

**UNIVERSITY MOHAMMED SEDDIK BEN YAHIA, JIJEL**  
**FACULTY OF LETTERS AND LANGUAGES**

**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**



**ESP Needs Analysis Vis-à-Vis Formality in  
Business Letters  
A Case Study of First Year Master Marketing  
Students at Mohammed Esseddik Ben Yahia University, Jijel**

**Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for  
A Master Degree in Language Sciences**

**Presented by:**

**Nardjes SADOUDI**

**Rokia SADOUNNE**

**Supervised by:**

**Redouane NAILI**

**Board of Examiners:**

**Chairperson: Ms. Rafika MALEK**

**Examiner: Mrs. Sabrina HADJI**

**Supervisor: Mr. Redouane NAILI**

Mohammed Seddik Ben-Yahia University

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## *DEDICATIONS*

### *Dedication One*

*I sincerely dedicate this dissertation to:*

*My delicate mother*

*To my precious father*

*And everyone who believes in me*

*Nardjes*

### *Dedication Two*

*This modest work is dedicated with true love to my dear parents  
for their uplifting, unconditioned love and consistent encouragement;*

*It is dedicated also to my sweet brothers, Ammar, Hamza, Younes,  
Ahmed, Zakaria, Walid, whom I love too much.*

*ROKIA*

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## **Abstract**

### **ESP Learners' Needs Vis-à-vis Formality in Business Letters**

#### **A Case Study of First Year Master Marketing Students at Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University, Jijel**

The present study is conducted within the context of the department of Commercial Sciences, at Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University, Jijel, and aims at investigating the English language needs of First Year Master students of marketing vis-à-vis formality in business letters. It is exclusively exploratory and shaped by the theoretical framework of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), Needs Analysis (NA) and formality in business letters. The investigation is built on the hypothesis which speculates that first year master students of marketing are not aware of formal language and its use in business letters. The sample consists of one group of students out of the three enrolled at the said level and specialty as well as six ESP teachers. For data collection, two instruments are used: a test for students and a questionnaire for teachers. The findings revealed that the students do have the target needs (necessities, wants and lacks), and that they are unaware of the formality of language and its use in business letters. Additionally to having poor skills in recognizing aspects of formal language, writing business letters, and differentiating between formal and informal English language, learners have also poor skills in the English language in general. Therefore, to meet the students' target needs, actions need to be taken by syllabus designers and curriculum developers through providing practical solutions and pedagogical procedures to overcome the obstacles that are associated with the above mentioned ESP target situation such as providing a systematic and appropriate educational program that fully covers the identified learners' needs, especially with regard to the issue of formality in business letters, and organize an ESP training program for teachers as well.

**Key Words:** ESP, NA, Formality, Business Letters.

## List of Abbreviations

<b>(%)</b>	Percentage
<b>BE</b>	Business English
<b>CNP</b>	Communicative Needs Processor
<b>EAP</b>	English for Academic Purposes
<b>EBE</b>	English for Business and Economics
<b>EGP</b>	English for General Purposes
<b>ESP</b>	English for Specific Purposes
<b>LMD</b>	License Master Doctorate
<b>N</b>	Number
<b>NA</b>	Needs Analysis
<b>PSA</b>	Present Situation Analysis
<b>TEFL</b>	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
<b>TSA</b>	Target Situation Analysis

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## **General Introduction**

1. Statement of the problem
2. Research Questions
3. Aims of the Study
4. Hypothesis of the study
5. Research Methodology
6. Structure of the dissertation

## **General Introduction**

This preamble to the dissertation presents the problem to be addressed, the research questions posed, the hypothesis formulated, the aims set for the study, the research methodology adopted in the field work, and, finally, the structure of the dissertation.

### **1. Statement of the Problem**

Nowadays, the standard requirement of employment in Algeria is qualified graduates who have both technical knowledge and international communication skills. Knowledge and skills in English, as one element, has become a much wanted criterion in job applicants' resumes owing to the fact that the world of trade and commerce makes extensive use of the language. Hence, learners of English for the specific purposes of technology and commerce know exactly the need and reasons why they are learning the language (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987, p.6). The specific demands of these learners led to the creation, within the profession of English language teaching, of the subfield of English for specific purposes, or ESP as commonly referred to for short. ESP is regarded as an approach to language teaching aiming at investigating student's needs and lacks.

In academic contexts, English is not just a foreign language to be learnt, but it serves as a means of research. Thus, in the case of undergraduate marketing students surveyed by this study, students need not only to learn the language itself, but they are expected to be capable to do and accomplish certain academic tasks in their future career. Writing business letters constitutes one of those workplace tasks that may be taken for granted as having been previously acquired as part of one's education. Furthermore, an important part of business correspondence is to use and comply with appropriate degrees of formality. The latter depend on the purpose of the message and the relationship that the writer has with the reader.

For example, a memo reporting the results of a meeting will be more formal than an email inviting someone for a cup of coffee. Similarly, an email to a friend will be less formal than an email to one's employer. Formal language conveys respect, politeness and distance; whereas informal language may convey familiarity and friendliness.

In the department of commercial sciences at Mohammed E'Seddik Ben Yahia University, Jijel, the recruited staff of teachers of English is none other than graduates in English with no previous training in teaching English for Business and Economics (EBE), except for personal initiative and interest. The teachers approached by researchers do not have provisions in their personal syllabi for teaching formality in the English language, in general, or formality in writing business letters, in particular, for teaching First Year Master students of marketing. To be absent altogether from courses dispensed to students reveals that formal style is either supposed to be an already mastered area of language, a marginal area with little importance or something that can only be done by students who are generally good at English. More importantly, it shows that syllabi are not based on preliminary analyses of students' lacks and needs with regard to potential future careers. Therefore, students are taking ESP classes unconditionally; they are not prepared for any kind of future carrier by having a class of English. This may result in students being unable to be fully in command of communication skills, especially where using formality in writing business letters is concerned.

## **2. Research Questions**

Based on the problem posed, this study attempts to answer the following questions:

- What are 1<sup>st</sup> year master marketing students' levels in writing business letters?

- Are 1<sup>st</sup> year master marketing students aware of formality and the appropriate use of formal language in business letters?
- What perceptions and attitudes do teachers of ESP have about the ESP syllabus and teaching formality in business letters?

### **3. Aims of the Study**

The purpose of undertaking this study is to explore the academic needs and lacks of graduate students particularly in using formal English language in writing business letters in the field of marketing. The research outcomes will set the importance of communicating with a formal style rather than an informal one in business correspondence, and this, in return, will prepare both teachers and learners to take this issue into consideration because of its significance in the field of marketing. Moreover, the study attempts to suggest some solutions to make both teachers and learners more motivated explore knowledge regarding formality in writing business letters. Similarly, the study aims at sensitizing teachers' awareness to insist on their students that they should acquire the ability to recognize formal academic language in the field of ESP; and, ultimately, it attempts to give guidelines to university curriculum developers and syllabus designers to take formality in business letters into consideration.

