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An Analysis of the Writing Module Taught to the MA FL Students at EFLU Hyderabad

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ABSTRACT

NEP 2020 highlights the importance of integrating employability skills into the University curriculum to make education more relevant and adequate for facing the challenges of the 21st century. In line with this, the EFL University, Hyderabad, introduced a new course on Communicative English for its postgraduate students of various Foreign Languages (FL) in the academic year 2022-2023. Spread across two semesters, this course contained a writing skills module dedicated to enhancing students' employability skills by helping them develop e-portfolios showcasing their strengths and potential to perform in a given job role. This study analyses the efficacy of the writing module by using classroom observation, survey responses and teacher and student interviews as primary tools of data collection. A group of 20 students from Semester 1 of the course participated in the study along with the two co-instructors of the writing module. The study found that learners perceived e-portfolios to be a challenging yet motivating and rewarding approach to assess and improve their English writing skills, which are needed to enhance their employability skills to tackle the nuances of professional communication.

KEYWORDS: Communicative English, e-portfolios, writing skills, employability

INTRODUCTION

The ability to express one's thoughts persuasively through writing is at the heart of the application and selection process of getting a job and entering the professional world. Despite having the necessary qualifications and skill sets, if students fail to showcase them and present them persuasively and strategically, they may not end up getting the job they desired. Therefore, preparing postgraduates who are at the threshold of entering the professional space is essential.

In line with NEP 2020 recommendations, the English and Foreign Languages University (EFLU), Hyderabad, engaged in curricular renewal and added courses that focus on 'Workplace readiness' and employability in its basket of courses under skill enhancement. As part of this curricular experimentation, the students pursuing a Master's degree in various Foreign Languages (FL) were introduced to a course titled Communicative English I and II in 2022. This course focused on professional writing genres, keeping in mind the learner profiles and their motivations for learning English as aspiring FL professionals. This study used the feedback method to seek learners' opinions on the efficacy of the course, along with gathering teachers' input via personal interviews.

The Communicative English course was offered by two instructors in the academic year 2022-23. The first batch of students to take the course (in Semesters I and II) comprised 31 students from the MA Arabic, MA French, MA Spanish, and MA Japanese departments. The current study analysed the learners' writing samples from Semester I and their course feedback to explore whether the Communicative English course attained its proposed objectives in developing writing skills for workplace readiness.

This study is significant because it delves into an under-researched area of gauging the efficacy of a customised, institute-specific course introduced based on recent policy guidelines that focuses on workplace readiness and employability. Since teaching skills that prepare university students for the job market is such an integral part of modern-day curricula, it is important to conduct timely evaluations of the efficacy of such skill-enhancement courses, especially by understanding learners' engagement. The Communicative English course at EFLU has not been viewed from such a critical lens before, making

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the current paper one of the few studies to have analysed the utility and learner satisfaction, and perceived growth at the end of a course.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Gaining proficiency in writing skills is important in almost all professions that require documentation, especially in the current era. Possessing strong writing abilities is essential for successfully entering any modern workplace. Zhu (2004) highlights how the business world demands that potential employees possess excellent writing skills, considering them as clients of the corporate world.

According to Hyland (2003), language proficiency is closely linked to writing skill improvement. Proficient ESL writers produce texts that are cohesive, logically structured, engaging, and well-organised, showcasing a diverse vocabulary and mastery of mechanical conventions (Jacobs & L, 1981; Hall, 1988, as cited in Fareed et al., 2016). Nunan (1989) argues that writing is a complex cognitive activity that requires learners to manage various factors, ranging from their academic background and personal interests to different psychological, linguistic, and cognitive phenomena (Dar & Khan, 2015; Haider, 2012, as cited in Fareed et al., 2016).

