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| C:\Users\CESA\Downloads\image002.jpg | **COMMERCIAL EDUCATION SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA**  **PERIODIC DISCUSSION PAPER No.54[[1]](#footnote-1)\*** | **September**  **2023** |

**NEEDS ANALYSIS OF BUSINESS ENGLISH MAJORS IN CHINA IN THE NEW ERA**

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**Introduction**

Since China joined the World Trade Organization in 2001, industries in China have participated in international activities more frequently, and the demand for versatile talents with both high English proficiency and business practice abilities has also increased significantly. As a result, students' enthusiasm for learning Business English has increased. To meet the needs of the labour market and promote the sustainable development, many universities and colleges have established Business English majors or related departments, as important bases for cultivating high-quality business English talents with compound abilities. The Business English major is always a foreign language major established to meet the demand for versatile foreign language talents in the context of opening up to the outside world and economic and social development (Wang, 2021).

**Needs Analysis**

However, with the development of economic globalization and the advancement of the information technology revolution in the 21st century, interdisciplinary fields continue to emerge, and the demand for foreign language talents in society has become diversified. The demand for single foreign language graduates who only mastered a certain foreign language has significantly decreased, because they can no longer fully meet the needs of the developing society (Wang, 2021). Through a survey on the needs analysis of vocational Business English major students, it is found that business English major students mainly work in small and medium-sized foreign trade enterprises, with three main job categories:

1. business reception positions (foreign secretary/foreign administrative assistant/international telephone customer service/foreign hotel service personnel);
2. international business operation positions (foreign trade salesperson/cross-border e-commerce salesperson/foreign trade salesperson/ international shipping agents);
3. business related foreign marketing and management positions. Currently, these enterprises most need talents who are proficient in using foreign trade English skills, familiar with foreign trade processes, and able to proficiently use various international trade platforms, understand data analysis, product release, customer maintenance, international market development, and other skills, the so-called talents with compound skills (Zhong, 2021).

The need for inter-discipline talents has broken the old concept of traditional foreign language talent cultivation and established a new talent cultivation goal, requiring foreign language talents to become a new type of foreign language talents with solid basic foreign language skills, broad knowledge range, strong innovative thinking ability, and application ability. The 'National Standard for Business English' focuses on talent development in terms of quality, knowledge, and ability. It has set a clear goal for Business English major cultivation: The Business English majors should have solid basic English skills, international perspective and humanistic literacy, mastery of basic theories and knowledge in linguistics, economics, management, and other related fields, familiarity with international business rules and practices, English application ability, business practice ability, cross-cultural communication ability, thinking and innovation ability, and self-learning ability, who can engage in international business work.[[2]](#footnote-2)

Firstly, students must possess comprehensive application skills in English, including listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translating. Business English is a socially functional language that belongs to the branch of English and is mainly used in various international business activities. Since the 1980s, China has seen fast economic and social development, and China's participation in international political, technological, cultural, social, and other activities has become increasingly frequent, with even deeper and wider cooperation and communication with the international market. Many people started to learn English knowledge and skills for business purpose. Students of Business English majors should acquire abilities to understand written and spoken English information, transmit opinions, attitudes, thoughts, emotions, and other information in written English language, and can smoothly carry out translation or interpretation work with the assistance of professional tools, efficiently transmit correct information to international financial institutions or enterprises (Chen, 2023).

Secondly, students of Business English majors must possess core business practical skills, including marketing, business negotiation, e-commerce, international trade, as well as general occupational skills such as business etiquette, secretarial skills, and public speaking ability, which are necessary skills for their future jobs.

Thirdly, students should acquire international vision and cross-cultural communication skills. With the further development of globalization and the increasingly close international cooperation, in the international context of global connectivity of all things, both social development and national prosperity require more responsible, capable, and innovative international talents with an international perspective. Students who will be engaged in industries such as finance, foreign trade, foreign investment, and business translation in the future need to have the ability to communicate fluently in various business environments in business English; Be able to effectively communicate with English speakers from different countries through the appropriate combination of language and nonverbal communication strategies, and successfully complete communication tasks and work in an international practical environment; Be able to correctly use communication strategies to express emotions and attitudes in cross-cultural communication; Always grasp the influence of culture on communication topics, without any pragmatic errors (Yang, 2023).

Students who will be engaged in industries such as finance, foreign trade, foreign investment, and business translation in the future need to have the ability to communicate fluently in various business environments in business English (Wang, 2023); Ensure that both parties can accurately grasp the information provided by the other party and achieve the development goal of mutual benefit and win-win situation (Chen, 2023); The ability to accurately grasp the needs of foreign customers, provide good after-sales service, and improve customer satisfaction.

Fourthly, students’ individual sustainable development ability plays an important role in their career. This may include abilities like self-learning and management ability, teamwork ability, environmental adaptability, problem-solving ability, pressure resistance ability, overall decision-making ability, flexibility, and innovation ability, etc.

Finally, in the digital economy era, data analysis capabilities have become particularly important. In the information age, various commercial activities are gradually expanding from offline transactions to online transactions. Individuals participating in modern business activities must possess information technology application abilities, such as the ability to analyze customers' consumption psychology, cultural customs, professional background, consumption potential, etc. by using big data (Wang, 2022); The ability to conduct research on domestic and international markets with the help of data analysis software and carry out appropriate product promotion and promotional activities. Business English majors need to possess information searching skills, master the application skills of searching engines such as Baidu and Google, and understand and learn data analysis software specialized for foreign trade platforms. On the one hand, before participating in business activities, practitioners need to collect and analyze information about their target consumers, enterprises, and market data to lay the foundation for subsequent work. On the other hand, the application of 5G technology has driven the development of e-commerce. Many enterprises have participated in cross-border e-commerce and launched various online shopping apps. Business English majors must master the ability to introduce and sell products to global consumers on online platforms.

**Conclusion**

The market has been constantly developing and changing for a long time. With the growth of the number of business English graduates, society and enterprises will put forward higher requirements for the comprehensive quality and ability of vocational Business English graduates. The teaching of Business English majors and courses in vocational colleges must keep up with the times, update teaching concepts and talent cultivation goals according to market demand, build a high-level teaching team and a new assessment and evaluation system, provide guarantees for the cultivation of high-quality and versatile talents, and better play the social service function of universities and colleges.

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1. **\* These papers are for internal discussion within CESA on topics related to the CESA Mission.** [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. English Teaching Guidance Sub Committee of the Teaching Guidance Committee for Foreign Languages and Literature Majors in Higher Education Institutions of the Ministry of Education. 2020. *Teaching Guide for Undergraduate Foreign Language and Literature Majors in Ordinary Higher Education Institutions (Part 1): Teaching Guide for English Majors*. Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)