### **4. Hypothesis of the Study**

The present study is built upon the hypothesis which speculates that 1<sup>st</sup> year master marketing students are not aware of formal language and its use in business letters. Thus, this unawareness makes of the issue of formality in business letters a necessary need for students that must be taken into consideration.

### **5. Research Methodology**

In order to find out about students' needs vis-à-vis formality in business letters, the study made use of two research instruments: a test for students and a questionnaire for

teachers within the context at the University of Mohamed Seddik Ben Yahia, Jijel, during the academic year 2016-2017.

The test was carried out individually, and consists of two exercises to test the students' knowledge on the formality of language and its use in business letters. In the first task students were given a set of letter extracts and asked to decide whether they are formal or informal with justifying their choice. In the second exercise the students were supposed to write a letter of application to a company. Regarding the teacher's questionnaire, the items were generated from the relevant literature on needs analysis, and investigate the student's level in writing business letters as well as using formal language.

First year master students of marketing are the target population of this study, from which a group was selected randomly without any predefined criteria. The logic behind the selection of first master year students rather than other levels was their experience with the ESP course which allows evaluating the effectiveness of the programme, in the process.

## **6. Structure of the Dissertation**

The dissertation develops three chapters that are divided into two theoretical chapters and one practical chapter. Concerning the theoretical part, firstly, it is prefaced by a general introduction which contextualizes the study and provides its basic components.

Chapter One is entitled 'Needs Analysis in the Field of English for Specific Purposes'; it provides a literature review of the different elements related to English for Specific Purposes (ESP), needs analysis in ESP, and business English (BE). In the first section, we suggest an overview of the field of ESP covering its definition and characteristics, emergence, developmental stages, as well as spotlighting needs analysis in ESP by covering its definition, necessities, approaches, steps, and methods. The subsequent section deals with the aspect of

business English which, in turn, encompasses its definition, features, and finally business English learners.

Chapter Two, entitled ‘Formality in Business Letters’, provides a general overview about formality and formality in business letters. It starts by defining the concept of formality as well as clarifying some related aspects namely styles of formality, levels of formality, the notion of register, and politeness and social distance. In addition, the features of formality that are discussed relate to both the morphological and the syntactical features. The other point that is subsequently dealt with is business letters, their definition, types and structure. Last, formality style and tone of business letters is scrutinized at different stages or parts including salutations and complimentary closings.

Chapter Three, entitled ‘Field Work’, represents the practical part of our research. This chapter synthesizes and discusses the results obtained from the applied data collection tools, namely the student test and teacher questionnaire; it attempts also to test our research hypothesis and provide adequate answers to the research questions through analysing the results. Hence, three descriptive, analytic and interpretive sections are devoted to data presentation and analysis of each of the students test and the teacher questionnaire followed by an overall analysis and interpretation of results.

# **Chapter One**

## **Needs Analysis in the Field of ESP**

### Introduction

#### 1.1. Overview of English for Specific Purposes and Needs Analysis

##### 1.1.1. Definition and Characteristics of ESP

##### 1.1.2. The Emergence of ESP

##### 1.1.3. Developmental Stages of ESP

##### 1.1.4. English for Specific Purposes (ESP) vs. English for General Purposes (EGP)

##### 1.1.5. Needs Analysis in ESP

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###### 1.1.5.3. Necessities of Needs Analysis

###### 1.1.5.4. Approaches to Needs Analysis

###### 1.1.5.4.1. Target Situation Analysis (TSA)

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###### 1.1.5.4.5. Learning-Centred Approach

###### 1.1.5.4.6. An Eclectic Approach to Needs Analysis

###### 1.1.5.5. Methods of Collecting Data in Needs Analysis

#### 1.2. Business English

##### 1.2.1. Definition of Business English

##### 1.2.2. Features of Business English

##### 1.2.3. Business English Learners

###### 1.2.3.1. Pre-experienced Learners

###### 1.2.3.2. Job-experienced Learners

### Conclusion

## **Chapter One: Needs Analysis in the Field of ESP**

### **Introduction**

This chapter examines the literature review of the different elements related to English for Specific Purposes (ESP), needs analysis in ESP, and business English (BE). In the first section, we suggest an overview of the field of ESP covering its definition and characteristics, emergence, developmental stages, as well as spotlighting needs analysis in ESP by covering its definition, necessities, approaches, steps, and methods. The subsequent section deals with the aspect of business English which, in turn, encompasses its definition, features, and finally business English learners.

### **1.1. Overview of English for Specific Purposes and Needs Analysis**

This section covers, mainly, the notion of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) by shedding light on its definition and some potential related elements. Needs analysis, as an integral part of ESP, is focused on to demonstrate its value and procedures.

#### **1.1.1. Definition and Characteristics of ESP**

ESP is an active branch of applied linguistics, in general, and Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), in particular. Understanding the concept of ESP entails an awareness of its components; however, a starting point is often the commonly addressed question of what is ESP? In response to this question, Hutchinson and Waters made it clear that ‘it is an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner's reason for learning’ (1987, p. 19). Hence, ESP should be looked at as a methodology of language teaching that foregrounds learners’ needs and goals in designing syllabi and using techniques to implement them. In the same vein, Dudley Evans and St. John (1998) stressed the learner’s reason for learning as a defining aspect of ESP, but used ‘attitude of mind’ instead of Hutchinson and Waters’ ‘approach of teaching’.

Additionally, Dudley Evans and St. John (1998) defined ESP through making a clear-cut distinction between its absolute and variable characteristics as follows:

- The absolute characteristics:

1. ESP is defined to meet specific needs of the learner,
2. ESP makes use of the underlying methodology and activities of the discipline it serves,
3. It is centred on the language (grammar, lexis, and register), skills, discourse and genres appropriate to these activities.

- The variable characteristics:

1. ESP may be related to or designed for specific disciplines,
2. ESP may use, in specific teaching situations, a different methodology from that of general English,
3. ESP is likely to be designed for adult learners, either at a tertiary level institution or in a professional work situation, and could also be for learners at secondary school level,
4. ESP is generally designed for intermediate or advanced students. Most of ESP courses assume some basic knowledge of the language system, and can be used with beginners
5. ESP is not necessarily associated with a particular discipline,
6. It can be used with both adult learners and young adult in secondary school setting (p.4).

### **1.1.2. The Emergence of ESP**

The emergence of ESP was a result of the collaboration of three main factors, according to Hutchinson and Waters (1987): the demands of a brave new world, a revolution in linguistics and the focus on the learner.

The first reason is the appearance of stability and the peaceful atmosphere by the end of World War II, which led to an unpredictable boom in scientific, technical and economic activity worldwide. As the most dominant domains were technology and commerce, an international language was needed for international communication; hence, English became the key of international currencies in these fields. Moreover, the western involvement in the oil crises in the early 1970s, which took place in the oil-rich countries, had rung the alarm for a shared language (p.6).