Writing presents challenges as it involves stimulating thinking, demanding concentration, and the organisation of ideas, thereby nurturing skills in summarisation, analysis, and critical evaluation (Maghsoudi and Haririan, 2013, p.60, as cited in Selvaraj & Aziz, 2019). The existing literature suggests that the primary hurdle faced by ESL students in completing writing tasks is their lack of proficiency in English, lack of genre awareness and rhetorical situations, inability to develop an authorial voice and persuasion. To compose well-structured writing, it is not sufficient to have only a wide range of vocabulary and knowledge of grammar rules; instead, they need to have the ability to self-regulate their cognitive resources, improve thinking skills and develop flow and coherence in their text composition. Writing in English can be overwhelming for students because of its complex nature, leaving them uncertain about the approach to take. Many students struggle to generate and organise ideas, leading to difficulties in producing cohesive writing pieces, especially because their previous experience of writing in the English classroom is product-driven. On the other hand, the process approach to teaching writing focuses on working through multiple drafts, celebrates false starts, incentivises revisions, rewards recursivity and evaluates writing beyond accuracy-based rubrics, focusing on form, format and punctuation (Graham & Sandmel, 2011, p. 396-397).

It is common knowledge that many studies have focused on the lack of accuracy in ESL writing, highlighting gaps in knowledge surrounding grammar, conventions, punctuation, capitalisation, and spelling (Ghabool et al., 2012, p.130; Ramasamy & Abdul Aziz, 2018, p.2266, as cited in Selvaraj & Aziz, 2019). However, ESL writing goes much beyond this. Students encounter complex problems that are both cultural and linguistic in nature (Normazidah, Lie, & Hazita, 2012, p.41, as cited in Selvaraj & Aziz, 2019), which can diminish their interest in writing and lead to demotivation.

The use of electronic portfolios or e-portfolios to document student learning has been widely discussed in research literature. Comprising various digital modes or artefacts of gauging learning, such as cases, reports, shared documents, recorded learning episodes or reflections, etc., e-portfolios present an engaging and authentic means of assessing learning (Yang et al., 2015; Walland & Shaw, 2022). The writing module of the Communicative English course studied in the current paper makes use of the process approach, and e-portfolios are particularly effective for evaluating such learning as they assess selection, reflection, rationalisation, and evaluation, along with the product of those processes (Winsor and Ellefson, pp. 68–69, 1995, as cited in Walland & Shaw, 2022). Not only do e-portfolios facilitate assessment, but they also allow learners the space to monitor their progress and critically reflect on their progress and teacher feedback (Barbera, 2009 and Crisp, 2012, as cited in Yang et al., 2015).

Effective communication is one of the most desirable skills in a prospective employee (Anderson & Surman, 2007, as cited in Al-Musalli, 2019). Studies have highlighted the importance of offering soft-skills training along with exposure to real-world projects and communication setups to enhance learners' employability (Tilve et al., 2026, p. 379). As per an ETS India report titled "English, AI, and Talent in India's Workforce," having valid proof of English proficiency (as a university transcript) is gradually becoming an important factor informing hiring decisions (Singh, 2026). Thus, it is of utmost importance that we teach business communication skills to our learners. Reiterating the findings of Beer and McMurrey (1997), Anderson and Surman (2007) mention that speaking and writing effectively are among the primary factors

of employees' job performance that employers gauge (Al-Musalli, 2019). Calonge and Shah (2016, as cited in Al-Musalli, 2019) mention that there continues to be a mismatch between the skills possessed by undergraduates and the skills that potential employers require. They argue that proper email etiquette, sentence structure or other communication skills should not be left for the employer to teach fresh graduates; the college curriculum should equip learners with the basic and practical professional skills.

