familiarize with some of the related vocabulary and with the kind of sentences which are used in such professions, so that they get familiar with the practical knowledge of such fields". The instructor's (TBC1-AA) use of role plays also resembles his own studies in English language. Reflecting upon his teaching methodology, the instructor (TBC1-AA) further reports: "we involve them going through various extra material, for example, short stories and short novels, so that they comprehend the passage and structures used in such passages, and finally they can use the same in communication...we specially focus on their speaking skills involving them in various activities including group discussions, individual presentations and many related activities...when we use extra material and when we involve them in real-life situations, involving them in various activities, speaking activities, that makes a difference, and that helps them a lot in their further communication skills". The instructor's previous qualification is in language and literature, and it seems evident that his approach pertains more to his previous education than the infield business communication practices.

Data reveals that TBCs mostly take business communication as a subject on language skills. This phenomenon is also revealed in an instructor's (TBC2-AS) assumption that productive skills i.e. speaking skills and writing skills are more focused at the time of job interviews and that the candidates are assessed through these two skills. Reflecting upon his teaching methods, the instructor (TBC2-AS) states: "We try to teach them certain skills like 'how to attend a meeting' and 'how to speak and contribute in a meeting' in speaking skills, and of course in writing skills, we try to teach them different formats in memo writing, letter writing and report writing". The respondent (TBC2-AS) further reports that he focuses on speaking skills and writing skills in his business communication classroom. The instructor's academic background (i.e. English language and linguistics) is reflected in his preferred teaching methodology. The respondent (TBC2-

AS) mentions a limitation that the teachers of business communication skills are bound to stick to prescribed course contents, and TBCs have little liberty of implementing their own choice in teaching business communication. The information gathered on this TBC's educational and professional background does not reveal any first-hand exposure to the above narrated oral and written business correspondence.

One respondent (TBC3-AN) views that the course contents of business communication aim at developing the students' written and spoken skills through extensive drilling. This TBC involves her pupils in various activities: letter writing, email writing, memo writing, face to face interaction, oral presentations in front of smaller as well larger groups. She states that there are many cases/situations in the recommended books and "in those situations, the students are also supposed to use internet during the classroom activities, so that they can 'google' and they can see the different connotations of different words and different cultures also; so, that is going to be one thing that they can inculcate in their writing practices". She encourages her students "to bring examples from the local market also, because most of the students are already in business, they have their business, a family business kind of thing (One of her students has a petroleum filling station, and another has a glue manufacturing company)". The respondent (TBC3-AN) perceives these students have experience of dealing "with a lot of labor class" and other employees, customers and vendors. She (TBC3-AN) states: "I don't have to tell them that they need to stick to English most of the time; what they need to understand is they need to develop 'You attitude' and 'You kind of approach' in them, so that they can attract the audience' attention through the language they are using" (since these students have exposure to business world practically, they take interest in business communication courses). She (TBC3-AN) also assigns field projects to make her students understand infield business communication practices for their practical exposure and learning.

Another instructor (TBC4-AZ) shares her teaching practices: "My classroom is very interactive. If it is to say 30% lectures, and 70% would be the activity-based of that lecture, and I would actively engage students in that activity, and I make sure they learn through implementation whatever theory is taught in lecture", "group task or pair works, individual tasks", "theory plus practice"... "As far as report writing is concerned, we use hypothetical situations which are closely related to real-life situations". This instructor also has an academic background in English Linguistics, and she does not possess any first-hand exposure to business studies or the business world. It is implied that this instructor's

teaching methodology could have been effective if she had relevant educational and professional exposure.

Another instructor (TBC5-FB) narrates his methodology: “What I do, I prefer giving less lectures and encouraging them to participate in different activities, like, I give them topics, like, right now I am teaching M.Com students ‘Business Communication’. What I do I give them one topic...the topic should be related to their subject, like, I give them topic ‘Inflation and its Impact on Pakistan’s economy’ ...I create a situation in a class and they participate...I focus on their pronunciation too...I ask them different movies to watch, the movies which are based on true stories...we don’t have audio-visual facility here, so if they watch a movie, they are at least tuned to language that how English is spoken. So, they also improve a little bit in this way...I take different reading material from ‘net...I don’t recommend them any book, rather I give them different notes, different readings from different books”. He further states: “Students are not comfortable when you teach them...You have to analyze your audience...You have to see what background you have...What language you have to use...Here you are going to criticize someone, so, you are not going to use ‘You attitude’ ...In my paper, what I do, I give them situation related to Seven Cs, and then I ask them to apply Seven Cs on them”. The instructor (TBC5-FB) (again with a glimpse of his academic background in language and linguistics) further reports: “I focus on their pronunciation too...I ask them different movies to watch, the movies which are based on true stories...the issue with Pakistani students is language...You attitude, what kind of language you are going to use, in what kind of situation you are going to use this thing. So, books are fine, but issue is proficiency of students in English...we give example from our routine, daily life...when teach ‘how to write how to design tender notice’ we always refer them read newspaper, get ‘tender notices’ from there...Then I ask them now you have (to) write tender notice, and I give them situation, this is the situation, according to this you will write the tender notice”. The instructor’s (TBC5-FB) methodology reflects more focus on the development of language skills than business communication skills (his teaching approach seems more appropriate for teaching language skills than business communication). His (TBC5-FB) teaching methodology can produce effective outputs if he is trained on infield business communication practices.

Another instructor (TBC6-KS) emphasizes that students’ communication skills in the English language should be focused on because “(of the role of) English as their official

language”. Here again, this instructor’s focus seems more on communication/language skills than business communication skills. The respondent’s (TBC6-KS) comments on the need of indigenizing the available books and materials: “We are required to indigenize when it is taught at international level (other than a book author’s own country). He shares his teaching methodology for business communication courses: “I used to create some topics, some points related to Pakistani business community, like, my question, most of the time, they were based upon, Pakistani market orientation, like if I would give an assignment to students I would ask them to read Daily Dawn Sunday Edition, and address a particular ad given by a company, right, like ‘Centaur’s in Islamabad then they are ordered to address the ad in the newspaper: How would you prepare your (job) application for a position. So, (that way) I was indigenizing those markets, those company names which are locally working, they are well known, and their needs were related to those local market orientation”. The respondent (TBC6-KS) also mentions that he encourages his students to read job advertisements in Pakistani English newspapers. The respondent shares his assumption that changing the international companies’ names to Pakistani companies’ names is a procedure to make stuff indigenized. It seems this TBC (TBC6-KS) can also deliver better if he has some relevant exposure to infield business communication practices.

Another TBC (TBC7-KM) shares his methodology for preparing lectures: “I use different sources in the form of books...I also use different examples especially from the market, from Pakistani society, to supplement the development of their communication skills”. This TBC’s teaching approach also reflects a lack of exposure to the business world, which otherwise could refine his teaching approach.

Another instructor (TBC8-MA) reports his effort on delivering recent and indigenous knowledge to his students: “I do manage it through referring to current affairs, and by referring to the demand of the market, especially for BBA students, because we are living in a multilingual world, and here, competence especially in English language is compulsory, if the students want to flourish in their professional areas. So, I do suggest them to watch BBC and CNN, and especially the programmes relevant to their area of studies”. There is a glimpse of the respondent’s academic background of language and linguistics: “There is a lack of that sequence which is required in language teaching or language learning”. The instructor (TBC8-MA) also reports: “I provide them a phonetic chart, I do tell them the difference between Urdu sounds and English sounds”. Here, a small effort on ‘area-specific’ delivery is visible, yet the respondent’s major stress is on linguistic

skills than business communication skills. The respondent (TBC8-MA) further shares his perception of business communication and other Functional/Business English courses: “When we talk about language skills, basically these skills are referred to four areas which we say four skills, like reading writing, listening and speaking. I use certain techniques to teach them all the four skills. For example for improving their speaking skills, I arrange group discussions on some important current topics, and for improving their reading skills, I do prepare some reading exercises—I teach them how to skim, scan, how to read with understanding. For listening, I do arrange some native conversations, and I arrange this for my students at various time in my course, so that they can understand the native accent, and they can understand how the native speakers are speaking different sentences, how they are conversating with each other, how they are communicating with each other. So, I try to create native like environment through these audio visual aids to improve their skills”. From his (TBC8-MA) narrations, a glimpse of his academic background (i.e. language and linguistics) is visible. Regarding the sufficiency of available books, this instructor (TBC8-MA) believes that teachers need to make efforts to deliver all the course contents to the students (through preparing their lectures from multiple sources according to their caliber and needs) since no complete book can be taught in one semester: “It is the teacher who has to look into the needs of the students because it depends on where are you teaching what is the level of the students, which area is weak, and which area is comparatively good. So, according to the requirements of the students, keeping in view their background knowledge, the teacher can plan his lessons, and the teacher can teach the students, so the students learn, and the students improve their linguistic competence”. Unawareness from communication practices of real business settings is also visible in this respondent’s comments.

One TBC (TBC9-SM) assigns her students some self-reading, before introducing a new topic: “Before delivering the lecture, students are assigned different topics and are asked to prepare them before coming to the class. Through this, it becomes easy for me to elaborate the points relevant to the lecture”. The instructor (TBC9-SM) is convinced that “this strategy is beneficial for the students as they (the students) explore a lot of material and besides differentiating between relevant and irrelevant, they can also come across with the new and innovative in business sector”. This instructor’s approach also more aligns with language skills in general than business communication skills in particular (since there is no mention of exploring the business sector communication needs).

Another instructor (TBC10-SF) narrates her teaching approach (which seems quite remote from practical business settings): “However, what I do is, I always improvise my teaching. I do refer to the book. We consult the book in the class. I improvise if I find there anything to correct or I want to do it my own way”. She perceives that a teacher needs to indigenize materials and terms and expressions since students cannot make themselves aware of business communication: “I think I as a teacher try my best to synchronize with somehow, because the kind of projects I assign to them, I try my best to give them proposals or reports in the way, that it would be beneficial for them...I personally try my best to keep my teaching objectives aligned with their requirements that they might have in future”. Like other instructors, this TBC (TBC10-SF) seems to make her best efforts which can produce better results with the relevant exposure through industry-academia consultation and professional training programmes.

Another instructor (TBC11-SA) tries to deliver indigenous knowledge to his students, through involving them in “situations”, “mock interviews”, “letter writing”, “role plays” and other “different activities” (which are mostly derived from the books).

Another instructor (TBC12-SZ) mentions his efforts of arousing his students’ interest in field-specific knowledge through reading business newspapers: “We need to, in first place, localize whatever we get. My way is to engage them in activities which are really business-oriented. For example, I ask them in each class to bring at least one business article from a business newspaper of national circulation, and they bring their own material regard, according to their interest, discuss and interpret, and from there we get vocabulary and everything, and I try to immerse into the language required for their future practical life”. In his case, it seems that the instructor encourages his students to stay in touch with the business world through relevant news articles, yet the instructor’s qualification is also apparent. (The instructor holds a degree in language and linguistics, which is reflected in recommending the students to ‘read’ the articles.) Regarding his teaching approach, the respondent (TBC12-SZ) states: “I prepare my own notes-lecture from all of those books and from the relevant material and I try to localize everything...But, for me it is not a matter of book or books, it is involving people in business-oriented communicative situations, which is devised by teachers, depending upon the setting, the needs of the students, and also keeping in mind the comprehension level of the students”. It appears that this instructor’s (TBC12-SZ) relevant exposure can produce better output.

Among the respondents, one instructor (TBC13-TA) has studied a course relevant to business during his undergraduate studies. He (TBC13-TA) mentions his efforts to update himself with the business world: “I rely on my own learning that once upon a time, I have also been a student of Economics...I also try to go through the business pages of newspapers also and magazine, so that I remain current with the different requirements and situations of business world and corporate world in the country. I try to correlate the two things so that the students should be given recent information instead of telling them anything that is totally irrelevant”. The respondent (TBC13-TA) also focuses upon language skills (since he holds a degree in English Linguistics). He states that, after conducting a diagnostic test and gaining awareness on the gaps in language skills of students, “I try to bring them at a level where they do understand that these skills are not merely subject that they have to go through, it has a practical implication also”. This respondent’s comments imply that TBCs with a relevant academic background (and if possible, with relevant professional experience) can deliver better results i.e. they can teach business communication effectively.

Another reflection of the instructor’s qualification is visible in one respondent’s (TBC14-UK) comments: “It is my rule, while teaching Business English or Business Communication; I used to teach in English. I restrict my students to communicate only in English”. This instructor’s (TBC14-UK) paying more attention towards language skills reflects her own academic background (i.e. English language and linguistics): “In the beginning I usually focus on their language skills, but later on I try to develop their communication skills in terms of ‘language affect the audience’, in terms of ‘connotation of language’, ‘how they understand’, how language connotation is associated with the feelings and its effects’, and ‘what are the key factors in terms of clarity and Seven Cs and all that’ which can improve their communication skills and technical writing, because technical writing is different from simple academic writing or other genres of writing”. On indigenizing the contents and concepts in foreign authors’ books, she (TBC14-UK) states: “I use to introduce intercultural communication skills so they (students) can really indigenize the foreign experiences into the local context, but professionally they have to communicate in English, and usually we teach them business communication—how to communicate effectively—in English language, and some of them work in multinational companies, and medium of instruction is English, and they have multicultural clients as well. So, keeping that scenario in mind, I use to cover all that aspects that how they can

apply the same skills with some modifications in the local contexts and in international context". For imparting indigenous knowledge to her students, she assigns her students: "small report writing from the Pakistani context", "email writing...a good persuasive email", "a bad news message...how you would write to your audience", "business activities like some mock interviews or some mock meetings". This respondent's efforts also could produce better outcomes through exposure to the actual business world and infield communication practices there.

One instructor (TBC15-ZS) states: "I want myself to be a good communicator...I focus on my language, I try to be eloquent, clear while talking to the students, that the students may get and they should enjoy...I want to communicate that taste to the students—taste of learning. That I am a role model for students; when I am attractive for them, they follow me". The instructor's (TBC15-ZS) statement implies that he presents himself as a role model for his students. On preparing the lectures and notes, the instructor (TBC15-ZS) states: "I try my level best to use good material, whatever the handouts, photocopy or print out or LED etc...I use emails and different notes etc. I always try to give things to students in written form, if I give any response on their notes or notebook etc. whatever is their work, I want to give it in written form. I maintain a diary as well for the students; that they may carry out that diary. That will be a good source of communication. I advise the students to form a Whatsapp group to share things 'student to student' and teacher student' Email group is formed to exchange email, so they may carry these activities in a positive. Apart from that I am the chief exponent of this thing that teacher should respond timely and student should also respond timely whenever there is some kind of communication"... "There are books, but my way is, I collect things from different sources"... "But, originally we follow the books of the foreigners, that is the original source".

Interpretation of TBCs' responses and discussion: The TBCs' methodology seems less aligned with the requirements of the business world, and more influenced by their academic qualifications in language, linguistics, and literature. For instance, one respondent (i.e. TBC1-AA) narrates that he involves his students of business communication in reading short stories and short novels to improve their reading skills. This respondent also involves his pupils in real-life situations, which are not related to business settings. Another respondent (TBC2-AS) focuses on speaking and writing skills. He has not mentioned how such efforts can develop his pupils' professional communication. One respondent (TBC5-

FB) recommends his students watch movies on real life and true stories; he also takes steps to improve students' pronunciation. Another respondent (TBC6-KS) focuses on communication skills in the English language. One respondent (TBC8-MA) recommends his students stay informed through current affairs and through watching well-renowned English news channels. He also believes in improving students' pronunciation. One respondent (TBC12-ZS), to make his students aware of the business world, recommends them to read business-related articles in English newspapers. One respondent (TBC13-TA) (who has studied Economics, as a subject of his undergraduate studies) relies on his previous knowledge of economics and business affairs while teaching business communication. One respondent (TBC14-UK) emphasizes using the English language only in the classroom. When compared with the information that all these TBCs have provided on their academic qualifications, there is an enormous reflection of their academic qualification of either English language and/or literature in their teaching approach for business communication, with only one exception where one TBC has studied a business-relevant subject i.e. Economics.

The TBCs' responses show reflections of their qualifications in their teaching methodology (yet certain limitations are beyond TBCs' control). They rarely have any qualification or training relevant to business communication, either as a professional experience or academic discipline. Some teachers' focus is on enhancing their students' productive skills i.e. writing and speaking or other language skills e.g. students' listening skills through recommending them English news bulletins. TBCs are bound to follow the prescribed course contents along with the time restrictions of the semester system (i.e. 16-18 weeks for one semester, usually), which limits their efforts, as per their narrations, to groom students' business communication skills. The teachers also face restrictions in adopting a uniform approach because of the differing academic/intellectual caliber of their students in some universities. In some cases, less availability of audio-visual aids in business communication classroom also restricts TBCs' efforts in adopting a methodology of their choice. TBCs' responses also reveal their efforts to align their teaching approach with business communication:

- i. Some TBCs recommend their students to read business pages of English newspapers to develop reading comprehension skills and to get some know-how of business terms and concepts.

- ii. One respondent assigns her students some field projects so that the students may know infield business communication.
- iii. A few TBCs encourage their students to learn and seek some practical information on corporate communication.
- iv. Some instructors involve their students in activities of applying their theoretical learning e.g. of Seven Cs, ‘you attitude’, and other such concepts.
- v. The teachers make their efforts to indigenize the material available in the books written by foreign authors.

4.3.3 The Rationale for Explicit Inclusion/Instruction of Pragmatics

This broader thematic head includes the following sub-themes:

1. Implicit reflection/presence of pragmatics in existing course contents
2. Benefits of pragmatics in communication
3. Benefits of explicit instruction of pragmatics in business communication
4. Suggestions for teaching pragmatics
5. General suggestions

4.3.3.1 Implicit Reflection of Pragmatics in Existing Course Contents

The following responses of TBCs pertain to the researcher’s assumption on the implicit presence of some pragmatics concepts in the syllabi. The researcher’s main aim during the interviews with TBCs was to explore whether the explicit teaching of pragmatics to business students is more effective, as compared to implicit teaching through existing syllabi, and whether this explicit instruction is expected to assist them in better acquiring business communication skills.

One respondent (TBC2-AS) mentions the term ‘sugar coated’ which depicts the use of pragmatics in business communication “(with a focus on) how to communicate by using different forms”, “how to lower down the tone of the (unwelcomed part of the) message”, “how to bring courtesy”, “how to convey meaning by using the soft words or by indirectly conveying”. The respondent’s views affirm the implicit presence and use of pragmatics in business communication.

Another instructor (TBC4-AZ) also affirms the implicit presence of pragmatics concepts: “In implicit form, these concept (of pragmatics) do exist” in syllabi. Conceding to the researcher’s assumption, this respondent states that the teachers with a background in linguistics (with the knowledge of pragmatics and with an inclination to apply it in

practical communication) can find pragmatics in the contents. The respondent further views that TBCs may refer to pragmatics in audience analysis, oral presentation skills, understanding audience's expectations, cultural barriers, contextual communication, "But, it depends on the consciousness and level of knowledge and understanding and clarity of the teacher—how familiar the teacher is with the concept of pragmatics and how successfully the teacher can implicitly or explicitly highlight and explain the pragmatic aspect of whatever the communication is taking place". On the importance of this particular subfield of linguistics, the respondent (TBC4-AZ) states: "Pragmatics is a very important component and unfortunately it is an ignored component of school, college and even university level teaching as far as these communication subjects are concerned". Thus, the respondent affirms the researcher's notion of including pragmatics concepts and their explicit instruction in business communication courses.

Another respondent (TBC5-FB) shares his efforts of informing his students about pragmatics: "We tell them...to analyze your audience...to analyze your data...to observe their (audience's) responses...if you have a multicultural or multi-religious society... (for example) there are certain Christians or Hindus are also part of your audience, so what kind of examples you can quote. Isn't it that you are quoting something that may hurt them?... You can discuss any incident happened in your society. You can discuss any news, then, you can bring them back. These are different things related to pragmatics which we do but they are not explicit, obviously, they are implicit". The respondent refers to the importance of pragmatics in audience analysis, contents selection, anticipating the audience's reaction/interpretations, and intercultural communication.

One respondent (TBC6-KS) includes pragmatics implicitly while his teaching: "Without mentioning pragmatics...we are not teaching them pragmatics (explicitly), but we will implicitly go for those features which are required, like how to carry out audience analysis, how to consider the background of the reader, who is the target audience". The respondent is convinced of the importance of pragmatics in audience analysis and in anticipating the audience's schemas. This respondent (TBC6-KS) supports the teaching of pragmatics implicitly and disagrees with the notion of teaching it explicitly.

Another respondent (TBC8-MA) views the role of pragmatics as inevitable in human communication: "Interaction includes social values, it includes your knowledge of traditions, etc. and I emphasize on pragmatics while my teaching because if you understand

the context, you can't produce the relevant expression and you can't get the desired result. So, contextual understanding is must".

One respondent (TBC10-SF) affirms the compatibility between pragmatics and business communication (as is presented in Section 4.1), while she mentions her approach of teaching pragmatics implicitly: "Yes, implicitly there is reflection (of concept from pragmatics in business communication course contents) because when we talk about seven principles of effective communication (i.e. Seven Cs), they are somehow pragmatics dependent principles". The respondent (TBC10-SF) further opines that pragmatics concepts "are somehow applied, and they (business students/professionals) know it, even addressing to some complaint, addressing to some issues", and thus pragmatics is tacitly used in being "specific about some context", "in writing an introduction to a proposal or a report, we tell them to be audience-centered", "being audience-centered means to keep in mind the context of the report".

Another respondent (TBC11-SA) perceives the implicit presence of pragmatics concepts in the course contents: "Pragmatics is there in real sense but that is not visible".

Another respondent (TBC12-SZ) views a profuse presence of pragmatics: "There are many examples of pragmatics in our course books—picture story writing, conversation, interviews".

One respondent (TBC14-UK) states that pragmatics has its implicit role in intercultural communication, in contextual communication, in nonverbal communication, in "literal meaning and metaphorical meanings". The respondent views that the indirect organizational approach for writing a 'bad news' message is an example of using pragmatics implicitly in business communication: "the news is same, but the language effect is not that bad and depressing for the clients". The respondent compares the inappropriate correspondence with pragmatically appropriate one: "if you receive a rejection letter from government sector usually, it starts with 'you are failed to qualify'... we tell the students that in multinational companies it is offensive and it is not the way to use language". Re imparting her students with implicit awareness of pragmatics, she states "But I don't tell them that this comes under the theory of pragmatics".

Interpretation of TBCs' responses and brief discussion: TBCs (with a background in linguistics) find the implicit presence of pragmatics in the course contents. The TBCs' responses imply that they make their students aware of its effectiveness (implicitly) in

contextually appropriate communication. Pragmatics is there in conveying messages, especially through ‘Indirect Approach’ for ‘bad news’ or ‘persuasive messages’. The TBCs highlight pragmatics (and its implicit use) in many course contents in the form of (for example):

- i. ‘Sugar coated language’ i.e. euphemism and metaphors (for indirect meaning/speech acts)
- ii. Audience analysis concerning their expectations, responses
- iii. Audience’s social values and traditions, their frame and schemas
- iv. Cultural barriers, their identification, and management
- v. Context, contextual understanding, and situational expressions

4.3.3.2 *Benefits of Pragmatics in Communication (in General)*

One instructor (TBC1-AA) is convinced of the role of pragmatics in communication: “Wherever we communicate pragmatics is involved in this, and so is the case with students of business communication, when they communicate, directly or indirectly, implicitly or explicitly, they are making use of some of the concepts of pragmatics”.

Another instructor (TBC2-AS) considers pragmatics helpful in understanding “the underlying meaning or intended meaning”.

One more instructor (TBC3-AN) views: “keeping in mind, the context, the language, the speaker, and the listener...is very important”. The respondent’s comment implies the significance of pragmatics for students’ effective communication competence in their professional careers.

Another instructor (TBC4-AZ) comments: “Pragmatics has lot to do with this common sense (in terms of day-to-day communication)”. She (TBC4-AZ) states: “Having this sensitivity (i.e. knowing and appropriately applying the concepts of pragmatics) of that your communication is not an end in itself, but your communication is a means to some end (e.g. successful business deals or personal relations), that you are trying to achieve, then, how effectively this means should be used” and communication can be made effective through knowing “the expectations, and the psychological and different aspects of audience and understanding their needs”.

One instructor (TBC5-FB) sees the significance of pragmatics in notes-taking and listening comprehension: “when someone is speaking to you or someone is giving

presentation, you should avoid taking notes, you should try reducing notes, you should make clear in your mind, what is the purpose of your listening, why are you listening to him”.

Another instructor (TBC8-MA) sees the role of pragmatics in using “right word for the right place, right word for the right concept, right word for the right situation, and this all is through understanding the context”. He considers pragmatics important for business professionals: “in your professional life when you are a professional, then you have to talk as per the requirements, you have to use the words as per the requirements, you have to understand the context”.

Another instructor (TBC10-SF) considers pragmatics helpful for communicators while they change their roles from a sender to a receiver and vice versa (as is discussed in “Communication Cycle”). She asserts: “Pragmatics...is going to help you in articulating what you are trying to say and be specific in that, same way it is going to help them in decoding and interpreting what somebody else is trying to say in a particular context”. Highlighting the significance of pragmatics, she says: “If it is helping them in saying what they are trying to say, it is definitely going to help them in understanding what somebody else is trying to say”. She (TBC10-SF) shares her learning: “When I came to know what pragmatics is, it helped me a lot to convey what I wanted to say”. Her comments imply that learning pragmatics helps one in effective communication.

One instructor (TBC13-TA) says: “As a society we are multilingual, in Pakistan, in different parts of the country, different languages or different dialects are used... there is a dire need to understand others and let others understand yourself”. It implies that understanding of pragmatics is helpful for business professionals in Pakistan who need to interact in a pluralist society with ethnolinguistic, cultural, religious diversity.

Another instructor (TBC15-ZS) states: “through pragmatics, they (students) (can) know the highways and byways of communication of language”. This respondent views pragmatic competence as helpful for business graduates in language use (i.e. effective communication), and resultantly in gaining more prestige, growth, rewards in their careers: “a very prestigious and distinguished place among very highly skilled people”. His (TBC15-ZS) comments ascertain that pragmatics is important in communication since it (pragmatics) provides an in-depth understanding of language, and helps in understanding the philosophy of language.

Interpretation of TBCs’ responses and brief discussion: On the whole, pragmatics encompasses the philosophy of language. The TBCs responses (presented under this thematic head, align with BAs’ views in section 4.4) affirm that awareness of pragmatics and its effective application is helpful in successful business dealings and personal relations. Pragmatics is important for business students (i.e. future business professionals) to stay focused and target-oriented in communication:

- i. Pragmatics is involved in every communication; it is present in conveying and interpreting both ‘said’ and ‘unsaid’ parts of communication.
- ii. Pragmatics concepts on sender, receiver, message, language, context, common sense of communication, demographic variables, understanding oneself, understanding others—are all very important to make communication successful.
- iii. Pragmatics helps decide ‘what to say’ to a certain audience, in certain circumstances, with a specific purpose, with a targeted/anticipated response.

4.3.3.3 Benefits of Explicit Teaching of Pragmatics

One instructor (TBC1-AA) endorses: “Explicit teaching of pragmatics can improve interpersonal skills of students”. He considers pragmatics helpful for communicators when both sender and receiver are aware of it and they can use it appropriately to smoothly conduct their communication: “If they are familiar with some of the concepts of pragmatics, it would help them a lot to convey their message effectively to the other person”. Regarding the importance of pragmatics for business students, he says: “If students of business studies are made aware of some of the concepts of pragmatics before communicating to any person, definitely they will be selective in words, selective in the use of various sentences, they will be selective in using various structures, and their communication may become precise and effective in that case”. He (TBC1-AA) believes that the knowledge of pragmatics will enable the students for focused on communication (as per their audience, occasion, contents, and purpose).

Another instructor (TBC2-AS) also endorses the importance of pragmatics for business students: “Their (students’) communication skills will be improved by adding this pragmatics in their course outline”. He considers pragmatics helpful in spoken discourse while interpreting others’ indirect meanings, intended meaning, nonverbal communication, etc.: “If we add this pragmatics explicitly (in course contents), of course, it would improve their speaking skills...when they (students) would be at their workplace, they have to

interact with people, they have a lot of interaction with different people, and if they have this skill, that will be very useful for them at their workplace, because they get an idea, they can understand the underneath meaning, they can read between the lines, they can understand”. He asserts further: “Pragmatics gives you good understanding of the audience and the way people will communicate and they can extract the intended meaning of the speaker by using their knowledge of pragmatics”.

Another instructor (TBC3-AN) opines that the knowledge of pragmatics is helpful for business graduates in understanding the context of communication and the use of language as per the context. She believes that explicit instruction of pragmatics can help business students better understand intended meaning and invisible meaning.

Another instructor (TBC4-AZ) says: “If you are given some basic understanding of pragmatics, that is really going to help you out professionally, not in just English related things, but your professional communication, your professional dealing with kinds of humans, because when you talk about business and all this, this is human oriented interaction...and in human interaction pragmatics is very important...it may make communication very convenient, very effective if you have that pragmatics sensitivity of understanding the pragmatic aspects of any communicative situations”. On the importance of pragmatics in business communication, she (TBC4-AZ) states: “Being able to capture pragmatic essence of communicative situation is communicative smartness for a professional” and “that person will obviously have an edge on communication skills” because “In professional life, things are happening in a fast pace, so many things are happening, you are switching between different roles, you are changing different caps, you are dealing with different humans, and different type of communication is going on. If you have this pragmatic smartness that is an asset, that is a tool kit that you have, and that is going to be of benefit for you as professional”. On the implicit presence and instruction of pragmatics in business communication courses, she says: “We do teach our students the importance of analyzing your audience, understanding your audience. I think we do tell them their social-cultural background, the organizational background, academic background, and all these things, but it has a certain pragmatic cover to this whole thing. Regarding the explicit awareness and its consequent application, she says: “I think having that sensitivity that pragmatic understanding would definitely help professionals in better analyzing not just the audience but the situation, and then responding to it with relevance, with more appropriacy, in a more effective way; so, I think it (teaching of pragmatics

explicitly) has a positive effect”. Her comments imply that the knowledge of pragmatics helps in effective communication, both in day-to-day communication as well as in business communication.

On the importance of pragmatics for business students and business professionals, the instructor (TBC7-KM) says: “There can’t be two different opinions on that; definitely they would develop better understanding if they are exposed in some kind of pragmatic contents”. He (TBC7-KM) further opines that the knowledge of pragmatics can improve the graduates’ communication performance from ‘satisfactory’ to ‘exceptional’. He believes that pragmatics is the backbone for our business graduates’ communication skills—“to play their role in industry, in business, in their professional careers”. He also views pragmatics helpful in anticipating probable interpretations by the audience in a communication event “because pragmatics gives the candidate-student some kind of tool box, with that they can have different kind of interpretations of the audience. They can easily conceive that and they can get a meaning out of that”. His comments also imply that pragmatic competence helps an individual (either a common person or a business professional) in understanding the invisible i.e. ‘unsaid’ part of communication.

Another instructor (TBC8-MA) supports the explicit inclusion and explicit instruction of pragmatics concepts: “If pragmatics terms are explicitly included, it will enhance the understanding of the students about pragmatics, and it will click them in future when they will have this all concept in their mind, it will help them; I mean it will be a part of their memory that whenever there is a situation, they will use the language appropriately according to the requirement”. He (TBC8-MA) further highlights the importance of instruction of pragmatics for business students: “when they have understanding...about different aspects of Grice’s principle...contextual meaning... situated meaning...certain situations...to behave with your boss...to deal with the customer...how can politeness be incorporated through vocabulary items (in formal/informal expressions)”. He again endorses the effectiveness of pragmatics: “When concepts of pragmatics will be explicitly included in the course contents of business communication skills...the students will understand the terms... (and their) background...implications...applications...they (the students) will be in position to be successful communicators and successful professionals in life”.

Another instructor (TBC9-SM) also supports the explicit instruction of pragmatics to business students: “If this initiative is taken and pragmatics is blended with the designed

course outlines for business communication, they (business graduates) will be more capable to interact with the business sector”.

One more instructor (TBC10-SF) endorses the effectiveness of explicit instruction of pragmatics: “It will be a lot beneficial if we introduce pragmatics explicitly”. Regarding the benefits of pragmatics for business students, she asserts: “They would be in better position to understand the importance of all these principles (of pragmatics)”. She further opines that through explicit teaching of pragmatics, the students’ interpersonal skills will improve, and “they (students) would also be able to apply that” with their teachers and later in their professions. She further asserts that explicit learning of pragmatics will help the students in incorporating ‘speaker’s intentions’ appropriately in a ‘message’ and matching them with the listener’s interpretation in professional communication. She (TBC10-SF) views: “it will definitely be going to help them (the business students) that way to be very clear (and) to be very objective in what they are trying to say”.

Another instructor (TBC11-SA) also supports the explicit instruction of pragmatics: “Being a teacher, I feel explicit pragmatics can be extremely effective and beneficial for the students...that could be very helpful for them in business administration, etc....Explicit pragmatics can be supportive and helpful for interpersonal, because our students, I personally feel, they have problem of interpersonal skills...it will facilitate the students to grasp the meaning of invisible stuff...If pragmatics is included in course contents, it will be easy for our learners to understand about communication and about practical use of communication”. The instructor (TBC11-SA) associates communication skills with employment opportunities for business graduates: “Our students are suffering after doing BBA or MBA, market is saturated; when they appear in interview, if their communication skills are not good, and their interpersonal skills are not good, they surely face problems, but if pragmatics is part of communication skills and particularly explicit pragmatics, that could facilitate them in gaining good position in management etc....it will surely support our learners to learn and then adjust in professional life”. The instructor (TBC11-SA) sums up: “Pragmatics is very supportive and helpful in anticipating various probable interpretations”. It implies that this instructor (TBC11-SA) is convinced of the effectiveness of pragmatics for business students.

Another instructor (TBC12-SZ) supports the teaching of pragmatics to business students: “It is very important to let them know the pragmatic meaning...I expect a considerable increase in their understanding, if explicit pragmatics is included in course

outline, in classroom activities”. On the implicit presence of pragmatics in course contents, the respondent opines: “The concepts are invisible, but as far as our books are concerned and local market trends are concerned, there is nothing like pragmatics (i.e. its explicit awareness)”. On the possible benefits of explicit teaching of pragmatics, the instructor perceives that pragmatics will help graduates “prosper in their future professional career”.

On the importance of pragmatics in the business world, the instructor (TBC12-SZ) opines: “It is part and parcel, without pragmatics we can’t even communicate, and in business it is very important, and pragmatics, when it will be included will be talking and discussing things with reference to business and market trends and their professions, they will be to get more fluency and efficiency in their communication”. The instructor (TBC12-SZ) also views if the business graduates are trained with pragmatics “with reference to business and market trends and their professions, they would be (able) to get more fluency and efficiency in their communication” since “the world of business is diverse, and there are different situations”. The respondent views that learning and the application of pragmatics contribute to both communication and professional performance. The respondent’s (TBC12-SZ) comments imply that he supports the explicit instruction of pragmatics to business students, and perceives this instruction as helpful for them in their professional careers.

Another instructor (TBC13-TA) also considers the explicit instruction of pragmatics helpful for the learners in understanding “the difference between the universe of sender and receiver”. He opines that “they (business students) will be able to express themselves better and to understand the needs of their audience better, and they will be communicating with a kind of ease, so that the both could negotiate in a fairly comfortable atmosphere”. The respondent’s (TBC13-TA) comments imply that explicit instruction of pragmatics is helpful for the students in communicating with any kind of audience.