The second reason is related to the realization made by linguists and language teaching specialists concerning the fact that teaching usage or grammar alone had failed to reflect the ways in which language is actually used in real communication (Widdowson, 1978). To cut a long story short, the idea was built around the fact that the English needed by a particular group of learners could be determined by analysing the linguistic characteristics of their specialist area of work or study. ‘Tell me what you need English for and I will tell you the English that you need’ became the leading rule in ESP.

The third reason, mentioned by Hutchinson and Waters (1987), was the shift towards focus on the learner. The bottom line was that students have different needs and interests that can influence their motivation to learn. The term ‘relevance’ was used to support the learner’s needs and interests in course development, through taking texts from the learner specialist’s area. The theory was based on the assumption that a clear detection of the learner’s needs would improve motivation, hence successful learning (p.8).

### **1.1.3. Developmental Stages of ESP**

In addition to the inception stage mentioned above, ESP can be said to have developed through five phases since the beginnings of the 1960s. ESP developed step by step at different speeds resulting in: register analysis, rhetorical or discourse analysis, target situation analysis, skill-centred and learner-centred approaches.

The first stage, referring to ‘register analyses, had its beginnings in the 1960s and the early 1970s; it focused on the grammatical and the lexical features associated with certain scientific fields. The latter were recognized to use different morpho-syntactic features which should be analysed to form the teaching content of the course. The mainly reached areas of interest were science and medicine. The approach was limited as far as ESP syllabus design is concerned because the grammatical items were almost the same in the various disciplines and the analysis was confined to the sentence level (Tomlinson, 2003, p. 18)

During the second phase, attention shifted to the level above the sentence, and ESP became involved in the flourishing field of ‘discourse analysis’, which dealt with how sentences are combined to produce meaning. The leading figures during that movement were Henry Widdowson, in Britain, and the Washington school of Larry Selinker, Louis Trimble, John Lackstorm and Marry Todd-Trimble, in the United States. ESP courses extended their focus from grammatical and lexical features of sentences, associated with the early stage of register analysis to identify the organizational patterns in texts and their specific linguistic means by which these patterns would then form the syllabus of the ESP course (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987, p. 20).

With the aim being more specified to enable learners function adequately in anticipated situations, the subfield of ‘target situation analysis’ came into being. A syllabus is designed, then, in response to and following prior investigation and identification of the intended situation and its linguistic features. This process is called Needs Analysis, or as Chamber (1980) suggested “target situation analysis”. A deep explanation and application of the concepts and procedures involved in syllabus design was offered in John Munby’s book *Communicative Syllabus Design* (1978). Munby developed a system for describing and analysing learners’ needs. The ultimate aim was to place the learner’s needs at the centre of syllabus design.

The fourth stage of ESP had a unique perception. The ‘skill-centred approach’ attempted to explore the thinking process underlying language use, and most of its developments were related to English for Academic Purposes (EAP). Rather than learning a language for a particular context, the different skills –especially reading– need to be developed in order to increase the language ability at the end of the course (Tomlinson, 2003, p. 18).

The previous phases are based on what people do with language. However, in the final approach, called ‘learners’ centred-approach’, the student is considered as a key parameter in the teaching/learning process. This new orientation addresses language learning instead of language use. Learning a language is not a task of describing what people do with the language. Therefore, a reliable approach to ESP must be based on understanding the process of language learning.

#### **1.1.4. English for Specific Purposes (ESP) vs. English for General Purposes (EGP)**

For various reasons, there were controversies about what makes English for General Purposes (EGP) different from English for Specific Purposes (ESP). After surveying the relevant literature on the matter, Hutchinson & Waters (1987) concluded that the cutting edge between ESP and EGP is that EGP refers to contexts such as schools where needs cannot be readily specified, but instead are broad and detailed (pp. 53-54); whereas ESP refers to the teaching and learning of the specific skills and language needed by particular learners for a particular purpose.

First and foremost, what is learned in ESP is strictly related to a particular discipline such as marketing and engineering where learners are seeking to develop their English proficiency through satisfying the needs, whether for occupational or academic motives. Therefore, the syllabus is carefully designed to cater for those needs. Unlike ESP, however, the aim of being enrolled in EGP classes is to acquire the general knowledge because the

context of performance is not specified. In this regard, Richards (2001, p. 33) clarified that ESP learners focus on the performance at the end of a course study, as a preparation for future tasks, whereas in General English the goal is having a full command of the entire language elements.

Another distinctive feature between ESP and EGP can be deduced from the amount of exposure that a learner can experience. In the case of Algeria, where English is a foreign language, the non-native speaking learners receive EGP at schools through successive levels. The educational system offers English classes as a compulsory subject starting from Middle School for four years, and spanning three other years at the Secondary School. Learners are introduced to the big picture of a language that contains countless elements and concepts such as sounds of English as well as lexical, grammatical and rhetorical elements which compose written and spoken discourse. In such a context, ESP is taught at the tertiary levels of education, universities and colleges, which suppose that learners have already acquired the fundamentals of language. Consequently, it can be said that ESP is built upon previous knowledge of English, EGP, but has a narrower scope.

According to Dudley-Evans and St. John (1997), the ESP practitioner generally fulfils various roles: teacher, course designer and materials provider, collaborator, researcher and evaluator (pp. 13-15). As a distinction can be based on the teacher's role, Hutchinson and Waters (1987, p. 157) mentioned that the EGP teacher receives no special prior training into how to fulfil the above-named roles efficiently.

An in-depth investigation, and by way of summary, Widdowson (1983 as cited in Popescu, 2010, p. 51) established distinctive features of ESP and EGP. First, EGP is often focused on education, the learners' future needs are impossible to predict and the course content is more difficult to select than in ESP. On the other hand, ESP focuses on training, the

selection of the appropriate content is easier, the syllabus should be relevant to the vocational context and the aim may be to create a restricted English competence.

### **1.5. Needs Analysis in ESP**

This section discusses the various aspects that are related to needs analysis in ESP, starting by defining the notions of needs and needs analysis, and proceeding from there to demonstrate the value of needs analysis and its approaches, methods and steps.

#### **1.1.5.1. Definition of Needs**

There is no static definition for the term ‘need’ because its definition varies following the vantage point taken, the researchers’ or students’. Brindley, for instance, (1990) points out that “need” is “the gap between what is and what should be” (p. 65). Berwick (1989) also perceived needs as gap or a measurable discrepancy between what learners need and what they receive in language programs. Brindley (1989) cited in Belala (2013, p. 43), however, makes a distinction between objective needs and subjective needs as follows:

1. ***Objective needs:*** these can be described as external needs. They are those needs that reflect facts about the learner such as the colloquial language, their English level, and faced obstacles.
2. ***Subjective needs:*** these can be called internal needs. They are information derived from the affective and cognitive state of the learner such as learning modalities and strategies, personalities, attitudes and other individual differences that influence their learning.