Written communication, in particular, is often regarded as a high requisite skill in the professional sphere (Moore and Morton, 2015). The objective of university curriculum should be to reduce the gap between educational settings or provisions and industry or workplace needs (Jackson, 2013; Analoui, 1993, as cited in Moore and Morton, 2015). This necessitates a curriculum's inclusion of courses or modules that focus on strengthening learners' business correspondence, which includes writing letters, emails, memos, meeting minutes, agendas, reports, and other modern-day skills like resumes, newsletters, etc. In the field research done by Marjanovikj-Apostolovski (2019) to understand whether college curricula contribute to enhancing undergraduate students' employability, it was noted that business correspondence and writing skills are deemed important by learners, but remain underrepresented in coursebooks (p. 94). The emphasis is often on honing learners' speaking skills. Consequently, learners struggle in the workplace, and often in entering the workforce itself, considering how competitive and performance-driven the current job market is.

Context of the Study

This study aims to analyse to what extent the writing modules of the Level 1 and Level 2 courses on Communicative English introduced by EFLU Hyderabad were useful for its postgraduate students pursuing Foreign Languages. The study largely takes a qualitative approach, where data collected from students and instructors form a major part of the data analysis. Furthermore, learners' writing samples from their semester 1 were considered to gauge whether their performance was in line with the curricular expectations.

Research Questions

This study attempts to answer the following Research Questions:

RQ 1: What are the primary objectives (in terms of writing skills) that learners want to achieve by the end of the course?

RQ 2: Did the course enable learners to reach their respective learning goals in terms of writing skills?

RQ 3: What are the common errors learners make while writing resumes and cover letters?

RQ 4: What are some ways in which the course on Communicative English can be made more useful for the FL learners at EFLU Hyderabad?

Participants of the Study

MA first-year students (academic year 2022-23) enrolled in different Foreign Languages formed the target group for this study. They were drawn from different departments of Foreign Languages such as Arabic, French, German, Japanese and Spanish at EFLU Hyderabad.

The class strength was 31 students in the first semester and 30 in the second semester. The class comprised 22 male and 9 female students; however, one female student eventually discontinued the course. The participants were aged between 21 and 26 years and possessed varying levels of English proficiency, ranging from A2 to B2, based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

Research Instruments

Since this study aims to evaluate the efficacy of a part of the Communicative English course (the writing module), it made use of three primary research tools: LexTutor and Grammarly analysis of participants' end-semester writing samples from Semester I, quantitative and qualitative analysis of participants' responses in a survey questionnaire, and analysis of the data gathered from personal interviews with a select group of students and the two course instructors.

End-semester writing samples

While the efficacy of the writing module of the Communicative English course is gauged for two semesters, the end-of-semester writing samples of only Semester I have been analysed for this study. The learners were asked to create an e-portfolio in Semester I, which included their resumes, cover letters (if applying for a job), statements of purpose (if applying for further education), and their LinkedIn profiles. It is important to note that although the submission happened at the end of the semester, the students continued to develop their e-portfolios throughout the semester within a formative

framework of encouraging ongoing feedback and revisions. Students worked through multiple drafts and engaged in self-, peer-, and instructor feedback throughout to arrive at their final portfolio.

Questionnaires

A 31-item questionnaire created using Google Forms was circulated among the students in the class WhatsApp Group. The questions included in the questionnaire covered question types such as short-answer, long-answer, multiple-choice, and Likert scale questions. The questionnaire was divided into four sections, each tapping into different aspects of the writing module of the course on Communicative English. The sections were titled 'Learner Profile,' 'Semester I Course Feedback,' 'Semester II Course Feedback,' and 'General Feedback on Writing Module.'

Personal Interviews

Personal interviews with the two course instructors and four selected participants from the student group were conducted through telephonic interactions. The interviews were recorded and analysed to measure the effectiveness of the course introduced at the postgraduate level at EFLU.

Data Collection

Course feedback and reviews usually occur at the end of a course. Hence, all the data collected for this study reflected the perspective of the learners and course instructors. Apart from the feedback gathered through Google Form responses and telephonic interviews, 20 end-term submissions from the target group of participants were analysed for content, coherence, rhetorical awareness, accuracy, and overall effectiveness. The writing genres included resumes, cover letters, and LinkedIn profiles.