One instructor (TBC14-UK) views pragmatics as more important in a multicultural, pluralist country (as is Pakistan). She (TBC14-UK) comments on the benefits of teaching pragmatics contents on intercultural communication: “(students) will be able to cover (tactfully manage) the local diversity of the kind of clients they have”. On the multifaceted diversity, she (TBC14-UK) says: “There are also kind of sub-cultures within Pakistan—linguistically and culturally we are diverse nation, and if they are to communicate if the people from other countries or nations, so that (intercultural communication) can help them”. She (TBC14-UK) shares her teaching approach: “I used to include intercultural

communication; this is one point where pragmatics can help them; two, how to deal with culturally rich terms, in English they are different and Urdu they are different, and how to have those terms and how to use them effectively”. On the notion of including pragmatics concepts in the course contents, she opines: “We can include pragmatics part, they (business students) can understand better...for example, culturally rich terms cannot be translated in any other language...If we are dealing with the people of different cultures, how culturally rich term can be used ‘as it is’, instead of by force translating them into other language”. Regarding how to teach pragmatics, she says that pragmatics can be taught “but not in terms of including pragmatics theories within the course contents, and as linguist we should implicitly teach them those pragmatics—how pragmatics is helpful in language use, with the cultural interpretation, contextual interpretation, metaphorical interpretation, nonverbal communication—because in all these things, pragmatic is there, but not including theories explicitly”. She (TBC14-UK) sums up the benefits of pragmatics for business students: “As a communicator, they can be more effective in this case”. The respondent’s (TBC14-UK) comments imply that pragmatics can help business students in intercultural communication skills required in business settings.

One instructor (TBC15-ZS) highlights the importance of pragmatics through a metaphor: “When you study pragmatics, you plunge deep into this river; when you plunge into the river of the language, you get much more, you know the spirit of language, you know the inner soul of language, and when you know the inner soul of language correctly, definitely you improve your communication skills, and then you become very good business student”. On the importance of pragmatics for business graduates, he says: “they (business graduates) will become good leaders (if they have an understanding of pragmatics). He (TBC15-ZS) further opines: “If you have command on language, language is your power, language is your identity, and your language will be enriched through pragmatics, when you have rich (knowledge of) pragmatics, you have rich language (as means of communication), and through rich language you are good businessman, you are a good leader, and you are bold, you are on frontline everywhere, you are leading everywhere”.

Interpretation of TBCs’ responses and discussion: The TBCs’ are convinced of the importance of pragmatics in better communication, and the majority of them supports its explicit teaching:

- i. Explicit instruction of pragmatics can better prepare business graduates in their communication contents, delivery modes, and procedures, and according to the audience, occasion, and purpose.
- ii. The learners can better convey and interpret the intended meaning and invisible meaning; they would better perceive their audience's expectations and interpretation; and their communication would be focused on various aspects e.g. socioeconomic background, cultural background, academic background, and organizational background of the parties involved in a communication event.
- iii. Pragmatics concepts on Grice's cooperative principle, contextual meaning, situated communication, said and unsaid, speaker's intentions, listener's interpretation are helpful in interpersonal communication.

On the whole, the TBCs' responses affirm that awareness and application of pragmatics (acquired through its explicit teaching/learning) will refine and groom the business graduates' communication skills pertaining to professional settings.

4.3.3.4 Suggested Methodology for Explicit Teaching of Pragmatics

TBCs are on the frontline in teaching business communication courses. Under this thematic head, TBCs' suggestions on methodology for explicit instruction of pragmatics are included.

One instructor (TBC1-AA) reports that the students of business studies lack in sufficient vocabulary and other composition skills to meet the needs of business communication courses. He (TBC1-AA) suggests the inclusion of pragmatics concepts in the course contents to enable the students "communicate effectively in various contexts". It implies that the learning and application of pragmatics will enable learners in contextual communication (which is a prime objective of pragmatics).

Another instructor (TBC2-AS) suggests: "It is better to have a module of pragmatics in the existing syllabus".

Another instructor (TBC3-AN) opines that "Developing the concepts of students" should be focused in business communication classroom. The respondent (TBC3-AN) suggests that the students should know that connotative meanings are context-dependent and that the connotations change their meaning in different contexts. She (TBC3-AN) quotes one incident: "One of the Chinese came to our class, and he told us that he is running his business and his business is all in red; 'All in red' is a phrase that means 'all in danger'

(usually, in Pakistani context)...(whereas he) actually meant—he is having a prosperous business or business is flourishing...because in China the color ‘red’ is meaning of happiness...in Pakistan we actually don’t have one connotation for these things, because our language has been taken from different cultures. English is not our first language, so, that again is a problem for us. That should also be made clear to our students that how one word can develop different connotations and underlying meaning in different cultures”. The instructor (TBC3-AN) emphasizes both theoretical and applied learning of pragmatics concepts: “If they (students) are going to practically do that (pragmatics), time and again, it is going to help them in their future life also, professional or business life also”. The respondent (TBC3-AN) further states that explicit teaching of pragmatics will help the students understand “cultural connotations”, “cultural differences”, “organizational differences”, and this learning will help them in effective communication, especially, for the students with less exposure, owing to their geographical background (or other factors). These students can benefit themselves from pragmatics both in big cities during their education/employment and in their native localities.

On the inclusion of pragmatics concepts in the curricula of business communication, one instructor (TBC4-AZ) says: “There is no second thought to the question that if pragmatics contents are incorporated in outlines, would it be beneficial or not, yes they would be, there is no second thought to that... it would be great idea to introduce pragmatics into communication based courses”. It implies that this respondent fervently supports the inclusion and explicit instruction of pragmatics concepts in the course contents.

One instructor (TBC5-FB) suggests teaching pragmatics as a separate subject rather than as a part of business communication. The respondent (TBC5-FB) justifies his suggestion: “students (of business studies) have the tendency that normally they think these are the subjects related to English...It (pragmatics) should be separate subject, it should not be included in communication skills”. He (TBC5-FB) further suggests that pragmatics should be taught as “a complete three hours credit course”. He justifies the inclusion of this new subject in the course scheme: “Even, this subject can be taught in 4th or 5th semester, because they (business students) are learning English, and ‘Communication Skills’, then, ‘Business Communication’, ‘Oral Communication’, then they can also learn pragmatics”. The respondent refers to the four subjects (already included in the course scheme of BBA)

and advocates the addition of pragmatics as a separate subject to improve the learners' communication skills.

One instructor (TBC6-KS) has a bit different perspective from the other respondents: "Implicitly it (pragmatics) is there. We analyze target audience, we analyze their mental tone, we analyze their educational background in order to prepare any document. Right! But since they are the students of business, pragmatics is a particular linguistics subject. I don't see any explicit benefit of involving it...They (pragmatic contents in business communication) must be taught, because if you want to communicate effectively, then you must consider these features (i.e. pragmatics concepts). They are already there in business communication (in) the book that I mentioned to you 'The Essentials of Business Communication' by Gurphy. These features are there. They are taught in a different perspective, in business perspective, not really in linguistic or pragmatic perspective, but these are there and these topics are really important". This respondent's (TBC6-KS) earlier responses (presented under afore-thematic heads) show that he himself incorporates pragmatics concepts in his teaching of business communication. His (TBC6-KS) comments (presented here) imply that pragmatics concepts already exist in business communication (course contents, materials, and books), and these pragmatics concepts need to be taught from the business perspective, and not in linguistic perspective.

Regarding the instruction of pragmatics from an applied perspective, one respondent (TBC7-KM) appreciates those business schools which arrange practical exposure to market/industry for their students. He (TBC7-KM) considers it beneficial for students in learning "some kind of pragmatic skills within the context, within the real-life like context where they can perform better". His comments imply that pragmatics concepts can be better understood and applied if they are correlated with practical scenarios.

One more instructor (TBC8-MA) enthusiastically advocates the teaching of pragmatics concepts: "It is the duty of the teacher that he must introduce the elements of pragmatics, different aspects of pragmatics, like we talk about illocution, perlocution, etc. Grice's principle, Searle's concepts about pragmatics". He (TBC8-MA) further states that a teacher can incorporate pragmatics while teaching communication skills to train the students for formal expressions, informal expressions, semiformal expressions, styles of languages, etc. which will be professionally beneficial for the business gradates at their

workplace. This respondent is strongly convinced of the utility of pragmatics concepts in business communication courses.

Another instructor (TBC10-SF) suggests: “in ‘oral communication’ (pragmatics) can be incorporated”. She further asserts: “pragmatics should be taught deliberately, specifically keeping in mind their spoken requirements, spoken needs”. The respondent (TBC10-SF) is in favour of incorporating pragmatics concepts and teaching these concepts explicitly along with course contents.

One respondent opines that it may get difficult for the students in an earlier semester to grab the concepts of pragmatics. On the importance of pragmatics, the respondent (TBC12-SZ) says: “When they (business students) cover (study) their course contents in other subjects, they try to understand the meaning which are intended by the speaker, their teachers, then they are able, but for the freshmen it is very difficult speaker’s intended meaning or pragmatics”. The respondent’s (TBC12-SZ) comments imply that pragmatics concepts can be taught in later semesters as the students would have studied plentiful courses by then, and they would understand and apply pragmatics concepts more effectively.

Another respondent (TBC13-TA) suggests that pragmatics should be introduced arousing the learners’ interests and skill-building aptitude and “not something that they have just to go through and have some grades”. He (TBC13-TA) further asserts that pragmatics should not be taught through traditional teaching methods rather as per “the requirement of their profession, their future”. On the benefits of teaching pragmatics, the respondent opines: “this thing will be strengthening their (communication) abilities and their communication skills”. The respondent further stresses that the students should be made aware “of wonders it (learning of pragmatics) will play to them once they equip themselves with this subject”. The respondent’s (TBC13-TA) comments imply that students should be informed of the benefits of pragmatics as well. He (TBC13-TA) perceives that instruction of pragmatics will benefit the students in developing their communication skills.

One respondent (TBC14-UK) opines on the methodology of teaching pragmatics: “if not clear theories, but main ideas we should explain to them, how in context, meaning of same language, same sentence can vary”. She sees teaching of pragmatics beneficial with one apprehension: “if we start teaching them (students) some pragmatic theory, what

they will do, they will try to memorize what these theories, there and then, they will just produce the same contents in the (examination) paper”. On the notion of teaching pragmatics concepts explicitly, the respondent (TBC14-UK) suggests: “Theoretical concepts should not be included as the content of this course, teacher should know what are the theories which are helpful for their business communication, but they should not be taught directly, they should be taught the application of the theories in the real life, that is very important instead of teaching them communication model or pragmatic rules”. She further suggests that instruction of pragmatics “should be all based on practice, and situation based knowledge that how to deal with these business situations... (basic concepts of pragmatics) should be included to explain them (students) how to practice it, not to explain to them to memorize and reproduce them in the paper”. She sums up her stance: “We should tell them how to apply them; so, application is more important than teaching them theoretical concept”. She perceives that students can learn pragmatics (and its application in business communication) if they are involved in practice i.e. (use of pragmatics) in some specific context or communication with the audience. The respondent’s (TBC14-UK) comments imply that pragmatics should be taught from the perspective of application and not from the perspective of theories.

Interpretation of TBCs’ responses and discussion: The important points deciphered from TBCs’ responses are presented in the table below:

Table 4.14

The TBCs’ Responses on Inclusion and Instruction of Pragmatics Concepts

Sr.	TBC Code	The Gist of the Comments
1	(TBC1-AA)	Pragmatics concepts should be taught for effective contextual communication.
2	(TBC2-AS)	A separate module comprising pragmatics concepts should be included in business communication.
3	(TBC3-AN)	Pragmatics concepts should be taught for developing the students’ ability to understand and manage cultural connotations, cultural differences, and organizational differences.
4	(TBC4-AZ)	Pragmatics concepts should be explicitly included in all communication courses.

5	(TBC5-FB)	Pragmatics can be included in the course scheme as a separate subject in the 4 th or 5 th semester. In other communication courses, it should be taught implicitly from a practical perspective.
6	(TBC6-KS)	Pragmatics concepts already exist in business communication. They need to be taught from the business perspective, and not from the linguistic perspective.
7	(TBC7-KM)	Pragmatics concepts should be taught by relating them to practical scenarios. The students' field visits should be arranged to let them see the practical side of pragmatics used there.
8	(TBC8-MA)	Teachers can incorporate pragmatics while teaching communication skills to train the students for formal/informal/semiformal expressions, styles of language, etc.
9	(TBC9-SM)	The explicit inclusion/instruction will help the business students in the challenging business world. Pragmatics concepts should be blended into the course contents.
10	(TBC10-SF)	Pragmatics concepts should specifically be included in the course contents on spoken communication (through explicit instruction).
11	(TBC11-SA)	The inclusion of pragmatics will enable the students to communicate, and get adjusted in professional life.
12	(TBC12-SZ)	Pragmatics concepts can be taught in later semesters as the students would have studied plentiful courses by then, and they would understand and apply pragmatics concepts more effectively.
13	(TBC13-TA)	The students should be made aware of the benefits of pragmatics.

		Pragmatics should be taught for skill building (and not through the traditional approach), in accordance with the students' later professional communication requirements.
14	(TBC14-UK)	Pragmatics should be taught from the perspective of application and not from the perspective of theories.
15	(TBC15-ZS)	Awareness and application of pragmatics will make learners' communication effective. They will get an in-depth understanding of the language and its philosophy.

The majority of the respondents have supported the notion of teaching pragmatics explicitly, whereas three of them have different opinions: one TBC favours teaching it as a separate subject so that business students are more benefited; one TBC disagrees with teaching pragmatics explicitly since he is in favour of its implicit teaching through embedding its concepts in case studies; one TBC supports the teaching of basic concepts of pragmatics from a practical perspective only and not its theories.

The TBCs' responses imply the following points:

- i. Pragmatics should be taught in business communication classroom while discussing case studies, writing business documents, and delivering oral presentations.
- ii. Pragmatics should be taught for skill-building and not as a grades-oriented and exam-focused segment of the courses on business communication skills.
- iii. Pragmatics can be used to teach business-related vocabulary, composition skills, connotative meaning, context-dependence, and nativity influence.

The TBCs' suggestions on the teaching of pragmatics are aligned with BAs' views and suggested methodology for explicit instruction of pragmatics (see sections 4.4.3.2, 4.4.3.9, 4.4.3.10 of BAs responses and 4.5.4, 4.5.5 of synthesis of results).

4.3.3.5 TBCs' General Suggestions

Under this thematic head, the TBCs' suggestions on course contents, teachers' training, and students' skills development are presented with brief interpretation. At the end of these thematic heads, the points deciphered from TBCs' comments are presented.

One respondent (TBC1-AA) emphasizes modifying the existing course contents according to the job needs: “I personally think these formats do not correspond with the formats which are actually practiced in practical life in various organizations. The whole course outline must be modified, and it should be made in accordance with the requirements of the jobs...(and) practical fields and various professions”. His comments imply that course contents should be prepared according to the students’ later job/professional requirements as per real business settings.

Another respondent (TBC2-AS) stresses that courses on communication skills must address both the “immediate needs” and “future needs” i.e. “at their workplace”. The respondent further opines: “Need analysis is required...there is a need to change the topics and improve the syllabus”. He emphasizes conducting comprehensive research to explore the modern day needs of the business world, and on devising an up-to-date syllabus keeping in mind the present as well as future needs of the business world.

Another instructor (TBC3-AN) also emphasizes devising job-oriented course contents and teaching methodology: “Introducing them (students) with the practical things is more important, making them experience different exercises, different activities, and practically doing work in classroom is more important as compared to the course contents that are written over there”. The respondent also emphasizes on considering the needs of local business organizations: “That (course contents of business communication skills) has to be very indigenous; the course outlines should be developed keeping in mind our context”. The respondent also recommends excluding less practical material in the course contents: “There is a kind of superfluous level of things which are there, like talking about the long report, and talking about the short report, which are not practically going on in the market currently; so, we just need to focus on practical aspects, that should be contextualized”. Keeping in view that some students may also join NGOs, the respondent (TBC3-AN) suggests adding some content related to the development sector.

Another respondent (TBC4-AZ) emphasizes multiple improvements. The respondent suggests offering business communication courses in later semesters i.e. 7th or 8th, whereas currently they are offered in early semesters (the respondent considers it difficult to assign field projects to these early semester students for their practical learning since they do not have much awareness of their future jobs or professions). The respondent (TBC4-AZ) also considers it important to explore “what is happening in the industry, what are the current industry requirements and preparing courses according to that...The

contents need to be prepared keeping in mind the (industry) needs, what is the situation on ground, what is happening in that particular industry and what are the requirements of that industry, so that collaboration as you mentioned, the industry and academia collaboration, because this identification of needs—what is this you are teaching these course to students for”. Her comments primarily imply the need for industry-academia collaboration for teaching business communication courses.

Most of the instructors of business communication are from language and linguistics/literature (see section 3.3.2.7). In the same stream, one instructor (TBC5-FB) considers poor language comprehension as an issue for some of his students in studying business communication. He comments on students’ performance in exams: “(whatsoever) they have in their minds, they just produce it”. He suggests: “The course should be revised in this way that their (students’) improvement in language should be focused on because when their language is not good, they are not good at language, obviously whatever you are teaching them, they have to apply, application is missing”. He suggests interactive and practice-based contents/teaching methodology. He also recommends building language labs for teaching business communication skills, especially for the students’ listening skills. He also opines: “Exposure (to various phenomena e.g. accents, pronunciation, etc.) is very important”. The respondent also emphasizes teaching communication courses from early schooling: “The students should be taught these things slowly and gradually—how to use your intonation, how can you give certain expressions, and how you can judge other person, if he has a gaze on his face, what he will be feeling about you, or if he has a frown on his face, or if he is just leaning against the table, it means he is not giving you response, if he is looking at you it means he is not giving you response”. At one point of conversation, the respondent presents the idea of teaching pragmatics as a separate subject. At another point during the interview, he supports its implicit instruction in business communication courses: “This (pragmatics) should be taught implicitly because it will never be their major subject (since, mostly, business students consider such courses as of English)...They (students) should not be feeling that we are doing pragmatics (i.e. TBC/English teachers are teaching them another subject of English). They should be taught in a way...they are doing something naturally”. His comments imply that (even while implicit teaching of pragmatics) the focus should be the development of learners’ pragmatic communication skills and not on merely teaching pragmatics as a part of the courses.

One instructor (TBC6-KS) fervently supports industry-academia consultation at the level of each teacher: “You are required to go for appropriate need analysis...you must also meet those employers who are the employers of your graduates at the end of the course when they complete their degree—then (ask them) ‘what are the expectations of the employers in the market?... They (the suggestions of the business professionals) must be included, but, normally we don’t include that because we are just meeting the traditional track, you are not actually going out of the box”. He suggests the teachers arrange meetings with business professionals to know “what are the expectations of the employers in the market”. The respondent himself frequently meets his friends in business professions. He asks these business professionals particular questions: “What do you expect from our graduates?... How do you find them (in terms of their skills and abilities)?... The graduates of which university do you think are more efficient and they are more actively pursuing their communication and you really don’t have problems with them”. The respondent (TBC6-KS) also recommends the course contents to be indigenized through “putting the local taste”. He also supports the autonomy of a teacher in deciding the sequence of the course contents. The respondent (TBC6-KS) is in favour of continuous industry-academia consultation to increase the employability of business graduates.

Like the previous TBC, another respondent (TBC7-KM) himself practices revision of contents and materials. He presents a suggestion as well: “HEC should recommend such kind of reforms (TBCs’ training and their discussion forums, industry-academia collaboration) all over Pakistan, so that should be taught, with some kind of centralization”.

One instructor (TBC8-MA) encourages his students to prepare themselves for their future workplaces: “I make them aware of the demands of the market, and then I ask them to prepare themselves to meet those demands. There is a big competition in the market, because BBAs and MBAs are taught almost in all the universities, and definitely who are comparatively better in terms of their knowledge, they will get good opportunities in business, good opportunities in the job market”. He (TBC8-MA) also suggests instructors to make explorations: “The teacher can adapt his self-understanding...about the needs of students or the current requirements of the market, and then a through a sort of adaptation, teacher can meet the needs of students so that they become successful in their professional life”. He perceives that our business schools are not appropriately training the graduates for demands of the business sector; consequently, our business graduates face problem of under employment: “They (business graduates) are not surviving as per their academic

qualification; they are surviving in the market below to that, below their academic qualification”. For industry-academia consultation, he suggests: “Before the preparation of the course outline, there should be a seminar at least once a year; these industrialist and businessmen who have experience, they must be called upon, and there should be a sort of seminar, or there should be a sort of conference, so through their feedback, through the feedback of those who are serving in the field, the course outline must be prepared, but it is not happening, absolutely not, no consultation with those people who are in the market”. It is implied from this TBC’s comments that course contents should be prepared/revised in consultation with senior industrialists, business persons and managers, recent graduates/alumni since all these people can point out the shortcomings in the course contents and can suggest the required modifications.

Another (TBC9-SM) TBC recommends continuous revising of the course contents: “There should always be space for change”. She stresses upon catering to the students’ interests: “Course outline can also be designed after learning about the areas of interest of students with different backgrounds”. She also suggests revising the course contents as per job market needs: “So that they can be prepared for the real-life situation where they have to serve”.

One more respondent (TBC10-SF) supports industry-academia consultation. She opines that the course contents “should be designed in collaboration with academia and industry”. For further additions into the contents, she opines that there “should be something regarding ‘public speaking’ and ‘presentation skills’...instead of written stuff”. This respondent’s comment is also supported by BAs responses (see section 4.4.1.1 and 4.4.1.3) that spoken communication is a prominent part of professional communication.

One instructor regrets the lack of industry-academia consultation: “In real sense, there is no collaboration of university-industry or industry-academia... there is a big gap between industry and academia; academia, they are in different direction (whereas) industry is demanding something different”. The respondent (TBC11-SA) is in favour of training our business graduates according to the demands of the industry.

Another respondent (TBC12-SZ) emphasizes the teachers, universities, and book authors to produce a localized knowledge bank for our students.

Another respondent (TBC13-TA) suggests a SWOT analysis since the existing course contents need “revising and updating with the passage of time” to match our

indigenous requirements. He suggests “the students should be taught in the world of realism, instead of in an unrealistic sort of context”. He also recommends addressing the students’ deficiencies in language skills while teaching communication courses.

Another respondent (TBC14-UK) suggests that business communication courses should be graded based on the students’ participation in practical activities and field assignments. Regarding courses on business communication skills, she (TBC14-UK) stresses the practical-oriented approach of teaching: “business communication or communication skills kind of courses, they should be more practice-based courses instead of written stuff...I am not in favour of including theories, whether pragmatic theories or communication theories in the contents”. The respondent also stresses upon training the students for language skills, pronunciation, spoken/oral presentation skills, and nonverbal communication. She further emphasizes “localization” in developing the students’ communication skills.

One respondent (TBC15-ZS) emphasizes ensuring an effective flow of communication between a teacher and students, without which classroom learning cannot take place. He identifies that the communication courses need to be revised for better content, sequence, and teaching methodology. He also recommends training programmes for the teachers of business communication. He opines that teachers should work on (1) their language proficiency and eloquence and devise interesting teaching methodology to help their students develop communication proficiency “because, without communication, they (students) will not survive in their careers”. He also recommends that business students to realize the “great competition in business market”. This respondent (TBC15-ZS) also recommends the teachers of business communication to keep themselves updated through (1) being active members of society, (2) being well informed through print and electronic media, (3) attending relevant conferences/seminars, and (4) collaborating with expert peers.

Interpretation of TBCs’ responses: From the TBCs’ above-presented comments, the following points are deciphered:

- i. Senior business professionals should be involved in making revisions and additions to the course contents, course materials, and books.
- ii. Outdated contents should be dropped from the course contents and books.

- iii. Training programmes should be designed/arranged to prepare specialized teachers, through on-job training, interaction opportunities with business professionals, and exposure to the business sector.
- iv. Teachers of business communication themselves should create opportunities of interacting with the business world to seek information on the infield professional communication practices and requirements.
- v. The teachers can update themselves through print/electronic media, through participating in conferences/seminars, and through seeking assistance from their connoisseur colleagues.
- vi. Diversity among students can be tactfully used in training them for intercultural communication and communication with diverse audiences.
- vii. The students' visits to business organizations should be arranged for their practical exposure/learning, especially in terms of professional communication.
- viii. The students should be involved in practical work (rather than merely teaching them theoretical aspects) to keep them motivated during classroom activities.
- ix. The students' overall language skills should be groomed for their better performance in business communication courses.

4.3.4 Composite Discussion (on TBCs' Responses)

This section comprises discussion on extracted views of TBCs' on (1) the importance of communication skills for the students of business studies, (2) challenges and issues arising in teaching business communication courses, and (3) the case of explicit inclusion/instruction of pragmatics in the course contents.

TBCs are convinced of the importance of communication courses in developing the students' skills for their later professions. TBCs make their utmost efforts to prepare business students accordingly. TBCs' efforts to improve business students are restricted because of some deterring factors, many of which are beyond TBCs' control. Problems are there owing to the students' attitude towards business communication courses, diversity among students, students' poor language skills (mainly comprehension and production skills), students' varied aspirations on their future careers, the inadequacy of course contents, time bindings of semester system, and outdatedness of course contents and available books written by foreign authors. These books/materials are also not easily understandable for a significant number of business students. Besides, these books do not address the majority of indigenous business sector needs.

TBC make efforts to train/prepare their students for the communication needs of professional vocations, yet TBCs' hard efforts (to align with business sector communication needs) fail because of their own unrelated academic/professional background in comparison with an altogether different business world. The majority of TBCs neither possess any relevant education nor have received any training on business and management which could help them in teaching BC-Skills courses. To manage the gap, TBCs rely on their knowledge gained through print or electronic media, or small information got from their acquaintances in the business sector, which is of very little help. The data obtained from BAs (see section 4.4) also affirm many of the afore-narrated issues, which (as per BAs' and TBCs' suggestions) can be addressed through the training and development of both TBCs and business students and comprehensive industry-academia consultation measures.

Many of the afore-narrated issues can be addressed through explicit inclusion/instruction of pragmatics since the knowledge of pragmatics is expected to sensitize business students towards multi-faceted business communication. Pragmatics is important in human communication (in message formulation, delivery modes, audience analysis, occasion analysis, and purpose-orientation), and its explicit instruction can better prepare business graduates in (1) conveying and interpreting intended/invisible meaning, (2) perceiving audience's expectations/interpretation, (3) and focusing on schematic aspects arising from communicators' socioeconomic, cultural, academic and organizational backgrounds. Basic pragmatics concepts on speaker's intentions (conveying desired messages tactfully), listener's interpretation (anticipating audience's probable interpretations), cooperative maxims, implicature, flouting, contextual and situated communication (formulating communication as per the circumstances/context), said and unsaid (choosing appropriate contents and language), face, frame, and schemata are expected to aid business students' interpersonal/communication skills needed in professional settings.

On the whole, the TBCs' responses affirm the notion that awareness and application of pragmatics (acquired through its explicit teaching/learning) will refine and groom the business graduates' communication skills pertaining to professional settings.

4.4 Analysis of Data from Business Administrators' Interviews

This segment of data concerns the fourth subsidiary research question of this study i.e. seeking the opinions of business administrators on the effectiveness of explicit inclusion and instruction of pragmatics concepts in business communication courses. This segment addresses the following major areas concerning infield business communication.

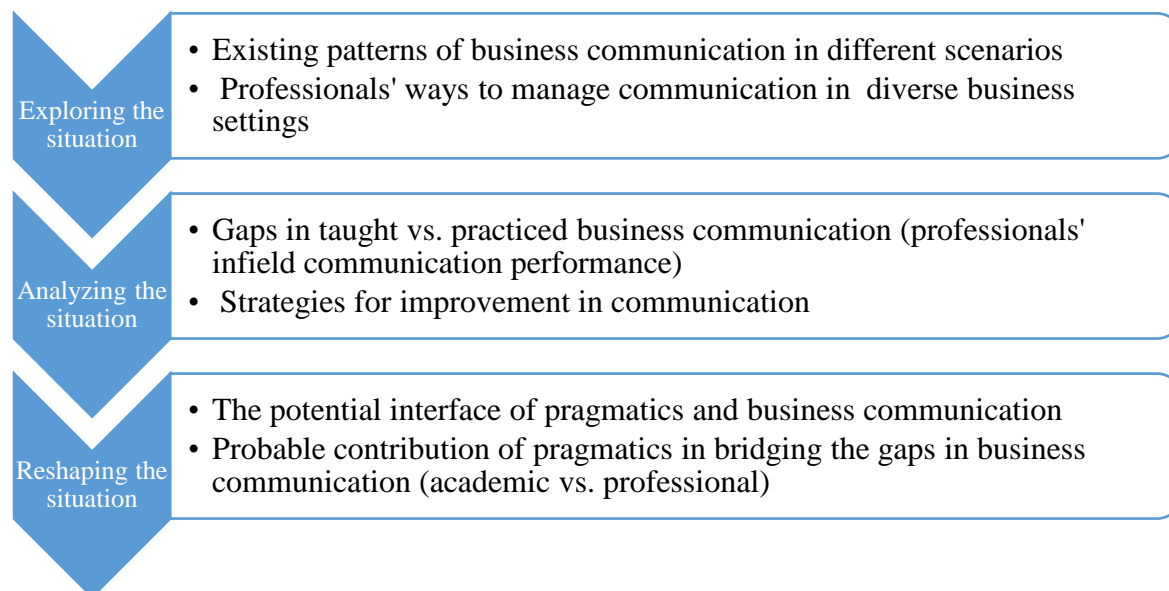


Figure 4.5: Major areas addressed in the present research concerning infield business communication

This section includes the responses of fifteen business professionals (all working at administrative positions, and thus termed here as business administrators or BAs) collected through semi-structured interviews. These business professionals/administrators are from different organizations, and with diverse experiences in terms of their fields, their positions, and the number of years they have spent in the business world either as managers or entrepreneurs in multiple capacities. The questions asked from BAs targeted these areas:

- i. Role of communication in diverse business scenarios
- ii. Modes and procedures of infield business communication
- iii. Contribution of academic learning in professional communication
- iv. Potential benefits of explicit instruction of pragmatics in business communication

The first three areas are expected to provide grounds for the fourth point of investigation because of the respondents' vast professional experience. The audio recorded data were transcribed and thoroughly perused to find the broader themes and sub-themes (presented in the table below):

Table 4.15

Broader Themes and Sub-themes Derived from the Interviews of Business Administrators

Sr.	Broader Themes	Sub-themes
1	Prevailing business communication practices and their implications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication—the main tool in the business sector • Professionals' working with diverse national and multinational audiences • Contemporary business communication practices • Importance of interpersonal communication skills in one's professional career • Employers' preference for (new hires') interpersonal/communication skills
2	Gaps, and measures to bridge the gaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution of existing business communication courses in developing communication skills • Differences between academic and infield business communication • Limitations of existing course contents • Suggestions for revision of existing course contents and teaching methods • Suggestions for students' better their preparation for future
3	Case of explicit instruction of pragmatics, and suggested teaching methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implicit learning/application of pragmatics by professionals • Potential benefits of including explicit pragmatics for effective business communication

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- Pragmatics and sender's intentions and desired meaning/message
 - Pragmatics and audience's expectations and interpretations
 - Pragmatics and effective message delivery
 - The role of pragmatic context and shared knowledge
 - Pragmatics and internal communication
 - Pragmatics and external business communication
 - Inclusion of pragmatics for enriching existing course contents
 - Suggestions on methodology for the teaching of pragmatics
-

One respondent (BA1-AR) opines that business professionals/administrators' views provide valuable data on (1) professional communication situations and requirements, (2) the possible contribution of explicit teaching of pragmatics, (3) strategies for teaching pragmatics to train the students for professional communication since they are practically performing business communication in real settings.

4.4.1 Prevailing Business Communication Practices and their Implications

This broader thematic head comprises the following sub-themes:

1. Communication—the main tool in the business sector
2. Professionals' working with diverse national and multinational audiences
3. Contemporary business communication practices
4. Importance of interpersonal communication skills in one's professional career
5. Employers' preference for (new hires') interpersonal/communication skills

4.4.1.1 Communication—the Main Tool (of performance) in the Business Sector

One respondent (BA1-AR) has diverse professional experience: as a business administrator (employee), an entrepreneur, and a trainer. In the light of his vast experience and exposure, he (BA1-AR) opines: "Communication is the main tool in any of the domain either it is business communication or routine communication or law communication".

Another respondent (BA2-AB) informs that business professionals “confront different sort of situations”. He states that organizational communication is in different forms: oral communication and written communication, emails and online audio/video calls, communication with expatriates, office co-workers, or vendors/clients. He comments that business professionals are, most of the time, busy in one form or the other of official communication.

One respondent (BA4-EMj) mentions several communication situations: “(Business professionals) deal with clients for bargain terms”, “for promotional activities”, “to talk legal matters in courts or with consultants”, “to deal with employees, clients, senior managers, and definitely with operations relevant employees”. On the vast contribution of communication in human life, he says: “Every person is human being, human beings are mostly involved in communication in one way or the other...Communication has vital role in organization’s improvement and performance”. He further views that business professionals have to communicate with their colleagues, senior management, and clients. He asserts that employees who are not good at communication skills waste energy and resources.

Another respondent (BA5-HS) states that business professionals communicate with their clients, vendors, officials of regulatory bodies, competitors, and other stakeholders, in written or spoken form. He states: “We have to seek their (regulatory bodies) permissions to carry out some activities...We may also have to communicate with competitors if there is a joint or common sort of agenda”. On the importance of communication, he states: “When you talk about communication skills, confidence, and gestures, postures, answering the questions, readiness, wittiness, apprehension—all of these things are very apparent...Communication is the backbone of any organization”.

One respondent (BA6-HR) states that all organizational functions depend on one form of communication or the other: “This is an information age; this is an age of communication. Whatever you do, whatever you achieve in an organization, it is a result of lot of communication, in any form of it, maybe it is verbal, maybe it is written”.

Another respondent (BA8-KD) mentions ‘the smart work concept’ of obtaining better results with lesser efforts; as a part of the ‘smart work concept’, a person with good business communication skills can communicate organizational perspective in a way acceptable for the audience, and thus he/she can benefit the organization.

One respondent (BA9-KJ) comments that most of the infield business communication is result-oriented.

Another respondent (BA10-AK) informs that business professionals perform many of their tasks through communication as well as they show their performance through communication. He (BA10-AK) further tells that communication with junior officials is usually in the form of instructions on some assigned task or in the form of follow-up. In communication with high-ups, one presents one's views and submits facts and figures based suggestions. These suggestions should demonstrate that one is making efforts towards enhancing sales, raising the revenues, bringing improvements, etc. The respondent further states: "For upwards communication, you can't say that this is thing you (senior management people) have to do. When you are communicating (with seniors) you are to communicate the other way". It implies that one cannot give commands or directions (which is considered quite offensive) to one's high-ups.

One respondent (BA14-WA) reports: "The other difficulty is faced with our senior management" while communicating with them because of hierarchal differences. Besides, professionals of different departments/sections also face difficulties in communication with one another (because of less shared knowledge). The respondent's (BA14-WA) comments imply that professionals at different levels of the organizational hierarchy have differences in perspectives and approaches towards the same issues, which cause barriers in communication.

One respondent (BA15-ES), who is serving in two different roles in two different organizations, states: "Currently, I am into two roles. I am Chief Operating Officer with a company. Additionally I am also running my own business. Where (in the first company) I am Chief Operating Officer, I have to report to my high-ups and I have to coordinate with my colleagues as well. At the same, (as external communication) I communicate with my stakeholders—my customers, my potential stakeholder we use to engage for our events (i.e. event management business, since he serves in an event management company). Being CEO (of the other company) I interact with all the stakeholders, with the customers, with buyers, with sellers, like, service providers, other vendors who actually facilitate us in all these". His comments imply that as an owner/CEO of his own company, he communicates much diversely in comparison to his role as an employee. Regarding his other role (as an employee), he reports that a person in the middle level management position communicates with colleagues both upward and downward in the hierarchy, besides involvement in

external communication with customers/vendors and officials from regulatory bodies. He also states that top management officials perform diverse communication roles.