#### **1.1.5.2. Needs Analysis**

It is widely approved that learners have distinct needs. One of the aims of any researcher in the field of ESP is to clear up the misunderstanding and direct users and subject specialists towards pinpointing these needs. Believing that the most suitable starting point of

an ESP course is meeting the student's needs in a particular discipline, Needs Analysis or Needs Assessment is born to be the cornerstone of ESP teaching. It has had notable impact on designing language courses, whether ESP or EGP.

Needs analysis refers to the different techniques of collecting and assessing data that are specific to course design. It is an ongoing process that can be modified and evaluated. The term needs embraces the learners' profile, their language proficiency, their motives of taking the course, their learning modalities and teaching preferences as well as the target situation in which English is to be used. To sum up, Needs Analysis involves what students already know and what they do not know (Hyland, 2006, in Paltridge & Starfield, 2013, p. 325).

### **1.1.5.3. Necessities of Needs Analysis**

It is generally agreed that the process of Needs Analysis is the first step in investigating the learners' needs as a foundation for ESP program developments. In this regard, Hutchinson and Waters (1997, p.53) argue: "Any language course should be based on needs analysis". The awareness of those needs could be sufficient for the curriculum designers to design and deliver a successful and effective course. In the same line of thoughts, Munby (1978) insists that ESP courses and materials be essentially raised from the prior analysis of the learners' needs (p. 2)

Richards (2001) states that Needs Analysis in language teaching can be used for a number of different purposes:

- "To find out what language skills a learner needs in order to perform a particular role, such as sales manager, tour guide or university student;
- To help determine if an existing course adequately addresses the needs of potential students;

- To determine which students from a group are most in need of training in particular language skills;
- To identify a change of direction that people in a reference group feel is important;
- To identify a gap between what students are able to do and what they need to be able to do;
- To collect information about a particular problem learners are experiencing” (p. 52).

#### **1.1.5.4. Approaches to Needs Analysis**

In a similar way to the developmental stages of ESP, stated earlier in section 1.1.3., needs analysis has witnessed many developments that led to accumulation of methods for approaching learners’ needs. These methods refer to target situation analysis, present situation analysis, strategy analysis, means analysis and learning-centred analysis.

##### **1.1.5.4.1. Target Situation Analysis (TSA)**

In earlier stages of its development, needs analysis was mainly concerned with linguistic and register analysis. Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) point out that needs were seen as discrete language items of grammar and vocabulary. With the publication of Munby's book *Communicative Syllabus Design* in 1978, the interest shifted to the learner’s purposes as a framework for needs analysis. Hence, the notion of target needs became of paramount importance in the field of ESP. Actually, The term ‘Target Situation Analysis (TSA)’ was introduced by Chambers (1980) to refer to “communication in the target situation” (p. 29). In turn, Munby adopted the ‘Communication Needs Processor’ (CNP) as a needs analysis procedure for planning and designing language courses. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) explain that “The CNP consists of a range of questions about key communication variables

(topic, participants, medium, etc.) which can be used to identify the target language needs of any group of learners”(1987, p. 54)

#### **1.1.5.4.2. Present Situation Analysis (PSA)**

Due to the shortcomings of TSA, Present Situation Analysis (PSA) was established. It has drawn attention to what the learners are able to do, in terms of language knowledge and skills, at the beginning of the course. As Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998, p. 125) state, "a PSA estimates strengths and weaknesses in language, skills, learning experiences." If the destination is all what matters, then knowledge about the current state is unquestionably crucial. Because it describes the current state of the learner, PAS is likened to a placement test.

A model of PSA was proposed by Richterich and Chancerel (1980) in which the source of information is the learner in person, teachers, and subject specialists. PSA provides more details as the background information or personal information that may give the researcher some useful clues and a chance for prediction. Generally, TSA and PSA are considered two faces for the same coin where the collaboration of both is necessary. However, they proved to be insufficient, and as such urged the need for further research. As result, alternative approaches have been proposed (Songhori, 2008, p. 10).

#### **1.1.5.4.3. Strategy Analysis**

Unlike the previous approaches, Strategy Analysis considers the learner’s perception of learning. Allwright (1982) as the pioneer of Strategy Analysis made a clear distinction between needs wants and lacks, as follows:

- 1. Needs:** the skills which a student sees as being relevant to himself or herself,

2. **Wants:** those needs on which students put a high priority in the available limited time,
3. **Lacks:** the difference between the student's present competence and the desired competence (Jordan, 1997, p. 27).

#### 1.1.5.4.4. Means Analysis

This approach was founded to address the limitations of Munby's approach. Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) stated that Means Analysis provides us "information about the environment in which the course will be run", and thus adds to ESP course the cultural aspect as a part of the context. The syllabi should be adopted carefully to fit a given environment because each situation has its conditions that may not be workable in other situation (cited in Songhori, 2008, p. 25).

#### 1.1.5.4.5. Learning-Centred Approach

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) distinguished between learner-centred and learning-centred approaches as follows:

- **Learner-centred:** indicates that "learning is totally determined by the learner" (and thus does not possibly exist); whereas
- **Learning-centred:** involves learning as a process of negotiation between individuals and society" (which includes teaching syllabus, methods, materials)

They also made a distinction between 'target needs' and 'learning needs':

- **The target needs** are sub-divided into:
  1. Necessities: what the learner has to do to function effectively in the target situation.

2. Lacks: the gape that exists between the target level and what the learner needs.
  3. Wants: they refer to the subjective needs of the learner.
- **Learning Needs:** indicate how the learners move from the starting point (lacks) to reach the desired destination (target situation). Target needs alone cannot achieve the purpose because we need to take into account the learners' skills, strategies, style, and motivation.

#### **1.1.5.4.6. An Eclectic Approach to Needs Analysis**

Despite the number of approaches stated in the literature, none of them scored high as a reliable approach. In view of this situation, Dudley Evans and St. John (1998) define; acknowledging the fact that need analysis is essentially a matter of framing the *how* and *what* of the course, proposed that an approach to needs analysis should include the following:

- Environmental situation - information about the situation in which the course will be run (means analysis);
- Personal information about learners - factors which may affect the way they learn (wants, means, and subjective needs);
- Language information about learners - what their current skills and language use are (present situation analysis);
- Learner's lacks (the gap between the present situation and professional information about learners);
- Learner's needs from course - what is wanted from the course (short-term needs);
- Language learning needs - effective ways of learning the skills and language determined by lacks;
- Professional information about learners - the tasks and activities English learners are/will be using English for (Target Situation Analysis and objective needs);

- How to communicate in the target situation – knowledge of how language and used in the target situation (register analysis, discourse analysis, genre analysis) (in Songhori, 2008, p. 20)

Nowadays, it is widely acknowledged that the different approaches are not exclusive but complementary like the pieces of a jigsaw.

#### 1.1.5.5. Methods of Collecting Data in Needs Analysis

Several methods have been developed to serve the purpose of needs analysis. A variety of methods can be applied together to identify the needs. For example in investigating the area of ESP courses, a questionnaire and interview are probably sufficient to draw a full picture. It is generally agreed that the more tools are used, the more accurate and complete the result would be.

The most commonly used methods, according to (West1994, p7), are described in the Table 1.01 below.