Since gauging their writing skills based on resumes and LinkedIn profiles could be limiting because of the nature of these genres, cover letters/statements of purpose played a significant role in gauging participants' writing skills. However, the researchers devised a means of integrating all three submissions to gauge the overall effectiveness of the writing e-portfolios submitted by participants at the end of Semester I.

Tools for Data Analysis

This study collected data through online feedback forms, personal interviews, and analysis of writing samples. The samples were analysed using descriptive statistics, and conclusions were drawn based on the feedback forms and interview responses using inferential statistics. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the data. Apart from finding the average (mean of the collected data), two other significant digital tools were used for data analysis: LexTutor and Grammarly.

Descriptive Statistics

The average performance of participants (their lexical and grammatical knowledge, rubric-based performance, etc.) is recorded by parsing their submissions through the two digital tools, LexTutor and Grammarly. Their scores in both tests were recorded, and a class average score was calculated. Attempts were made to track the participants' performance in terms of the heterogeneity that largely defines this group. Writing assessment rubrics by Cumming (1997), East and Young (2007), Mansilla, Duraisingh, Wolfe, and Haynes (2016), and Rezaei and Lovorn (2010) were integrated with LexTutor and Grammarly scores to create an assessment rubric for this course on Communicative English. The same rubric was used to grade the participants' e-portfolios.

The assessment rubric used for the study was adapted from existing frameworks and checklists that were validated by previous scholars, thus ensuring its construct and content validity. For instance, categories of purposefulness, integration and critical awareness were adapted from Mansilla et al. (2016), which, in turn, are based on the Targeted Assessment Framework developed by Mansilla and Duraisingh in 2007. The argument and mechanics categories were adapted from the assessment rubric used in Rezaei and Lovorn's 2010 study. The analytic, holistic and primary trait categories have been drawn from Cumming's 1997 work. The use of Lextutor and Grammarly is partially inspired by East and Young's emphasis on lexis, grammar and spelling in the rubrics they assessed in their 2007 study. The current assessment rubric was subjected to a thorough review by one of the course instructors who taught the participants. The rubric was used with previous iterations of the course for evaluation purposes. It was also adapted by another scholar for the School of ELE, EFLU, Hyderabad, for her research. Moreover, the items used (apart from LexTutor and Grammarly) were synthesised from already established frameworks and closely monitored by a senior researcher, which reduces the threat to data integrity.

The following table shows the assessment rubric created (by the researchers) for this study using the rubrics proposed by the scholars mentioned above.

Table 1. Writing Assessment Rubric

WRITING ASSESSMENT RUBRIC				
Range-Score (marker)	**Naive-1 (lacks clarity)**	**Novice-2 (nascent grasp)**	**Apprentice-3 (expertise)**	**Master-4 (sophistication)**
Purposefulness (clarity about aims and audience)				
Argument (understanding and use of relevant information)				
Integration (capacity to integrate perspectives)				
Critical Awareness (consolidation skills)				
Analytic (unity, coherence, flow of ideas, formality level)				
Holistic (merits/strengths of the writing)				
Primary Trait (individualistic trait of writing)				
Mechanics (errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling)				
LexTutor*				
Grammarly**				

***LexTutor scores:** K1-K3 (Naive); K4-K5 (Novice); K6-K7 (Apprentice); >K8 (Master)
****Grammarly scores:** 0-40 (Naive); 41-40 (Novice); 61-80 (Apprentice) & 81-100 (Master)

LexTutor

The Compleat Lexical Tutor, a free online platform available at www.lextutor.ca, provides a range of corpus-based tools focusing on vocabulary's role in language learning for English, French, and Spanish. These tools promote inductive learning. Tom Cobb, from the University of Quebec at Montreal, Canada, created the website with a mission to facilitate "data-driven learning on the web" (Cobb, 1997, as cited in Sadeq Alaghbary, 2018). One of the tools on LexTutor, VocabProfile, allows users to determine the number of words in a text from four different frequency levels: (1) the most common 1000 word families, (2) the second 1000, (3) the Academic Word List, and (4) words not found in the other lists. In the current study, VocabProfile was used to check the word families that participants used in their writings.