Interpretation and brief discussion: BAs' responses imply that effective communication is the lifeline of business organizations. The following points are deciphered from BAs' responses:

- i. Organizational communication is diverse because of different levels; it is performed through different channels; it varies according to audiences; it is intended to generate different outputs. With all these diversities, the goal is the smooth flow of business operations.
- ii. Internal organizational communication can be downward communication, horizontal communication, or upward communication. A professional needs to communicate with his immediate boss and higher bosses (upward communication), with relevant higher officials (diagonal communication), and with subordinates to disseminate instructions and directions (downward communication).
- iii. Business professionals/administrators are also engaged in external communication, wherein they communicate with clients, with regulatory bodies, with advertising firms, with suppliers, with vendors, with law consultants, and (in some cases) with competitors.

The procedures and demands of each of these categories of communication are different, wherein professionals need to be accordingly tactful. These communications revolve around (almost the same) themes: sales, revenues, improvements, performance.

4.4.1.2 Professionals' Working with Diverse National and Multinational Audience

Based on his long and diverse professional experience and exposure (of almost 20+ years), one respondent (BA1-AR) reports that working with a multinational audience is different from working with a national audience. The respondent himself has worked both at domestic and international levels. His comments imply that business students need to be prepared for both national and international audiences through training them on the required communication tactics and procedures.

One respondent (BA3-EM) highlights the pluralist (multi-ethnic, multilingual) nature of our own country. He asserts that business administrators need to understand this multidimensional diversity to make communication effective and to cater to their organizations' business goals. His comments also reveal that a professional needs to

communicate with audiences from diverse geographic regions with diversity in their language, accent, vocabulary, etc. Emphasizing upon the pragmatics of communication, he states: “You have to communicate with them and you have to understand what they are saying, and you have to make them understand what you are trying to say to them”.

Another respondent (BA14-WA) talks about different organizational cultures. He comments on the difficulties in communication “with the external partners which include the partners we are working with and the suppliers etc. ... there is a difference in the culture between the different organizations and we do not know the kind of culture existing in that company”. He further states: “When you are in a company, you are not communicating with a single person, there are different persons, from different background, from different countries, from different cities”. Commenting on the acquisition of communication proficiency, he says that “It takes time” to know the culture (of the officials from other organizations) or their organizational culture through “interacting with them for a few days or for a few months, you go there for meeting, you talk to them, casually and formally both, and then, you are able to know the culture”. He also reflects upon learning: “Every day you learn different things how to communicate every different kind of person. If you are talking person with a different culture, then you will learn a different thing”. The respondent further views: “(As a new professional should be ready to learn) you will always keep yourself open, keep yourself open to different people, meet new people, engage yourself, that’s the only thing you can do, learn every day”. His comments imply that the differences in organizational cultures (of different organizations) pose communication hurdles for their professionals when they are interacting with one another. It is inferred from his assertions that (1) business professionals need tactful and adaptable communication competence to ensure their organization’s business benefits, (2) they need to know their organizational culture to effectively interact with the audience from other organizations, (3) business professionals need to interact with diverse audiences and in diverse situations, (4) the exposure to different audience enhances the communication skills of business professionals.

Another respondent (BA15-ES) compares the communication with national and international audiences: “If we talk about Pakistan, and we talk about international world, there are two different perspectives” since the communication requirements with national and with international audience are quite diverse. Talking about the pluralist nature of our country, he says: “Assume that you are going or visiting KPK, and you are visiting that

area by wearing jeans like that. Once you have an understanding of the norms, culture and such things, that actually help you sync with that particular culture, like being wearing Shalwar Qameez in KPK help you immediately synchronize with these people”.

Interpretation and brief discussion: The BAs responses reflect that communication requirements are different for national and international audiences. The following points are inferred from BAs’ reflective comments:

- i. The business professionals working in multinational organizations (or in organizations that work with multinational organizations) interact with audiences (officials and clients) from other nationalities.
- ii. Owing to vast ethnolinguistic miscellany, there is a large diversity among officials, clients, and other stakeholders in Pakistani organizations as well. Communication with multiple types of audience demands understanding their language, vocabulary, accent, expectations, and interpretations.
- iii. Differences in organizational cultures pose communication problems when professionals of two organizations interact while negotiations.
- iv. Organizational differences need significant attention when corporate organizations deal with public sector organizations.
- v. The communication needs and communication perspectives vary from indigenous organizations to multinational organizations and smaller organizations to bigger organizations.

4.4.1.3 Contemporary Business Communication Practices

One respondent (BA1-AR) describes the desired outcome of business communication: “Business communication need target-oriented communication for the conduct of business rather than boasting of one’s good communication skills in English language; a professional needs to ensure that business terminology, communication objectives and information contents are exquisitely conveyed to the audience”. This respondent’s (BA1-AR) statement reflects the otherwise of TBCs’ emphasis on good language skills (especially in English).

Another respondent (BA3-EM) talks about the diversity of professional communication. The respondent (BA3-EM) points out that for the success of business transactions/deals “from signing of contract to delivery of goods”, business professionals need effective communication.

One respondent (BA5-HS) shares another aspect of organizational communication. He states that organizational communication can be in the form of grading or evaluating one's subordinates.

One respondent (BA6-HR) talks about internal and external communication: "Internal communication relates to your colleagues, peers, subordinates and seniors, and, interdepartmental communication with different departments and their representative... External communication includes with your customers, your vendors, regulatory bodies, and general members of the public". He stresses upon considering diversity among audience: "the audience is always diverse, and you are communicating with whole strata of different audiences". Reflecting upon academically taught courses, he says: "We are in an age where we communicate a lot already and the formats and all these things, they are good to know things but they are not applicable in any environment in a fast pace business environment". Highlighting the pragmatic aspect of business communication, he says: "It is the message which is important or the understanding of message or the interpretation of message is very important". The respondent's (BA6-HR) comments imply that there is diversity among the audience in different situations, and business professionals need to adapt their communication accordingly. It is inferred that this respondent is not fully satisfied with the academic teaching approach of business communication, and he seems to suggest that business communication should be taught as per 'what is being practiced in business organizations'.

One respondent (BA7-HA) comments on the abundance of communication in organizational operations: "The whole day is busy with communicating with different type of people". It implies that external and internal communication is a continuous process in business organizations. The respondent also states some specific communication scenarios according to one's designation, e.g. a finance officer communicates with bank staff, along with other diverse day-to-day communication with vendors, suppliers, colleagues, subordinates, and bosses. Professionals may communicate through a single channel/medium (or otherwise) as per their specific designation e.g. through email.

Another respondent (BA8-KD) also talks about diversity in business communication: "The business professionals are not only required to get the feedback from their own employees, but they are frequently have to make conversations with their stakeholders, like, suppliers, vendors, their promotional strategies...ultimately good communicator can transfer that message effectively as well as efficiently". He (BA8-KD)

also tells that some business professionals need to make their own company's and other companies' competitive analyses.

Another respondent (BA9-KJ) reflects upon communication types and intents behind them:

- i. Upward communication scenarios may include communication with bosses (to communicate one's performance, justifications for performance gaps, and the measures that one has taken for strengthening and for the growth of the company).
- ii. Downward communication scenarios can include, for example, communication with subordinates (in the form of conveying instructions on what they are required to perform and how to perform, and of what level of performance).
- iii. External communication can include communication with customers (on promotion packages and selling advantages, to grow the company's business), with suppliers (for the sake of bargain on low price supplies), and with other vendors.

One respondent (BA10-AK) shares his experiences as a sales professional (rising from an initial level to a senior position). He tells that he has been involved in B2B (business to business) dealings and more formal communication as compared to interactions with direct consumers: "you have to mold yourself and have to communicate the way they want to communicate with you" (The respondent's this comment reflects one pragmatic concept i.e. audience's expectation and interpretation). He also tells that the professionals communicate differently in internal versus external communication. He (BA10-AK) comments on internal communication: "You have to have knowledge of how to write an email, how to properly communicate with your head office with your other colleagues, and then how to present your numbers, how to make presentations, and present your numbers that are meaningful in front of your superiors". His comments imply that, in internal communication, the professionals use emails, telephonic conversations, and oral presentations on their sales performance in quantified form. The respondent (BA10-AK) highlights the requirement of effective communication with each business task: "In professional life you are assigned different projects, you have to get done in a set time period. So, for that you have to constantly follow-up. For constant follow-up, first what you do write an email, draft an email and send it to the person you want the work done. If he does not respond, then what you do, you call him. If call is not the option, he is not picking up, or he is miscommunicating, then what you do it you again document it, document in the email, taking your senior manager in the loop, so that the things get done".

It implies that for the success of both internal and external communication, strong negotiation and argumentative skills and target-accomplishing tactics are needed.

Another respondent (BA11-MA) states that a business company may offer several services or products to its customers. Salespersons need to talk to clients plausibly while delivering all that information the clients want to know and the way they want to know. The respondent (BA11-MA) also states that the officials responsible for communicating with clients need to develop their customized model of communication for conveying the information to the clients, from the beginning of the relationship to the end (including introducing the company, offering the services, negotiating and drafting terms and conditions of sales, performance/delivery of services, invoicing, receiving of payments, resolution of any conflict or complaint), as well as the follow-up and feedback from the clients. The respondent comments imply that business professionals, especially directly dealing with customers, need effective communication and good knowledge of the products/services which the company is offering to its clients.

The respondent (BA11-MA) also states that a professional accomplish different kinds of communication: “performance of the services...deliver as a report to the client...client invoicing...payments...contract resolution”. He (BA11-MA) further states: “if there is any issue on service performance or any results, we have to communicate with them (clients)”. He (BA11-MA) also tells that, in modern day organizations, most of the communication is through electronic channels, especially emails: “If you are writing it (email) insensibly, you are not only posing the company in a very informal way, the understanding of the client will take it into other perspective”. On written communication, the respondent (BA11-MA) comments: “Written communication should be very much disciplined, organized, concise, courteous—the Seven Cs is the basic of communication”. Emphasizing effective communication, the respondent asserts that poor communication can destroy not only a business transaction but also the image of the company.

In terms of external settings, the respondent (BA11-MA) views that the officials involved in external communication are the ambassadors of their company: “people with good communication should be allowed to corresponding with clients outside the organization because they are sitting at the boundary and they are not only reflecting themselves, they are reflecting their company, their confidence by their writing, by their communication...The confidence in them depicts the confidence in the company also...The people with good skills must be put on the (external) communication side...Every

employee is the representative of the company, even the peon from down the chain, from office boy to the CEO, everyone is performing his part in representing the company". He (BA11-MA) states that every employee has his role in making the company's image in the eyes of external stakeholders. He (BA11-MA) sums up that "Good image development" is an important part of organizational communication. The respondent's (BA11-MA) comments imply that only the employees with proficient communication skills should be deputed for external communication.

In terms of external communication, one respondent (BA12-SK) shares his experience as an accounts/finance editor. He states, while the audit professionals visit their clients, they face problems (1) because of the complexity of their work, (2) because of the different skills of their subordinates as they "have different languages, behavior, and so many things", (3) because of the clients' or their employees' inability to answer queries. The respondent also talks about the professionals working as consultants or serving as an "outsourcer": these professionals need to interact with an unskilled audience who even may not understand a query or how to respond to a query. In such situations, a communication gap is caused when "both (the communicators) have different knowledge and (perspective of the) situation and (they have different) experiences (of looking at the things and handling the matters)". His (BA12-SK) comments imply that there are diverse situations while working in any specific field. His comments also imply that communication problems arise when professionals of different fields interact with one another (as in this case, external auditors and sales staff of a company).

One respondent (BA14-WA), who works in a larger organization with both national and international employees and of different technical/professionals fields, shares his experiences: "In internal (communication) we face difficulties and we are communicating with other departments, and we have a different background, for instance, I am from business background (the respondent is an MBA, whereas many of his colleagues are engineers and technicians), and if I am talking to a technical guy, there will be a difference in understanding technical terms". He (BA14-WA) further states that diverse issues arise in internal communication among the staff of different cadres with different expertise and different fields of educational qualifications. His (BA14-WA) comments imply that business professionals need effective communication skills while interacting with their colleagues in different fields.

In the context of communication with the external public, the respondent (BA14-WA) states that each employee is a representative of the company he/she is working in: “all the employees of a company are a face of it”, since efficient communication skills are essential for each employee, especially in case of external communication. The respondent’s (BA14-WA) comments imply the need for effective communication skills for a company’s spokespersons. These spokespersons can be the sales staff dealing with clients, or negotiators interacting with competitors, vendors, or regulatory bodies.

Interpretation and discussion: Effective communication is equally important in both internal and external communication to secure an organization’s business interests. The BAs’ responses reveal that communication varies as per their roles and responsibilities, and in terms of internal vs. external settings. Finance officials frequently interact with banks and other financial institutions. Sales and marketing staff communicate related to sales, sales volumes, revenues, and promotional strategies. HR officials interact with the internal public on recruitment, selection, promotion, rotation, training, and development. Top management officials are involved in all aforementioned communication: promotional packages, selling advantages, bargain for low prices from suppliers, and any other form of communication along with their concerned subordinates.

Internal communication requirements and procedures: Business organizations require target-oriented communication from their employees. In internal (downward) communication, administrative professionals evaluate their subordinates, disseminate instructions, and motivate their subordinates for better performance. Upward internal communication is mainly in the form of reporting to bosses/seniors. Upward communication varies in nature: communication on one’s performance, justifications for performance gaps, and plans for strengthening the company and for the growth of sales volumes. In impulsive communication with one’s high-ups, one needs to realize their expectations and present their desired information-contents to establish/retain one’s good image. During all these kinds of communication, the professionals focus on desired outcomes of their communication in diverse scenarios:

- i. Their main focus is on formulating an appropriate message.
- ii. They also consider the probable interpretation of the message by their audience.
- iii. They plan their communication differently for different audiences.

(Seen from the lens of the theoretical framework of this study, the aforementioned features highly correspond with basic concepts of pragmatics. In later section 4.4.3.1, this assumption is further confirmed through BAs' responses on their implicit learning/application of pragmatics concepts in professional communication.)

External communication requirements and procedures: External communication can be routine, occasional, or specific; business professionals need exquisite communication skills. External communication varies in its shape, intent, and outcome, but the main purposes are to secure both a company's positive image and its business benefits. The respondents' comments (presented under this thematic head) imply that:

- i. The professionals involved in external communication are the representatives of their company.
- ii. A company is perceived as its employees present themselves (and their organization) in front of the external audience. They can either strengthen or weaken the image, goodwill, and reputation of their organization.
- iii. The business professionals may gain benefits (through effective communication/interpersonal skills), and they may cause serious damages to the company (otherwise).

4.4.1.4 Importance of Interpersonal Communication Skills in One's Professional Career

One respondent (BA1-RA) opines that interpersonal skills have the main role in business communication: "Interpersonal skills is one of the major tool of any salesman or any businessman, you either are selling or marketing". The respondent mentions that some audience may have more information about the product or company than its representative (i.e. sales-rep) in "direct communication with the client"; thus, the company representative has to convince as well as make the client accept the product. Thus, a company representative's strong interpersonal skills either win the situation or make it a win-win situation.

Another respondent (BA2-AB) views: "The people who are good at interpersonal skills and they are good communicators, normally, co-workers and peers find it very easy to work with them because they are very effective communicators and, interpersonally, they are sound enough to convey their messages...that's why the employer always prefers to hire a person who is good at interpersonal and communication skills". The respondent's

(BA2-AB) comments imply that a good communicator is welcomed in recruitment and afterward by the co-workers owing to less perceived communication complications.

One respondent (BA3-EM) shares his personal experience: “The organization I am working, they have to implement project, they always go with business communication also, they always go for (hiring) the person who know business communication, they don’t want to train anybody on it or want to teach it”. His comments imply that good communication is considered an added advantage at the time of hiring.

One respondent (BA4-EMj) analyzes the reason for preferring new hires with good communication skills. Since recruitment is a lengthy and expensive process, organizations prefer to hire employees with good organizational/communication skills rather than “facing with frequent turnover of employees”. Thus employers focus on “to check that person (the new hire) for the first time and retain that person for a long term period”. His (BA4-EMj) comments imply that employers perceive it cost-effective to hire a productive person, and thus interpersonal communication skills are highly preferred among other professional skills.

Another respondent (BA5-HS) states that employers prefer hiring individuals with better interpersonal skills as “the interpersonal skills are very much visible” during the interview and other stages of recruitment procedures. From his comments, it is inferred that better interpersonal skills are the indicators of a hire’s confidence, knowledge, and professional skills.

One respondent (BA6-HR) opines that “good interpersonal skills is very important to be a productive resource or a valuable resource” for any individual aspiring to join the business sector. The respondent (BA6-HR) further opines that employees with strong communication skills are high-rated: “anyone who can engage in useful communication and can present his ideas, can convince on his ideas, can present his logic and defend his logic, so, that is very valuable resource (that person is considered as a valuable resource by the employer)...The technical knowledge is very important but what you are going to do with that technical knowledge at the end of the day, you are going to communicate in one way or the other to your audience”. The respondent’s (BA6-HR) comments imply that even technical skills are demonstrated (and supplemented) through effective communication skills.

One respondent (BA7-HA) throws light on the role of communication skills for various organizational roles: “At least a person should have some confidence, some speaking so that he can communicate with his colleagues, other staff members and vendors and different senior colleagues...if someone is introvert (he/she) cannot communicate, cannot be a part of a team, obviously, (consequently) the productivity of whole team is affected by that...we prefer (at the time of hiring) that a person who comes should be extrovert, should have good communication skills”. The respondent’s (BA7-HA) comments imply that a professional with good communication skills can become an effective team leader and productive team member.

Another respondent (BA8-KD) states that business organizations need proficient leaders skilled in “the techniques that can be applied in practical (professional) life”. He further opines that effective communication skills contribute to achieving the desired output.

One respondent (BA9-KJ) reports that business professionals need diverse interpersonal skills for both the internal audience and external audience.

Another respondent (BA10-AK) informs that (1) most of the organizational tasks need to be performed in a specified period, (2) professionals need to use all the possible media of communication to get the tasks performed by their subordinates or vendors, (3) the immediate boss is to be informed immediately in case of any failure, and for all these tasks: “Interpersonal skills are important because you have to get your work done more effectively and in the given time period and at the same time... At every level in professional life, you have to negotiate with others...your will should be strong enough to negotiate better, to have a better deal at the end”. The respondent (BA10-AK) further states: “If you are good at negotiations, that was not previously taught to you in business communication class, mostly people don’t do good...In professional field, you have to apply negotiation at every step”. The respondent’s (BA10-AK) comments imply that business students should be well trained/equipped with interpersonal/communication skills since the graduates with better interpersonal skills are at advantage right from the start of their career; they can negotiate better for their salary and other incentives, and they can perform better for their organizations.

One respondent (BA11-MA) comprehensively defines professional communication: “Everything is communication, your actions, your modes of dealings,

everything comes into that—how you work, how you talk, how you behave, how you look—defines your ‘self’, defines your communication”. His comments imply that communication is used and reflected in all professional activities.

One respondent (BA13-TR) opines that effective communication skills help business professionals in successful deals with their clients, since “Business communication is key to any businessman to make his career more tracked”. He also views that graduates with better interpersonal skills get better job opportunities.

Another respondent (BA14-WA) perceives the professionals with good interpersonal skills “will be able to tackle difficult situations when they are dealing”, “they will be more confident when it comes to work”, and “they will be able to handle (job) stress”. The respondent’s (BA14-WA) comments imply that efficient communication skills are essential for each employee to handle diverse situations.

Interpretation and discussion: Good interpersonal/communication skills start benefiting business graduates right from their first job interview to perform their job duties, and from securing promotion opportunities to availing leading (i.e. top position) roles. The respondents (BAs) endorse the role of strong interpersonal communication skills for entrance, survival, growth, and success of a professional in:

- i. Getting a good employment
- ii. Securing a handsome salary/earning package
- iii. Playing team membership roles
- iv. Enhancing the business (sales, goodwill, competitive advantage, etc.)

4.4.1.5 Employers’ Preference for their Employees’ (New Hires’) Interpersonal Skills

Many of the respondents are senior-level executives (three of them are entrepreneurs as well) who either participate in the recruitment and selection process or supervise it. These BAs’ views are significant in understanding the employers’ stance on employees’ good communication skills at the time of hiring, promotion, and assigning tasks.

One respondent (BA1-RA) states that employers prefer new hires who possess job-related “knowledge coupled with interpersonal skills” i.e. both professional and communication skills. The respondent himself is engaged in the sales and marketing of pharmaceuticals for which he states: “interpersonal skills are important in case of my

business”. He further states business degree is valued when professionals can perform and demonstrate their employers’ desired performance.

One respondent (BA6-HR), who is involved with his company’s human resource management, reports that companies consider skilled professionals an asset. The companies appreciate those employees who can (1) understand their ideas, (2) interpret what they intend to say, and (3) justify what they communicate. He shares his stance on recruitment and selection procedures: “If I am hiring a person who cannot express himself, who is not good at interpersonal communication, then, that (person) is a kind of liability for me. I want someone who is an asset for me, having communication (i.e.) good interpersonal skills are very important to be a productive resource or a valuable resource”.

One respondent (BA9-KJ), who is a top-level executive in a large multinational organization, reports that the major reason for hiring a skilled candidate (with both professional and interpersonal communication skills) is that employers demand performance-based results, right from the very first day of employee’s joining the company: “Our employees or our new employees, those who have done recently their business studies, those (new employees) must be ready to face for that competition”. Since the respondent has risen from an initial level to a top-level administrative position, he shares his comprehensive observations based on his vast professional:

- i. Corporate employers do not want to wait for training to get employees’ output in medium to longer terms (rather, they want results immediately).
- ii. Since there is intense competition in the corporate sector, each company prefers to hire employees who can bring a competitive advantage through their performance.
- iii. Each business professional needs to deliver his/her best performance in bringing competitive advantage to the company through (1) selling more to the customers, (2) acquiring cheaper raw material from the suppliers, and (3) making the subordinates deliver more for the company’s growth.

One respondent (BA11-MA), who has been involved in sales of services (training and development) and recruitment procedures, reports that communication proficiency is an important factor in hiring: “To start with hiring of the people—workers (technical/professional skills), and related job communication, job description, follow-up of that job description, reporting, work progress, this kind of communication is the part of the work”. The respondent’s (BA11-MA) comment implies that companies hire value-

adding new staff, tell them their JDs, ensure follow-up on JDs, and maintain smooth reporting on work performance. In all these processes, proficient communication skills are needed.

One respondent (BA12-SK) presents a comprehensive analysis of taking new hires in place of less productive employees: “Those persons should be hired who have better interpersonal skills because when a person is not in condition to handle such situation, then why we should hire that person...That person (new employee) needs better interpersonal skills than the existing (employee, who is to be replaced). If the existing employees are covering (i.e. meeting) our requirements, required skill, then why we are hiring new people (at the time of any new recruitment, employers prefer to hire such people who add some value to their organization) who have better skills. That’s why we prefer to hire those persons who have better interpersonal skills”. His comments imply that only those business graduates can expect their hiring who possess both exquisite professional and interpersonal communication skills (The respondent has been involved in hiring, mentoring, and training the new staff in different organizations, and currently he is a partner in a service providing firm).

Another respondent (BA13-TR) shares the perspective of inducting ‘fresh-blood’: “New employees have more vision...they are more creative, more confident...more energetic...more interpersonal skills... (whereas) the old employees think the company will not work without them”. The companies prefer new young employees with better interpersonal skills “just because they deal good with the clients, with our customers”. The respondent’s (BA13-TR) comments imply that fresh skilled employees can bring creativity, vision, energy to an organization. (This respondent is an entrepreneur and runs his own event management company.)

One respondent (BA15-ES), who is a CEO/owner in a tours-operating company and is also serving at a management position in another event management company, shares his experience: “Once you are into the process of hiring people, our objective is to hire actually bright (capable) people who can actually immediately conceive your vision what you are trying to tell them, they translate that vision to the people they are interacting with. So that is the only why we usually go for (hiring) of those people who have high IQ and EQ level, who have better understanding, who have better communication. That they are actually able to translate your vision, your product to the potential stakeholders”. The respondent also reports that middle management executives need effective communication skills to

translate the company's vision to the frontline/lower staff and the customers/vendors. The respondent's comments reflect employers' preference for hiring new candidates and management executives with better communication skills, both in receiving messages from their high-ups and sending messages to their subordinates.

Interpretation and brief discussion: BAs' responses imply almost similar points on employers' preference for interpersonal skills of new hires:

- i. Employers prefer hiring new employees with requisite professional knowledge coupled with exquisite interpersonal/communication skills.
- ii. Communication is an indispensable component of management level professionals' specific JDs, since they excessively communicate through reporting to high-ups, instructing the subordinates, and coordinating with peers.
- iii. Professionals with an ability to understand instructions, organizational policies, and performance demands are appreciated, whereas those with non-proficient communication skills are deemed a liability instead of an asset because of their fruitless presence and adverse contribution to the company's operations.
- iv. Owing to massive competition in the corporate sector, BAs prefer to hire 'value-adding' and proficiently skilled employees who can bring creativity, innovation, vision, and energy to the organization.
- v. Business organizations seek those employees who can deliver results at their earliest and do not make organizations wait for their performance after getting experience and training.

The following figure sums up the role of interpersonal/communication skills from three perspectives:

Personal Perspective	Internal Organizational Communication	External Organizational Communication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personality/skills development • Career growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructing/mentoring the subordinates • Reporting to bosses • Team membership roles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiating with the suppliers for raw materials • Convincing the customers • Analyzing the competitors for competitive advantage • Conciliation with regulatory bodies

Figure 4.6: Importance of interpersonal/communication skills (a multidimensional perspective).

4.4.1.6 Composite Discussion

Business officials are frequently engaged in interactions with both the internal public and external public, different kinds of national and international audiences, through communication with diverse aims and perspectives and intended outcomes. These interactions can be in the form of emails, telephonic conversations, formal oral presentations, negotiation, bargains, etc. Internal communication is meant for reporting, coordinating, directing, informing, motivating. Whereas, external communication concerns a company's sales volumes and bargains with vendors, suppliers, or regulators. Business professionals/administrators can perform their aforementioned roles through effective interpersonal/communication skills, and thus these skills assist professionals in both internal and external settings. These skills support fresh graduates in entering and later in their survival and growth in the business world.

Pragmatics can assist professionals in interactions with the internal public (subordinates, colleagues, bosses) and external public (suppliers, whole-sellers, retailers, regulatory bodies) since it comprehensively addresses all the aspects of communication, and its application can ensure successful communication.

4.4.2 Gaps in Academic Learning, and Measures to Bridge the Gaps

This broader thematic head includes the following sub-themes:

1. Contribution of existing business communication courses in improving communication skills
2. Difference between academic and infield business communication
3. Limitations of existing course contents
4. Suggestions for revision of existing course contents and on teaching methods
5. Suggestions for students' better preparation for future

4.4.2.1 Contribution of Existing Business Communication Courses

This segment includes respondents' comments on the contribution of business communication courses in their professional communication. One respondent (BA1-RA) states business communication courses are meant to enhance business graduates' communication skills. Besides, these courses also contribute to enhancing the graduates' vision and professional capabilities.

Another respondent (BA2-AB) states that business communication courses help in one's professional career.

One more respondent (BA3-EM) opines that taught courses are helpful for business graduates throughout their professional careers. Academic learning starts helping the fresh graduate right from their very first job interview.

Another respondent (BA4-EMj) views the existing course contents as beneficial in a professional career since these courses comprise “some basic practical and fundamentals of business communication”.

One respondent (BA5-HS) recalls Seven Cs and declares them very useful in professional communication. The respondents’ (BA5-HS & BA4-EMj) comments imply that the basics of business communication taught at business schools contribute significantly to workplace communication.

Another respondent (BA6-HR) considers the existing course contents and course materials useful as they provide basic knowledge to the students. He states that the existing courses are good; they should not be excluded to make place for others, and more contents can be included, with due care and deliberation, “as per the requirements of the business environment”.

One respondent (BA7-HA) states the students’ learning at their business schools has a major role in providing them a better start; at least these fresh graduates know some basics which boost their confidence. The respondent further opines that usually, the fresh graduates perceive that they are trained enough for professional communication requirements, but they experience real learning when they join an organization. She states her personal experience: “We face different situations every day and we learn through them”. The respondent’s (BA7-HA) comments imply that the courses significantly contribute to enabling the students for their later professional tasks (and thus these courses should be taught from practical i.e. skills imparting perspective than merely as an academic element).

One respondent (BA8-KD) comments that a business school’s approach matters significantly in devising course contents and in teaching/training the students. This respondent appreciates the role of Seven Cs: “Seven Cs are the major areas that might be taken for the effective communication”. (Seven Cs are appreciated by many respondents. The researcher assumes, based on his own teaching experience, that Seven Cs are remembered since they are taught through examples and practice.)

Another respondent (BA10-AK) states that business communication taught at universities is more useful in some fields like the banking sector and telecom sector, where the business graduates are required to dress and communicate formally.

One respondent (BA11-MA) states: “I personally believe that ‘communication skills’ is very important. This topic (course) should be taught in every discipline of education sector”. The respondent (BA11-MA) also considers Seven Cs vital for professional correspondence: “Seven Cs Principles are very important to understand because written communication is final communication (in concrete form). When you write something, you cut your hands, and ball is in other’s court”. His comments imply that business communication courses should be taught in each academic discipline as all professionals need them in whatsoever job or business they are involved in.

Another respondent (BA13-TR) also appreciate the contribution of Seven Cs: “Whenever we deal with our clients, we follow those Seven Cs concept, or we email to corporate client or something or we are writing a letter, it always helps me just because of business communication subjects, we studied these things in our studies”. His comments imply that Seven Cs are effective in external communication, in email writing, in letter writing, and other forms of business correspondence.

Interpretation and brief discussion: The respondents view the communication courses taught at business school as quite helpful in building and strengthening one’s communication skills. Their responses highlight the following pros of business communication courses:

- i. These courses provide the graduates a theoretical base at the start of their professional vocations (especially the respondents consider ‘Seven Cs’ as a guiding star for their written correspondence).
- ii. These courses contribute to providing foundations for the professionals’ grooming, though these graduates learn through their practical exposure to various communication scenarios in business settings.

4.4.2.2 Difference between Academically Taught and Infield Business Communication

One respondent (BA1-AR) highlights the difference between his academic learning and demands of infield business communication: “Practical ground realities are altogether different (than) that we learn in our education”.

Another respondent (BA3-EM) also views that there are larger gaps between what he learnt at business school and what he performs in the business world: “In my communication (courses), I have never studied how do you communicate with different persons who belong from different areas (of the country), that’s what they should consider, rather than going to bookish knowledge”. Here, this respondent refers to the pluralist ethnolinguistic demographics of Pakistan in which different territories have a wide diversity in terms of language, culture, ethnicity, and economic circumstances. The respondent’s (BA3-EM) comments imply that Pakistani business students should be taught about the massive demographic and other ethnolinguistic differences prevailing in the country.

Another respondent (BA5-HS) shows his dissatisfaction with academic courses: “What we studied in our business communication course has very little relevance with the real-life situation...That knowledge that we acquired during our study, was very little of the help in terms our applied or practical fields”. The respondent (BA5-HS) views business organizations (which the fresh business graduates join) have their specific communication patterns, wherein the graduates’ academic learning has a little relevance with them. Since business organizations have their own communication patterns/needs, they require (or train) the new hires accordingly. The respondent also refers to fast pace developments in the business world. He considers that the contents taught at business schools are not pacing with fast-track communications used in the contemporary business world. He (BA5-HS) further asserts: “The need for trainings or refresher courses keeps on arising...(at the start), during the middle portion of career as well as even at the very end”. He (BA5-HS) also feels that “there is big gap between the industry and academia (in Pakistani context)”. The respondent’s comments imply the need for curricula revision, internship/field projects for students, and industry-academia consultation.

Another respondent (BA6-HR) states that the contents taught at university e.g. letter writing, block format, etc. are rarely used in modern business communication. He (BA6-HR) informs that mostly present day business communication is either through spoken or electronic media, and most of it is now on the deductive or direct organizational plan of composing business correspondence. His (BA6-HR) comments also suggest that academicians stay in touch with changing business world.

Reflecting upon what he learnt during his academics, one respondent (BA9-KJ) states that the major contents of business communication courses are writing letters, which

are now rarely practiced in business organizations. He informs that most of the correspondence is through either oral or electronic channels in the present business world. He further states: “The contents that I have studied in my studies when I was doing my MBA, and the things I am going to use in my professional are far away different from each other, because, normally, I have been taught I have to write a letter, and once I came to job I have been required to make verbal (oral) speech to the customers, either they are internal or they are external”. The respondent perceives that the case studies used in books/teaching are based on assumptions that have very little relevance with the contemporary business world. He views that business schools make their business students dream of an executive office and an easy professional career (where they would just write letters to customers and bosses, and these letters would simply be approved or disapproved), whereas the actual professional life is quite different from such idealistic images. His (BA9-KJ) comments imply that there is a gap between what is taught at business schools and what is practiced and demanded at business organizations. His comments also suggest that academicians and students stay connected with the contemporary business world.

One respondent (BA10-AK) reflects on his start of career and the difference between his university learning and actual circumstances: “When I joined the professional life, and joined sales, and came to field, it was totally opposite to what I was taught. There was no need for me to give presentation, there was no need for me to wear a business suit, and go to market, because the demand was not there. For what I had to face, I had to face typical Punjabi speaking whole-sellers, retailers, for whom I had to mold myself, and I had to learn Punjabi to communicate”. The respondent (BA10-AK) himself has risen from a lower to an upper middle-level administrative position, and based on his experience and exposure, he feels that there are many aspects of organizational communication which are not taught at business schools. For example, the business students are not told that (1) they may need to learn local languages to communicate with their vendors and clients, (2) they may need to wear local dresses instead of formal business suits, (3) they may need to communicate quite informally more often than formally, (4) they may need to work more out of office (informally) i.e. in the field. He further states that business professionals require strong negotiation skills to perform their diverse communication tasks, during all the circumstances. The respondent (BA10-AK) further states a student’s fantasies can be ‘an easy desk job in a big air-conditioned office’, but the reality is altogether different for fresh graduates. His comments reveal that the workplace environment and requirements

entirely differ from students' fantasies. He also suggests industry-academia consultation through inviting business professionals to interact with students for making them aware of infield realities.

Another respondent (BA11-MA) views that the existing course contents only provide basic concepts to students, whereas "(job) market needs more volatile things...new techniques...new methods...the kind of communication that is going on". The respondent's (BA11-MA) comments emphasize preparing/training the students according to the patterns/requirements of the business world.

Another respondent (BA12-SK) states that the business world is not a fairyland with 'all are happy sort of life': "actually professionals are facing so many problems when they start or have started their careers". He (BA12-SK) comments on the relevance of academic teaching with industrial needs: "We are currently studying or teaching business communication that is totally different from the market". His comments imply that academic business communication courses do not train enough business students for professional communication.