<b>Methods</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Pre-course placement/ Diagnostic tests</b>	These are tests conducted before course implementation to estimate the language level of the learners.
<b>Entry tests on arrival</b>	These are tests that can have a diagnostic value and are used to identify learners' language weaknesses and lacks.
<b>Observation of classes</b>	This tool is used generally for deficiency analysis.
<b>Surveys based on questionnaires</b>	It is the most common method; it helps draw a profile of the learners' needs, lacks, wants, learning styles and strategies. Then, make learners aware of those needs and lacks.
<b>Structured interviews</b>	These are interviews that consist of pre-planned questions

	the answers to which can either be recorded or written down.
<b>Learners' diaries</b>	These are used as supplementary to end-of-course questionnaires offering retrospective, qualitative information.
<b>Case studies</b>	This method provides in depth information about the needs and difficulties of individual learners or groups.
<b>Final evaluation/feedback</b>	This method is usually conducted in the form of questionnaires which provide information on the evaluation of the course and help design and improve the next course.

**Table1.01: Methods of Collecting Data in Needs Analysis (West 1994)**

With regard to putting the different models of data collection into practice, Gravatt (et.al, 1997) cited in Kadi (2013) demonstrated a comprehensive and systematic approach to identify the language needs of non-English-background students. This approach includes the following steps:

- a) Literature survey;
- b) Analysis of wide range of survey questionnaires;
- c) Contact with others who had conducted similar surveys;
- d) Interviews with teachers to determine goals;
- e) Identification of participating departments;
- f) Presentation of project proposal to participating departments and identification of liaison person in each department;
- g) Development of a pilot student and staff questionnaire;
- h) Review of the questionnaires by colleagues;
- i) Piloting of the questionnaires;
- j) Selection of staff and student subjects;
- k) Developing a schedule for collecting data;
- l) Administration of questionnaires;
- m) Follow-up interviews with selected participants;

- n) Tabulation of responses;
- o) Analysis of responses;
- p) Writing up of report and recommendations“ (p.12).

## **1.2. Business English**

This section focuses generally on Business English by providing a brief definition to the term in focus and a description of some aspects of interest such as features of business English, business English learners, and business English syllabus.

### **1.2.1. Definition of Business English**

To make the notion of Business English clear, Ellis & Johnson (1994) state, “Business English is an area of ESP that is poorly reached” (p. 7). Paltridge and Starfield (2013, p. 195) went further in their attempt to explain that notion by saying that “the literature on business communication considerably enlarged the original, narrow view of Business English as the teaching of the language for vocational purposes through linking linguistic performance with actual business activities”. Business English is usually taught for adult learners who already work in the field of business or are preparing to work there. It has some aspects in common with General English, but the aims are different. The most important thing to consider is that Business English is strongly associated with expectations (Donna, 2000, p. 2). Given the dynamic developments of business on an international scale, the language used became of paramount importance. A successful business is often led by a clear and complete communication between the parties involved.

It is worthy to note that Business English is based on specific language corpora as well as specific communication skills. Business English is also distinctive from other branches in that it is usually a blend of precise and general content (Ellis & Johnson, 1994, p.3).

### **1.2.2. Features of Business English**

According to Ellis & Johnson (1994), there are three characteristics of Business English:

1. **Sense of purpose:** English is used to achieve an end and will be objective rather than personal
2. **Social Aspects:** business people have different cultural backgrounds which they need to know about each other. Consequently, they quickly feel comfortable
3. **Clear Communication:** the information should be correctly conveyed without the risk of misunderstanding. In Business, certain terms (acronyms) are used to refer to concepts that businesspeople know in order to be save time and secure understanding (pp. 7-9).

### **1.2.3. Business English Learners**

According to whether they have experience at work, Business English learners can be divided into two main categories: pre-experience learners and job-experienced learners.

#### **1.2.3.1. Pre-experienced Learners:**

As the name suggests, pre-experience learners are undergraduate students who received theoretical language knowledge largely from books and, as a result, their knowledge is conceptual rather than practical. Such learners lack knowledge about real-life business situations because they were surrounded by only school experience and the language imposed by the educational policies of the country.

Pre-experience students will have two types of needs; their present situation which may require developing the reading and listening skills in addition to subject-related

vocabulary. They need also to prepare for a future carrier. The teacher can include skills like holding meetings, presentations, and social interaction depending on the job context.

### **1.2.3.2. Job-experienced Learners:**

Job-experienced learners have both the educational background and the training in the workplace. This experience helps them to focus on what they perceive as lacks. They have only a set of needs in case they are going to experience a new situation. Job-experienced learners need the practical use of language (pragmatics) more than the knowledge about English.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter covered a wide range of aspects regarding the areas of English for Specific Purposes, ESP is considered as an interesting and important field for conducting studies; it is inseparable from the field of Needs Analysis which is considered as the corner stone of the process of designing any language material of ESP courses. Hence, ESP is a field that witnesses continual development, following the changing needs of learners and professionals.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Formality in Business Letters**

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## **Chapter Two: Formality in Business Letters**

### **Introduction**

This chapter presents a general overview about formality and formality in business letters. It is first initiated by defining the concept of formality as well as clarifying some related aspects namely styles of formality, levels of formality, the notion of register, and politeness and social distance. In addition, the features of formality that are discussed relate to both the morphological and the syntactical features. The other point to be dealt with is business letters, their definition, types and structure. Last, formality style and tone of business letters is scrutinized at different stages or parts including salutations and complimentary closings.

### **2.1. The Scope of Formality**

Formality is a concept that has been extensively researched in various disciplines such as ethnography of communication, sociolinguistics and social anthropology to describe social occasions and the behaviour associated with them. It has frequently been conceived in terms of components, scales or related concepts including style, formality vs. informality, register, politeness and social conventions such as observing social distance.

#### **2.1.1. Definition of Formality**

Formality is defined differently according to the settings in which the term is used. Hence, the definition of formality in academic papers differs from that in business letters and political speeches. In The Longman Dictionary, the noun formality is clearly defined as “careful attention to polite behaviour and language in formal situations”. The adjective formal is defined as “used in official or serious situations”.

Researchers define formality from different perspectives, and this causes difficulty to give a clear-cut definition for this concept. In this regard, Brooke et al. (2010, p.90) make it

clear by saying that formality is “related to the appropriateness of a word in a given context”. Similarly, the definition by Heylighen and Dewaele explains formality as the linguistic choices the writer or speaker makes when discoursing in a particular genre.

According to Wordnet.princeton.edu, a large online lexical database of English, formality is explained as a requirement of etiquette or custom, a manner that strictly observes all forms and ceremonies and compliance with formal rules. In the same vein of defining formality, Andr en et al. (2010, p.224) state that any utterance that does not follow the natural flow of conversation can be considered formal. Their definition, however, resembles that of Atkinson (1982) who describes formality as “non-conversational”. Departing from mere focus on conversation, Urbanov a (2002) deals with formality in terms of a scale including formality, informality, solidarity, and social conventions. She describes variation within this scale as a range of values on the axes formal vs. informal, polite vs. familiar, and impersonal vs. personal. To further define this term, The Precise Edit’s Blog, a large database of English, explains that “formality means (1) the degree to which you attend to Standard English conventions, real and assumed, (2) the degree to which you use common words as opposed to colloquial, idiomatic words, (3) the level of objectivity, and the level of intimacy you assume with the reader”.