Grammarly

Grammarly (www.grammarly.com), an American cloud-oriented typing aid, evaluates English texts for various errors, such as spelling, grammar, punctuation, clarity, engagement, delivery, and plagiarism. Founded in 2009 by Alex Shevchenko, Max Lytvyn, and Dmytro Lider, Grammarly is not only useful for writers, editors, students, and employees, but it also serves as an excellent pedagogic tool and plagiarism checker that generates reports on a particular writing sample's accuracy, coherence, appeal, authenticity, etc. (Grammarly Inc., 2022).

Grammarly is an Automated Writing Evaluation (AWE) tool that checks the language of written work and scores it on a 100-point scale. While scholars agree that academic writing extends beyond grammar, punctuation, and spelling, Grammarly vouches that it indeed goes beyond these surface-level issues and evaluates engagement, clarity and delivery issues. In their study, Qub'a et al. (2024) found that while Grammarly results may not be completely accurate in flagging errors, they still have a high precision rate of error detection if combined with the feedback from academic advisors to limit inconsistencies. In her 2025 review paper, Hien Thi Phan mentions how Grammarly can be used to gauge the accuracy aspect of the Complexity-Accuracy-Fluency (CAF) framework of evaluating writing quality. She suggests that Grammarly can be an effective tool to assess surface-level accuracy rather than fluency or higher-order complexity in L2 writing (Phan, 2025).

Having established the limitations of Grammarly as an assessment tool, it must be mentioned here that this study used Grammarly to solely evaluate the accuracy of surface-level language nuances in participants' writing samples, that is, their statements of purpose.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

RQ 1: What are the primary objectives (in terms of writing skills) that learners want to achieve by the end of the course?

The course participants had various expectations of the Communication English course. Some common expectations were as follows:

- Improving overall English proficiency, including speaking, writing, listening, and reading skills.
- Enhancing confidence in communication with others in different situations.
- Learning effective communication techniques.
- Gaining skills in writing applications, reports, CVs, resumes, and other forms of communication is important for jobs and academics.
- Improving grammar, vocabulary, and writing ability.
- Inculcating the ability to construct well-structured and coherent written pieces.
- Brushing up on Academic English and gaining credits for the course.

The course seemed to have fulfilled many of these expectations and provided valuable insights beyond teaching writing, including cover letters and letters of recommendation. Some participants were initially unsure about the course content, but they ended up having a positive and enriching experience.

RQ 2: Did the course enable learners to reach their respective learning goals in terms of writing skills?

The e-portfolios submitted by the participants at the end of the first semester had two main submissions:

1. A cover letter or statement of purpose (based on whether it is a corporate or academic position they are applying for)
2. A résumé or LinkedIn profile

For the cover letter/statement of purpose, Grammarly and LexTutor tests were performed, apart from grading in terms of the other parameters of the assessment rubric (Table 1). However, Grammarly and LexTutor tests were omitted from the Resume/LinkedIn profiles. Hence, scores were reflected as '0' for these categories in the analysis. Thus, based on the rubric shown in Table 1, there are 10 parameters of evaluation for Cover Letters, with the scores divided into four levels: Naive (1 point), Novice (2 points), Apprentice (3 points), and Master (4 points). Therefore, the maximum score that a participant could obtain was 40. Similarly, for the evaluation of resumes, the first eight parameters (excluding LexTutor and Grammarly) were considered for assessment, making the maximum attainable score 32. The following table shows the individual scores of each of the 20 participants.