One respondent (BA14-WA) shares his student life reflections: "When we are students, we are not aware of corporate culture". He considers that business communication courses aware the students about the basics only—about correspondence documents and their formats: "They (the courses) basically give you the basic idea, they are not totally sufficient because they just give you an overview of the corporate culture, but when you come into the job market, when you interact with the different persons, then you get to know that it is a different game". Regarding the teaching methodology, the respondent views: "You cannot teach business communication just by a book or by a slide, you need to expose all the students to the real world, and if most of them have to work in Pakistan, how it is different than working, the books we are teaching are not according to our culture, and according to our country. The mostly courses which are taught are based on the US and UK books. Basically, they (the business graduates) need to know that communication in Pakistan is much different than what they have been taught in the university". His comments seem to support the notion of explicit instruction of pragmatics (in relation to business communication) to bridge the gap between books authored by foreigners and communication practices in Pakistani business organizations. The respondent's (BA14-WA) comments also imply the insufficiency of course contents in preparing the students for the business world. His comments also harmonize with TBCs' dissatisfactory comments

on books/materials authored by foreign authors since such contents do not address Pakistani businesses' needs.

One respondent (BA15-ES), who works in a horizontal organization, a small entrepreneurship venture, states: "We are using altogether a different format to communicate with each other; it is never that much formal we have studied, actually. Currently, it is very much different; we are very much informal with our high-up, and even with our customers". He shares his experience of training their frontline staff: "We need to look into, overall communication skills matter a lot. Most of the representatives we interact with are not of up to the mark (in communication skills). We really feel lot of trouble in telling them how to interact with people, how to respond inquiries, how to trouble-shoot (solve) problems. These are problems (sudden problems) they do not have idea how to cope up such situations. When they (fresh graduates) come to us, they are very much novice, they don't have knowledge to deal with things. They just have basic assumptions, like, in this situation I have to write a letter (with a typical beginning) 'I beg to say', like that. I think things are very much different now, so, practically speaking, we need to tell our students that, practical side, practical communication is very much different. You need to understand the basics, I mean, of the professional life. We need to add practical contexts into our, what we call, curriculum. How to handle such situations, case studies type...case studies of present day organizations". His comments imply that fresh graduates are not sufficiently prepared for organizational requirements at their business schools. His comments also imply the need of exposing business students to infield communication practices.

Interpretation and brief discussion: On the whole, it is inferred that academic practices are much different from the infield communication procedures. In this regard, BAs' comments highlight the following important aspects:

- i. There is a lack of content on ethnolinguistic and demographic variations of Pakistani audience with whom business graduates would make interactions.
- ii. Business organizations have specific communication patterns which may significantly differ from the academic learning of graduates.
- iii. Contemporary professional communication is faster as compared to what the graduates learn and assume at their business schools.
- iv. Insufficient industry-academia consultation also widens the gaps. For example, business communication courses focus more on traditional written communication

whereas, in the business world, communication occurs more through spoken and electronic channels.

- v. Business professionals undergo impulse-based than theory-based communication.

4.4.2.3 Limitations of the Existing Course Contents

In the above thematic head, gaps between academically taught and infield business communication are presented, which show that certain revisions and additions are required in the existing courses. Some limitations of existing course contents, course materials, and course books are presented under this thematic head.

One respondent (BA1-AR), who has vast and diverse business experience, states that many contents taken from international books do not match with local perspectives because “in Pakistan, for the short term objective we do our own communications which is suitable for us and which is suitable for our organizations”. He (BA1-AR) further comments that theories taught in business communication courses are of little use in professional communication situations. This respondent’s comment on “short term objective” seems similar to another respondent’s (BA9-KJ) comment of “impulse communication”. These comments highlight the impromptu nature of professional communication, which is not stressed upon in teaching.

One respondent (BA4-EMj) highlights another limitation and suggests its remedy: “This business communication (academically taught) is almost concentrated or confined on theoretical aspects, (whereas) practical aspects should be included”. His comment implies the need of making academic courses matched with professional requirements.

One respondent (BA6-HR) views exam-oriented scheme as a major hurdle in practical learning: “Our teaching methodology or the way we have been studying business communication, it is more gear up towards exams; you memorize things (and) you pass your exams...(whereas) it (business communication) is a skill which needs to be developed and enhanced in the individuals and business graduates, but (the current approach) is not of developing a skill, the approach is just passing of information, so that students can memorize them and put them into exams, and pass the exam”. The respondent’s (BA6-HR) comments are similar to the previous BAs’ (BA4-EMj) comments that business communication should be aligned with professional communication demands.

One respondent (BA12-SK) compares his academic learning with his professional experience: “When we studied business communication, that was theoretical actually, it is

totally different or almost different, not totally because it helps out to start...it contributes but not enough". The respondent (BA12-SK) views that current teaching methodologies make these courses contribute "but not enough... (whereas) we need more practical experience-based courses which would help out our professionals for their career and for their practical life in businesses". He (BA12-SK) further opines that the existing course contents do not meet all "requirements of market" and thus "market feels hesitation to hire newcomers because our existing course contents do not meet the requirements of our practical skills (demanded by organizations)". The respondent emphasizes to bridge the gaps between 'what is required by the business world' and 'what is taught at academia': "We need to fulfill those requirements and (we need) to fill that gap, we need further practical approach based courses". The respondent (BA12-SK) suggests devising course contents which "help out the students to enter in market in better position". The respondent's (BA12-SK) comments imply the need for industry-academia consultation for preparing industry-oriented course contents, materials, and books.

One respondent (BA15-ES), who has multiple professional experiences, highlights the outdatedness of course contents and materials: "Being Pakistanis, what we are studying are very much different, like, we are studying courses from (year) 2000 or 2005, on the other side developed world has developed really different things. They (developed world) are very much updated and they are using modern techniques now". The respondent narrates his observation about fresh graduates who often face communication problems in "how to interact with people, how to respond inquiries, how to troubleshoot problems... (since) they do not have idea how to cope up such situations". The respondent also suggests that business students be provided opportunities for interaction with officials involved in 'hands-on' professional communication. The respondent's (BA15-ES) comments also imply the continual revisions in course contents, course materials, course books, and teaching methodologies. The respondent's comment on out datedness of books is also supported through the review of HEC's (2012) scheme of studies for BBA (see section 4.3.2.5)

Interpretation and brief discussion: The respondents have their concerns about the course contents, mainly the lack of industry-academia liaison and 'hands-on' training opportunities at business schools. The other limitations of course contents, course materials, and teaching methodologies are summed up as:

- i. The present contents are more focused on theoretical concepts which have limited use in professional communication.
- ii. The teaching methodology is not aligned with professional communication: the teacher passes on the theoretical information, the students memorize the information and reproduce it in the examination.
- iii. The above scheme does not significantly help business students in understanding what they may need in their later occupations, and train/prepare them accordingly.

On the whole, BAs' comments imply that business students need to be prepared according to:

- i. Their professional careers
- ii. The audience they are to interact with
- iii. The communication issues/problems they are to resolve
- iv. The circumstance and situations they are to cope with.

These implied requirements seem to be fulfilled through the inclusion of pragmatics concepts in course contents and their explicit instruction through a practical perspective. Pragmatics concepts (their learning and application) can effectively help out business graduates in managing communication in business settings.

4.4.2.4 Suggestions for Revision of Existing Course Contents and Teaching Methods

In the preceding two thematic heads, the BAs have highlighted many issues: lack of continual revisions in course contents, course materials, course books, and teaching methodologies, lack of industry-academia consultation, and lack of professional skills development approach in both contents and teaching methodologies. The respondents' (business administrators/professionals') suggestions on revision of course contents, course materials, and teaching methodologies are presented under this thematic head.

One respondent (BA1-AR) suggests that (1) role plays can be effective in training the students, (2) practical work should be made a part and parcel of social sciences subjects, (3) practical approaches can be explored to enhance the students' learning of business communication, (4) business communication should not be graded like other courses; the students should be encouraged to learn it through practical approaches.

On the revision of courses, the respondent (BA1-AR) suggests that people in academia explore what is happening in industry rather than "copy-paste their syllabus from the abroad". He shares his perception that "(our) social-economic factors, our social family

system, our culture, behavior, attitude are altogether different from Europe and America and other developed countries”. All these factors which this respondent mentions make frame and schemata, and these pragmatics concepts can help a business professional understand the aforementioned factors. The respondent further suggests that people in academia “to conduct, evaluate, assess, what are the problems and what are the requirements of business communication, what are the requirement to boost our business...we definitely need renovation and innovation in our syllabus, because whenever we copy the Europe, America syllabus and their criteria of working and their developing environment, and their social-economic factors are different as compared to Pakistan. We are underdeveloped country. We must develop the system of education as per our requirements, rather we copy the Far East, what is going on in America, what is going on in Europe, it will not be so much helpful, until and unless we will not select our own syllabus, develop our own syllabus”. The respondent endorses comprehensive revisions of contents and methodology according to contemporary indigenous requirements. The respondent’s (BA1-AR) suggestions imply that business communication courses should be taught to develop students’ skills.

Another respondent (BA2-AB) has similar suggestions. He suggests that business communication courses should include “real time scenarios”, “challenging scenarios”, “different sort of situations” which a professional may come across during his/her career, so that “when the students go out in the job market, they know how to cater difficult situations, and those challenging tasks, in terms of business communication”. The respondent suggests the syllabus designers explore “real time needs”, “challenging environments”, “different situations”, “(professionals’ ways of) responding to these situations... (and) conventional methods to deal with co-workers or supervisors or higher management”, “presenting a certain presentation”, and performing “job roles”. The respondent’s (BA2-AB) comments primarily imply the need for industry-academia consultation.

One more respondent (BA3-EM) suggests the inclusion of “real time scenarios” in business communication courses: “They (course designers and book authors) should include as much practical things in books, that would help the students”.

One respondent (BA4-EMj) suggests students’ field visits make them “involved in some practical communication, in ongoing situations (of real business settings)”. He suggests including practical aspects in course contents and teaching approach: “We can

include some (field) assignments that we send some students to some situations where he has to deal with some clients to promote his products and to bargain with someone to enhance and to have practical experience of what is communication, what he has learnt from the text... We can develop some interview-like situations, some bargaining situations, some situations where students have to promote their products, virtual products... In classroom we can have some situations which has to explain some process or material to other students, clients". He suggests that teachers consider students' level (of intelligence, interest, educational strengths, etc.). He (BA4-EMj) emphasizes including professionals' input and views on field requirements while revising the course contents. The respondent (BA4-EMj) reports that the students' assumptions change when they join professional careers, so it is the responsibility of academicians to "make them know what are the situations, they will face in practical life". He opines that business communication is not a course to memorize and pass; it is important to make the students "realize what is the importance of business communication and also the importance of incorporating pragmatics in business communication skills... They (students) should make interactions with their seniors who have already got experience in this business communication, and have faced many sort of problems". On teaching methodology, he suggests: "We can assign them some practical tasks to perform, like, product promotion, like recruiting something, like presenting in a huge crowding. Several sort of situations we can create for students. It will give him practical aspect, how can he make experiment over there for that for learning".

One respondent (BA5-HS) views the role of electronic/digital media since business students can learn a lot about the practical aspects of organizational communication from there. The respondent also emphasizes the revision of the course contents according to the modern era. He also suggests some significant steps to familiarize students with the industry needs i.e. guest lectures, study visits, and internships. He views that the measures like "invited guest lectures by industry professionals" and "visits to corporate organizations" are far below than bridging the gap between industry and academia. He perceives that both industry and academia should step forward to bridge the gap between curricula and industry needs. Higher Education Commission, Ministry of Education, and Chambers of Commerce can contribute significantly in bridging this gap between industry and academia. His comments imply that business schools should educate and train their students according to the industry requirements.

One respondent (BA6-HR) emphasizes practical learning since the academically studied contents are prone to be forgotten, at least from the conscious part of memory. He (BA6-HR) suggests the development of skills and capabilities among business students which they require in their professional careers: “(the instructors of business communication should) link up the situations with the real business world”. The respondent (BA6-HR) is dissatisfied with the teaching approach: “business communication is something practical, it is something you apply, it is application based...(Business communication) is a skill which needs to be developed and enhanced in the individuals and business graduates, but (the current approach) is not of developing a skill, the approach is just passing of information, so that students can memorize them and put them into exams, and pass the exam”. The respondent’s (BA6-HR) comments imply a practical teaching approach for business communication.

Another respondent (BA7-HA) emphasizes training the students for online/electronic communication in communication courses. (During the visit to her workplace and her interview, the researcher observed that this respondent was performing her tasks through online/electronic communication.)

One respondent (BA8-KD) urges comprehensive methods and techniques (e.g. case studies on company analysis and situational analysis) to develop students’ communication and business skills. He (BA8-KD) further states that business professionals need to proactively make their own company’s and other companies’ competitive analyses. (The respondent’s job responsibilities include the aforementioned phenomena since he provides services as a financial analyst). His comments imply that business students should be trained for the communication practices/procedures of their expected/aspired professional careers.

One respondent (BA9-KJ) opines that the course contents “should be based on the real dynamics of the market” since the professional life “is not easy life that they (business students) would be having after the completion of their studies”. The respondent implies that students themselves and their business schools should prepare them for multiple challenges.

One respondent (BA10-AK) opines: “Business communication should be a whole package; it should include other things which are needed in communication”. He also suggests assigning this course to the teachers having knowledge and experience of business,

and if it is not possible, there should be frequent guest lectures by business professionals who “can give hands-on knowledge to the students in the classroom...It is very important to invite the professionals from industry in business communication classroom”. The respondent’s (BA10-AK) comments provide an important suggestion regarding the prerequisites for a teacher of business communication. It is inferred that such teachers can train their students better for professional communication. The respondent (BA10-AK) also endorses that business communication should not be one course, it should be a comprehensive set of courses comprising “professional life”, “electronic communication”, “negotiation skills”, and “presenting oneself”. He further suggests: “One subject or course should be on negotiation skills. This subject may include (1) how to articulate different type of data, (2) how to manage this data, (3) how to present that data”. The respondent (BA10-AK) opines that course contents should be devised through industry-academia consultation: “\$People/experts from industry should be consulted, and around 75%, of course, should be according to the opinions of the people from industry. These experts should be from different types of organizations. So that, people in academia come to know the culture of a specific industry: what are the work procedures there, what are the expectations of the employers of that industry. The students of business studies, when they complete their studies, do not know which field or which organization they will join. The students should be taught (through teaching pragmatics or other means) that they should expect any unexpected, and they are shocked at any sudden unexpected scenario from the organization or industry they join. Thus the students will be prepared for any untoward circumstances\$\$”. (\$ shows the start of translation, and \$\$ shows the end of the translated script of the respondent’s communication in the Urdu language.) On the whole, the respondent’s (BA10-AK) comments imply that business communication should be a comprehensive course with all the practical contents essential for effective communication.

One respondent (BA11-MA) asserts that the new modes of communication (email, SMS, Whatsapp, etc.) should be given due place in course contents. He perceives that “Writing an email is an art which is not taught anywhere”. He suggests keeping basics as a part of course, but suggests also revising to include new modes of communication: “Yearly basis, monthly basis, new things are coming...in our course contents, nothing is added up (with that pace), and everything is five years back, ten years back, even twenty, thirty years back. Fine, that is good for us to read (for understanding the basic concepts) and to understand that procedure. We have to adopt new things also...So far the course contents

are comfortable, but they need new contents, they need space for new contents”. The respondent further opines that new communication applications and techniques, the new apps and softwares and their usage, netiquettes/etiquettes and related precautions, and the use of cellphone should be included in course contents: “How to use the softwares, how to use the apps, different communication apps is not there, what are the etiquettes of using those things. These should be added up to the new course contents”. The respondent (BA11-MA) recommends the additions on all “new changes”, “real-life scenarios”, “problem resolving”, and “case studies” in the course contents.

One respondent (BA12-SK) highlights: “A person who is preparing their courses has different approach, and the person who is working has different approach”. This respondent (BA12-SK) emphasizes on the course designers to consult the people from industry to prepare courses “as per the market (needs)” because effective course contents cannot be prepared when “they (academia and industry) do not have any type of interaction between them” and “these people should meet each other, and try to understand each other... (and) the requirements of the market, and those things (professional communication requirements) should be incorporated in their courses for better future of our relevant persons (i.e. students)”. Like other respondents, he also perceives: “There is actually a gap between the industry and the university knowledge” which can be bridged “If the practical things are included in our courses at university level, then, the students would be more satisfied and would be more skilled, hopefully, would be good businessmen, business managers, etc.”.

One respondent (BA13-TR) emphasizes on business schools to introduce practice sessions and internships: “There must be a special module, or there must be one week or two weeks exercises or internship, which focus on the practices of business communication skills, it will help the business organization to meet the challenges in their business”.

One respondent (BA14-WA) suggests the additions in the course contents including (1) students’ interaction with business professionals, (2) recordings of “actual conversations happening in a company”, (3) real case studies, (4) invited talks of professionals: “If you are in a class and if you are sticking to simple a course and course book, you cannot know what is happening in organizations... You cannot learn business communication just by the books... You need to expose the students to the real world to make them know... The students should be given a sort of exposure to the actual business communication”. The respondent’s (BA14-WA) comments imply that business

communication is not a course to be taught in the classroom only, rather the students should be provided exposure to the real business world.

One respondent (BA15-ES) shares his communication experience as an entrepreneur of a small business: “Being CEO, I interact with all the stakeholders, with the customers, with buyers, with sellers, like, service providers, other vendors who actually facilitate us in all these...I am in a position where I have to deal with different people, now we are using altogether a different format (mostly electronic/digital) to communicate with each other”. Being himself an entrepreneur, the respondent (BA15-ES) suggests specific modules/contents on entrepreneurial communication patterns for potential entrepreneurs among the graduates. The respondent suggests certain additions in course contents: (1) case studies, (2) information on the country’s ethnolinguistic/demographic diversity, (3) field visits and internships, (4) guest lectures and interaction opportunities with industrialists and business professionals, and (5) measures to groom language skills of the students from rural areas. His comments imply that communication patterns are quite different than taught during academics since today’s organizational communication is more electronic/online and more spoken than conventional written form. The respondent (BA15-ES) emphasizes adding a special segment on indigenous communication patterns in the course scheme/contents since the majority of our business graduates would work within Pakistan which has a multidimensional diversity of communication patterns.

Interpretation and brief discussion: The BAs’ responses imply that business communication courses be revised into a comprehensive set of modules comprising theoretical contents, practice-based simulations, field visits and projects, internships, seminars, conferences, guest lectures, interactive sessions, and other explorations into the business world. In the light of their vast professional experience and field expertise, the respondents’ suggested measures can bring improvements in the course contents and methodology.

The respondents have categorically emphasized on:

- i. Establishing industry-academia connections
- ii. Incorporating online/electronic communication patterns in the course contents
- iii. Revising business communication courses as skills-oriented modules
- iv. Realizing indigenous communication practices and making revisions accordingly
- v. Adopting a practical approach for professional training of business students.

The respondents' suggestions of 'role plays' and 'practical scenarios' align with some TBCs' teaching methodology, which can effectively render better results if TBCs are aware of infield communication practices through field visits, guest lectures, and other exploratory measures to know the business world.

Though business professionals learn business communication practices/procedures/patterns, in the true sense, when they join their careers practically after the completion of their education (as is reported by BAs-respondents throughout section 4.4), their formal education provides a foundation in edifying and training them for their future roles. Thus, business courses offered at business schools need to be significantly relevant with their future communication roles and according to requirements.

4.4.2.5 Suggestions for Students' Better Preparation for Future

The respondents (BAs) have themselves studied business communication (as academic courses) and now they are practicing it in professional lives. During their interviews, some BAs presented many suggestions for business students.

One respondent (BA8-KD) opines that one's efforts for skills development during an academic career pay during one's professional career. The respondent's comment implies that students should work on their grooming and skills development, than merely depending upon their teachers or business school.

One respondent (BA9-KJ) suggests business students get a practical picture of what they would face in the business world (to rise in their careers), which mainly demands result-oriented performance and communication. The respondent (BA9-KJ) further suggests that fresh graduates be practical than idealistic in their approach while starting their careers. The respondent (BA9-KJ) advises the business students and fresh graduates to be ready for 'impulse communications' throughout their careers and to be extrovert and explicit in their communication. (The respondent himself has grown from an initial to a top-level administrative position.)

One respondent (BA12-SK) opines: "students should visit the market before they enter, any type of internship, any type of workshop, (and interact) with those people with whom these students are going to meet in future". This advice can work whatsoever the field/professions these students want to join. The respondent suggests that internships, field visits, and workshops on business communication should be a requisite, thus "these students would get a better knowledge of the industry before they enter...They should

attend or visit, on regular basis, business market, or for regular basis, like four weeks or eight weeks, or for three months-a quarter...these students should visit on regular basis, and (such field visits) should be the part of their course". The respondent's comments imply that a student, during internship or field visits, can learn the actual communication patterns in the business sector: specific gestures, specific words/expressions along with their specific contextual meaning. A student needs to experience these things through internships and visits to "increase his skills, his expertise, etc." and to "be a better person in any sense for the industry". On learning the infield pragmatics of professional communication, the respondent opines: "If a person or a student visits the market, then he would get the information and knowledge, and also learn the pragmatics of the market". His comment implies that a person can experience the pragmatics of the market through his/her physical senses.

One respondent (BA13-TR) suggests some additions: "confidence-building workshops, and email writing and corporate dealing" and "corporate meeting". His comments imply that workshops added into business communication courses will enhance the students' interpersonal skills.

Another respondent (BA15-ES) also supports the idea of frequent internships: "During your (studies), having internship for two months, why only for two months, (whenever) you are free from university for fifteen day, for twenty days...or in the evenings, you should push for such things, because as much hands-on you are, that much good is for you. At the end of the day, it is adding value, along with your curriculum, along with what you are learning at university or in colleges. This thing can really add a lot". The respondent's (BA15-ES) comments imply that internship programmes will add value to academic learning, and will prepare the business students for their professional ventures.

Interpretation and discussion: Both the students and teachers should take 'out of box measures' and should not solely rely on classroom-exam-oriented academic activities. The BAs-respondents have fervently supported the notions of providing/availing opportunities of exposure to the real business world:

- i. The students themselves should explore the business world through (1) field visits, (2) seeking opinions of infield professionals, (3) availing the opportunities of internships in that industry, (4) preparing themselves for their aspired careers.

- ii. These visits, interactions, internships, training can be arranged on weekends, during evening hours, and/or during the semester breaks. Through these measures, business students would know, through their first-hand observation and experience, about the required skills, verbal and nonverbal communication schemas.
- iii. The students themselves can make such efforts or their business school can arrange training/interaction sessions for their exposure to the professional requirements.
- iv. Through all these steps, the students will understand the pragmatics of the business world.

Students are the affectees or beneficiaries of academic programmes offered at educational institutions. During their stay at business schools, they are adults and they should realize what they are being taught and what they may need in their professional lives. They need to explore, train and equip themselves with those skills and competencies they require in their professional careers. For such preparations, they need to take ‘out-of-box measures’ and not rely solely on their ‘in-classroom-exam-oriented academic activities’.

The following figure sums up the BAs’ suggestions on bringing improvements in the course contents and teaching approach vs. the existing gaps and limitations:



Figure 4.7: Suggested measures for improvement vs. existing gaps and limitations.

4.4.2.6 Composite Discussion

There are evident gaps between real business communication and the one taught. Infield communication is instant, through faster channels, in indigenous languages (in spoken case, mostly), organization-specific, productivity-oriented. The business world welcomes new entrants equipped with the required professional knowledge and communication skills. Since students are the ultimate affectees of deficiencies of academic programmes, they should explore ways to train and equip themselves with the skills and competencies required in their professional life. Business communication courses need the inclusion of relevant theoretical contents, simulations/case studies, field visits/projects, internships, seminars/conferences, exploration/information on recent business developments. All the academic stakeholders (HEC, Ministry of Education, TBCs, students, ORIC, career placement centers, universities/business schools' administration) need a more volatile and dynamic approach for realistic outcomes. Since effective and

proficient communication is foremost essential for the professionals in performing their roles in both internal and external settings, the gaps between academic teaching practices and infield requirements need to be bridged for the students' skillful preparation/training at business schools.

4.4.3 Case of explicit instruction of pragmatics, and suggested teaching methodology

This broader thematic head comprises the following sub-themes:

1. Implicit learning/application of pragmatics by professionals
2. Potential benefits of including explicit pragmatics in business communication
3. Pragmatics and sender's intentions and desired meaning/message
4. Pragmatics and audience's expectations and interpretations
5. Pragmatics and effective message delivery
6. The role of context and pragmatic shared knowledge
7. Pragmatics and internal communication
8. Pragmatics and external business communication
9. Inclusion of pragmatics for enriching existing course contents
10. Suggestions on the teaching of pragmatics

4.4.3.1 Implicit Learning/Application of Pragmatics by Professionals

The respondents were informed of pragmatics and its concepts (and their implicit awareness/use in communication) in a preliminary session before conducting their interviews. So, they could fairly understand pragmatics and could relate it to various forms of professional activities and communication. On asking about the implicit usage of pragmatics concepts in the business world, one respondent (BA1-AR) instantly replied that the pragmatic approach and pragmatics concepts are widely used in making advertisements.

Another respondent (BA2-AB) reflects upon implicit learning of pragmatics: "A good communicator always knows what sort of questions you (he) gonna get from his listeners. So, this is what is all about pragmatics". It implies that experienced professionals have developed pragmatic competence.

One respondent (BA6-HR) presents a comprehensive stance on implicit usage of pragmatics concepts in the business world: "Actually, in real world, it is pragmatics that really matters in your communication. I have a situation, for example, I have to communicate with someone, so, I have to make an analysis of my pragmatics—what is my message, how it will be perceived or interpreted by my audience, who is my audience, what

are their aspirations-thinking, what is their language, how do they interpret language, what is our common knowledge (shared knowledge) base, what kind of structure they (audience) use, what kind of knowledge (pre-existing knowledge structures, frame, schemata) they already have—I have to make this assessment. Even, (I need to consider) if it is a better time to communicate, is it a better situation (i.e. time) to communicate, is everybody in same frame of mind, frame of reference at the moment that I should communicate or I should not communicate, or according to the message what kind of message I should construct. So, what I believe is it is the knowledge of pragmatics which prepares a modern day business professional in a better way to communicate in any situation. So it is very very important. It will add a lot of value to the current contents of business communication if pragmatics (concepts) are added...The knowledge of pragmatics which prepares a modern day business professional in a better way to communicate in any situation”.

On paying excessive heed to organizational communication, the respondent (BA6-HR) believes that business professionals consider certain aspects of their communication: (1) who are the audience, (2) what they can think, perceive, expect and interpret of a message, (3) how an effective message can be crafted accordingly. For all these aspects of pragmatics-based communication: “they (professionals) don’t know they are practicing pragmatics, they have learnt this hard way with experience”. The respondent also perceives that a seasoned professional often asks himself/herself: “I am writing in this way to this person, and I was not able to succeed but then I change my language, I change my vocabulary, I change my references, and then I was able to succeed...So, what they (business professionals) are doing unconsciously, they are actually applying the principles of pragmatics”. Reflecting on pragmatics concepts, he (BA6-HR) opines: “In any context, how I see pragmatics, it is developing and understanding that what and how you are going to communicate in any given situation”. On learning and applying pragmatics, he (BA6-HR) perceives: “we (learn and) apply pragmatics on trial and error basis without knowing we are applying pragmatics.”

The respondent (BA6-HR) states a long narration of his ways of developing and using pragmatic communication competence: “Whenever I go to a meeting, or whenever I have to communicate with any certain set of audiences, I make a scanning, you can say, I make an evaluation or assessment that what is my audience, what is their knowledge level, what kind of vocabulary they use, what is the meaning of that vocabulary, what is their position and how are they going to use position in this particular meeting. So, what I do is,

before sending a message, before going to a meeting, before starting any verbal communication, I have an assessment or I make an assessment that if I say this how it will be interpreted, if I use these words or vocabulary, how it will be interpreted, and accordingly running through different situation in my mind, I craft a message, I pick up certain vocabulary, and I let go off certain vocabulary, then, that's my choice, you know, that's my understanding that this audience require, they will interpret, they will perceive my message in this way, so I have to deliver my message in this way, what kind of tone I should be using, what kind of vocabulary, what position I should be taking. This is all because I know I have to be sensitive about interpretation, which is one of the basic elements of pragmatics. So, yes, it helps me a lot, and it will help any business professional to be sensitive about the interpretation of his or her message by different types of audience". The respondent's (BA6-HR) comments imply that most successful business professionals learn and apply pragmatics implicitly in the business world, but this implicit learning takes a long time.

One respondent (BA7-HA) comments on learning and applying pragmatics implicitly: "We face different situations every day and we learn through them". The respondent works at middle management position in a company working with national and international clients. If this respondent's (BA7-HA) comment is juxtaposed with the previous respondent's (BA6-HR) comments, it can be inferred that business professionals implicitly learn and use basic pragmatics concepts: sender's intentions, receiver's expectations, and probable interpretations deciding the contents of communication as per the context.

One respondent (BA8-KD), who has extensive connections with business organizations as a financial analyst and advisor, perceives that the business community values "how effectively a message is going to be delivered to the audience or the customer".

One respondent's (BA9-KJ) comments reflect the use of pragmatics concepts on audience's expectations and probable interpretation, contextual communication contents, and pre-existing knowledge structures in infield communication: "Sometimes we learn something on the base of old knowledge that is based on very logical chronological order. The customer would say something and then you would say something, then he would say something and then you would reply with something". The respondent (BA9-KJ) considers pragmatics important in interpersonal skills used during internal formal business meetings: for example, in such organizational meetings, middle-level managers responsible for sales

targets need to convince senior management (who already have plentiful knowledge on all the matters) of their efforts of increasing sales, profits, market share, etc. During all these interactions, pragmatic communication skills are used in delivering oral presentations and explaining statistics since these managers present their stance the way their senior management desire.

Another respondent (BA10-AK) also talks comprehensively about professionals' implicit learning and application of pragmatics concepts: "Pragmatics plays a very important role in day-to-day professional life...Pragmatics is helpful in professional conversations (oral interactions/emails)". He comments on the use of pragmatics in instant communication: "\$Your senior may visit you and ask a question about business\$\$, and sudden communication starts, and for that sudden communication, you have to be ready to give answers, he has certain intentions with which he has come, and you have a perception of him that he is a boss—and you have made a perception of him that he deals this way\$\$...that depends on your background knowledge (previous knowledge about him). \$You can answer him if you have hand-on knowledge and facts and figures, and you know what to answer him, and if you know what are his perceptions \$\$...\$You need to understand what he expects. You can change his perception at the same time (through the facts and figures you present to him, and the way you present to him)\$\$ (facts and figures can be related to one's assigned job or task)...It is basically your job and how and what way. If he has asked something, you have to communicate the way he likes. You should be better judge, what he likes, and what format does he like. \$You present actual facts and figures to your boss in an MS office may excel sheet, and he (your boss) may get offended owing to the way you are presenting those statistics to him. He may be expecting that you present all these statistics in a formal presentation (MS PowerPoint presentation)\$\$".

The respondent (BA10-AK) further narrates (on internal, upward communication) that professionals need to understand their boss's expectations, since their communication with their bosses can cause extreme positive or negative outcomes: "This can go both ways (your communication may offend him and may please him). \$You have the knowledge, you have statistics\$\$ How do you present it, if you present it as per his expectations, you can be successful. But if you do not present as per his expectations, you can go the other way (one can offend the boss, and may ruin one's prospects)". The respondent (BA10-AK) also perceives pragmatics useful in an unexpected/instant communication with one's boss: "You can answer him (the boss), if you have hand-on knowledge and facts and figures, and

you know what to answer him, and if you know what are his perceptions... You need to understand what he (boss) expects... If he (your boss) has asked something, you (his junior/subordinate) have to communicate the way he likes. You should be better judge, what he likes, and what format does he like". His (BA10-AK) comments on upward communication imply that a professional needs to conduct communication (in terms of format, medium, contents, size, etc.) as per the boss's expectations. (\$ shows the start of translation, and \$\$ shows the end of the translated script of the respondent's communication in the Urdu language.)

One respondent (BA11-MA) perceives that pragmatics focuses on both a sender's intentions and audience's interpretation/expectations: "Knowing yourself, knowing the other people is equally important as knowing yourself". The respondent's comments imply the importance of knowing people (which is also a desired outcome of pragmatics learning).

Another respondent (BA14-WA) reflects on his implicit learning of pragmatics during his professional career: "I wasn't taught about this pragmatics in my BBA and MBA. So when you talk to a professional, you just with a hit and trial method. You just hit and trial if that person is thinking this way, so I should be mailing him like this or the words should be like this. That's just on the basis of hit and trial method". On teaching pragmatics explicitly to business students, he opines, in continuation of the previous comment: "If that person is already aware with pragmatics, I guess, he will be able to address the needs of the person he is interacted to in a better way." The respondent supports the notion of teaching pragmatics explicitly since pragmatics helps in anticipating the needs of the audience and formulating communication according to all contextual factors.

In response to the query on the potential benefits of pragmatics in terms of preparing students as proficient business professionals, one respondent (BA15-ES) views: "when someone tells you do this thing, you (should) have a clear understanding of what your senior is asking you to do...demanding you to do...Once you have clarity of objective (of communication), you will be able to do things (assigned tasks) in better way". The respondent's (BA15-ES) comments imply the implicit use of basic pragmatics concepts in professionals' communication in a real setting.

The various phenomena with implicit usage of pragmatics, as narrated by the respondents, are shown in the figure below:



Figure 4.8: Implicit usage of pragmatics in business.

Interpretation and brief discussion: On the implicit learning and use of pragmatics, the professionals' responses are summed up as:

- i. Organizational communication is based on pragmatics concepts. Business professionals learn these concepts implicitly through their interactions/exposure in varied communication settings, but this implicit learning takes a longer time.
- ii. Business professionals develop pragmatic competence through different situations they face every day, and through successful stances of communication with their audience.
- iii. Professionals often use pragmatics concepts for the success of their professional dealings. Professionals learn through their experience about the appropriateness of a specific genre and contents of communication in a certain business setting.
- iv. During implicit use, business professionals rely on their familiarity with the audience, level of audience and their probable interpretations, vocabulary choice, and their organizational position (based on previous knowledge). All these factors are similar to pragmatics concepts.
- v. Implicit learning of pragmatics facilitates these professionals in impromptu/impulse communication, in an unexpected state of affairs, up to the need-satisfaction of all stakeholders.

- vi. Advertisements are made on the notions of pragmatics—desired messages conveyed in a specific context to the target audience as per their pre-existing knowledge, script, and schemata in a comprehensible communication.

4.4.3.2 Potential (General) Benefits of Including Explicit Pragmatics in business communication

In the above thematic head, the BAs responses have revealed that they learn pragmatics implicitly, and use it in (a) conveying desired messages (b) in a specific context (c) to the target audience (d) as per their pre-existing knowledge, (e) script and schemata (f) in a comprehensible communication. The respondents' (BAs') views on the potential benefits of explicit teaching of pragmatics for students are presented here.

Agreeing with the effectiveness of pragmatics in business communication, one respondent (BA1-AR) views pragmatics as useful for employees and entrepreneurs: "Pragmatics definitely helps in business...pragmatics must be included in this course with new inventions and new techniques". The respondent himself is an entrepreneur and he has also rendered services as trainer/mentor, thus he believes that "only the theories do not play the good role in grooming the communication skills", rather pragmatics should be taught for professionals' skills and capability development. His comments (BA1-AR) imply that pragmatics should not be taught as a theoretical subject. Business students should be taught its basic concepts from an applied perspective with a target to develop their pragmatic communication skills.

Another respondent (BA2-AB) views that pragmatics will enable business professionals to communicate better, since awareness of pragmatics grooms one's interpersonal skills "to a reasonable extent—the knowledge, and the interpretation, and catering the correct intentions of the listeners as well the speakers, and the target audience".