Lastly, Trudgill (1983) explains that formality is the term used to describe a variety of language which shifts depending on topic, subject, or activity. Trudgill suggests that “formality is characterized by lexical and grammatical features. The level of formality can identify which social group a person belongs to and is often considered jargon by those who do not belong to that group”. (ibid. pp.62-63)

### **2.1.2. Formality Styles**

Before dealing with the aspect of formality styles, a definition of what a style is must be provided. In this regard, Crystal (1987,p.87) defines style as “any situationally distinctive use of language – a characteristic of groups as well as individuals...style is viewed as the set of language features that make people distinctive – the basis of their personal linguistic identity”. Thus, style has to do with the way in which different people use language in different situations and settings; each specific situation determines a specific appropriate use of language or language style.

Concerning the formality styles, Martin Joos suggests five styles that go from written to spoken language; these are: the frozen style, the formal style, the consultative style, the casual style and the intimate style. The most formal style with printed unchanging language is called the frozen style; it often contains archaisms, or features of writing that are no longer used (Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, p.52). Next, the formal style involves one-way participation and no interruption; it contains technical vocabulary and includes introductions between strangers. Third, the consultative style involves a two way participation in which background information is provided and no prior knowledge is assumed. Another style identified by Joos is referred to as the casual style because it is used with friends and acquaintances; its common features are ellipsis, slang, interruption, and absence of background information. Lastly, there is the intimate style, or the style used in non-public situations and is characterized by private vocabulary use.

### **2.1.3. Formality Levels**

The interlocutor’s selection of the level of formality depends on aspects of the social and situational context and the mutual relation of the interlocutors. The aspects fall within the scope of domain that determines language formality/ informality, which leads to the use of deferent levels of style (Trudgill, 1983, p.111).

In this respect, scholars distinguish two levels of formality: formal style and informal style. The formal style is characterized by phonological precision, elaboration of syntax, and lexicon (Brown and Fraser, cited in Sherer and Giles, 1979, p.46). Therefore, the formal style is typically described by well selected lexical items, use of terms of address and titles, consistency of language forms, and highly complex structures. Informality or informal style, on the other hand, is distinguished by discourses of low social prestige, ellipses, repetition, simple syntactic structures, simple words, and lack of terms of address or titles.

#### **2.1.4. Register**

The notion of register is of wide use in the domain of discourse analysis, in general, and in language variations studies, in particular. According to Koester, register is “the set of linguistic features which characterizes texts in different professional and academic fields, as well as other specific contexts. These linguistic features include grammar, lexis, as well as style”. (123) Moreover, in his Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics, Crystal (1991, 295) gives a clear definition of this term stating that register is “a variety of language defined according to its use in social situations e.g. a register of scientific, religious, formal English”.

Halliday and Hasan (1989) go further to describe register as “a configuration of meanings that are typically associated with a particular situational configuration of meanings, a register must also, of course, include the expressions, the lexico-grammatical and phonological features, that typically accompany or REALISE these meanings”. (38-39)

In the same line of thoughts, Halliday (1989, p.42) offers three variables that determine register: field, tenor, and mode. Field refers to the subject matter or topic and asks: “what is, who acts, who is involved, and the attendant relevant circumstances”. Tenor refers to the roles of the participants in an interaction and answers the questions: “who are

participating and what is their relative status or power”. Mode refers to the channel of communication and answers the question “what is the language doing”.

### **2.1.5. Politeness and Social Distance**

Politeness represents the interlocutors’ desire to be pleasant to each other through a positive manner of addressing. In an attempt to shed light on the notion of politeness, we selected these definitions; one of them is that stated by Yule (1960). Yule describes politeness as a fixed concept which reflects the idea of “polite social behaviour” or the etiquette within a culture. He provides different general principles that determine “polite social behaviour”; some of these, according to him, might include “being tactful, generous, modest, and sympathetic toward others” (60). The same idea has been stated both in Wordnet.Princeton.edu and on Wikipedia.org where the former expresses politeness as a courteous manner that respects accepted social usage as well as an act of showing regard for others. The latter, however, expresses it as a practical application of good manners or etiquette; adding that politeness is a culturally defined phenomenon i.e. what is considered polite in one culture can be quite rude or simply strange in another. Similarly, Urbanová (2002) refers to politeness as the ability of the speaker to express respect, courtesy and goodwill to an addressee. In addition to Holmes (2001, p.268) who claims that “being linguistically polite involves speaking to people appropriately in the light of the relationship” reflecting by this the idea that the relationship between the participants regarding their social status determines the appropriateness or the polite language use. Fairclough (1989, p.66) also is in line with Holmes claiming that “politeness is based on the recognition of differences of power, degree of social distance”.

It is typical that participants show the relative social distance in their interaction. Social distance is particularly associated with showing respect, which might be considered more as the opposite of familiarity; whereas social closeness involves friendliness,

camaraderie, or solidarity. Notably, Yule (1996, p.60) states that politeness is related to the contextual factor which is the tenor of discourse; this means that the level of politeness of a social interaction is determined by various factors related to social distance and closeness. These factors, according to Yule, indicate relative status of the participants, and are derived from social values, namely, age and power. In this context, address forms with a title and last name are often used. Other factors such as the degree of friendliness signal less marked social distance, which requires the use of the first name form.

## **2.2. Morphological and Syntactic Features of Formality**

Formality can be established through different morphological and syntactic features. Morphological features are related to word formation or arrangement out of morphemes; whereas syntactic features are related to phrase and sentence formation out of words.

### **2.2.1. Morphological Features**

The morphological features that decide on the levels of formality include the pattern of words used in terms of their number of syllables and the nature of the terms of address employed.

#### **2.2.1.1. Polysyllabic Classical Words vs. Monosyllabic Words**

Polysyllabic classical words are lengthy words that contain more than one syllable and are derived from Latin, Greek or French. On the other hand, monosyllabic words are short words that contain only one syllable and are derived from Anglo-Saxon origins.

According to Thornborrow and Wareing (1998), many pairs of words in English that might appear to be synonymous are not actually used synonymously because they differ in their level of formality. Most formal words have their roots in Greek and Latin, and many informal words have their roots in German (92).

Thornborrow and Wareing (ibid.) explain also that word length is an indication of how formal a word is; the longer the word the more formal it is. Thus, polysyllabic words tend to be more formal than monosyllabic words.

In Table 2.1, Koutraki (2015) demonstrates a number of common words that are essentially synonymous, but the use of one in each pair implies a level of formality in a text.