Table 2. Participants' performance in end-semester e-portfolio task

Participant	Cover Letter Data		Resume Data	
Code	Total Score (Out Of 40)	Percentage (%)	Total Score (Out of 32)	Percentage (%)
P1	39	97.5	32	100
P2	27	67.5	18	56.25
P3	35	87.5	18	56.25
P4	38	95	22	68.75
P5	26	65	21	65.62
P6	39	97.5	21	65.62
P7	32	80	26	81.25
P8	33	82.5	25	78.12
P9	32	80	27	84.37
P10	32	80	28	87.5
P11	26	65	24	75
P12	26	65	23	71.87
P13	25	62.5	31	96.87
P14	27	67.5	22	68.75
P15	40	100	32	100
P16	34	85	24	75
P17	32	80	16	50
P18	40	100	27	84.37
P19	35	87.5	23	71.87
P20	36	90	21	65.62

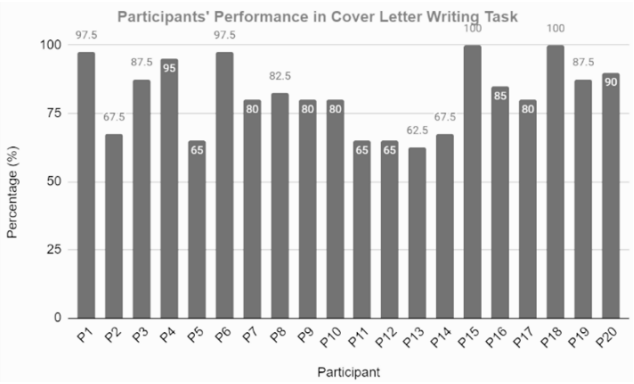


Figure 1: Participants' performance in cover letter writing task

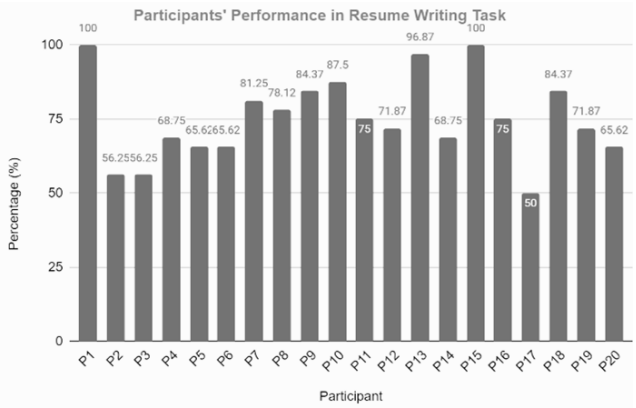


Figure 2: Participants' performance in resume writing task

The average score obtained by participants in the cover letter (out of 40) was 32.65, with the highest and lowest scores being 40 and 25, respectively. This translates to a lowest score of 65.5% in the cover letter writing task, indicating that the participants were able to write satisfactory cover letters at the end of the semester. On the other hand, the average score participants obtained in the resume writing task was 24.05 (out of 32). The highest and lowest scores obtained were 32 and 16, respectively, suggesting that a minimum of 50% was scored by all students in both genres. It is interesting to note that the student with the lowest score in the cover letter task (P13) scores the second-highest mark in the resume writing task, and the student scoring the lowest in the resume writing task (P17) performs fairly well in the cover letter writing task. This suggests that students may have different strengths and interests in terms of writing open-ended pieces such as cover letters and structuring and organising details as in the case of a resume.

In the feedback form, when the question of 'expectations from the course' was posed to the participants, they opined that their primary expectation from the course was that it would help them enhance their English fluency, confidence in communication, writing, listening, and reading skills. Many had a lot of expectations because of the lack of similar classes during their prior education. The course included a wide range of skills, such as writing application letters, reports, CVs, and resumes, group discussions, and public speaking, all of which were deemed valuable for job prospects in both academia and industry. Participants aimed to improve their grammar, vocabulary, and overall language proficiency, other than fulfilling their credit requirements. There was a balance of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in this group. Although they were students of Foreign Languages, they were highly motivated to polish their English language skills and acknowledged the potential of skill transfer to other languages. Some had no specific expectations but hoped to enhance their academic English, while others looked forward to learning skills such as writing letters of recommendation and cover letters. The course was viewed as uniquely designed and helpful for future endeavours.