One respondent (BA3-EM) endorses the notion of making pragmatics a part of course contents: "They (business graduates who have studied pragmatics) will be able to understand the behaviour (of the audience), they will be able to understand the situation in different scenarios, it (the ability thus developed) will definitely help them". The respondent's (BA3-EM) comments imply that instruction of pragmatics contributes to learners' interpersonal skills.

Another respondent (BA4-EMj) views that pragmatic competence contributes to gaining maximum output through minimum input, in professional communication.

One respondent (BA5-HS) opines: “If 50% of communication happens correctly inside an organization, that grade is considered an excellent grade” and he expects pragmatics to contribute in bringing improvement in that gap of remaining 50%, whether it is taught as part of academic courses or refresher courses. He views the inclusion of pragmatics in the course contents as helpful for business graduates’ roles as business leaders and managers. He (BA5-HS) further states that pragmatics develops a “better approach or different approach leading towards business communication”. It helps in improving interpersonal skills, in getting a good job, in career growth, in performing better at the workplace, and in communicating with customers at the time of selling.

One respondent (BA8-KD) opines that pragmatics will optimize professionals’ implicit abilities of communication competence; the knowledge of pragmatics (and its consequent application in professional conversations/correspondence) would be a value addition in business skills.

One respondent (BA9-KJ) perceives the need for pragmatic competence in their jobs: “Once we go into the market, once we go into the supply market, or to our seller market, there are so many things we have to reply them based on impulse communication”. In continuation, the respondent (BA9-KJ) supports the notion of explicit instruction of pragmatics: “If our students are trained on the base of explicit pragmatics, they must be having knowledge, or they must be vocal, they must be extrovert that they can handle any situation, that is nowadays based on the aggressive competition among the different companies, might be in the same business or may be working in different industries”. The respondent (BA9-KJ) also views that pragmatic competence helps in foreseeing the implications of one’s actions and communication: “If (a) student is already equipped with interpersonal skills based on explicit pragmatics, he would be having so much knowledge, or he must be having very good background to understand the things that what could be different implications he could face in the market”. The respondent’s comments imply that explicit learning of pragmatics from a practical perspective is highly beneficial for business graduates in their professional careers.

Another respondent (BA12-SK) also foresees teaching business communication with explicit pragmatics as highly beneficial: “we are going to improve interpersonal skills of the person who is going to start his own business, or (enter) in a business industry as an employee” because “in market you are required explicit knowledge and other things”...“If it (pragmatics) had been included in our courses, then it might be possible, we would be in

better position for job, for business, for career"... "It is very important for us, or for students, or for a person to learn explicit things which are being used in the market or the industry, or our clients are using it". It is inferred from his comments that explicit knowledge of pragmatics can contribute in meet the communication demands of the business world.

One respondent (BA13-TR), who is a young entrepreneur and runs an event management company and needs to interact with a lot of people, states that awareness of pragmatics can enhance a professional's confidence during a business conversation. This young professional's comment implies that one can conveniently communicate when one is aware of (and can successfully apply) pragmatics concepts in business conversations.

One more respondent (BA15-ES), who is an entrepreneur and administrator, sees the explicit knowledge and application of pragmatics concepts useful: "I think, having pragmatics in it (curriculum) will actually help them (business graduates/professionals) understand a real time situation right at the time of student age. So, once they are into professional life, they will be able to better understand these terminologies, practical terminologies—and they (fresh business graduates) will be fast in processing, I mean, in communication way or receiving they have to do with customers...Once you have clarity in your objective, you are in a better position to demonstrate your abilities, your skills in your communication...Once you have that shared knowledge with you that really will help you a lot to actually communicate in a better way with your stakeholders". This respondent's comments imply that pragmatic communication proficiency helps professionals in realizing the 'desired/intended message' while receiving instructions from high-ups since understanding the intents of higher management behind each assigned task is mandatory.

The respondents' views and reflections on the benefits of explicit instruction of pragmatics are summed up in the figure below:

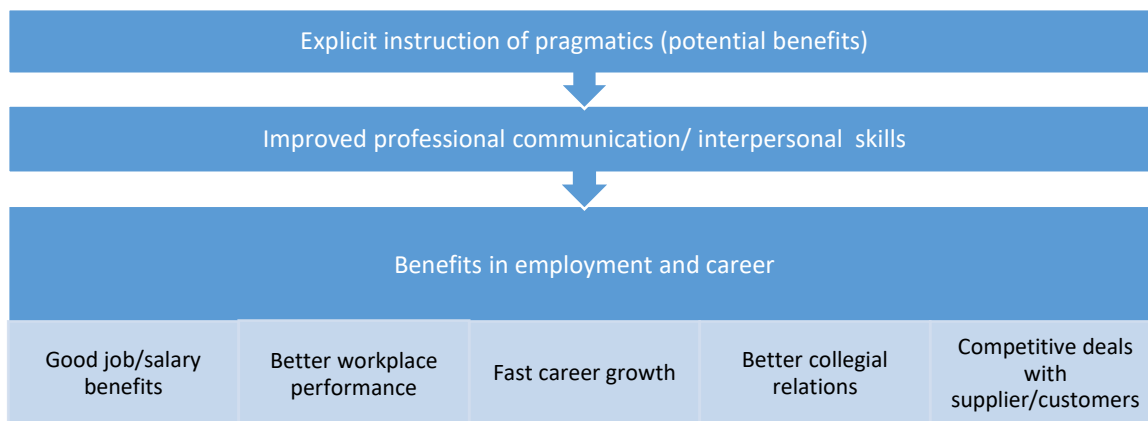


Figure 4.9: Potential benefits of explicit instruction of pragmatics

Interpretation and brief discussion: Business professionals/administrators need communication expertise along with other professional skills: for competitively/ efficiently performing their corporate roles in diverse communication events of internal and external settings. Explicit awareness and application of pragmatics concepts can improve professionals' communication skills:

- i. These professionals will better understand their intentions, communication targets, and the audience's interpretations and behaviours.
- ii. Pragmatic competence (acquired through explicit learning and its practical application) is helpful in unexpected and sudden communication events; it is helpful for professionals involved specifically in external communication i.e. selling, negotiating, and bargaining.
- iii. The business graduates trained through pragmatics will have knowledge, extroversion, and capability to handle any communication situation; they would be more cautious of the implications of their communication.
- iv. Pragmatic communication competence is helpful for a professional in getting a good job, getting promotions, and rising to managerial positions.
- v. Through the explicit instruction of pragmatics, business students will be sensitized for its application in professional settings. Pragmatics helps in developing new communication techniques, and consequently in enhancing professionals' performance. Pragmatics is equally helpful for entrepreneurs and on-job professionals.

In the above thematic head, the potential benefits of explicit instruction of pragmatics have been discussed. In the following four thematic heads, these benefits are

split into four segments in the light of the theoretical framework (shown in the figure below):

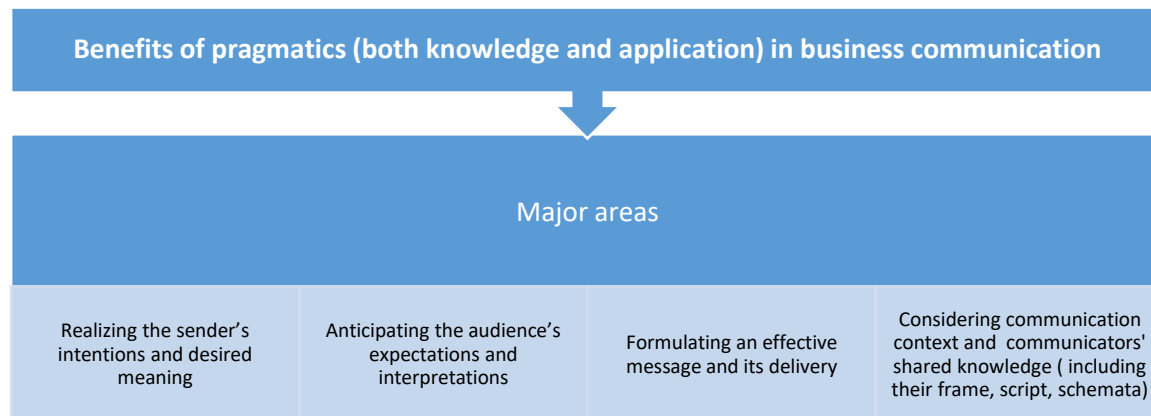


Figure 4.10: Benefits of pragmatics (both knowledge and application) in business communication.

The implications deciphered from BAs' responses are aligned with the results obtained in section 4.2, in which the learners' performance before and after the treatment supports the notion that inclusion of pragmatics concepts in the course contents and their explicit instruction benefit in improving business communication skills. The results of section 4.2 ascertain the BAs' responses that explicit instruction of pragmatics would help the business students in catering to the communication needs of professional settings.

4.4.3.3 Pragmatics and Sender's Intentions and Desired Meaning

One respondent (BA1-AR) states that, in business communication, the effectiveness of communication is compared with: (1) communication is "acceptable for audience", (2) desired meaning/objectives, message composition (as per pragmatic approach), methods of communication, acceptance by the audience—all are interlinked.

Another respondent (BA2-AB) considers the role of pragmatics vital in business communication: "It (the knowledge of pragmatics) will help (the business professionals) a lot in terms of conveying correct messages to the target audience... (Knowing about) speaker's intentions, and listeners catering its interpretations, and language, and language and all that stuff (would) help a lot in terms of delivery of the message effectively and efficiently, and to target audience (i.e.) correct target audience because pragmatics actually caters practicality of communication, business communication ... it (pragmatics) can do wonders in terms of business communication". It is inferred from the respondent's (BA2-

AB) comments that learning pragmatics will enable business professionals to communicate effectively.

One respondent (BA9-KJ) mentions that parties intend a successful business deal: “In our corporate world or business world, normally both the parties, communicator and the other person (i.e.) receiver have the common goal”. His (BA9-KJ) comment implies that both seller and buyer have a common objective of ‘win-win’ deal, in the majority of business transactions, since the transaction/deal is meant to benefit both.

One respondent (BA12-SK) comments comprehensively on the sender’s (an expert business professional’s) message formulation and its delivery: “When a person who has very professional understanding and practical knowledge and all these things, and he is talking with you (i.e. one receiver) or he is talking in front of number of people (i.e. multiple numbers of uninformed/less informed receivers) who still do not have a practical experience or knowledge, definitely he would share personal ideas, he would share market research-based things which are actually practical, not assumption based things, and audience obviously enjoys and have different questions which would be helpful for them in future...(if sender’s) intentions are very clear (in his/her entailed message), interpretation (for the audience) is very easy...A person who is saying (conveying the message) very openly, explicitly to audiences...there are minimal chances of misinterpretation”. The respondent’s (BA12-SK) comments imply that the responsibility of successful initiation of communication is on the sender (especially, if he/she is a senior/experienced professional and addressing an inexperienced audience).

One respondent (BA14-WA) states that pragmatics (its understanding and application) helps convey the desired meaning in business conversations.

Another respondent (BA15-ES) shares a tactic of conveying the desired message to an inexperienced audience: “I think exemplifying things is really a good way. Like, once you are communicating to your junior, to your team member, if you exemplify things that will help him immediately tag in mind that what you are trying to say, one way. Other way could be, if support things by some image, may be, that is another way. Support of a video could be another way. Exemplifying, like, playing a practical demo, we call on-job training...could be another way. These all things practically help your team members understand, by adding all these things, you can actually help your team members understand what you are trying to tell them actually”. The respondent (BA15-ES) suggests

simulations type activities, discussion on recorded videos of real time workplace operations, and on-job training for new hires to “actually help your team members understand what you are trying to tell them”. The respondent’s (BA15-ES) suggestions can be used to train business students for professional communication competence.

Interpretation and brief discussion: The respondents view the understanding and application of pragmatics contribute to formulating/conveying a message. The following points are inferred from BAs’ responses:

- i. Communication is initiated with sending of a message from a sender with a specific desired purpose. The exquisite formulation of an intended message, according to context and probable interpretation of the audience, depends on a sender’s pragmatic competence.
- ii. Pragmatic competence coupled with professional knowledge enables a sender in conveying an intended message to the audience. The audience is also at ease while interpreting such a message.
- iii. Pragmatics is useful in conveying intended meaning; a sender’s pragmatic competence influences the audience’s perception of the message as well.
- iv. A message (a business conversation or writing) is effective in achieving the desired results when it is acceptable for the audience and it produces the desired effects. In business deals, a ‘win-win’ common goal is the focal point of a communication event.
- v. Senior/experienced professionals can use examples, demos, simulations, and other such techniques to help their juniors understand and perform the assigned roles and responsibilities.

4.4.3.4 Pragmatics and Audience’s Expectations and Interpretations

One respondent (BA1-AR) states that “The shared assumptions and expectations of audience are very important, and we can attend the audience by improving pragmatics” since pragmatics is effective “to influence the audience and to attract the audience”. The respondent’s (BA1-AR) comments imply that professionals’ pragmatic competence (developed through the learning of pragmatics) enables them to cater to their audience’s expectations.

One more respondent (BA2-AB) emphasizes catering to the audience’s interpretation/expectations: “A good communicator always knows what sort of questions

you gonna get from his listeners. So, this is what is all about pragmatics” “When a business professional is sound in terms of business communication, when he has explicit message for his correct target audience, obviously, he will get an anticipation of the interpretation of the listener, and he can easily anticipate what sort of questions or what sort of information I need to convey to my target audience”. The respondent’s (BA2-AB) comments imply that pragmatics enables business professionals/students in anticipating the impact of their message on their audience.

Another respondent (BA3-EM) considers that pragmatics “will definitely help them understand and assume about the audience”.

Another respondent (BA4-EMj) states that the sender’s knowledge of pragmatics helps him/her in anticipating “what the listener is going to understand”, and problems and deficiencies of communication can be eradicated.

One respondent (BA5-HS) states that the concept of ‘shared assumptions’ help in empathizing with the other party “that put yourself into the shoes of the target audience when you are talking to them, and when you are audience by yourself, you may put yourself into the shoes of speaker”; pragmatics helps understand how a message would be interpreted by the audience—as an appreciation, as extra work, by a subordinate. The respondent (BA5-HS) sees the utility of pragmatics in communication: “You will be able to know what actually you (sender) meant and what actually they (audience) perceive, because when you talk about things which have been said or things which has been perceived, they may be taken out rightly different”. His (BA5-HS) comments imply that pragmatics helps in understanding a sender him/herself and their audience both.

Another respondent (BA6-HR) perceives pragmatics as helpful in realizing the shared assumptions and expectations of the audience in a communication situation: “If I have this understanding that there is something called shared assumption, or there is something expectations, which is given to me by the knowledge and understanding and learning of pragmatics, so it is definitely going to help me to be sensitive to what are shared assumptions which we have right now”. The respondent’s comments imply awareness of shared knowledge/assumptions and anticipation of the audience’s expectations (acquired through pragmatics) in business conversations/correspondence.

One respondent (BA7-HA) views the outcome of pragmatics in knowing/managing audience: “If we have grip on pragmatics...when we enter the market we know how to

(manage) our audience' attention, and how to communicate with them, and how to basically convey our message to them properly”.

One respondent (BA9-KJ) talks about the awareness of shared knowledge/assumptions and anticipation of the audience's expectations in the business sector: “We work in the business market, or corporate world, mostly the receivers or the other people to whom we are talking with, they also have the idea, they also have the proper knowledge of the same thing that we are talking about”. His comment implies that many external customers (e.g. whole sellers) are already aware of what a company official is going to communicate. In such cases, the company's representative needs a good knowledge of the audience's probable interpretations and expectations. The respondent (BA9-KJ), since he works at upper-level management position in a large company, informs that big companies often consider their wholesale dealers as their business partners and treat them with due protocols. His (BA9-KJ) comments imply that the audience (clients/customers), in many business deals, may have the same level of knowledge or even more than the sender (company's spokesperson/sales representative). The respondent (BA9-KJ) views pragmatics as helpful in responding to the queries/concerns of external customers (suppliers, whole sellers). A professional with good interpersonal skills can negotiate well with customers in increasing the company's sales, and in lowering the prices from suppliers.

One respondent (BA10-AK) views the role of pragmatics in internal and external communication: “Pragmatics is very important with respect to industry—working in industry. Being a business professional working in an organization, you have to communicate...with both the stakeholders—both internal and external...To balance both of their expectations, you have to have hands-on experience; you have to have good knowledge of pragmatics. Both of the people you are dealing with, they have their assumptions, they have expectations”. His (BA10-AK) comments imply that pragmatics helps in understanding both internal and external audiences since a business professional needs to communicate with the audience as per their expectations: “the people you are dealing with, they have their assumptions, they have expectations...The hands-on experience and knowledge of pragmatics would improve your interpersonal skills...Pragmatics is helpful in professional conversations”. The respondent's (BA10-AK) comments imply that professionals often indulge in impromptu communication, and in such situations, professionals need to compose their message keeping in mind the probable

interpretations of their audience (as per their views, mental filter, needs, culture, awareness, understandability, probable reaction): “People can interpret differently. A simple situation—but it can be interpreted differently by different people. Let us suppose that you have a situation that are you are dealing and you are given a reply, and in that reply written communication, there are three to four people who are in copy (cc), every person who will read it will interpret it as per his own level of understanding. The thing is, what causes it, you write a generic form and you expect it that everyone will understand it. Yes, if a person knows about pragmatics, he will draft a whole scenario as per the level of understanding of people you are copying (keeping in ‘cc’) in this email. Everyone will be able to understand that what are the requirements. What are the things that are required from their end? If in a project you are copying (sending a copy of the email as ‘cc’) three or four different people, it’s not that everyone has to do the same thing in that project”.

The following points are deciphered from the respondent’s (BA10-AK) views:

- i. In the case of multiple audiences of a message, the message should be carefully drafted. Otherwise, for each recipient, a separate message should be drafted rather than sending the same email message in ‘cc’.
- ii. The professionals involved in communication should be well aware of their roles.
- iii. Pragmatics can be useful in communication as per the situation.
- iv. In the case of multiple audiences, pragmatics is effective in communicating with each of them as per their variables.

One respondent (BA11-MA) emphasizes upon exploring the factors which influence the audience’s expectations and interpretation: culture, geographical city/area/region, nationality, religion, education, and institution “we have to make use of those things to communicate with them and to contact with them and that is very very important to know the pragmatics of that communication”. He points out that a sender also carries his/her multiple identities: “religion, social, demographic...you (i.e. sender) are representing everything...first evaluate yourself and you are to understand who you are talking to...(because) understanding your audience is also equally important as understanding yourself”. The respondent’s (BA11-MA) comments imply that a person should realize his frame, schemata, script, and how much all these phenomena are reflected in his/her communication, and s/he should also explore information about the audience.

Another respondent (BA12-SK) also views that pragmatics “helps out audiences to understand the things, and get the interpretation of those words, most of the time in that sense which has been communicated”. The respondent’s comment (BA12-SK) implies that pragmatics helps the audience in interpreting a message as per the sender’s intended meaning.

Another respondent (BA13-TR) considers pragmatics beneficial in knowing the audience: “Pragmatics is really helpful for business professionals because when they are dealing, they must assume what (are) the client-audience or audience’ expectation from them. So if a student or businessman knows about pragmatics in business communication skill, if he had already studied about it, then definitely he will assume what audience wants from him, from him or from company which is dealing with the client”. The respondent also views pragmatic communication skills as helpful in extending business links with clients. The respondent’s (BA13-TR) comments imply that pragmatics is helpful for business professionals in assuming and meeting the expectations of their audience (or clients).

One respondent (BA15-ES) talk about pre-existing knowledge: “I think once we have background knowledge, like, I have done one thing, I have passed through a situation, right, next in such situation, I will immediately relate that this is how things went last time. Practically, that situation will help me a lot in guessing what possible situation I will be facing now onward. I think, this is how these pragmatics (concepts) can help us visualize our situation. Using these pragmatics (concepts) can actually (make us) be more composed, be more productive”. His (BA15-ES) comments imply that background information helps in understanding the ‘pre-existing knowledge structures’ of the parties involved in communication, and that ‘pre-existing knowledge structures’ can be used in forecasting.

Interpretation and brief discussion: From the perspective of ‘audience’s expectations and interpretations, the respondents’ reflective views imply:

- i. Pragmatics helps business professionals in understanding the audience’s assumptions and expectations and their communication behaviour.
- ii. Pragmatic competence is effective in influencing the audience’s expectations and interpretations in relation to a message.

- iii. The audience's awareness of a sender's intentions attached to a message may influence their interpretation of it. Both the parties (sender and receiver) need to understand each other for better conveying and understanding a business message.
- iv. Professionals need comprehensive knowledge of a receiver's mindset, since audiences receive, relate, and interpret a message with their pre-existing knowledge structures.
- v. Understanding the concept of shared assumptions convenes professionals in saving time and resources.
- vi. In many business settings, the audience can have either more or equal levels of information as is of the sender. Pragmatics helps out professionals involved in external communication in answering the queries of suppliers, whole-sellers, retailers, and regulatory bodies.

4.4.3.5 Pragmatics and Effective Message Delivery

One respondent (BA2-AB) appreciates the contribution of pragmatics in formulating and conveying a business message: "Pragmatics is all about delivering the message effectively and efficiently, I believe if they (business student/professionals) have sound knowledge of pragmatics, its usage and scope of it, they could better manage to convey desired meaning and desired messages to the intended listener, whoever they want to speak to".

Another respondent (BA4-EMj) opines that the students' learning of the four pillars of pragmatics i.e. "speaker, listener, language and context" will make their communication more effective since the basic objective of explicit instruction of pragmatics is "to make students learn how to communicate effectively".

Another respondent (BA5-HS) views the significant contribution of pragmatics in addressing communication components: "Communicating to different type of audience should be requiring different type of communication, styles and communication patterns...It is not only that the words are important, how they are being said, are equally important". He perceives that communication becomes one way without pragmatics "where things are plainly said and assumed that they are plainly absorbed...(whereas) in reality, the things may be different because there are so many imperfections or barriers which come in the way...assurance (of conveying a message effectively) can be obtained by pragmatics only". The respondent's (BA5-HS) comments imply that (1) pragmatics is helpful in

understanding and overcoming various mental blocks, distractions, noise, and other communication barriers, (2) pragmatics optimizes the likeness between encoded version (i.e. intended meaning by the sender) and decoded version (interpreted meaning by the audience).

One respondent (BA6-HR) passes a comprehensive comment: “Actually, in real world, it is pragmatics that really matters in your communication”. The respondent further states that each professional needs to make an all-inclusive analysis in business conversation: “what is my message, how it will be perceived or interpreted by my audience, who is my audience, what are their aspirations-thinking, what is their language, how do they interpret language, what is our common knowledge (shared knowledge) base, what kind of structure they (audience) use, what kind of knowledge (pre-existing knowledge structures, frame, schemata) they already have...if it is a better time to communicate, is it a better situation (i.e. time) to communicate, is everybody in same frame of mind-frame of reference at the moment that I should communicate or I should not communicate, or according to the message what kind of message I should construct...It is the message which is important or the understanding of message or the interpretation of message is very important. Nobody is interested in what kind of, how you have delivered your message. What they want is they want to understand meaning out of it. So, how much you are able to address the different aspects of this communication, what is your point of view, how you will be perceived, what is impact of your communication on different audiences”. The respondent’s (BA6-HR) comments entail that a business professional should work out all the aspects of a message at the planning stage.

Another respondent (BA7-HA) perceives that pragmatics contributes to business communication: “Pragmatics is an essential part of communication—how to identify speaker’s intentions, the listener’s interpretation... (because) if we don’t know what the other person is trying (to say), or we interpret it wrongly, there would be communication gap”. The respondent asserts that pragmatics “should be taught and should be included (in business communication courses) as it helps in good communication between two people or group of people...They would know how to interpret the message...because it (pragmatics) is all based on intentions, interpretations...They (business professionals) would have an idea that how to get the message and then convey the message”. The respondent highlights the role of pragmatics in internal upward communication: “The knowledge we gain from pragmatics is helpful for us to communicate professionally...if I

want to communicate with my boss, I would know how I would take my message along, what way I should present myself and my message, so he could interpret it nicely. If I won't be able to communicate properly, there would be a communication gap which would affect the productivity and relationship between the colleagues". The respondent's (BA7-HA) comments imply that (1) pragmatics significantly helps a sender in encoding and conveying a message appropriately, and helps a receiver in decoding it, (2) business professionals can communicate their desired messages in specific context effectively if they know (and can apply) pragmatics.

Another respondent (BA8-KD) perceives that the students/professionals can "deliver their message effectively, they can understand the message—what the message is going to be delivered" through learning pragmatics, since "The ultimate objective of pragmatics is to transfer the clear message to the audience...If the message is in a right way communicated, then ultimately fruitful results may be taken up", and pragmatics enables one to choose "more appropriate way to communicate the message".

One respondent (BA9-KJ) sees that business professionals can follow Gricean cooperative maxims of quantity, quality, relevance, and manner while composing their messages. The audience may already have sufficient knowledge as well as assumptions on the sender's intended or desired meaning. The respondent (BA9-KJ) also views that the knowledge and practice of pragmatics can help business graduates in enhancing their confidence, their extroversion, and their ability of impromptu communication.

Emphasizing upon the multiple audiences, one respondent (BA10-AK) states that a very obvious message with very simple contents can be interpreted quite differently by different receivers.

Interpretation and brief discussion: Improper formulation and conveyance of a message can cause communication gap or failure, and consequently affect productivity and relationship in the business world. The learning and application of pragmatics can help professionals in effective professional communication:

- i. Pragmatics concerns conveying tactful messages to achieve the desired outcomes. This is possible through an appropriate selection of content, style, form, and genre.
- ii. Pragmatics focuses on effective and efficient composition and delivery of message through catering to the concepts of speaker's intentions, listener's probable interpretations, context, and appropriate use of language.

- iii. Pragmatics addresses both encoding and decoding of a message since it requires a balance and synchronization among the intended and conveyed version of a message in relation to its likely outcomes in a communication event.
- iv. Pragmatics also addresses verbal and nonverbal modes of a conveyed message, its enclosures/ attachments, and its possible impact on the audience.

4.4.3.6 The Role of Context and Pragmatic Shared Knowledge

One respondent (BA3-EM) views that the learning of pragmatics at business school will help professionals in conveying their messages clearly and as per the demand of the situation (i.e. context).

The respondent's (BA3-EM) perception of the utility of pragmatics can be related to another respondent's (BA5-HS) comment, who reports that corporate employers demand "understanding the content and context in communication" from new hires. He (BA5-HS) further reports that new hires are not assessed through their academic grades at the time of recruitment; they are evaluated on the basis of their communication skills. The respondent (BA5-HS) perceives the context as "sharing the frame of reference between the both (parties)" and "riding on the same boat". The respondent (BA5-HS) also informs that business professionals need to consider their designation/position, the communication situation, and communication obstacles: "You will have to consider your position, you will have to consider your bars, you will have to consider the situation". The respondent's (BA5-HS) comments imply that, since the business professionals have to undergo diverse communication situations, the corporate world welcomes those fresh graduates who are proficient in communication according to the context (and this competence is aptly produced through awareness from pragmatics).

One respondent (BA6-HR) shares his perception of pragmatics: "In any context, how I see pragmatics, it is developing and understanding that what and how you are going to communicate in any given situation". The respondent's (BA6-HR) comments imply that business professionals apply pragmatics in every communication situation, though without knowing it.

One respondent (BA9-KJ) perceives that pragmatics is much helpful in internal communication since the communicators have 'shared context', but the professionals (e.g. the front line managers and middle-level managers) need to understand the audience's (top management) desired response in a specific situation: "If we have very good knowledge of

explicit pragmatics communication, we can well respond to our internal customers”. The respondent reports a situation: “A well-informed boss may enquire a senior-level manager: “Why your job is not going well, why your (sales) targets are not getting achieved?”, though the boss already knows all the “reasons of the bad results or may be the reason of the good results” (The boss knows the market situation and knows the failing sales targets). The respondent’s (BA9-KJ) narration implies that, in upward communication, an immediate boss wants to listen to the lower manager’s stance on bringing improvements for sales growth.

One respondent (BA10-AK) reports that upward communication and downward communication are quite different from each other, and a professional should thoughtfully decide the message contents, appropriately encode them, and then convey them with due consideration to the context of communication. The respondent (BA10-AK) endorses that, if a professional knows pragmatics, s/he can individually address each addressee and compose target-oriented message contents to save addressees from confusion.

In response to a query on “business professionals’ conveying the desired meaning in a specific context through pragmatics”, one respondent (BA11-MA) states: “We have to understand the person, if we know the person, what is his background, we can relate the people with same frequency (the audience can be persuaded to a message if the sender has realized and understood the pragmatics of audience)...Context is very important...the context is the element that gives a tone, shape of the argument, of communication, to which direction, context leads to certain objective. Without context you cannot ask, communication, it is not on the ground, everything will be floating on the limbo, it will not be on the ground”. The respondent’s (BA11-MA) comments imply that message contents are decided according to the context of communication.

Another respondent (BA12-SK) perceives that context sharing/realizing becomes easy through learning pragmatics. He considers it an advantage during a communication event if sender and receiver are on the same threshold: “if you are talking with a person who understands your words or your behaviour... your communication flows very frequently and fluently...better communication skills provide you so many advantages”.

Interpretation and brief discussion: The following aspects of the role of ‘context’ in organizational conversations/correspondence, and contribution of pragmatics in understanding it, are deciphered from BAs’ responses:

- i. The learning and application of pragmatics equip a communicator in synthesizing communication according to the demands of a situation.
- ii. An awareness of 'context' comprises a thorough realization of the sender's position, prevailing circumstances, and receiver's position.
- iii. Application of 'pragmatic context' plays a vital role in dealing with the external public: wholesale dealers, retailers, consumers, suppliers, media, and the general public.
- iv. Understanding of 'context', choosing convincing contents as per shared knowledge and shared assumptions, and awareness of expected interpretation make internal communication successful.
- v. In professional communication, a message needs its shape, tone, argument, objective, ground, and effect to be aligned with the context.
- vi. A comprehensive awareness of the implications of context helps in convincing and result-oriented communication.

The respondents' opinions affirm that following pragmatics concepts (their knowledge and application) can convene business students/professionals:

- i. Nature and contents of the message
- ii. Audience's expectations/interpretation
- iii. Audience's liking for expression style
- iv. Ease of understanding the message and compliance
- v. Implications of the message on its audience
- vi. Shared knowledge and context among communicators

Business professionals carry out multifarious communicative responsibilities along with other managerial/professional responsibilities. Knowledge and application of pragmatics are helpful for business professionals to communicate in diverse business settings. Pragmatics is helpful in varied external and internal communication. Pragmatics addresses the entire range of interpersonal skills of business communication: conveying intentions, message formulation, audience consideration (audience-familiar vocabulary/expressions, the audience's perceiving/ interpreting a message, their liking, and disliking, their multiple backgrounds, their responsiveness, cultural connotations, implications, referring expressions i.e. whole schemata) for common grounds of communication and according to demands of the situation. Explicit instruction of pragmatics can equip learners with those interpersonal communication skills which

otherwise take a long time to develop through implicit learning. Pragmatic competence also assists in impromptu communications (since awareness of the audience's pre-existing knowledge, cooperative maxims, pragmatic context and shared knowledge, frame and schemata and selection of genre add to one's communication skillfulness).

4.4.3.7 Pragmatics and Internal Communication

One important shade of internal communication is downward communication i.e. communication with one's subordinates or junior managers/staff. The BAs' responses presented in the above thematic heads reveal that it is comparatively easier for a business professional to interact with his/her immediate boss and immediate subordinates with whom s/he has frequent interactions. Under this thematic head, BAs responses on the benefits of pragmatics in understanding and dealing with subordinates are presented (along with brief commentary) and interpreted.

One respondent (BA11-MA) talks comprehensively on the aspects while handling one's subordinates: "know your audience, from which culture, from which problems he (the employee/subordinate) came from". He (BA11-MA) shares a few suggestions for a company's management (top/midlevel management):

- i. It is important to know if the subordinate is from an individualistic society or a collectivistic society. In case, the employee is from a collectivistic society, the company needs to take care of the employee's family and family issues as well, to ensure this employee's consistent productivity: "A professional from Pakistan or other sub-continent region has to take care of his/her family, and the company "need to take care of his family also, he will need a family visa also for that, but the Philippine, he will come only on his visa, he will not ask ten other guys' visa for him (employer)...When you hire a Muslim, he has to pray five times, you cannot deny him this right. Then, he has to take a tea break, then, a lunch break, then a smoke break, then a prayer break, so all these breaks are accommodated with that... When you are hiring someone, you are working with someone, you have to respect these things".
- ii. The subordinates' background—culture, religion, climate, nationality—every aspect is important in business communication, and for ensuring their performance: "So until and unless, we get into pragmatics and we know the people from that area, we cannot understand what they are, what are their motives, and, if you do not

understand their point of view, you cannot enforce your point of view on them... You have to know those people, pragmatics of that person, from where he belongs, which country he comes, which family he belongs, what kinds of issues are there. Some issues, for you are big issues, for them it is not an issue”.

The respondent (BA11-MA), besides serving at administrative positions, has also served as a trainer (both as an in-house and as an outsource). He shares that it is difficult (for trainers) to communicate with labor class employees since they may not easily accept to change their behaviours.

Another respondent (BA15-ES) highlights the importance of training/mentoring the subordinates through practical demonstration: “Most of the time we just tell people (subordinates) ‘Do this thing’; we actually never try to demonstrate how should they do it...actually telling people do it, exemplify things is a better way for them to understand things...may be if you practically do it once, and then, and let them do is another way”.

Interpretation and brief discussion: The BAs’ responses, presented under this thematic head and some preceding thematic heads, imply that senior professionals should consider the following points concerning their subordinates:

- i. While communicating with subordinates, managers need to be conscious of their pre-existing knowledge structures, frame, script, schemata, and also of their subordinates’.
- ii. The audience’s reaction is mostly according to their pragmatic background. Learning of pragmatics is expected to help a business professional explore the pragmatic background of the public, employees, clients, etc. (of that area or community he/she is placed in, if previously unknown to him/her).
- iii. The professionals should not rely on the information got through media or hearsay since communication patterns and behavioural characteristics of a particular community are not accessible without actual human interaction.
- iv. It is important to understand the culture and other demographics and their implications on subordinates (e.g. collectivistic cultures have different implications as compared to individualistic cultures). People do carry their ethnic bindings and values when they are serving in a company either of their geographical region or abroad. The demographic variables, especially the education of employees,

influence their aptitude e.g. less educated or uneducated employees may not incline to follow organizational procedures.

- v. Sometimes, subordinates need some demonstrations, examples, or explanations from their seniors to perform an assigned task.

From the perspective of pragmatics, all the subordinates' life aspects contribute to their 'pre-existing knowledge structures', 'script', 'frame' and 'schemata', and consequently affect their communication and professional behaviour.

4.4.3.8 Pragmatics and External Business Communication

From the BAs' responses on external communication, under preceding thematic heads, it is revealed that business professionals need a thorough understanding of their external audience as well. In the case of external communication, their audiences include customers, vendors, suppliers, outsourcing companies, regulators, who have their interests and perspectives. A few responses (of two business professionals) are presented here.

One respondent (BA9-KJ) informs that, in many business situations, the audience may have the same level of knowledge or even more than the sender: "We work in the business market, or corporate world, mostly the receivers or the other people to whom we are talking with, they also have the idea, they also have the proper knowledge of the same thing that we are talking about... We talk to our business partners, normally, what we say is our customers, they already knew what I am going to sell them and what I am going to give them or what good things I am going to offer them for the money they would give me or the money they would give me in return of or after buying my product. If we have the strong idea that what I am going to present, and my audience also have the strong interpretation of the same thing I am going to sell them, both parties will be in win-win situation at the end". The respondent reports that companies often consider their wholesale dealers as their business partners. A company's representatives are assigned to negotiate for increasing sales with such business partners (wholesale dealers) and to get lower prices of raw materials from suppliers. The whole-sellers are already aware of what a company official is going to communicate, and the company's representative needs a good knowledge of whole sellers' probable interpretations and expectations, to ensure "win-win situation" (secure mutual benefits) for both parties i.e. the company and the client. The respondent (BA9-KJ) perceives that pragmatics can help business professionals in negotiating with and responding to external audiences (suppliers, whole sellers).