<b>Formal</b>	<b>Informal</b>
<b>Appear</b>	Seem
<b>Ascend</b>	Climb
<b>Assist</b>	Help
<b>Cease</b>	Stop
<b>Commence</b>	Begin
<b>Consume</b>	Use
<b>Decrease</b>	Shorten
<b>Demonstrate</b>	Show
<b>Depart</b>	Go
<b>Enquire</b>	Ask
<b>Inform</b>	Tell
<b>Obtain</b>	Get
<b>Preserve</b>	Keep
<b>Reject</b>	say no
<b>Release</b>	Free
<b>Require</b>	Need
<b>Reside</b>	Live
<b>Retain</b>	Keep
<b>Finally</b>	In the end

<b>Immediately</b>	At once
<b>Initially</b>	At first
<b>Principally</b>	Mainly
<b>Repeatedly</b>	Again and again
<b>Subsequently</b>	Next
<b>Comprehension</b>	Understanding
<b>Deficiency</b>	Lack
<b>Opportunity</b>	Chance
<b>Residence</b>	House
<b>Vision</b>	Sight
<b>Complete</b>	Whole
<b>Fortunate</b>	Lucky
<b>Inexpensive</b>	Cheap
<b>Responsible</b>	In charge
<b>Sufficient</b>	Enough
<b>Vacant</b>	Empty
<b>Repair</b>	Mend

**Table 2.01: Illustration of Formal Words and their Informal Counterparts adapted from (Koutraki, 2015)**

### **2.2.1.2 .Respectful Terms of Address vs. Intimate Terms of Address**

Terms of address refer mainly to words and expressions used in salutations to address people in written or spoken language. Respectful terms tend to be formal and are used to address people of high social status than speaker or writer, and include: Dear Sir, Dear Madam, Dear Miss, or Dear Ms. Conversely, intimate terms of address tend to be less formal or rather informal, and are used to address people of the same social status or of familiar

relationship to speaker or writer. Examples of intimate terms of address include: My Dear William, Dearest Jean, or Darling Daughter.

### **2.2.2. Syntactical Features of Formality**

Beyond the level than individual words and expressions, syntactical features of formality are related to sentence formation, and refer to the use of passive and active voice, direct and indirect speech, complex and simple sentences, modal verbs and contractions.

#### **2.2.2.1. Passive Voice vs. Active Voice**

According to Thornborrow and Wareing (ibid.), the use of the passive voice rather than the active is viewed as a sign of formal language (p.93). Passives are composed of the construction “be+ past participle”. Common features of the passives can be include focus on what is being done rather than who is doing the action; and in sentences starting with an introductory ‘it’, avoiding mention of the agent from the sentence sounds more formal. In addition, the use of the passive voice gives writing an objective tone by avoiding the constant repetition of the subjects.

#### **2.2.2.2. Direct and Indirect Speech**

Leech and Svartvik (2002) posit that indirect speech is considered to be more formal than direct speech. The structure of the indirect speech tends to be formal because it contains quotation frames such as: ‘it has been said’, ‘she said’, or ‘he said’, and conjunctions such as ‘that’ or ‘if’. Yule (2004) stresses that the shifts that appear in indirect speech including tense shift, shift of adverbials of place, change of demonstratives, and change of pronouns are formal and indicate politeness.

#### **2.2.2.3. Complex Sentences vs. Simple Sentences**

As far as the rules of formality are concerned, complex sentences are viewed to be more formal than simple sentences. Thus, complex sentences with sentence linkers and

subordination are formal markers of the language. On the other hand, simple sentences with clause linkers and coordination mark informal language.

#### **2.2.2.4. Modal Verbs**

The use of modals is considered to be a tool for establishing formality in writing, in general, and business writing, in particular. The main modal verbs are should, could, can, may, and would; each modal verb has a different function according to the level of formality it tends to express. For example, the sentence: “could you lend me some money?” sounds more formal than the sentence: “can you lend me some money?”

#### **2.2.2.5. Contractions**

In writing, the lack or absence of contractions reflects formality of language. A contraction refers to a shorter form of a word or words. For instance, ‘can’t’ is the contracted form of ‘cannot’.

### **2.3. Presentation of Business Letters**

Writing in business tends to be quite different from writing in humanities, formal sciences, social sciences, or other academic disciplines. Business writing is used for different purposes resulting in different types of business letters, and requires unique considerations to specificity, accuracy, structure as well as to tone or formality.

#### **2.3.1. Definition of Business Letters**

A business letter is a type of correspondence used as the basic means of communication between companies either internally or externally. It is the most used type of business correspondence besides memos, emails, and faxes. A business letter is expected to be clear, complete, concise, courteous, and grammatically correct. It is supposed also to reflect the level of formality appropriate to the context in which it is used. Business letters can be

used to provide specific information, to persuade others to take action, or to seek a position within a company.

### **2.3.2. Types of Business Letters**

Literature dealing with business correspondence provides various types of business letters categorizations. Based on Naterop's (2002) book *business letters for all*, letters are classified into letters applied to social situations and applied to business situations.

#### **2.3.2.1. Letters Applied to Social Situations**

Letters applied to social situations include letters of offer, letters of order, and letter of enquiry.

##### **2.3.2.1.1. Letter of Offer**

According to Naterop (2002), letters of offer are sent by a company to offer current products to new or potential customers or to introduce a new product on the market.

##### **2.3.2.1.2. Letter of Order**

Letters of order serve to order products or materials from suppliers. Naterop (ibid.) states that an order letter has its own form; it is the most useful letter in the business field, and as such, should be written in an impressive style to effectively serve the purpose it stands for.

##### **2.3.2.1.3. Letter of Enquiry**

This kind of letters are sent by business people to seek different types of information such as information about transport of goods, information about the availability of supply, or information about catalogues and prices. Naterop (ibid.) points out that the letter of enquiry has the aim of requesting information, and that the tone in which it is written is very important in the sense that if the tone is friendlier, it would be easier for the receiver to provide the information to the sender.

### **2.3.2.2. Letters Applied to Business Situations**

Letters applied to business situations include letters of complaint and adjustment, letters of invitation, and letters of application.

#### **2.3.2.2.1. Letter of Complaint and Adjustment**

Naterop (ibid.) explains that the letter of complaint is sent by companies to solve problems and deal with difficult situations. On the other hand, a letter of adjustment is sent in order to fix mistakes that occur on the part of the business company. What should be observed in writing adjustment letters is to include an apology in addition to compensation for the damage that has been caused.

#### **2.3.2.2.2. Letter of Invitation**

According to Bond (2010), a letter of invitation should be formal and written in the first person. He claims that formal invitation should include the abbreviation RSVP, short for the French expression ‘répondez, s’il vous plaît’, which means in English, ‘please, reply.’

#### **2.3.2.2.3. Letter of Application**

As Naterop (2002) indicates, a letter of application is sent to a business company to apply for a job position. According to her, there are two types of letters of application: a solicited application which is sent as a reaction to a business company advertisement and an unsolicited application which is sent without any prior advertisement.