Based on the data presented in Table 2, we can make the following conclusions about learners' performance in the end-of-semester writing prompt and its underlying impact on their individual language learning goals:

- The two highest performers scored a full hundred in the 10-item assessment rubric, whereas even the lowest performer scored 62.5% in the cover letter writing task, making the class average as high as 81.75% for this task.
- In the resume writing task, the two highest performers scored a full hundred in the 8-item assessment rubric, whereas even the lowest performer scored 50%, making the class average a decent 75.15%.

Thus, it can be said that at the end of the first semester, the participants were in a good position in terms of knowledge acquisition, practice, and performance.

RQ 3: What are the common errors learners make while writing resumes and cover letters?

Parsing participants' cover letters through Grammarly and closely reading them and the resumes for errors manually helped identify the following common errors in their submissions:

Objective in resume: Some participants omitted the section on objectives, while a few others misinterpreted its meaning and filled the section with

what the Job Description said. Another section of participants attempted to write the profile bio/objective but failed to make it concise and accurate. An example of such an 'Objectives' section lacking refinement is provided below:

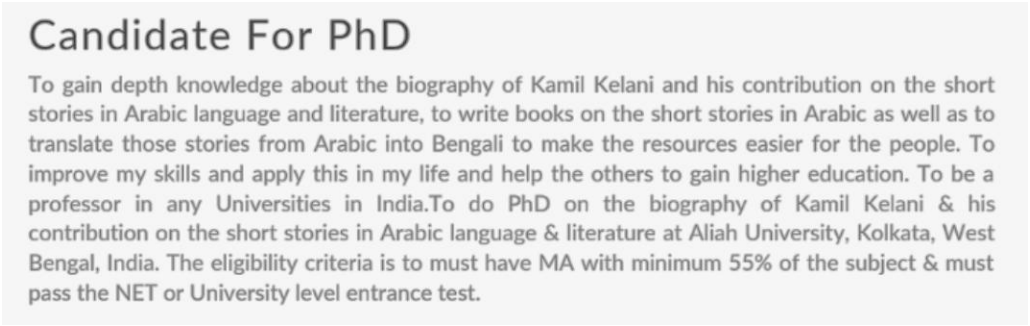


Figure 3. Sample of an objective section in a resume

Grammar and syntax: Tense concord, grammatical irregularities, sentence structure and syntax errors, etc., were common markers in the cover letters of these participants. This was also evident in the 'Objectives' section of their resumes. The same was also noticeable in the overall accuracy scores for Grammarly.

Lexical errors: Although this is not a prominent or recurring pattern across the writings of the participant group, there was one particular instance when a participant used the word 'marinate' in the incorrect context, perhaps to refer to a setup where he/she gets to use all the skills he/she has gathered so far. Apart from that, participants exhibited a fairly rich lexical stock, using up to K-16 and K-17 level words in their cover letters.

Table 3. LexTutor word levels used by participants

Participant Code	LexTutor Word Levels
P1	K1-K8
P2	K1-K5, K7-K9, K16
P3	K1-K8, K10, K11
P4	K1-K4, K7, K8, K12
P5	K1-K8, K10, K13
P6	K1-K9
P7	K1-K13, K17
P8	K1-K9, K12, K15
P9	K1-K8, K10, K11
P10	K1-K6
P11	K1-K4, K6-K8, K13
P12	K1-K5, K8
P13	K1-K4, K6, K8, K12, K14
P14	K1-K10
P15	K1-K8
P16	K1-K6, K8, K16, K20
P17	K1-K9, K13, K14
P18	K1-K10, K12, K17
P19	K1-K6, K8, K9
P20	K1-K5, K7, K9. K11

Format and template: Apart from the above-listed errors, minor inconsistencies in font style, font size, spacing, and capitalisation, etc., were observed in the submissions of some of the participants.