Another respondent (BA10-AK) views that a sender should first realize the level of understanding of the audience, then design the communication (as per audience's views, mental filter, needs, culture, awareness, understandability, probable reaction), rather than giving too much or too less amount of information.

Interpretation and brief discussion: Effective external communication contributes to a business organization's growth and survival in fast pacing business world. Following points have been deciphered from BAs' responses on external communication and the potential effectiveness of learning pragmatics:

- i. A company's revenues, profits, positive image, and competitively advantaged position depend on how its professionals handle its external audience.
- ii. While communicating with customers, whole-sellers, or retailers, a company's representatives need to understand their expectations from a business deal and their interpretation of a sales offer.
- iii. The company's representatives while dealing, negotiating or bargaining (after knowing their audiences' probable interpretations and expectations) need to deal with them plausibly for both parties' just incentives and benefits.
- iv. In many cases, external audiences are more informed, better motivated, and much aware of a company's operations. In such cases, the company's representatives need to deal with them carefully.
- v. External audiences want their queries duly addressed; they want respectful treatment; they want to secure their benefits; they want credible and truthful information.

BAs' responses on external communication imply the importance of pragmatics for understanding the audience; it is inferred that awareness and application of pragmatics in such scenarios can be useful for professionals in managing the desired outcomes and their implications.

4.4.3.9 Inclusion of Pragmatics for Enriching Existing Courses—Broad-Spectrum Benefits

One respondent (BA1-AR) considers revising the syllabus as “a continuously social need and requirement”. He opines that not only the contents and other course material from the developed world must be borrowed, but also their methodology (for enhancing students' communication skills) should be probed, and afterward the both should be adapted as per

local needs and circumstances. He states that “importance of pragmatics cannot be denied” in this process of adaptation.

One respondent (BA6-HR) supports the inclusion/instruction of pragmatics since “Pragmatics addresses whole range of aspects of interpersonal communication skills (i.e.) knowing your audience, knowing how to construct your message, what vocabulary should be used, what is the emotional state of your audience, how they perceive your message or how they are going to perceive your message, what are their likes and dislikes, what are their sensitivities, what are the cultural connotations, what are the cultural implications in any business situation...If you cover pragmatics, you are covering the whole contents of interpersonal communication skills”. The respondent’s (BA6-HR) comments imply that pragmatics is helpful in improving one’s interpersonal skills since it encompasses major aspects of interpersonal communication.

Another respondent (BA7-HA) views that instruction of pragmatics can help business graduates communicate with their Pakistani audience (since there is a great ethnic diversity in Pakistan), especially, in understanding others’ communication behaviours, and in adopting an appropriate one for themselves. The respondent (BA7-HA) further states that instruction of pragmatics will enable the professionals “to identify the intentions of the speaker”, and “to interpret the message” and “it would be easier for them to communicate in business communication”. She suggests that students prepare themselves for “real learning” when they enter the business world.

One respondent (BA8-KD) opines that through knowing pragmatics, the graduates would realize their capabilities and potentials, both in terms of their professional performance and communication.

Another respondent views the explicit teaching/learning of pragmatics as helpful in both internal and external communication, especially in “impulse communication”. He further views good communication skills, resulting from pragmatics, value addition for professionals in sales and marketing: “We can well equip our students to match their skills with market” since the skilled professionals (representing different parties) can better manage common goals and objectives.

One respondent (BA10-AK) comprehensively discusses the role of pragmatics concepts in professional communication: “When you have to communicate something you get a project (desired outcome), you have to communicate it with your other colleagues-

what applies is ‘speaker’s intentions’, you first understand what is the project, and when you communicate it verbal or written to the other person who reads it or listens to it—what he perceives should be very clear. It depends upon how good you are at interpersonal skills. If you are not good, if your communication skills are not good, then, the communication that you are cascading down, it can be perceived differently, and the result would be different, not what you were anticipating. ‘Context’ also becomes irrelevant, if your first communication (i.e. conveying the sender’s intended message effectively) is not right, and the language you require is also important because if you are working in a team, if you are working with your higher-ups, in an organization you meet with different people who have different set of behaviours. You have to communicate with them, you have to work with them, in different ways. Every individual has different needs, you have to adopt different styles of communication with them. I guess, pragmatics is very important with respect to industry—working in industry. It (pragmatics) should be taught to students in classroom in order to prepare them for practical life”. The respondent’s (BA10-AK) comments imply that learning of pragmatics helps a professional in catering to all important facets of business communication: (1) speaker’s intentions and intended/desired meaning, (2) audience’s expectations/needs and interpretation of the message, (3) context of the business event, and (4) stylistic expression. The respondent considers pragmatics important for grooming professionals’ interpersonal/communication skills.

Another respondent (BA12-SK) states that the gap between ‘what is needed at the workplace’ and ‘what is taught by academia’ should be reduced, and pragmatics can play its “very helpful” and “very meaningful” role in bridging that gap. He further (BA12-SK) states theoretical and practical pragmatics, implicit and explicit pragmatics, both are helpful for a person “interested to enter in (job) market, or going to start a business, or going to start a workshop or seminar”. The respondent (BA12-SK) also reflects upon the utility of pragmatics in intercultural communication: “Pragmatics actually considers the culture and the language which is going to be used, and all these things actually become a recipe for a better communication, and all these things are provided by pragmatics”. The respondent’s (BA12-SK) comments imply that learning pragmatics will help professionals in managing impromptu business communication through quickly responding to unexpected situations. Moreover, pragmatics is an added advantage in intercultural communication in professional settings.

One respondent (BA13-TR), a young entrepreneur, perceives that inclusion of pragmatics in course contents will help business professionals in understanding and applying the concepts of shared knowledge, intentions, and entailment, pre-existing knowledge structures (based on previous experiences), assumptions, and shared assumptions of communicators, possible interpretations and expectations of the audience, frame of communicators—awareness and application of all these concepts are helpful for professionals in business communication.

One respondent (BA14-WA), a young professional serving at a midlevel management position, views pragmatics as a blessing for fresh graduates: “Pragmatics is the solution to a problem a fresh graduate has to face in the corporate world. If he or she is aware of pragmatics, he would be not 100% but 70 to 80% prepared for the real market, corporate world which they will be starting their career”. The respondent’s (BA14-WA) comments imply that awareness of pragmatics (on all facets of communication and related human behaviours, and ability to apply this learning) will help fresh graduates in managing the majority of their interpersonal/communication issues in the business world.

The respondent (BA14-WA) comprehensively discusses the benefits of learning and applying pragmatics: “the interpretation of both the parties and also the real use of communication... If someone is already prepared with these kinds of skills, he will be able to interpret what the listener or what the other one he is talking to demands, what are the expectations; he would be able to express himself or herself more, (and) in a very better way...In any kind of event...if he is aware or that professional is aware of pragmatics, he would be already prepared with the audience he is facing in the event he or she is going. He would be already aware what should be the medium and what should be the communication language he should be or she should be using while interpreting in any kind of event ... it will be helpful for any kind of business professionals whenever they are going into any kind of conversation”. The respondent’s (BA14-WA) comments imply that pragmatics is helpful in effectively completing the ‘communication cycle’ in professional communication.

One respondent (BA15-ES) links the learning of pragmatics with quick adjustment in an organization. He states that new hires need a quick understanding of the intents of their higher management behind each assigned task. He (BA15-ES) mentions that graduates are not trained at their business schools to understand the top management’s directives. The respondent perceives that the inclusion of “pragmatics in it (curriculum)

will actually help them (business students) understand a real time situation right at the time of student age...if you know these pragmatics right at the stage of your education, so, the moment you are actually coming up to professional life, you will immediately sync with industry, because you have basic understanding, you have foundation with you (to understand diverse communication), it will really help you a lot". On the benefits of explicit learning of pragmatics for business graduates/professionals, the respondent (BA15-ES) says: "That will help them a lot in rising higher in their careers". The respondent's (BA15-ES) comments imply that the graduates with awareness from pragmatics can harmonize themselves with the requirements of workplace communication in lesser time than the others.

Interpretation and brief discussion: The respondents' opinions on the inclusion of pragmatics for enriching business communication courses imply the following points:

- i. Revision and modification of course contents and teaching methodology are needed as per local business needs. In this regard, models, methods, and materials can be adapted from developed countries' apex business schools.
- ii. Learning and the consequent ability to apply pragmatics will strengthen business professionals' interpersonal/communication skills to effectively convey the intended message as per the requirement of the context.
- iii. Explicit instruction of pragmatics helps understand others' communication behaviours and compose an appropriate message accordingly; the professionals would identify the intentions of a speaker and interpret the message accordingly.
- iv. The inclusion of pragmatics in the course contents is expected to groom the business students' interpersonal/communication skills for real time corporate scenarios.

4.4.3.10 Suggestions on Teaching Methodology of Pragmatics

The respondents (i.e. business professionals) have studied business communication courses, and now they are practically involved in business communication, their suggestions were sought on teaching methodology of pragmatics among the course contents.

One respondent (BA1-AR) opines that "we should go for the practical, and teacher and students may go to visit practical offices, different organizations (as the best way to learn pragmatics is through practical approach), and (they should observe) in practical what reality is going on there, that should be observed in a controlled environment, and

experimental laboratories must be established in universities for the improvement of business skills, business communication, and role of pragmatics in business”. He perceives that better pragmatic communication proficiency can be developed “by practicing, what knowledge we practice in the market, it would be very helpful...for the business entrepreneurs and for the new comers, and for the students who are learning these skills”. The respondent (BA1-AR) appreciates the notion of teaching pragmatics to business students’ training for infield business communication.

Another respondent (BA4-EMj) also approves teaching of pragmatics explicitly, especially for business students “who will be practically facing various practical situations” and they “will be definitely in much better position to communicate”. He states that new ways, methods, techniques can be devised to train the students for their communication skills, e.g. simulations, video recordings etc: “Students can have some situation in which he has to communicate with simulation software so that they can learn and develop their skills”. (The respondent holds degrees in Economics and Statistics besides his MBA with specialization in Information Technology, and he has worked with softwares at one organization.) The respondent (BA4-EMj) suggests explicit instruction of pragmatics through field assignments, videos, simulations to train the students on pragmatic aspects of communication, rather than adding more theoretical contents.

One respondent (BA5-HS) tells that the expectations of industry are far different from students’ fantasized learning at their universities. He suggests revising the course contents according to real time communication needs of the business world. He appreciates the inclusion of pragmatics in the curriculum, and he expects it to reduce the gap between industry requirements and academia. He suggests making pragmatics a part of the examination as well as of class assignments.

For infield, business professionals/executives, the respondent (BA5-HS) suggests its (pragmatics) teaching through refresher courses, since it is beneficial for both upward and downward internal communication. For the methodology of teaching, he perceives: “Case studies can be (used) in terms of conveying this better understanding of conveying desired images”. He views that case studies and simulations can be used (in business communication classroom, or training workshops) to enhance the students’ and professionals’ pragmatic competence. He also proposes videos (comprising good organizational communication stances and bad ones) to train the students and professionals. He emphasizes arranging output-oriented communication training sessions, and perceives

that novel ways of bringing improvements in organizational communication “can significantly contribute towards productivity, towards the satisfaction of employees and stakeholders” and proposes rewards for extraordinary performers “for good communication”. He (BA5-HS) suggests that universities introduce linguistics and pragmatics into the curriculum of business studies to prepare business graduates proficient in communication along with other professional skills.

One respondent (BA6-HR) recommends the instruction of pragmatics in business studies: “with an approach of developing a skill, it will help every professional, in every context, in every type of communication”. The respondent’s (BA6-HR) comments imply that business professionals apply pragmatics without knowing it; and thus, it is better to train them through its explicit instruction rather than letting the professionals learn it through the trial and error method. For business schools, he suggests the inclusion of pragmatics to develop students’ interpersonal skills (through relating pragmatics with organizational communication situations) and not for exams only: “It is really going to help business graduates in developing better sensitivity, appreciation (approval, admiration, positive reception) understanding about shared expectations”. In response to the query on the inclusion of pragmatics in refresher courses for infield professionals, the respondent replies: “I believe (it) should be included in detail, not only in business communication, (but in) any course, at any level, of business communication, pragmatics should be part of it”. The respondent (BA6-HR) endorses teaching pragmatics for training business students and professionals.

Another respondent (BA10-AK) suggests training the students (through teaching pragmatics or other means) for unexpected, instant/impromptu communication since such communication scenarios do frequently occur in the business world.

Another respondent (BA13-TR), a young entrepreneur, appreciates inclusion and instruction of pragmatics: “It will be really good if we can add this pragmatics in business communication skills. It will give more knowledge about previous things (i.e. pragmatics concepts on pre-existing knowledge, frame, script, schemata)... pragmatics are about intentions, shared knowledge and entailment. So, I think it will help the business professionals to make good (business) deals...(Pragmatics may produce) the proper ability for professional conversation...Pragmatics should definitely be included in courses”. The respondent’s (BA13-TR) comments imply that knowing customers’ assumptions and expectations can ensure better business deals.

Another respondent (BA14-WA), who himself is a young midlevel manager, perceives: “In corporate communication the most important thing is pragmatics which the current curriculum lacks at the moment. This is something we leave it to everyone to interpret and work it on their own but it is not that everyone can be on same level (i.e. it is assumed that professionals will learn pragmatics implicitly, but it does not equally occur to all professionals)”. The respondent narrates the benefits of knowing pragmatics: (1) anticipating the audience’s feelings and interpretations, (2) conveying the desired message effectively, (3) realizing the communicators’ intentions, and (4) choosing modes/media according to the context. The respondent sees that awareness from pragmatics is helpful in all corporate communication, and the curriculum should include contents from pragmatics.

The following methods for teaching pragmatics are deciphered from BAs’ responses:

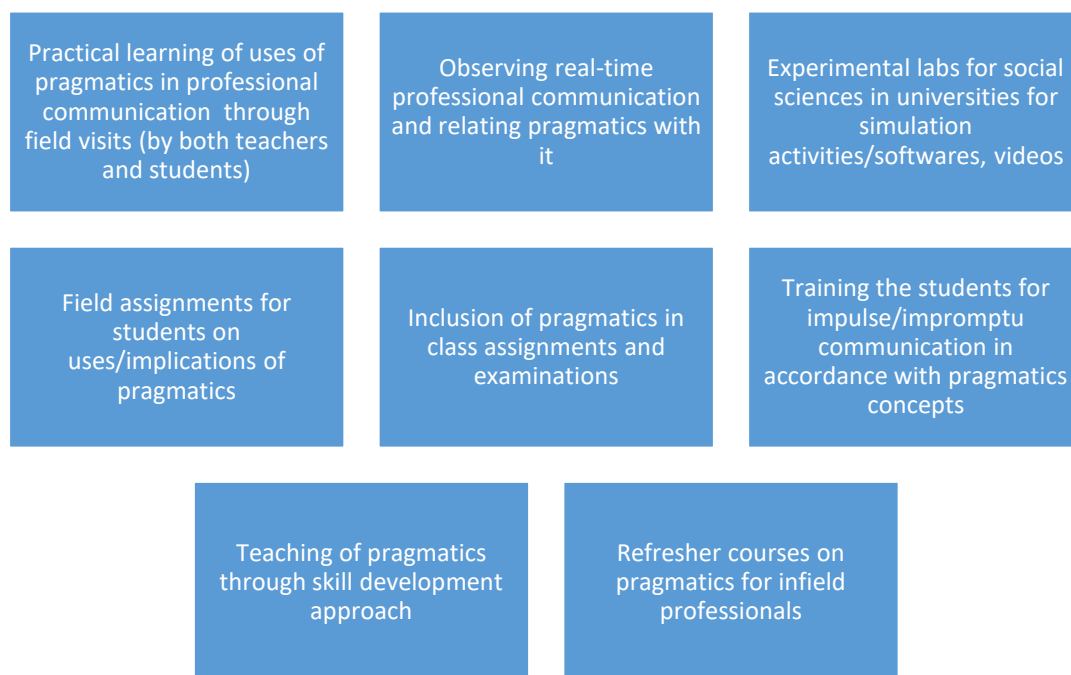


Figure 4.11: BAs’ suggested methods for explicit instruction of pragmatics in business communication courses.

Interpretation and brief discussion: Here follows brief interpretation and discussion on the points deciphered from BAs’ responses:

- i. Pragmatics is frequently used in professional communication scenarios (but it takes professionals a long time to learn pragmatics implicitly and its application).

- ii. The inclusion of pragmatics and its explicit instruction in business communication courses are expected to help professionals in quick learning and application of pragmatics for professional communication.
- iii. A practical approach to teaching pragmatics can render effective results. In classroom teaching and allied activities, pragmatics can be related to communication situations occurring in business organizations, through purpose-oriented simulations, case studies, role plays, field assignments, corporate visits, exploration of infield communication, communication-specific internships, and practicing impromptu communication.
- iv. These methods/approaches can be included in course contents and teaching methodology of business communication taught at business schools. Modern technologies (e.g. simulation softwares, video recordings and discussions on them, social science experimental labs, and self-study/self-improvement modules) can be devised for students' training on professional pragmatic competence.
- v. Pragmatics-based refresher courses and training can be arranged for on-job professionals.

The focus of all these efforts should be to train business students/professionals to perform contextually suitable communication in professional/business settings.

4.4.3.11 Composite Discussion

There is a wide space for improvements in the existing course contents (and books and other materials) through adding infield pragmatic knowledge. Multidimensionality of professional communication also justifies the space for the inclusion of pragmatics concepts in the course contents since pragmatics is useful (1) in conveying an intended message, (2) in a specific context, (3) through appropriate language/contents, (4) with anticipation of audience's interpretations through understanding their schemata and (5) with anticipation of the impact of communication. This inclusion and explicit instruction of pragmatics (through practical measures) is expected to assist business graduates throughout their careers. Though even otherwise, professionals learn these communication tactics yet it takes a longer time. If they are trained on the use of pragmatics at their business schools, they can perform optimal communication quite earlier.

4.5 Synthesis of Results and Discussion

In this chapter, results, and analysis of the data from four diverse sources (along with commentary and discussion) have been presented (sections 4.1-4.4). In this section, synthesized results and discussion are presented on the following themes:

1. Communication, its importance, and contribution of pragmatics
2. Aligning BC-Skills courses and teaching methodology with business sector practices
3. Professional communication situations and potential role of pragmatics
4. Benefits of inclusion and explicit instruction of pragmatics in business communication teaching
5. Suggested measures for teaching pragmatics along with business communication courses
6. Potential benefits of pragmatics in managing auxiliary issues
7. Theoretical underpinnings on the role of pragmatics in business communication

4.5.1 Communication, its Importance, and Contribution of Pragmatics

Successful business professionals are successful communicators as well. Interpersonal/communication skills are among the requisites of success for professionals in business settings. Both TBCs and BAs view the significance of proficient communication skills for business professionals in performing their diverse roles, especially at administrative/frontline positions, since (1) they perform actions along with communication and get actions performed from subordinates through communication, (2) they report to their bosses through communication, (3) they deal with external audiences through communication. Business organizations are heavily dependent on their professionals who, as their mouthpieces, manage smooth business transactions with external stakeholders. Effective communication happens when due consideration is given to all the involved factors to ensure the operations in an organization. Multiple roles and responsibilities of business administrators demand vigilance, capability, and productive performance. The learning and application of pragmatics can benefit business professionals in performing these roles and responsibilities.

4.5.2 Aligning BC-Skills Courses and Teaching Methodology with Business Sector Practices

Business professionals learn business communication practices/procedures/patterns when they join their careers practically after the completion of their education, yet

their formal education provides a foundation in educating and training them for their future roles. BC-Skills (Business Communication Skills) courses are an important component of undergraduate studies. Thus these courses need to be significantly relevant to the requirements of professional settings and the business graduates must be conversant with communication skills helpful for them to enter and succeed in the business world. In most cases, TBCs' efforts for successfully imparting the required communication skills to the students are not compatible with the communication practices of the business world. To overcome this non-compatibility, academia can enlighten themselves on the contemporary patterns of corporate communication through industry-academia linkages through: e.g. (1) arranging seminars/conferences/workshops with resource persons from the business sector, (2) organizing discussion sessions with participants both from academia and industry, and (3) inviting business professionals as guest speakers in business communication classroom (through physical or virtual forums). Infield business communication comprises the patterns, genres, and dimensions which the books/materials authors and TBCs can either only assume or partially know in the conventional scheme (since the TBCs rely on their knowledge acquired through print or electronic media, or a little information gained from their acquaintances in the business sector). The professionals are dissatisfied with the teaching of business communication as a theoretical subject, and they recommend these courses be taught from a practical perspective as per the market needs and expectations of employer organizations. The comparison of the results of sections 4.3 and 4.4 highlights the need for comprehensive measures to bridge the gap between industry and academia (see figure 4.7). Improvements are needed in teaching approach, students' counseling, teachers' training, course designing, course materials writing, and other industry-academia consultation measures.

4.5.3 Professional Communication Situations and Role of Pragmatics

Business professionals work in a highly competitive corporate world, where they communicate with diverse audiences—bosses, peers, subordinates, vendors, suppliers, partners, and regulatory bodies. Communication with each category of audience requires different expertise e.g. (1) while communicating with bosses, they talk about improvement or gaps in performance, (2) with subordinates, they encourage them for better performance or deliver them instructions, (3) with suppliers and vendors, they negotiate for low rates for supplies or high sales volumes (i.e. benefits for the company). In all these communication situations, business professionals use pragmatics implicitly (without being aware of its

usage). BAs' responses affirm the notion that learning pragmatics from an applied perspective, during academics, would improve students'/professionals' communication. BAs endorse that implicit learning of pragmatics takes a longer time whereas its explicit instruction produces better outputs in less time (as is implied by the results of the comparative analysis, single-subject experiment, and by the BAs' views).

The results of the comparative analysis, single-subject experiment, and the key-informants' (TBCs and BAs) responses affirm the role of pragmatics in developing and refining interpersonal communication skills, both in personal life and in professional settings. Since business professionals carry out diverse communication roles along with their managerial responsibilities; the knowledge and application of pragmatics are helpful for them in assorted communication events. Pragmatics is helpful in internal communication: upward, downward and sideward. Higher the position of an administrative professional, the more responsibilities he/she bears, especially to take the team members along and to secure business benefits for the company. On the other hand, the lower staff and lower administrative professionals are more concerned with their ethnocultural associations since they do not have to be responsible for ensuring accumulative results. The knowledge of pragmatics is helpful for administrative professionals in handling such employees through exploring (or at least being sensitized to) their pre-existing knowledge structures, frame, schemata, and probable interpretations, and then communicating to them their roles and responsibilities. Thus, these lower employees can be made to perform their roles, follow organizational policies, and contribute to the organization's productivity.

Pragmatics is helpful in diverse internal and external communication. Awareness of pragmatics is expected to help administrators/professionals in persuasive, forceful, influential directives to their internal public. In external communication, while communicating with customers, whole-sellers, or retailers, a company's representative needs to presume their expectations from a business deal and their interpretation of a sales message. In many cases, the clients have more information than a company's representative. These clients seek worthwhile benefits either in the form of a product or other advantages in return. The company's representative is responsible to manage a 'win-win' benefit for both parties in dealing with such audiences. Awareness and application of pragmatics in such scenarios are useful for professionals in understanding their audience's expectations and interpretations, which are usually based on 'profitability-focused' pre-existing structures, frame, and schemata.

4.5.4 Potential benefits of Inclusion and Explicit instruction of Pragmatics in Business Communication Teaching/Training

The business sector welcomes new entrants (hires or entrepreneurs) with requisite professional/communication skills. In reality, it takes a longer time for business professionals (see Section 4.4.3.1) in acquiring the pragmatic competence of what to communicate, how to communicate, and what results to expect in a communication situation. The BAs' responses, the comparative analysis, and the results of the single-subject experiment signify the role of pragmatics in business communication both in the classroom and in professional settings. Pragmatics accompanies business communication since the main props of pragmatics i.e. speaker's intentions, listener's interpretations, the language of use, context, and all other factors are aligned with professional communication. Pragmatics is helpful in conveying an intended message in a specific context through appropriate language contents with anticipation of the audience's interpretations and with an anticipation of probable impact (see section 4.4.3). The TBCs and BAs agree that knowledge of pragmatics can benefit business students for their later careers. The data obtained from students' WDCTs also affirms that instruction of pragmatics is beneficial for improving business communication skills. Explicit teaching of pragmatics (from an applied perspective, as per BAs' reflective views) can be made a part of classroom activities to enhance students' communication competence for professional settings. The business graduates' pragmatic communication competence is also expected to contribute to their roles as successful managers and business leaders.

Various empirical studies acknowledge that the development of communication skills through explicit instruction takes lesser time and produces better results (Brock & Nagasaka, 2005; Félix-Brasdefer, 2008; Riddiford & Joe, 2010), and the same is testified through this research as well. As per the suggestions of BAs and the majority of TBCs, if pragmatics is explicitly taught from the applied perspective (i.e. with skills/capacity-building approach), the business students will be better prepared for professional communication. The literature also affirms that business professionals need communication expertise for performing their roles efficiently in both internal and external communication and that the business professionals' strong interpersonal skills always help them perform competitively for themselves and their organization (Chaney, 2005; Johan & Noor, 2013; Murphy, Hildebrandt, & Thomas, 2007). Through inclusion and explicit instruction of pragmatics in business communication courses, the professionals are expected to possess

better pragmatic communication proficiency from the beginning of their careers in the business world.

4.5.5 Suggested Measures for Teaching Pragmatics along with Business Communication Courses

The diverse suggestions of key-informants (BAs and TBCs) and a unified blend are presented in Figure 4.12 below:

TBCs' Suggestions	BAs' Suggestions	Unified Suggestions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implicit teaching of pragmatics from a business perspective • Pragmatics teaching through contextual/ practical communication • Pragmatics teaching through cultural communication • Field visits and teaching pragmatics through practical professional scenarios • Pragmatics teaching for writing styles/ expressions • Informing the students of the benefits of pragmatics • Explicit teaching of pragmatics • Pragmatics concepts to be blended with course contents • A separate module/course of pragmatics • Pragmatics teaching while a senior semester • The teaching of pragmatics from an applied perspective and not as theories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practical learning of uses of pragmatics in professional communication through field visits (by both teachers and students) • Observing real-time professional communication and relating pragmatics with it • Experimental labs for social sciences in universities for simulation activities/software, videos • Field assignments for students on uses/implications of pragmatics • Inclusion of pragmatics in class assignments and examinations • Training the students for impulse/improptu communication in accordance with pragmatics concepts • Teaching of pragmatics through skill development approach • Refresher courses on pragmatics for in-field professionals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blending of Pragmatics concepts wherever possible in the course contents while classroom teaching • Inclusion and explicit instruction of basic pragmatics concepts • Correlating pragmatics concepts with cases in textbooks and video recorded professional communication scenarios • Inclusion of pragmatics as an allied/optional subject for voluntary learning • On-campus training modules for learning and application of pragmatics (through industry-academia collaboration) • Teachers' and students' visits to business organizations, and teachers' explaining pragmatics concepts (with the assistance of business professionals) to students in accordance with professional settings

Figure 4.12: Key-informants' suggestions on the teaching of pragmatics

In the light of BAs' and TBCs' responses, the following measures are recommended in the classroom/training environment:

- i. The relevant pragmatics concepts can be blended with BC-Skills course contents in classroom teaching.
- ii. Pragmatics concepts can be correlated with cases given in the syllabi. Recorded videos of professional communication scenarios can be explained from the perspective of pragmatics to sensitize the students on the need for pragmatic competence.
- iii. Inclusion and explicit instruction of basic pragmatics concepts should be a part of the course contents. Pragmatics can be introduced as an allied/optional subject in four years BBA scheme of studies as well.
- iv. On-campus training modules (through industry-academia collaboration) can be designed for learning and application of pragmatics to successfully meet the communication requirements of relevant businesses.
- v. Teachers' and students' frequent visits to business organizations should be arranged, whereby the students can observe the utilization of pragmatics concepts in real business situations.

4.5.6 Potential Benefits of Pragmatics in Managing Auxiliary Issues

This thematic head comprises a composite discussion on the potential contribution of pragmatics in managing some miscellaneous issues e.g. students' career aspirations, classroom issues, English vs. indigenous languages, and an accumulative picture of deficiencies and measures for improvements.

4.5.6.1 Business Students' Diverse Aspirations of Future Careers

A significant number of students want to start their careers as entrepreneurs, where they would need strong interpersonal/communication skills along with human and financial capital. A majority of business students (especially with mid/low socioeconomic backgrounds) want to join the corporate sector as employees. Communication requirements are quite diverse for different fields e.g. in banking or marketing, they need communication expertise in dealing with the external public i.e. clients, vendors, suppliers, regulatory bodies; in HR and finance, they need to deal with internal public i.e. subordinates, peers, seniors, and bosses; in public sector jobs, they have to deal with public sector officials of both junior and senior cadres and the general public. For these diverse careers, business graduates require diverse but effective communication skills, whereas, it is revealed (in sections 4.1, 4.3, and 4.4) that existing course contents are general and do not address field-

specific pragmatic communication requirements. Since learning and application of pragmatics sensitizes communicators in catering to the situation and audience-oriented communication, its inclusion and explicit instruction will benefit the business graduates.

4.5.6.2 Miscellaneous Issues and Challenges in Classroom Business Communication Teaching

The data obtained from TBCs shows that there are problems because of diversity among students, students' poor English language skills, time bindings of semester system, students' varied aspirations on their future careers, inadequacy, and outdatedness of course contents and available books written by foreign authors which do not satisfactorily cater to the contemporary corporate needs. The books are also not easily understandable for a significant number of BBA students. The data obtained from business professionals also reflect the presence of afore-narrated issues. The business professionals endorse addressing the issues which obstruct training and improving students' communication skills. The teachers' hard efforts to handle these problems and to optimally deliver in business communication classroom, do not seem effective since they do not possess any relevant education or training on business and management which could have helped them in teaching business communication skills to BBA students and training them for their careers. Inclusion and explicit instruction of pragmatics (from a practical perspective, as mentioned in section 4.5.5) are expected to mitigate many of these auxiliary issues in business communication classroom because of the role of pragmatics in managing communication-related issues.

4.5.6.3 A Case of English vs. Indigenous Languages

TBCs' main focus is on students' communication skills of the English language, with no/little focus on the use of indigenous languages in communication. The data obtained through BAs' interviews reveals that most of the official written correspondence (e.g. letter, email, formal/official SMS/Whatsapp messages, fax) is conducted in the English language, whereas oral communication (e.g. face to face interactions, phone calls, meetings, online video meetings/conferences), in local business organizations and among Pakistani officials of multinational organizations, occurs in either national language i.e. Urdu or in other local languages. The results of the comparative analysis (section 4.1.3) also imply that a speaker can convey his/her intended contents conveniently in a language of his/her comfort, and a listener can interpret a message if it is delivered in a language comprehensible for him/her. The phenomenon of using two different groups of languages

i.e. exogenous and endogenous languages is acceptable until it does not pose problems for the concerned parties. Pragmatics caters to intercultural and interlingua issues; its learning is expected to benefit business graduates' communication.

4.5.6.4 Accumulative Analysis of Deficiencies, and Measures for Improvement

BAs' reflective views when compared with course contents and TBCs' teaching approach highlight a gulf between the real picture and academicians' assumptions. Business communication in professional settings is faster, through quicker channels, mostly in indigenous languages in case of oral communication, with a tint of each organization's own culture, productivity/profits focused, and instinct/impulse-based as compared to bookish academic courses. The results (BAs' narratives vs. course contents and TBCs' methodology) reveal that academic practices at business schools are not keeping pace with fast communication patterns/procedures of present day business world. Business communication courses do not address the communication differences in terms of the size of organizations (e.g. flat organizations use informal/semiformal communication and instant communication as compared to 'vertical organizations'). BAs' stance on the business world's welcoming new hires with practically effective communication skills also seems missing in existing course contents/materials and teaching methodology, and the students always have to be at the receiving end of this gap between industry and academia.

The professionals' (BAs') suggestions can be incorporated into the course contents and methodology to prepare business students for the business world. Business communication can be made a comprehensive set of academic modules comprising theoretical concepts, practice-based simulations, corporate visits, field projects, internships, seminars, conferences, and other measures whose needs emerge over time. Regulatory bodies like HEC and intermediary bodies like 'Chambers of Commerce and Industry' can also play their facilitating role in bridging the gaps. Teachers, students, and university administration (especially ORIC and career placement centers) need to adopt a more flexible and dynamic approach for collaborating with the business world.

4.6 Summary of the Chapter

The foremost concern of pragmatics is to transmit an understandable message to the addressees. The exquisite formulation of an intended message, according to context and probable interpretation of the audience, depends on a sender's pragmatic competence. Pragmatic communication expertise is effective in influencing the audience's expectations

and interpretations in relation to a message. Pragmatics is supportive in anticipating how a message may be interpreted by the audience. Pragmatics recommends considering communication behaviour, communication needs, and the workplace behaviour of audiences while communicating with them. Pragmatics helps know and understand the audience in a communication situation through knowing their shared assumptions, previous experiences, schemata, and expectations (Yule, 1996a). If a sender does not care about their pre-existing knowledge structure, frame, schematic patterns (geographic location, nationality, caste and creed, climate, ethnicity, education, culture, religion), the audience may either not pay heed to the message or aversely interpret it.

The audience's awareness of a sender's intentions instilled in a message may influence its interpretation. Understanding the concept of shared assumptions convenes professional communication in saving time and resources. Grice's cooperative maxims on quantity, quality, relevance, and manner assist in composing a conceivable message for receivers. Pragmatics can assist learners in effective and efficient composition and delivery of message through the concepts of speaker's intentions, listener's probable interpretations, regard to context, and appropriate use of language. Pragmatics is also helpful in encoding and decoding a message. The implications inferred from the comparative analysis (section 4.1), results obtained through single-subject experiment (section 4.2) and reflective, insightful views of key-informants (BAs and TBCs) endorse that explicit instruction of pragmatics can assist business graduates in composing/delivering effective messages and understanding received messages. Besides the formulation of a message, pragmatics can aid in realizing the shared context among the communicators, since understanding the context is vital in internal and external communication, especially for the professionals at the leading and frontline roles. A conversation acquires its shape, tone, argument, objective, grounds, and effect from the context it is generated, and thus a comprehensive awareness of implications of context can help out business students/professionals in persuasive communication. The participants in a communication event can make their role adjustments as per the context of that event. On the whole, pragmatics can assist in all aspects of general as well as professional communication.

The results of this study establish that explicit instruction of pragmatics is expected to benefit business professionals in professional communication. Corporate employers prefer hires with effective communication skills. Inclusion and explicit instruction of pragmatics (from an applied perspective) in course contents can enable business students

for interpersonal skills required in business settings. Revision of the course contents/materials according to business needs is required, and since pragmatics is frequently used by business professionals implicitly, it can be made a part of the course contents and teaching methodology. Incorporation of pragmatics into course contents can facilitate business students in expressing situation-appropriate intents and contents with the desired impact on the audience in professional settings. In the light of data analysis, the suggested modifications in course contents and teaching approach are expected to help business students in improving their communication skills. The results also reveal that pragmatics-based teaching of business communication at business schools can reduce the gaps between professional communication requirements and academic instruction.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

This chapter presents the findings and conclusions of the research. Implications of the harmony between pragmatics and business communication have been presented, the impact of explicit instruction of pragmatics on students' learning performance has been concluded to draw analogies on the incorporation of pragmatics concepts in teaching academic business communication. The teachers' views on the inclusion and explicit instruction of pragmatics have been concluded along with suggestions. The opinions and reflections of business administrators have been related to the suggested modification in the course contents. At the end of the chapter, suggestions for further research have been presented.

5.1 Findings

The present research aimed at exploring the answer to the main research question i.e. the role of including explicit pragmatics concepts in the courses of business communication skills at BBA. The data were gathered through (1) the comparative analysis of course contents of business communication vis-à-vis pragmatics concepts, (2) from a group of students taught through single-subject experimental design in the form of WDCTs, (3) from the teachers of business communication, and (4) from business administrators with relevant business qualifications. The findings are presented in the sub-sections below.

5.1.1 Findings from the Comparative Analysis of the Course Contents vis-à-vis Pragmatics Concepts

This sub-section presents findings on the first subsidiary question on exploring the pragmatics concepts compatible with the course contents of business communication skills. The findings are drawn to explore the implications of this harmony for enriching the existing course contents in the light of the theoretical framework. This segment comprises findings on (1) the implicit reflection of pragmatics concepts in the course contents and (2) the possibility of including these concepts in the related course contents (through the comparative analysis based on theoretical compatibility between the two fields i.e. pragmatics and business communication).

The comparative analysis of pragmatics concepts and course contents of business communication reveals compatibility between pragmatics and business communication. The selected contents from business communication are aspects and dimensions of language as a means of communication, components and process of communication, barriers and impediments in business communication, dimensions of effective interpersonal communication, collegial aspects of organizational communication, cultural variables, and cultural diversity and their role in communication, inductive and deductive principles and approaches of business correspondence. The major concepts from pragmatics found relevant with afore-narrated course contents are communicators' intentions and interpretations during a communicative event, communication context, cultural schemata, Gricean maxims and their flouting, implicature, and various dimensions of face.

The course contents on 'communication cycle' (i.e. sender, message, receiver, feedback, channel/medium, and context) have been found compatible with pragmatics concepts: speaker's intended meaning, listener's interpretation, pragmatic context, and its role in communication transactions, inference, entailment, and implicature, 'said' and 'unsaid' part of conversations. Sociopragmatic, pragmalinguistic and metapragmatic skills are found helpful in coping with communication problems. Pragmatics concepts on face, positive face, negative face, face saving acts, face threatening acts, pre-existing structures, schemata, etc. can benefit business professionals/administrators in interpersonal and intercultural business communication. Gricean maxims of quantity, quality, relevance, and manner make a business message appropriate, whereas implicature helps in understanding a message with flouts. Pragmatics can assist in handling diverse issues on conflicts, conflicts resolution, negotiation, politeness, bias, bias preclusion, disclosure, and trust in day-to-day corporate communication.

The present research finds a strong theoretical relationship between concepts of pragmatics and course contents of business communication skills. The awareness of pragmatics can certainly facilitate business professionals/administrators in using contextually appropriate language according to organizational communication policies, audience, purpose, intended outcomes, and expected effects of a message. Communicators' awareness and capability of applying pragmatics can help in effective communication in a particular event. The review of empirical studies on the impact of pragmatics on learning and consequent enhancement in competence and performance of L2, L3, SL, FL, etc. establishes the usefulness of explicit instruction of pragmatics (see section 2.3.4 in Chapter

2). Likewise, this study finds that pragmatics is compatible with business communication and its explicit instruction is expected to benefit business students in corporate communication. The findings of the earlier studies affirm the systematic development of the pragmatic competence of learners through explicit instruction of pragmatics and relevant classroom activities (see sections 2.3.4, 2.3.5, 2.3.11, and 2.3.12 in Chapter 2). The present study also finds that interface of pragmatics and business communication can assist business students in producing better business discourse.

Since both disciplines i.e. pragmatics and business communication are closely associated, explicit instruction of pragmatics in business communication courses is expected to assist the learners in professional communication. The communicative competence, thus developed, is expected to assist the business graduates in diverse socio-cultural settings, in understanding socio-cultural communicative differences, and in minimizing the misunderstandings during conveying and receiving business messages. Explicit knowledge of pragmatics has been found useful in understanding variations in cooperative maxims, politeness, face, FSAs, FTAs, and many other patterns from pragmatics. Business communication courses aim at preparing business students for their later complex communicative tasks, along with their other professional-administrative responsibilities in diverse communicative situations; the awareness of pragmatics can facilitate these professionals in interaction with audiences of different pragmatic backgrounds and communication patterns. Pragmatic competence acquired through explicit learning of pragmatics is expected to enable business students in diverse intracultural, intercultural, interpersonal, internal, and external communication.

5.1.2 Findings from Students' WDCTs

This sub-section of findings addresses the second subsidiary research question on exploring the impact of teaching explicit pragmatics concepts on the students' performance through WDCTs. An overall positive impact of explicit instruction of pragmatics has been observed on the learners' WDCTs through comparing students' performance in their posttests in comparison with their pretests. The diversity in the assigned WDCTs also served the purpose of the experiment effectively since the learners had to demonstrate their communication skills in varied scenarios.

The analysis of data of this segment reveals that the instrument of data collection was reliable since the value of Cronbach's alpha was found optimal. The results of Kaiser-

Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy also affirm the sufficiency of the sample size. Significance value obtained through Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is also found up to the mark for the analysis of the data. The values of both Cronbach's alpha and KMO and Bartlett's Test obtained in this study also validate the results of this study. Exploratory Factor Analysis performed through Paired Samples Statistics also reveals a significant improvement in the learners' performance. Exploratory Factor Analysis also affirms the positive effects of treatment. The relative improvement in each learner's total posttest score vs. total pretest score ranging from 81% to 230% with an obvious mean of 135% establishes the success of the experiment.

The investigation in the response to the second subsidiary question reveals that explicit exposure to pragmatic perspective is helpful for learners in producing effective business communication discourse. Pragmatics concepts (used in model lesson plans, in the treatment phase of the experiment) are found beneficial for the learners in producing improved business communication discourse. The learners have demonstrated better, coherent, and synthesized contents in written discourse in their posttests. Situation-oriented use of pragmatics learnt through explicit instruction, has been found beneficial for learners, and it is expected to benefit them in their later professional careers. The academically acquired pragmatic competence of these learners is expected to benefit them in their professional careers. The success of the experiment has affirmed that explicit instruction of pragmatics blended with course contents can improve learners' business communication skills.

5.1.3 Findings from Semi-structured Interviews of Teachers

This sub-section presents findings drawn on the third subsidiary research question. This subsidiary research question explores the perceptions of the teachers about the inclusion and instruction of explicit pragmatics concepts in the course contents. TBCs deal with the course contents, and the students; they are key players in the academic assessment/evaluation of students. They have first-hand information on issues, needs, and practicality of any revision or modification in contents, materials, or methodology. The teachers are the frontline managers; they are important key-informants for the data collection of this study. The respondents' narrative on the interface of academic and infield business communication, their opinions on the implicit presence of pragmatics in existing course contents and materials, and their perspective on the teaching of pragmatics blended with course contents are vital for the present study.

The respondents agreed with the unanimous importance of communication skills for business students in their academic and in their professional careers. These business students would need strong communication skills to convey, convince, and motivate internal or external audiences for the smooth operations of their organizations, in their professional careers. The majority of respondents view the course contents and course materials related to business communication as not sufficient and updated enough. There are a few exceptions among the respondents as well: one respondent deemed his recommended book as fairly sufficient when it is supplemented by his teaching methodology, whereas some other respondents were partially satisfied with their personalized efforts. The teachers' academic qualifications and their interests are also reflected in their teaching methodology, which seems not aligned with the requirements and practices of corporate organizations when compared with the reflective views of the other group of respondents i.e. business administrators.

The teachers find the implicit presence of pragmatics in business communication course contents and materials. The respondents are found convinced of the utility of pragmatics concepts in business communication classroom as well as in students' later professions. The respondents deem that the awareness and application of pragmatics are helpful for an individual in understanding the whole philosophy of communication. Pragmatics concepts are relatable with business vocabulary, message composition, situation, and context-bound factors, and connotative and metaphorical features. The majority of respondents appreciated the notion of inclusion and instruction of pragmatics explicitly. Two of the respondents supported the idea of teaching pragmatics implicitly through relating them with the contents and materials of business communication. One of these two opined that pragmatics can be taught as a separate subject to BBA students. One respondent suggested avoiding the teaching of pragmatics as a set of theories and suggested it be taught as a practical subject in line with corporate communication. All the respondents favoured teaching pragmatics with a practical approach (through relating pragmatics concepts with course contents, in writing business documents, delivering oral presentations, etc.) rather than teaching it as an exam-focused and grades-focused part of course contents.

The respondents are convinced that the application of pragmatics in business communication is vital in a country like Pakistan with social, ethnic, linguistic, educational, economic, cultural, religious, geographical, and racial diversity. Moreover, there is

diversity in students' interests and motivation, their future aspirations, and prospects. All these shades of diversity create both challenges and opportunities and can be addressed through explicit instruction/learning of pragmatics to a greater extent. The findings of this study align with the literature that teaching pragmatics explicitly produces better results in improving learners' communication skills (see section 2.3.5 in Chapter 2).

5.1.4 Findings from Semi-structured Interviews of Business Administrators

This sub-section addresses the fourth subsidiary research question and presents the findings drawn from the views of business administrators (BAs) on communication situations in corporate organizations, their ways to manage diverse and challenging communication scenarios, and their views on the effectiveness of pragmatics in professional communication and the possible outcomes of explicit instruction of pragmatics for the students of business studies. Business administrators interact with multiple audiences in diverse situations. In internal communication, they interact with bosses, peers, and subordinates, and they need different communication tactics to deal with this internal public of different organizational hierarchies. In external communication, communication patterns of varied organizational or communal cultures also pose hurdles. The professionals' communication revolves around certain themes: sales, revenues, hiring, finance, promotions, improvements, performance, etc.

As per these key-informants, the existing course contents and materials neither provide the students with adequate insight into the corporate communication patterns nor prepare them accordingly and only provide the basic and surface knowledge. These key-informants also endorse aligning the teaching methodology with the learners' later professional needs and avoiding the traditional exams/grade-focused approach. The students need to be trained for dealing with different audiences, responding to queries, solving problems, managing crises communication, coping with unexpected situations and other corporate scenarios. The trained graduates, equipped with both professional and communication skills, can perform according to the requirements of their organizations.

Professional communication skills are enhanced through exposure to diverse audiences and situations, wherein, the professionals learn many pragmatics concepts implicitly and their practical usage. The BAs agree with the notion that they might have benefited more from pragmatics concepts included business communication courses in their syllabi. The respondents agree with the contribution of pragmatics in conveying the

desired messages, in understanding audiences' expectations and probable interpretations, in formulating and delivering effective messages as per the context and shared knowledge. Pragmatics encompasses all the aspects of corporate communication from formulating and conveying the desired message to achieving the desired outcomes in a corporate communicative context.

5.2 Conclusions

The major aim of this research was to explore the effectiveness of explicit instruction of pragmatics in improving business communication skills of business students.

5.2.1 Conclusions Drawn from the Comparative Analysis

The comparative analysis of course contents and pragmatics aimed at examining the concepts of pragmatics compatible with business communication. Both pragmatics and business communication are highly compatible and harmonized with each other. 'Communication cycle' (which comprises sender, message, receiver, feedback, context) in business communication is similar to pragmatics concepts of speaker/writer's intentions, listener/reader's interpretation, Grice's cooperative principle/maxims, and context. Seven Cs are closely similar to Grice's maxims of quantity, quality, relevance, and manner. Cultural variables and their role and importance in business communication are closely related to pragmatics concepts of cultural schemata. Likewise, barriers in business communication can also be addressed through pragmatics.

The comparative analysis also establishes an implicit reflection of several pragmatics concepts in business communication courses (see section 4.1). The knowledge of pragmatics is useful in situation-specific, audience-centered, purpose-oriented, and culturally acceptable communication. The harmony between business communication and pragmatics supports the notion that relevant concepts from pragmatics can be included in the course contents to enrich them to improve the learners' pragmatic competence. The data obtained from other three sources, specifically from business professionals, also affirm that pragmatics is useful for business professionals in business settings.

5.2.2 Conclusions Drawn from Students' WDCTs

The prime objective of this segment of the study was to examine the impact of explicit instruction of pragmatics on learners' performance in written discourse completion tasks. The present study affirms a positive impact of explicit instruction of pragmatics on

the learners' business communication discourse. Pragmatically enhanced communication skills are advantageous to produce the desired response in classroom tasks. The results of the single-subject experimental design support the business administrators' views on the usefulness of pragmatics in business correspondence. Pragmatics-imbedded students' posttests (WDCTs) are found better than their pretests. The explicit learning of pragmatics has facilitated the students in enhancing their communicative competence and performance since its effectiveness is significantly visible through students' improved business communication skills in the results. In the light of results, it is concluded that planned teaching of pragmatics along with the course contents enhances business students' pragmatic competence and performance.

5.2.3 Conclusions Drawn from TBCs' Interviews

This segment of research aimed to find the views, reflections, and suggestions of the teachers of business communication on the utility of pragmatics in improving business communication skills. All the respondents are convinced of the importance of communication skills for the students of business studies; thus their main focus remains on improving students' overall language skills and linguistic competence. Their teaching methodologies are diverse and are influenced by their academic qualification in language, literature, or linguistics. TBCs' academic and professional background restricts their efforts of preparing their students for their future corporate communication needs. The teachers are convinced of the benefits of pragmatics for business students for improving their future needs of communication skills. The teachers agreed with the implicit concord of pragmatics with the course contents of business communication. The majority of respondents are in favour of teaching pragmatics explicitly along with course contents of business communication, and advocate its incorporation in case studies, discourse completion tasks, and oral presentations.

5.2.4 Conclusion Drawn from Business Administrators' Interviews

Business administrators have first-hand experience of business settings; their reflections on forms and procedures of corporate communication add value to this research. They agree with the contribution of business communication courses in infield communication. The respondents endorse aligning the course contents and teaching methodology with local corporate needs. The respondents stress upon exquisite interpersonal skills of business professionals for their diverse roles and responsibilities and

recommend developing students' skills accordingly. The business administrators themselves often employ the principles of pragmatics tacitly which they learn through their indulgence in corporate communication but they feel this tacit learning takes longer. The respondents are convinced of the importance of pragmatic competence for fresh business professionals at the time of hiring, in excelling their careers, in performing their organizational responsibilities. Pragmatics caters to all fundamentals of communication, and likewise of professional communication; the respondents support the notion of explicit instruction of pragmatics in business communication courses. It is concluded from the respondents' reflections that business communication learnt with pragmatic delicacies and refinement (achieved through explicit instruction) is more effective than without them.

All the four segments of this research, in accordance with the main research question on inclusion and explicit instruction of pragmatics concepts in business communication courses at BBA level, affirm the utility of pragmatics and its explicit instruction for students' better learning and consequent improvement in their business communication skills. Through single-subject experiment, a significant impact of teaching pragmatics explicitly has been noted on the students' written discourse completion tasks. The subject-teachers have agreed to the usefulness of pragmatics concepts in business communication courses, and their explicit instruction along with the course contents. The second group of respondents i.e. business administrators is also convinced of the contributive role of pragmatics in corporate communication. They appreciate the notion of teaching explicit pragmatics along with the course contents of business communication. The present study affirms the identicalness of pragmatics with business communication courses contents. Results of all these four segments establish that explicit instruction of pragmatics (blended in course contents, classroom activities, and assigned field tasks) can effectively contribute to improving students' business communication skills and resultantly benefit them in their professional roles and responsibilities.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher presents the following recommendations for revision/modification of contents of business communication courses, teaching methodology, teachers' capacity building, and industry-academia collaborations.

5.3.1 Recommendations on Course Contents

The findings of the comparative analysis establish a strong relationship between pragmatics and business communication. The major pragmatics concepts which can be incorporated in academic instruction of business communication are sociopragmatics, pragmalinguistics, and metapragmatics, cross-cultural awareness through pragmatics, pragmatic meaning, pragmatic context and shared knowledge, speaker's intentions and listener's interpretation, presupposition, frame and schemata, routine and genre, Gricean maxims and their flouting, implicature, entailment, speech acts, politeness strategies, face, face saving acts, face threatening acts. These concepts help enrich the course contents on 'communication cycle', verbal and nonverbal communication, benefits of communication for individuals and organizations, barriers in communication, interpersonal communication, conflict, conflict resolution, negotiation, politeness, bias avoidance, disclosure and trust, cultural variables and cultural diversity, seven Cs, writing stages (prewriting, drafting and post writing), audience analysis, organizational plans (deductive vs. inductive—for good news, bad news, neutral news, persuasive messages). In the light of the findings of this research, it is expected that explicit knowledge of pragmatics (selected/compatible concepts, mentioned above) and its application will enable business students for diverse communication situations in their professional careers.

5.3.2 Recommendations on Teaching Methodology

A comprehensive and integrated teaching approach needs to be devised for preparing business students for their future communication roles. Business communication should be taught as a set of communication skills, and not merely as an academic subject. Enriched with subject knowledge, pragmatics-based critical thinking and problem-solving skills need to be developed in business students. Skills and capacity building should be the main focus of business communication courses in training the students for dealing with clients, suppliers, vendors, regulatory bodies, and the general public. For this purpose, training-oriented teaching and real needs-based learning, stances from all the stakeholders, especially the opinions of infield business professionals, should be incorporated in both contents and methodology. Modern technologies should be adopted to make classroom activities more effective and productive. The oral-aural portion should also be focused along with the written aspect of business communication (with a specific focus on endogenous languages besides English, along with the pragmatic patterns of these

languages). The focus of all these measures should be to train the business students for their future professional roles to enable them to perform optimally from the start of their careers.

5.3.3 Recommendations on Teachers' Capacity Building

A proper mechanism of teachers' capacity enhancement for the teaching of business communication courses is needed. Business administrators' reflections also endorse that TBCs can deliver better if they have relevant qualifications, training, and practical experience or exposure to the business sector. On-job training sessions should be arranged for the teachers to provide an insight into corporate requirements. The teachers should be facilitated for the visits to business organizations. The teachers should be encouraged and supported for gaining educational qualifications related to business studies so that they get an insight into the field whose students they are teaching. They should be facilitated to develop links with the business schools which are already on the track of industry-academia liaison. TBCs can make their own digital 'professional groups' for sharing their methodology, suggestions, solutions, concerns, lesson plans, or other such communications about facing, tackling, and managing classroom issues.

5.3.4 Recommendations on Industry-Academia Collaboration

Effective measures are needed to establish and maintain industry-academia collaborations and consultations for updating and upgrading course contents as well as writing books/materials. A mechanism should be maintained for continuous interaction among the various stakeholders: students, teachers, syllabus designers, professionals, entrepreneurs, and others. Separate modules are needed for students aspiring for entrepreneurship and those seeking jobs with a further bifurcation of local or international levels with the help of employers, professionals, corporate trainers, and alumni. The course modification and up-gradation should be made a regular practice to include contemporary and emerging patterns/methods/technologies of professional communication. All these efforts need to be well integrated.

The recommendations presented above, when acted upon, are expected to benefit in revising and modifying the contents/materials of business communication courses, in bringing improvement in teaching methodology for these courses, in teachers' capacity building, and in enhancing industry-academia collaborations.

5.4 Directions for Future Studies

This research suggests further studies on the interface of pragmatics and professional communication. A tool to measure the development of pragmatic performance in discourse completion tasks can be developed on empirical grounds. Inductive and deductive principles and approaches of business correspondence can be studied through the lens of pragmatics. The role of pragmatics in everyday corporate communication can be empirically explored. Longitudinal studies can be conducted to explore the impact of pragmatics on business professionals' communication. Explicit instruction of pragmatics and its consequent application in business communication in a country like Pakistan with abundant diversity in terms of social, ethnic, lingual, educational, economic, cultural, religious, geographical, and racial features can be empirically investigated.

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Appendix-I: Lesson Plans

Lesson Plan No. 1

TITLE Introduction to Pragmatics

Objective

By the end of the lesson, the students will be able

- To understand the definition of pragmatics
- To understand the sender's intended meaning, and desired message
- To understand the receiver's interpretation
- To understand the role of context in communication
- To understand the role of pragmatics in communication
- To understand the concepts of 'said' and 'unsaid'

Materials

White Board, Marker, Rostrum, Duster

Time

60 minutes

Level

BBA

Introduction

- What is the importance of communication?
- What are the important components of the 'communication cycle'?
- What is the importance of the components of communication in business communication?

Procedure

The instructor presented the concept and definition of pragmatics. Pragmatics is concerned with the study of meaning as conveyed by the speaker (sender) and as interpreted by the listener (receiver). The aforementioned interpretation depends on the context of communication and on what is said. Listeners (audience) can make inferences to make interpretations of what the sender has intended to communicate. The audience decodes both 'said' and 'unsaid' parts of communication. The speaker decides how much to communicate on the basis of distance/ familiarity between him/her and the audience. The afore-narrated concepts of pragmatics were related to 'communication cycle' and its components: sender, message, receiver, feedback, channel/medium, and context. The concepts of pragmatics were also discussed in relation to the case studies provided to the students as their pretest, and other case studies.

Conclusion

The students were asked to point out the basic elements of pragmatics in one case study of their own choice.

Lesson Plan No. 2

TITLE Grice's Cooperative Principle and Cooperative Maxims

Objective

By the end of the lesson, the students will be able

- To understand the concept of cooperative principle
- To understand the maxim of quantity
- To understand the maxim of quality
- To understand the maxim of relevance
- To understand the maxim of manner
- To understand the concept of flouting of cooperative maxims

Materials

White Board, Marker, Rostrum, Duster

Time

60 minutes

Level

BBA

Introduction

- How can a message be made well-composed?
- Why do messages contain extra information?
- What is the importance of appropriate size, truthfulness, relevance, and understandability of a message?

Procedure

The instructor presented the concepts of Grice's cooperative principle and cooperative maxims. The cooperative principle directs a speaker (sender) to be cooperative with the listener (receiver) in communication. The cooperative maxim of quantity concerns the size of information and endorses that a business message should be complete and concise. The sender should contribute as much as is required for the specific purpose of the communicative event. Neither a business message should contain any irrelevant or extra information nor should it be devoid of required contents for the interpretation. The cooperative principle of quality requires a business message to comprise correct and truthful content. A sender should not communicate false, doubtful, evidence-lacking contents. Furthermore, a business message should consist of the desired supporting evidence for conveying the intended meaning. The cooperative principle of relevance stipulates only such contents which convey the intended message to the expediency of the audience and situation. Gricean maxim of 'manner' ensures a business message reflects clarity, and a sender avoids obscurity of expression, ambiguity, unnecessary wordiness and verbosity, and poor orderliness.

Gricean cooperative principle is significant in conversations with peers as it assists in mitigating obscurity and misinterpretations. Simplicity and clarity are important for the

effective communicative skills of business administrators and business leaders as they inspire and motivate their employees, customers, and shareholders. Gricean maxims devise comprehensive rules for a speaker or sender's encoding of an utterance, and these maxims warrant cooperation between communicators. The cooperative principle helps communicators produce an effective discourse.

Gricean maxims endorse a strong collaboration between a sender and the addressees towards whom a message is directed. A message is successfully communicated when the sender has conveyed the addressee in recognizing the intended meaning, and the addressee has recognized what the sender has intended to convey. Gricean cooperative maxims are of great assistance in effective professional communication. These principles emphasize that encoders (writers/speakers) are cooperative with the decoders (readers/listeners).

The afore-narrated maxims were related with Seven Cs: completeness, conciseness, consideration, courtesy, clarity, concreteness, and correctness. The maxims were also discussed in relation to the samples of letters/reports/memoranda etc. already provided to the students.

Conclusion

The students were asked to point out the basic elements of pragmatics in one case study of their own choice.

Lesson Plan No. 3

TITLE Presupposition, Implicature, Entailment, ‘said’ and ‘unsaid’ part of communication

Objective

By the end of the lesson, the students will be able

- To understand the concept of presupposition
- To understand the concept of implicature
- To understand the concept of entailment
- To identify the ‘unsaid’ in communication

Materials

White Board, Marker, Rostrum, Duster

Time

60 minutes

Level

BBA

Introduction

- What are the importance presupposition, entailment, and implicature?
- What are the various factors which contribute to ‘unsaid’?
- What is the importance of shared knowledge and context in understanding presupposition, entailment, and implicature and unsaid?

Procedure

The instructor presented the basic concepts of presupposition, entailment, implicature, and ‘said’ and ‘unsaid’ part of communication. A speaker’s assumptions on knowledge of the hearer are the basis for presupposition. Presupposition can be defined as a mechanism whereby the speaker addresses a body of knowledge and experience, involving both linguistic and non-linguistic contexts, which he or she assumes to be common to him-/herself and the hearer. Presuppositions are associated with shared knowledge which is not overtly asserted in utterances. Writers and speakers formulate their message with certain assumptions on their receivers’ knowledge. What a speaker assumes is true or is known by the hearer can be described as a presupposition. Both context and presupposition play a vital role in generating the pragmatic meaning of utterances.

Entailment addresses the sequent truthfulness of two statements in a conversation. Entailment establishes the relationship between two statements where the truth of one (A) requires the truth of the other (B), and thus entailment is considered a purely logical concept. Entailment is a logic-based segment of a conversation. Additionally conveyed meaning of an utterance is called implicature. Explicature is a ‘basic interpretation’ of any utterance based on ‘contextual information’. Shared assumptions of communicators and expectations help in understanding the ‘unsaid’ in a conversation. In encoding and decoding

the ‘said’ and ‘unsaid’ parts of communication concepts of pragmatics including presupposition, entailment, implicature, and explicature are very important.

Writers and speakers formulate their message with certain assumptions on their receivers’ knowledge. The participants of a conversation gather evidence about each other’s intentions through their uttered words, after decoding and interpreting them in the light of the context of conversations, and try to ensure that what is said is also understood, and thus speakers (encoders/senders) are responsible for making themselves understood to the other participants. Both context and presupposition play a role in generating pragmatic meanings of utterances.

Implicature and entailment are closely associated. In implicature, the truth of one statement (A) suggests the truth of (B). In contrast to both explicature and implicature which are purely pragmatic inferences and are cancellable, entailment is ‘a guarantee’ as it is non-cancellable. An entailment is considered to be necessarily true if its accompanying proposition is true. Entailment depends upon the language, but implicature depends upon the conversational context. Entailment is also different from presupposition. Entailment does not face negation whereas presuppositions can be negated. Entailment is closely associated with the sense which a word carries with it, and all possible senses of a word are a part of the entailment while the word is being used in a sentence. An understanding of implicature and explicature, presupposition, and entailment assist in both oral and written communication.

Through utterances, written or spoken, something more is communicated than what just the words mean, and this additionally conveyed meaning is called implicature. Implicature is an important pragmatic content that is frequently employed in decoding by a listener/decoder. Implicatures arise from breaches of some of the norms that underlie human communication and determine its efficient and rational character. Implicature is a kind of inference that is drawn from statements without additional meaning in logic and informal language use of implication. Implicature illustrates the association between two statements where the truth of one suggests the truth of the other.

Implicature is what communicators can imply, suggest or mean, apart from the actual words in an utterance. Implicature provides a clue on the meaning of an utterance and a sender’s intentions. There is a strong role of ‘inference’ in this regard which an addressee may develop on ‘background information’ and the sender’s viewpoint on a particular issue in a certain context. Semantics also plays its role in this regard, as implicature is based on ‘explicature’ and explicature is based on literal meaning. The literal meaning is based on the semantics of a particular sentence, explicature is developed through pragmatic reference to lessening ‘disambiguation’, and implicature is built upon pragmatic hints. Implicature is the pragmatic aspect of meaning and is connected with contextual, conventional, and literal dimensions of the words. Furthermore, implicatures are linguistically generated meanings and are distinct from implicit meanings, and shape the utterances as not merely ‘say’ something but also ‘do’ something.

Conclusion

The students were asked to point out the elements of pragmatics in any one of the case studies provided to them for classroom practice.

The afore-narrated concepts of pragmatics were also discussed in relation to the case studies provided to the students as their pretest, and other case studies.

Lesson Plan No. 4

TITLE Sociopragmatics, Pragmalinguistics and Metapragmatics

Objective

By the end of the lesson, the students will be able

- To understand the concept of sociopragmatics
- To understand the concept of pragmalinguistics
- To understand the concept of metapragmatics

Materials

White Board, Marker, Rostrum, Duster

Time

60 minutes

Level

BBA

Introduction

- What is the relationship between pragmatics and social aspects of communication?
- What are the various social requirements of communication?

Procedure

The instructor presented the basic concepts of sociopragmatics, pragmalinguistics, and metapragmatics.

Pragmatics contents on sociopragmatics, pragmalinguistics, and metapragmatics, cross-cultural awareness through pragmatics, pragmatic meaning, pragmatic context and shared knowledge among communicators, sender's intentions and receiver's interpretation, presupposition, frame, schemata, Gricean cooperative maxims, and their flouting, implicature, entailment, politeness, face, face saving acts, face threatening acts are helpful in interpersonal communication. Sociopragmatics helps in message formulation and decoding through an understanding of variables like relative power, social distance, degree of imposition, etc.; pragmalinguistics assists a sender for lexical and grammatical choices while encoding a message; metapragmatics supports in understanding intentions and effects of communication. Sociopragmatic, pragmalinguistic, and metapragmatic skills are of vital importance in conflict resolution and negotiation. Furthermore, these skills are useful for communicators to decide when and whom to trust or make a disclosure.

Conclusion

The students were asked to point out the elements of pragmatics in any one of the case studies provided to them for classroom practice. The afore-narrated concepts of pragmatics were also discussed in relation to the case studies provided to the students as their pretest, and other case studies.

Lesson Plan No. 5

TITLE Frame, Schemata, Routine, Genre

Objective

By the end of the lesson, the students will be able

- To understand the concepts of frame and schemata, and other related concepts
- To understand the concepts of routine and genre and their role in professional communication

Materials

White Board, Marker, Rostrum, Duster

Time

60 minutes

Level

BBA

Introduction

- What is the relationship between frame and schema?
- What are the various genres of business communication?
- What is the importance of communication channels and methods?

Procedure

The instructor presented the basic concepts of frame, schema, routine, and genre. Pre-existing knowledge structures are linked with schema (plural, schemata) and frame. "Schema is a pre-existing knowledge structure in memory". Schemata help to interpret the unsaid or unwritten part of an utterance (written or spoken). Fixed and static patterns to a schema are called 'frame'. Often communicators may develop rigidity in terms of their knowledge, conventions, beliefs, behaviours, and certain personality traits which may generate such fixed and static patterns. Pre-existing knowledge structures help in interpreting the new-fangled experiences through relating them with the previous experiences. 'Conventional schemata' may include such jargon as are easily understandable among a particular community, but may baffle the out-groups. Thus conventional schemata may include all such symbols (written, oral or nonverbal) as are used while encoding a message. The speaker is responsible for using the symbols which, on one hand, convey the message and, on the other hand, are easily decodable for the listener.

The common experiences of communicators assist in relating a specific symbol to a referent (reality) for semantic or pragmatic meanings. The modern day workplace has become communicatively complex and demands more communication in less time, and officials may switch from one medium (e.g. face to face interactions, electronically mediated communication, written correspondence) to another. Business professionals may online access or deliver company information as a part of their professional tasks to other employees, customers, media, or other firms through newsletters, magazines, memos,

letters, press releases, reports, etc. The need and frequency of such documents increase with the growth of an organization. For the appropriate selection of genre, students need to know requirements on process, formality, rhetorics, and subject-need. It is important to carefully select the jargon, medium, and genre while communicating a business message. Commenting on any possible carelessness in regard, Gallo (2006) says: “Great business communicators avoid mind-numbing jargon, especially when delivering to outsiders the message behind their service, product, company, or cause” (p. 114). “The medium is the physical system which carries the message from sender to receiver, which can vary from the air carrying the voice between two speakers to something like an email where the author is separated from the reader by complicated electronic processes” (Hartley & Bruckmann, 2002, p. 18). Routine is defined as “sequence of actions regularly followed”, “a regular course of the procedure”, “habitual or mechanical performance of an established procedure”, “a regular way of doing things in a particular order”. ‘Routine’ may comprise the medium and mode of conveying a certain utterance. Furthermore, ‘routine’ may include the choice of a channel for accomplishing a communicative event. University students may communicate orally or written, face to face (e.g. formal or informal occasions) or through some electronic channel (e.g. email). “At a general level, genre refers to linguistic expression conventionally associated with certain forms of writings (for example the Letter to the Editor)” (Hatim, 1998, p. 68). ‘Genre’ of a communicative event may include the choice of conveying a message through spoken words, gestures, written/electronic message. In the present as well as future business communication, the users should develop their skills in “communication, collaboration, and interaction at a variety of levels using different media and communication patterns” (Pickering, 2009, p. 169). An understanding of both ‘routine’ and ‘genre’ is needed for business administrators (Bargiela-Chiappini & Harris, 1996). Knowledge of textual, contextual, and intertextual features are also useful for the selection of routine and genre (Zhang, 2013, p. 146). The communicators may convene themselves through practicing pragmatic principles with their peers from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

Conclusion

The students were asked to point out the elements of pragmatics in any one of the case studies provided to them for classroom practice. The afore-narrated concepts of pragmatics were also discussed in relation to the case studies provided to the students as their pretest, and other case studies.

Lesson Plan No. 6

TITLE Politeness and various aspects of Face (positive face, negative face, face saving acts, face threatening acts)

Objective

By the end of the lesson, the students will be able

- To understand the concepts of face and other related concepts
- To understand the role of face and politeness in professional communication

Materials

White Board, Marker, Rostrum, Duster

Time

60 minutes

Level

BBA

Introduction

- What is the relationship between face and politeness?
- What are the various aspects of face?
- What is the importance of FSAs and FTAs?

Procedure

The instructor presented the basic concepts of face, positive face, negative face, FSAs, and FTAs.

A ‘competent adult member of a society’ has “an inclination to keep up his face” (Jansen & Janssen, 2010). The sender should consider the face needs of the receiver (Jansen & Janssen, 2010, p. 2533). Faces of a person, both positive face and negative face “are inevitably threatened when he takes part in communication” (Jansen & Janssen, 2010, p. 2533). A person’s ‘faces’ are a continuous threat in business or other such interactions and transactions (Jansen & Janssen, 2010). A communicator can use politeness strategies to save his own and his communication partner’s positive face, and can thus create a friendly environment in business or other day-to-day interactions. Zhu (2005) believes in the dynamic nature of ‘face’ and asserts that face and politeness strategies are influenced by communicators’ social status, social distance, power dimensions, communication circumstances, self/otherness, linguistic patterns, ethnocultural differences, and other interpersonal or social dimensions (p. 22). Zhu (2005) endorses the use of different linguistic strategies for each separate case of business correspondence and further asserts that “specific interpersonal and organizational communication patterns may also play a significant role in a certain context” (p. 24).

Positive Face: The positive face of a person comprises his presumption that “his wants are desirable for at least some others” (Jansen & Janssen, 2010, p. 2533).

Negative Face: Negative face is a “form of deference” and “the way an individual adheres to social and situational determined rules”, though it is also seen as “the desire of an individual to be unimpeded by others” (Jansen & Janssen, 2010, p. 2531).

FTA: Face threatening acts are related to some factors including the ‘distance’ particularly ‘social distance’ between sender and receiver, the ‘power’ of a receiver over the sender or vice versa, and imposition of the face threatening act, and status (Bargiela-Chiappini & Harris, 1996; Brown & Levinson, 1987; Jansen & Janssen, 2010).