Coherence and rhetorical awareness: While participants maintained structural coherence through chronological or thematic progressions, there were instances where they would include the job description in their objectives section, or cite irrelevant personal interests and skills that do not exactly add value to their professional appeal.

RQ 4: What are some ways in which the course on Communicative English can be made more useful for the FL learners at EFLU Hyderabad?

Based on the data collected from personal interviews with the two course instructors and four student participants, the following are some suggestions for making the 'Communicative English' course more useful for MA FL students.

Group dynamics, socio-cultural backgrounds of learners, and their varied proficiency levels often make learners stick to their comfort zones or inhibitions and interact less with participants from other departments. For instance, the divide between the MA French and Arabic students was palpable, and despite the instructor's best efforts to reduce group barriers, some students still found it difficult to interact freely and collaborate with everyone. Going forward, if the class is divided into two smaller groups based on proficiency level, it might be helpful to make classroom interactions more organic and encourage more participation from all learners.

The Communicative English course was pitched at the B1 level of proficiency; the group that benefited the most from this course was the one with intermediate-level proficiency. It was a bit challenging for those at

the A1-A2 level, but even then, they showed significant signs of improvement. However, a few students with an upper intermediate level of proficiency found the course less challenging, and their complacency was visible in their classroom presence, participation, and submissions. In cases where such learners felt the course content was not challenging enough, the instructor offered additional resources for the learners to work with and expand their horizons. For the lower proficiency group, 'buddies' were assigned within the class group to help these new learners of English use the language. Furthermore, around 4-5 sessions comprising 8-10 hours of class time were dedicated to offering a bridge course to lower-proficiency learners, wherein a PhD scholar from the university who was working on Cognitive Grammar was invited to familiarise learners with basic grammatical structures and language usage. Thus, either dividing the class based on proficiency levels or creating a balance between both groups using the methods mentioned above could be useful for such a dynamic group of learners. Offering the course at two levels in terms of proficiency levels might help students with varying proficiencies learn better.

The student participants were largely content with the way the course was designed and delivered. However, some of them felt that the segment on report writing (Semester II) was rushed (due to paucity of time) and included prompts not very inclined towards 'business communication.' Hence, learners suggested either the removal of the segment or perhaps a revision to align the writing prompts towards the academic or professional arenas.

CONCLUSION

This study made an endeavour to gauge the utility of the Communicative English course newly introduced for the MA FL students at EFLU Hyderabad. The student interactions and course feedback gathered both from learners and their instructors helped gain valuable insights into the minds of both groups, their perception of the course and the problems or loopholes they saw in the way the course was designed and delivered.

One of the limitations of the study is the absence of a pre-pilot validation of the assessment rubric that was used to evaluate the e-portfolios of learners. While the e-portfolios seemed to be effective for the first batch of learners, a more longitudinal analysis of their efficacy, shortcomings, etc., is required to make the course more meaningful for learners. Using e-portfolios for assessment of learning is a popular pedagogic tool; however, affective factors like students' motivation stand a chance of dwindling or enhancing its learning value, and this has also been acknowledged in the study by Syzdykova et al. (2021). Lastly, the syllabus for such courses on Communicative English should be designed not just based on the needs analysis conducted among the learners or the knowledge, comfort and instinct of the instructors; such courses should be shaped after conducting a thorough study of what the job market currently requires and the range of useful skills that can potentially strengthen learners' position in the job market in years to come (Al-Musalli, 2019).

In conclusion, several significant suggestions emerged from this exercise, such as dividing the class into smaller groups based on proficiency levels, pitching the same course at different levels to ensure comprehension and utility for learners, establishing greater clarity about the purpose of each task, orienting the report writing segment more towards the business genres, etc. It is hoped that the findings of this study, which tapped into the experiences of both the participants and instructors, would contribute towards a more refined implementation of the course for the upcoming batches.

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