Business documents e.g. letters, memoranda, etc. are used as data to analyze the implicit or explicit presence of pragmatics in them (Bargiela-Chiappini & Harris, 1996). Politeness strategies are frequently used in business correspondence. Pilegaard (1997) identifies the various ways of politeness strategies used in business letters to: “(1) prepare the ground for the formulation of the letter's main request, (2) redress the face-threatening act of requesting, and (3) round off the letter” (p. 241). Blum-kulka (1987) defines politeness as “the interactional balance achieved between two needs: The need for pragmatic clarity and the need to avoid coerciveness” (p. 131). Corresponding to pragmatic ‘face’, Overton (2003) states three kinds of images which need to be considered in business communication: 1) projected image “what people want appear to others” i.e. “to look good to others”, 2) self-image “how people see themselves”, 3) external image-“how people appear in the eyes of others” (p. 21). Overton (2003) also suggests that communication should not threaten or downgrade others’ projected image, though one should be careful about the fact that there can be a significant difference between one’s self-image and projected image.

Face and face wants, face saving acts and face threatening acts are very important for the communicators as they may express and respond according to these phenomena. “Your negative face is the need to be independent and to have freedom from imposition. Your positive face is your need to be connected, to belong, to be the member of the group” (Yule, 1996b, p. 134). Brown and Levinson (1987) consider a set of face-related aspects significant in maintaining expectations from others. Face is one’s public image as well one’s perception of oneself. Negative face requires freedom of action and avoidance of imposition from others. Positive face desires one’s positive image in the community and appreciation and approval for the one among one’s circle of relations.

Conclusion

The students were asked to point out the elements of pragmatics in any one of the case studies provided to them for classroom practice. The afore-narrated concepts of pragmatics were also discussed in relation to the case studies provided to the students as their pretest, and other case studies.

Appendix-III: An Overview of the Experimental Design
A Sketch of Teaching Methodology, adapted from Minaz, Tabassum and Idris

(2017)*

Phase#	Class Activities	Any Additional Activity
Phase I	The teaching of the course contents	The instructor taught the theoretical concepts, discussed some examples from the real world.
Phase II	The teaching of written genres i.e. letters, memos, reports, etc.	The instructor taught the basic contents and formats, provided cases for discussion.
Phase III	Pretest	The instructor provided four cases as WDCTs.
Phase IV	Revision of theoretical course contents amalgamated with concepts from pragmatics (assumed to be effective for the production of WDCTs)	The participants were involved in the discussion. Their queries were addressed.
Phase V	Assigning the students to make explorations on the use of pragmatics in business communication	
Phase VI	Posttest	The instructor provided four cases as WDCTs.
Phase VII	Students' feedback	

*Minaz, M., Tabassum, R., & Idris, M. (2017). An experimental study of the performance of prospective teachers of the flipped classroom and non-flipped classroom. *Pakistan Journal of Education*, 34 (2), 167-182.

Appendix-IV: WDCTs

Written Discourse Completion Tasks (used as pretest and posttest)

The students were administered the following WDCTs as pretest and afterward as posttest to implore the impact of explicit teaching of contents from pragmatics. The cases are as follows:

Q.1. Read the following situation, and write a sales/persuasive letter following AIDA plan.

Case:

ZBC is a well-known motorcycle manufacturing company in the country. The company has manufactured and sold over 200000 motorcycles of various engine capacities. ZBC has an established market share. Now, ZBC has decided to launch a mini car, which is easily affordable for middle class customers.

Required: Write a sales/persuasive letter addressing the existing customers.

- The letters will be sent to the customers at their residential addresses.
- The letter should be written as per AIDA formula along with any components from good news plan.
- The letter should have explicit information on engine capacity, size, repair, spare parts, availability, drive features, and other unique product features.
- The letter should reflect that you have conducted a comprehensive audience analysis.

Q.2. Read the following case and write an apology letter.

Case:

You are organizing a workshop on “Stress Management” and had advertised in local newspaper that only the first 250 applications received would be accepted.

Mr. Shahid’s application for participation was received after all the seats had been filled. Write a letter informing him of the reasons for rejection of his application, and informing him of similar events your organization intends to arrange in the future.

Required: Write a letter to Mr Shahid as per the case.

- The letter may be sent at his official/residential address.
- The letter should be written as per ‘indirect bad news plan’, and AIDA formula.

Q.3. Read the following case and write a memorandum.

Case:

Assume that you are the CEO of an electronics company. Your company has extraordinarily surpassed its competitors in terms of production, sales, profits, market share, customer satisfaction, goodwill, etc. You, as CEO, believe that all of the company’s success is owing to the hard work of your all employees working in different

departments. You write a comprehensive memorandum to your all staff and appreciate them for their sincerity and loyalty to the company. You appreciate them for their efforts, and announce certain bonuses and benefits and privileges for the whole company staff, besides some additional benefits for the team members whose performance has been outstanding. The memorandum should be comprehensive.

Q.4. You are the procurement manager of Baran Publishing Limited (BPL), a company engaged in the business of printing textbooks and periodicals. Two of the printing machines currently used at BPL have to be replaced due to wear and tear. You have been asked by the CEO to arrange for the purchase of two new printing machines without delay.

Write a memo (recommendation justification report) after inquiring about the details:

- Operational Efficiency
- Capacity
- Options Available

Also mention some details on prices and discounts, performance guarantees, time frame for the supply and possibility of exchanging (trading) the old machines used at present for new machines.

Appendix-V: Interview Guide

Interview Questions for Semi-Structured Interviews of Business Administrators

1. What are the various communication situations that business professionals face in their careers?
2. How much contribution is made by the courses of business communication skills in professional communication situations?
3. Why do employers prefer new employees that have better interpersonal skills?
4. How far are the existing course contents of business communication skills sufficient to meet the requirements of the job market?
5. Which parts of course contents of business communication skills, in your opinion, need revising to meet the challenges faced by business organizations?
6. What are the potential benefits of including explicit pragmatics in terms of preparing students to become proficient business professionals/administrators?
7. In your opinion, to what extent are interpersonal skills improved by teaching explicit pragmatics in business communication?
8. How is pragmatics helpful for business professionals to address the shared assumptions and expectations of their audience?
9. How can business graduates take advantage of their better pragmatic communication proficiency with explicit use of pragmatics in their professional conversations?
10. What are the ways through which business professionals can develop a better understanding of conveying desired meaning in a specific context if pragmatics is included in the course contents?
11. How does pragmatics help business professionals in anticipating the various probable interpretations by their audience in any communication event?

**Interview Questions for Semi-Structured Interviews of Teachers of Business
Communication Skills**

1. How do communication skills contribute to the academic learning of students (of business studies)?
2. What measures do you take to develop their communication skills?
3. Which book do you recommend as coursebook? Is that book written by foreign authors or local authors? How far is that book up-to-date and does it meet the demands of the local market?
4. How do you deliver your lecture to convey recent and indigenous knowledge to your students?
5. What kinds of jobs or professions do the students of business studies aspire and are prepared for? How much do business communication courses satisfy the professional communication needs of students? (How far are the existing course contents of business communication skills dominated by the books written by foreign authors?)
6. How far are the course contents of business communication skills adequate to meet the needs of the job market? Have these course contents been prepared through industry-academia collaboration and consultation? How much the preparation of course contents is in collaboration with industry-academia?
7. What sort of revision of the course contents of business communication skills do you recommend to meet the contemporary needs?
8. What issues do arise in business communication classroom when students are from diverse backgrounds?
9. How far is there an implicit reflection of concepts from pragmatics in the business communication contents?
10. What are the benefits of incorporating pragmatics in teaching business communication skills for students' effective communication in their later professional lives?
11. To what extent are students' interpersonal skills improved with explicit pragmatics?
12. How far are invisible meanings understood in business communication with the help of explicit pragmatics?
13. What are the benefits of teaching business communication skills with incorporation of pragmatics for the students in communicating effectively in their later professional life?
14. How do business students develop a better understanding of conveying their desired meaning in a specific context if pragmatics is included in the course contents?
15. How does pragmatics help business professionals in anticipating various probable interpretations by their audience in any communication event?

Appendix-VI: Relevance of Pragmatics with Business Communication, Established through Literature

This appendix comprises a detailed version of the comparative analysis (with the relevant concepts from pragmatics) presented in section 4.1 of Chapter 4. Comparative analysis is a flexible method of analyzing data (Cavanagh, 1997; Tesch, 1990) for textual analysis through a range of analytic approaches including intuitive, impressionistic, and interpretive analyses (Rosengren, 1981), for which raw data (in this case BC-Skills contents, extracted from HEC's (2012) recommended course contents and relevant pragmatics concepts) can be shaped into categories or themes on the basis of researcher's inferences and interpretations through careful examination and comparison (Patton, 2002; Weber, 1990; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Miles & Huberman, 1994). The researcher followed the following steps for the investigation of relevance between contents of business communication skills and pragmatics concepts:

- i. Exploration of Contents on Business Communication (BC) Skills in ESP/communication courses
- ii. Application of the Researchers' Reflections and Experiences
- iii. Devising of Categories and Themes from BC Course Contents
- iv. Exploring the Relevance between BC Contents And Pragmatics Contents

For the present research, after a thorough perusal of HEC prescribed course contents of business communication skills for BBA (in column A) vis-à-vis contents pragmatics concepts (Column B), the following categories/themes have been extracted, shown in the below table (The table is a reproduction of table 3.1, presented in Chapter 3):

Table

Relevant Contents from Business Communication and Pragmatics

Column A: BC-Skills Course Contents	Column B: Relevant Pragmatics Concepts as per the Theoretical Framework
Language as a means of communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication cycle 	Pragmatics Sociopragmatics, Pragmalinguistics, and Metapragmatics

• Verbal and nonverbal Communication	Cross-Cultural Awareness through Pragmatics
• Benefits of communication for individual and organization	Pragmatic Meaning
Barriers in communication	Pragmatic Context & Shared Knowledge
Interpersonal communication	Speaker's Intentions & Listener's Interpretation
• Conflicts, conflicts resolution, negotiation,	Presupposition
• Politeness	Frame & Schemata
• Bias avoidance	Routine & Genre
• Disclosure and trust	Gricean Cooperative Principles
Cultural variables and cultural diversity	Flouting of Cooperative Principles
Business correspondence	Implicature
• Seven Cs	Entailment
• Prewriting, drafting, and post writing	Politeness
• Audience analysis	Face, Face saving acts, face threatening
• Good news, bad news, neutral news	acts

The contents of the above table have been categorized into thematic heading (mainly taken from the course contents on business communication skills) in the form of thematic heads presented below to ascertain relevance between pragmatics and business communication.

Similarities between pragmatics concepts and BC-Skills have been narrated (in the present study, this narration of similarities is termed as 'Comparative Analysis of BC-Skills Course Contents vis-à-vis Pragmatics Concepts'. A brief discussion on the harmony among concepts of pragmatics and the course contents is presented in the last paragraph under each topical heading.

Language as a means of communication: From the perspective of linguistics, language is a means of communication among human beings, and pragmatics helps in using the

language of real use as per context (Cap, 2010; Cutting, 2002; Crystal, 1987; Lin, 2007; Rose, 2012; Yule, 1996a). Awareness and application of pragmatics are vital in human communication since certain language functions are aptly performed through pragmatic awareness owing to their role in producing communicative competence (Vasquez & Sharpless, 2009, p. 6). Moreover, pragmatics assists in socially appropriate interactions (Crystal, 1987; Kasper, 1997). Besides, the knowledge of pragmatics is helpful in using appropriate language in a communicative event through using “relevant utterances necessary for being considered a competent conversant”, and “interpreting meaning contextually” (Brock & Nagasaka, 2005, p. 18).

From the view of business communication, the use of appropriate language skills is a requirement for business professionals struggling in an extensively competitive world (Orban, 1994). In varied organizational communication, language becomes an important means of sharing messages (Fernández-Souto, Gestal, & Pesqueira, 2015). Hartley and Bruckmann (2002) consider language, in business communication, not merely a “carrier of information” but a vital player in generating various levels of meanings (p. 31). For Clyne (1994) language facilitates wide-ranged human interaction both in common as well as in professional settings.

Comparative analysis: In business communication, language along with its various aspects and dimensions is considered important for successfully conveying a business message. The proficient use of language, therefore, is equally important in business communication. The learners’ capacity enhancement through the knowledge of pragmatics can enable them to effectively cater to the later professional communication requirements. Since pragmatics focuses on language in context, and in business communication context relates with organizational communication policies, audience, purpose, and intended outcomes, produced effects of a message and the use of language accordingly, the knowledge of pragmatics may be of great assistance to business professionals/administrators.

Communication Cycle/Process in Business Communication and Basic Components of Communication in Pragmatics: In business communication, the ‘communication cycle’ comprises: sender, message, receiver, feedback, channel/medium, and context (Murphy, Hildebrandt, & Thomas, 2007; McLean, 2010). The process initiates with an impulse to communicate, following the encoding of a message, and then relaying the message. The receiver decodes the message and responds through some feedback. The communication

process is carried through a certain medium or channel. The communication process/cycle addresses all kinds/forms/channels of communication: oral interactions, written correspondence, visual/nonverbal communication, electronically mediated communication between a sender and audience.

The major relevant pragmatics concepts which supplement the process/cycle of communication are speaker's intentions or intended message and listener's interpretation/expectations, language contents of the message, and pragmatic context. The other relevant concepts with the 'communication cycle' are shared knowledge, presupposition, frame and schemata, routine and genre, Gricean cooperative maxims, flouting of these maxims, entailment, and implicature. Pragmatic context facilitates a sender in physical, social, socio-psychological, and chronological perspectives as human communication is context-dependent (Akerman, 2009; Cutting, 2002; Yule, 1996b). Shared knowledge helps a sender in deciding the size of a message through understanding social groupings, discourse community, interaction patterns, and group memberships (Johnstone, 2002; Yule, 1996). Sender's intentions in a message and the receiver's interpretations are vital in the whole communication process while encoding and decoding a message (Christie, 2000; Schober & Clark, 1989). Presuppositions comprise the covertly conveyed knowledge in a message that a receiver can decode through pragmatic competence (Cap, 2010; Yule, 1996b). The knowledge of presupposition and pragmatic context can assist a receiver in generating meaning while decoding a message. Frame and schemata help a sender to carefully encode, and a receiver to decode it accordingly. Genre may help a sender decide to convey a business message in the form of a letter, report, memorandum, press release, or in any other form, while 'routine' may help in knowing the conventions of sending a particular message. Gricean maxims are helpful in deciding the size, truthfulness, relevance, and explicitness of the contents of a message (Cap, 2010; Yule, 1996a). Implicature assists in decoding a non-existent, extra, obscure, apparently false segment of a message; besides understanding what a sender intends, implies, or means (Brown & Yule, 1983; Christie, 2000; Yule, 1996a).

Comparative Analysis: The comparison reveals that the contents of business communication on sender, message, receiver, feedback, channel/medium, and context are highly relevant with many concepts from pragmatics. The knowledge of speaker's intended meaning, listener's interpretation, pragmatic context and its role in communication transactions, inference, entailment, and implicature, 'said' and 'unsaid' parts of

conversations are some major contents which may assist the students of business studies and business administrators in effective business communication in diverse scenarios.

Barriers in Business Communication: From the perspective of business communication, certain barriers/problems may arise in communication e.g. distortion, physical/technical/social/psychological noise, personal/communal/national differences, selective perception based on expectations/attitudes/beliefs, etc. (Murphy, Hildebrandt, & Thomas, 2007, pp. 4-29). These barriers can be diverse: physical, perceptual, emotional, cultural, linguistic, gender-based, or interpersonal (Hoffmaister, 2010; Katz, 1947; Logsdon & Patterson, 2009; Loscocco & Robinson, 1991; Lynch, 1966). These barriers can destroy or distort the purpose, intent, effects, and output of a conveyed business message.

The problems/barriers in communication can be better coped with through pragmatics awareness (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Félix-Brasdefer & Cohen, 2012; Kasper, 1997; Othman, 2011; Yule, 1996). Awareness and proper application pragmatics contents of sociopragmatics, pragmalinguistics, metapragmatics, pragmatic meaning, pragmatic context, shared knowledge, speaker's intentions, listener's interpretation, presupposition, frame, prototypical version, schemata, implicature, entailment, face can help in coping afore narrated problems and barriers.

Comparative Analysis: Awareness from pragmatics concepts is expected to better sensitize the learners on realizing, understanding, and coping with the barriers likely to occur in in-filed business communication. It is expected that the learners' business communication skills would improve through better handling the communication barriers with the awareness from pragmatics concepts, and the learners would communicate more effectively as business professionals/administrators in diverse professional scenarios.

Interpersonal Communication: In business communication, interpersonal communication and various facets are heavily stressed to develop the learners' communication skills. Interpersonal communication occurs between two persons, groups, organizations, or in any case where two parties are involved. Interpersonal communication is vital in understanding others' tastes, preferences, attitudes, and behaviours in the business arena (Lueg & Finney, 2007, p. 27). Effective interpersonal skills contribute to professional success (Morreale & Pearson, 2008).

Pragmatics concepts on sociopragmatics, pragmalinguistics, and metapragmatics, cross-cultural awareness through pragmatics, pragmatic meaning, pragmatic context and shared knowledge among communicators, sender's intentions and receiver's interpretation, presupposition, frame, schemata, Gricean cooperative maxims, and their flouting, implicature, entailment, politeness, face, face saving acts, face threatening acts are helpful in interpersonal communication (Cutting, 2002; Félix-Brasdefer & Cohen, 2012; Hudson, 2001; Kasper, 1997; Riddiford & Joe, 2010; Yule, 1996a). Sociopragmatics helps in a message formulation and decoding through an understanding of variables like relative power, social distance, the extent of imposition, etc. (Riddiford & Joe, 2010, p. 185; Hudson, 2001, p. 284); Pragmalinguistics assists a sender for lexical and grammatical choices while encoding a message (Stubbs, 2001). Metapragmatics supports understanding intentions and the effects of communication (Mirzaei, Roohani, & Esmaili, 2012). Sociopragmatic, pragmalinguistic, and metapragmatic skills are of vital importance in conflict resolution and negotiation. Interpersonal communication skills also help communicators in deciding when and whom to trust or make a disclosure.

Comparative Analysis: Awareness and application of pragmatics concepts can help in developing and refining allied communication skills (interpersonal skills) such as sociopragmatic skills, pragmalinguistic skills, and metapragmatic skills which are of vital importance in interpersonal communication and related conflict resolution and negotiation. Interpersonal communication skills are widely used in real world professional correspondence and can be aptly developed and refined with explicit knowledge of pragmatics. The knowledge of sociopragmatics facilitates the students and professionals in mastering social factors involved in business communication. Likewise, pragmalinguistics can assist in the usage of linguistics structures, contextual aspects, appropriate message formulation, and required pragmatic competence for business communication. Pragmatics concepts can effectively help out in coping with practical communication problems which normally do occur in intra-organizational and/or inter-organizational conflict situations. These concepts can help business students in interviews, meetings, negotiations, interrogations, and counseling in their later professions.

Cultural Variables and Cultural Diversity: Culture includes lifestyle or patterns of spending life, and relates to the ethnicity of a certain social group as well as social groups devoid of ethnic considerations (Amaya, 2008; Dash, 2004; Stern, 1992). Cultural variables include national cultural variables i.e. education, economics, law, religion, politics,

language, social norms, and individual cultural variables i.e. chronemics/time, proxemics/space, decision making, social manners, acceptable dress, verbal and nonverbal communication (Murphy, Hildebrandt, & Thomas, 2007; Chaney, 2005; Ferraro, 2005). Culture has its impact on individuals' work behaviours (Hofstede, 1980) as cultural variables influence professionals and their way of doing business transactions. "Differences in management style and organizational behaviour can often be traced back to cultural influences" (Frey-Ridgway, 1997, p. 12). Trompenaars (1994) asserts that qualities of a culturally diverse team can be utilized for creativity.

Pragmatics concepts are helpful in understanding cultural diversity through an awareness of culture-specific and cross-cultural differences (Lin, 2007). Conversational patterns of directness/indirectness and 'face wants' can be mastered through pragmatic awareness (Walkó, 2007), and are useful for business professionals with diverse ethnolinguistic backgrounds. The concepts of face and its types, face saving/threatening acts, pre-existing knowledge structures, frame, and schemata can assist in intercultural communication.

Comparative Analysis: Explicit awareness from pragmatics concepts can assist business professionals in understanding the required communication patterns in case of cultural diversity. In linguistics, language and culture are seen as interlinked, and both are considered to be reflected in each other. Pragmatic understanding of language is associated with comprehending culture, especially when business administrators are interacting with the audience from other ethnolinguistic communities. Pragmatics can assist in handling administrative issues with subordinates or bosses who belong to other cultures or sub-cultures. Pragmatics concepts on face, positive face, negative face, face saving acts, face threatening acts, pre-existing structures, schemata, etc. can be of great value in intercultural business communication.

Principles of Business Correspondence (Seven Cs): The most frequently used principles for business correspondence are commonly termed as Seven Cs (completeness, conciseness, consideration, courtesy, clarity, correctness, and concreteness). These principles guide various steps of planning, composing and revising and follow-up, analyses of the audience, occasion, and purpose (Murphy, Hildebrandt, & Thomas, 2007).

From pragmatics, the concepts which relate to size, truthfulness, relevance, and clarity are Gricean cooperative maxims of 'quantity', 'quality', 'relevance', and 'manner'

respectively. For effective communication, business professionals/administrators need to observe Gricean maxims. A sender is recommended to incorporate the cooperative maxims at the time of encoding a message to facilitate the receiver in an appropriate decoding/interpretation. A receiver can interpret/decode a message conveniently if the maxims are observed by the sender; otherwise, the receiver needs to interpret the message through implicature (if the maxims are flouted).

Comparative Analysis: Through comparison of both Seven Cs and pragmatics concepts, it is revealed that Seven Cs of business communication are closely associated with Gricean cooperative maxims of quality, quantity, relevance, and manner. ‘Quantity’ is a reflection of ‘completeness’ and ‘conciseness’, and addresses the size of information. ‘Quality’ relates to ‘correctness’ as it concerns the truth of a message. ‘Relevance’ is associated with ‘completeness’, ‘conciseness’, ‘clarity’, and ‘correctness’. ‘Manner’ concerns the explicitness of a message and is closely related to ‘completeness’. Pragmatics concepts of ‘face’ and its types, face saving/threatening acts, implicature, and schema are associated with ‘courtesy’ and ‘consideration’. The communicative issues related to business dealings e.g. conflicts, conflicts resolution, negotiation, politeness, bias avoidance, disclosure, and trust can be better understood through pragmatics concepts.

Synthesis of Afore Chunks: Since business professionals/administrators perform complex communication tasks along with their other professional responsibilities, therefore the knowledge of pragmatics and its application is useful for them in effectively managing diverse communicative situations. Furthermore, pragmatics can help business professionals in overcoming the communicative hurdles in case the communicators have different pragmatic backgrounds and skills. The investigation of course contents of business communication skills reveals that many of the course contents are similar to pragmatics concepts. The inclusion of pragmatics concepts is expected to benefit business professionals/administrators in managing communication with the audience from different pragmatic backgrounds. Explicit instruction of relevant pragmatics concepts on inter-language, intercommunity, and intercultural communication can facilitate the learners (in this case, business students) in developing appropriate communication competence, which is essential for the business professionals/administrators. The present study also finds that the available empirical researches affirm that multiplicity of communicative features can be better handled through developing pragmatic skills (Riddiford & Joe, 2010). The results

of various studies advocate the systematic development of pragmatic ability among learners through classroom instruction.

The Case of Explicit Instruction of Pragmatics

Explicit instruction of pragmatics enhances one's ability to communicate appropriately. The results of various studies affirm the systematic development of pragmatic ability among learners through classroom instruction. "Pragmatics is studied in the framework of a communicative act or a speech act sequence" (Rose, 2012). Explicit instruction of concepts has proven more effective than implicit instruction (Vasquez & Sharpless, 2009, p. 7). The learners can perform real-life communication more appropriately if explicit pragmatic instruction is included in the course contents (Riddiford & Joe, 2010, p. 204). To produce the desired pragmatic competence among learners, explicit instruction of pragmatics in the classroom is highly beneficial (Kasper, 1997; Kasper & Rose, 1999, 2001). "The education of pragmatics is necessary and important in our globalized world" (Lin, 2007, p. 91). Pragmatics helps the instructors convey "the potentially inflammatory information" related to an entity e.g. why noun plurals, comparative adjectives, or certain tenses are used at a certain point (Swan, 2007, p. 7). Explicit pragmatic instruction can be included in course contents (Riddiford & Joe, 2010, p. 204). Thus, the existing literature affirms that business graduates can be effectively prepared for later real workplace-oriented communication through the explicit inclusion of pragmatic concepts.

Acquisition and afterward application, of pragmatic contents in business communication, can be facilitated through explicit instruction in the classroom, both through teaching and class activities. The learners' already existing L1 pragmatic foundations can be utilized to grow their pragmatic communicative skills, which would consequently help them refine their pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic communicative competence. Exposure to pragmatic variations through explicit instruction would also facilitate the learners in acquiring and applying metapragmatic knowledge. Various linguists have supported the explicit instruction of pragmatics to enhance the acquiring and applying the facilitative and necessary linguistic expertise. Without the explicit instruction of pragmatics contents, the learners may not fully acquire the required pragmatic communicative competence, and desired communicative competence may be either acquired slowly or adversely, both for their academics and their future careers. Explicit instruction of pragmatics may help the learners comprehend and communicate

“contextually appropriate linguistic actions” in both intra-cultural and intercultural communication (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001, p. 31).

Composite Discussion

The course contents of business communication skills aim at preparing future business professionals and administrators for multifaceted business communication roles. Business professionals/administrators perform complex communicative tasks along with their administrative responsibilities. The data reveal that pragmatic knowledge and its application are useful for business professionals in diverse communicative situations. Pragmatics knowledge can help to overcome the communicative hurdles in case the communicators have different pragmatic backgrounds and skills. The investigation of the course contents of “English I”, “English II”, “Oral Communication” and “Business Communication I” reveal the implicit presence of various concepts of pragmatics in these courses. The comparative analysis (of courses of business communication skills and pragmatics concepts) reveals that many of the course contents are comparable to pragmatics concepts. The course items have been identified which can be better taught through adding contents from pragmatics. In the light of analyses and consequent findings, it is expected that the inclusion of pragmatic concepts would benefit business administrators in communicating with the audience from different pragmatics backgrounds for the achievement of their communication objectives as per their corporate roles and responsibilities.

The courses on business communication skills aim at producing professional communicative competence among the students of business studies for their future roles as business administrators, thus the contents of such courses need to be redesigned and modified to prepare learners for the communicative situations they are likely to face during their professional life. Explicit instruction of pragmatics is expected to be beneficial in meeting the real-life communication requirements, the diverse and unfamiliar sociocultural contexts, understanding the socio-cultural communicative difference, and minimizing the misunderstandings in both conveying and receiving business messages. Explicit knowledge of pragmatics may also facilitate in understanding the variations of quantity, quality, relevance, manner, politeness, face, FSAs, FTAs, extroversion, proficiency, verbal and nonverbal features, and many other patterns from community pragmatics. The inclusion of pragmatics in the contents of business communication would familiarize the students with intra-cultural and intercultural communication patterns. It is expected that communication

proficiency developed through explicit instruction of pragmatics in amalgamation with course contents of business communication skills would prepare business students for the required professional communicative competence.

Conclusion

Through the comparative analysis of contents of business communication courses in par with pragmatics concepts, it is also revealed that both disciplines are closely associated and interlinked with each other, and inclusion and explicit instruction of pragmatics can benefit the learners and practitioners of business communication. Instruction of inter-language, inter-community, and inter-cultural pragmatics is valuable in developing appropriate communicative competence, which is essential for business administrators. The present study also finds that many empirical studies affirm that multiplicity of communicative features can be better handled through administering pragmatic knowledge explicitly and consequent pragmatic competence. The existing studies also support the systematic development of pragmatic ability among learners through classroom instruction and activities. The study finds that the inclusion of explicit pragmatics in business communication courses can assist the business students in their later required professional communicative competence.

Appendix-VII: The Procedures and Steps Pertaining to Single Group Experimental Research Design

This appendix includes the procedures and steps pertaining to single group experimental research design (one group pretest-posttest design) comprising: pre-experiment, pretest, treatment, posttest, extraction of factors for evaluation, procedures for quantified evaluation of WDCTs (whereas comparative/exploratory analysis through SPSS and other results and discussions are presented in section 4.2 of Chapter 4). This appendix is subdivided into the following heads:

- a. An overview of research design (phases of the experiment)
- b. Dimensions for comparing pre-tests and post-tests
- c. An overview of lesson plans
- d. Chronology of experiment

a. An Overview of Phases of Experiment

The phases adopted for the experimental design are shown in the figure below:

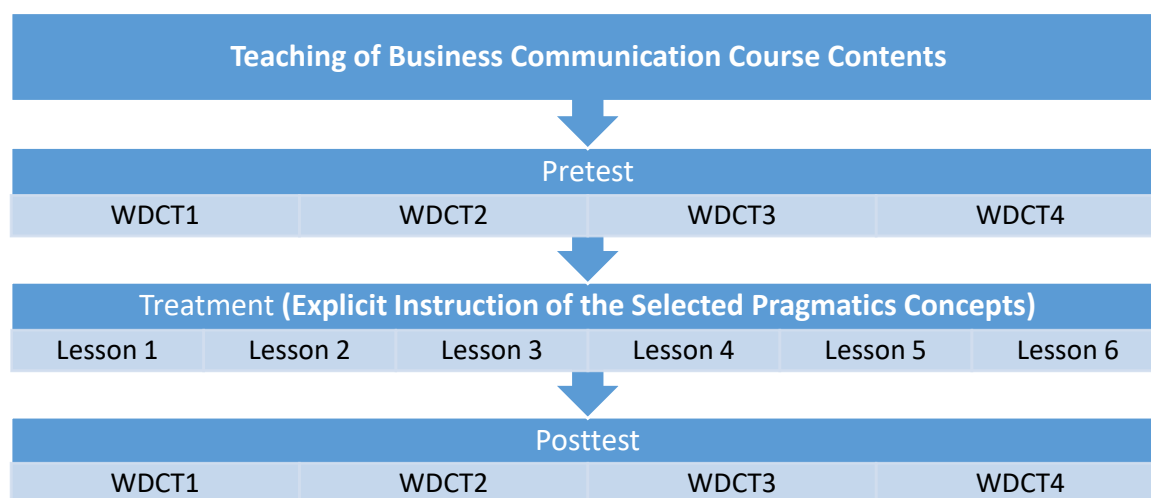


Figure: Phases of single-subject experimental design

b. Dimensions (Factors) for comparing Pre-tests and Post-tests

Ishihara (2009) suggests that teacher-researcher may consider if the learning of pragmatics has occurred among the learners or not as a result of classroom instruction; there must be an “evidence of noticeable pragmatic development or its absence”; themes or tendencies may be deduced or devised whose presence or absence is to be traced among the assessment instrument; cross-case analyses of similar patterns and perspectives of development or non-development emerge as preliminary themes; exceptional case of

particular participants are further examined; the “learners overall linguistic competence may influence their potential level of pragmatic development” (pp. 454-462). The researcher developed a ten dimensions/factors-based rubric for exploratory analysis for comparing pretests and posttests of the learners. Dimensions have been drawn from Swan’s (2007) three components in ‘Pragmatics A’ and Ishihara’s (2009) four parameters of assessing learners’ pragmatic development. In the light of Swan’s (2007) and Ishihara’s (2009) stances on pragmatics and pragmatic development, the impact of explicit instruction of pragmatics on learners’ performance has been measured on the following dimensions/factors:

- xi. Sender’s desired message (intended meaning)
- xii. Consideration of receiver’s expectations
- xiii. Contextually appropriate contents (also in terms of shared knowledge and presupposition)
- xiv. Contextually appropriate language
- xv. Gricean cooperative maxims
- xvi. Manageability of flouting of the maxims through implicature etc. by the audience
- xvii. Consideration of audience’s pre-existing knowledge structure, frame, script, schemata
- xviii. Sociopragmatic, pragmalinguistic and metapragmatic aspects
- xix. Cross-Cultural/ cross-communal/ interpersonal awareness and its expression
- xx. Politeness, face, face saving acts, avoidance of face threatening acts

For the present research, three evaluators evaluated each WDCT according to the rubric based on the above-narrated factors with marks 1-5 for each factor. For the analysis of data through SPSS, the mean of the scores granted by three evaluators has been used.

Written DCTs have been used for data collection from students since the students are more prone to prepare and demonstrate their best efforts for written examination sort of assessments. An experimental study may aim to develop learners’ pragmalinguistic, sociolinguistic and sociopragmatic skills to enable them to generate context-appropriate discourse; learners’ these skills can be measured to assess their learning performance (Ishihara, 2009). Written evaluations are in more tangible form. More objectivity can be expected in terms of the grading of WDCTs. WDCTs are also easy to analyze through SPSS.

c. An Overview of Lesson Plans

As per the theoretical framework of the present study, based on Swan's (2007) 'Pragmatics A' and 'Pragmatics B', six lessons were planned mainly on the course contents related to (1) communication cycle, (2) Seven Cs, (3) aspects and dimension of communication, (4) interpersonal/intercultural communication:

1. Introduction to pragmatics (sender's intended meaning, receiver's interpretation, the role of context, language of use)
2. Grice's cooperative principle and cooperative maxims
3. Presupposition, implicature, entailment, 'said' and 'unsaid' part of communication
4. Sociopragmatics, pragmalinguistics, and metapragmatics and their role and contribution in professional communication
5. Frame, schemata, routine, genre
6. Politeness and various aspects of face: positive face, negative face, face saving acts, face threatening acts

d. Chronology of Experiment

Pretest: The participants of the single experimental group were assigned four WDCTs as a pretest in two consecutive classes of one and half hours each. The WDCTs were relevant to the course contents. The participants were asked to write a persuasive sales letter, an apology letter, a memorandum of appreciation, and a memorandum report as per the provided case studies (attached as Appendix-IV).

Treatment Period: As per the contents of 'Theoretical Framework' of the present research and 'Adapted Model of Comparative Contents Analysis' and in the light of Swan's (2007) 'Pragmatics A' and "Pragmatics B" and Yule's (1996a) notions of pragmatics, lessons were prepared for the treatment period. The treatment period comprised six classes of one and a half hours each, with one hour for the teaching of a model lesson and a half hour for other class activities. The lessons during the treatment period also included the revision of so-far-taught course contents along with some selected contents from pragmatics.

Communication cycle, Seven Cs, aspects, and dimensions of communication (levels and kinds of communication, intercultural and cross-cultural communication, organizational plans for business messages) were selected from business communication.

Pragmatics contents on speaker's intentions, presuppositions, frame, listener's interpretation, differences as barriers/noise, and shared context were taught relating them to communication cycle and components i.e. sender, message, receiver, feedback, channel/medium, and context. Gricean cooperative maxims of quality, quantity, relevance, and manner were taught with seven principles of business communication i.e. completeness, conciseness, consideration, concreteness, clarity, courtesy, and correctness. Pragmatics contents on schemata, frame, prototypical version, script, cultural schemata, direct and indirect meaning were taught along with course contents on culture, cross-cultural differences, intercultural communication, interpersonal communication, verbal and nonverbal communication. Contents on inference, reference, referring expression, presupposition, entailment, co-text, and context were also related to course contents. Overall of the relation of pragmatics with course contents was also discussed. The experiment period was of about one month.

Posttest: The four WDCTs according to the provided case studies were assigned to the participants of the experimental group.