### **2.3.3. Structure of Business Letters**

Ashley (1992), along with many other authors, recommend a typical layout of business letters that is followed by many users. He suggests that a business letter generally includes a printed sender’s address that is typically placed on top right-hand side of the page, and below it, follows the date of writing the letter. Next, the receiver’s address is written below the line with the date, but on the opposite side of the page. A salutation opens the letter and addresses

the receiver, and it should start with a capital letter. Next, there is the body of the letter, which ought to give relevant information, and is divided into paragraphs with an appropriate length. At the end of the letter, there is a complimentary closing, which is used to close the letter. Lastly, the signature of the sender is provided. In this regard, Ashley (1992) comments on the form of the signature saying that “it is, to some extent, a matter of choice whether you sign with your initials or your given name, and whether you include a courtesy title. It is safer, therefore, to sign with your given name, and safest of all to include your title.” (p.6)

On the other hand, Insely (2016, p. 301) states that “the typical business letter contains the following standard components: inside address, salutation, body, complimentary closing, and a written signature.” He describes each one of them as follows:

- **Inside Address:**

The inside address contains the name and mailing address of the person or company the letter is being sent to.

- **Salutation:**

This is the greeting to the reader. If the letter is written to a specific individual, the typical salutation is the word ‘Dear’ followed by the receiver’s title (Ms., Mr., Dr., etc.) and surname followed by a colon; for example, Dear Ms. Garcia. If the letter is written to an unknown individual, a salutation such as Dear Sir or Dear Madam is used.

- **Body:**

This is the message. Most business letters contain three parts: an opening paragraph, one or more body paragraphs, and a closing paragraph.

- **Complimentary Closing:**

As the name suggests, this closes the letter. It is typically a word or phrase followed by a comma. Examples of common complimentary closings include: ‘Sincerely’ and ‘respectfully’.

- **Written Signature:**

This is the writer’s written signature. It is typical to leave three blank lines between the complimentary closing and the signature.

Other components, according to Insley (2016), contain:

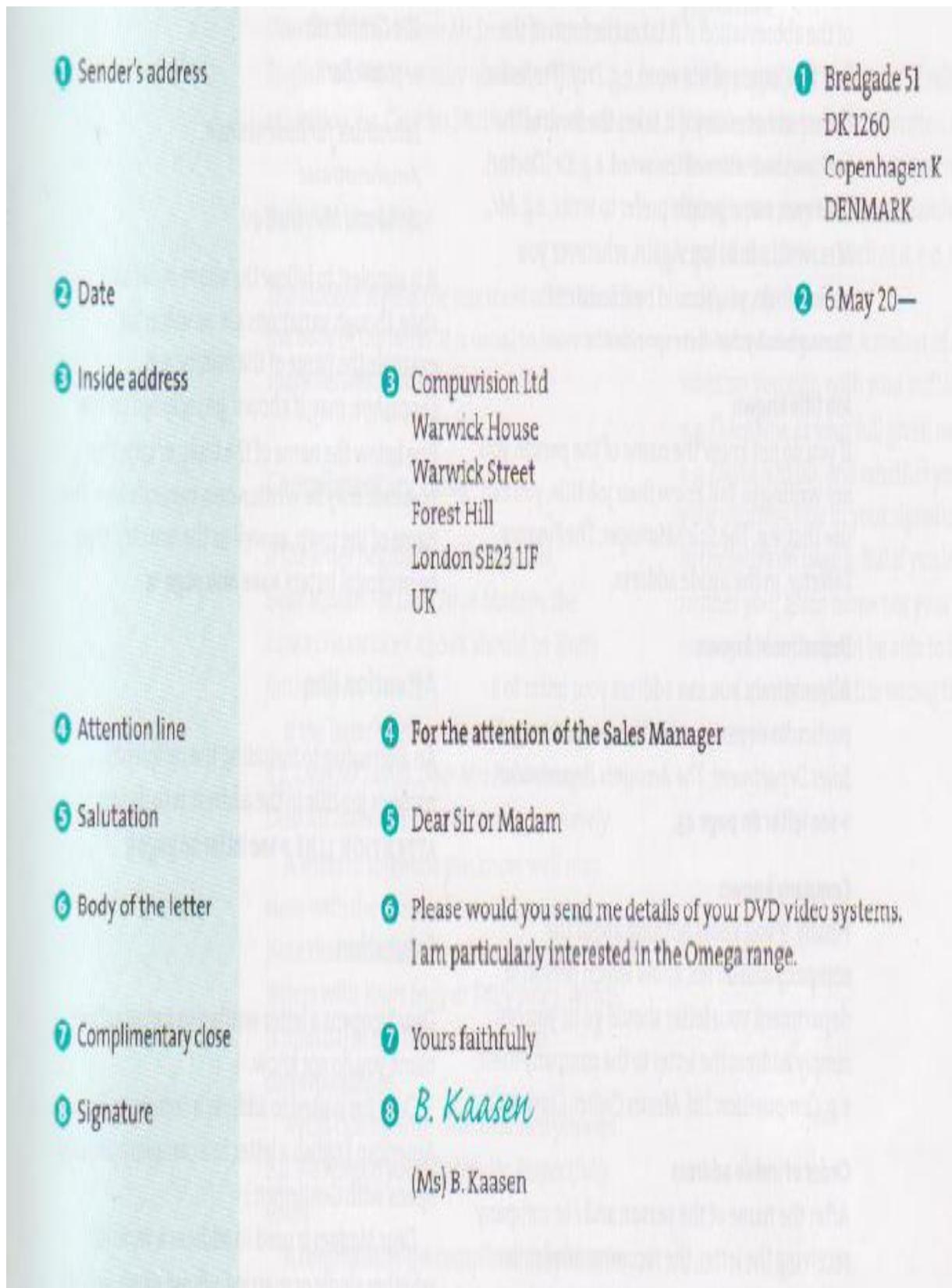
- **Attention Line:**

It is used in letters sent to a company, but directed to a specific person (Mr. kuo), position (Marketing Director) or a department within the company (Information System Department). It is the second line of the inside address.

- **Subject Line:**

As the term implies, the subject line tells the reader, in brief, the nature of the letter. It starts with the word subject: followed by colon, then five or six word description. The subject line is located between the salutation and the first paragraph of the body.

In summary, the following figure illustrates the typical layout of a business letter.



**Figure 2.01: Layout of a Business Letter adapted from (Ashley, 2003)**

## **2.4. Elements of Formality in Business Letters**

Several authors (Crystal and Davy 1969, Halliday 2005, and Holmes 1992) have dealt with formality in business letters from different angles. Crystal and Davy (1969) relate formality to social status or various social situations. They explain that one person, (either the addresser or the addressee), is always dominant and controls the level of formality. Halliday (2005), in comparison to Crystal and Davy, has a different perception of formality; he highlights that formality depends on relationships between people that take part in the business field, and that usage of formality results from different situations. By the same token, Holmes (1992) explains that formality mainly depends on social distance; hence the way the sender addresses the receiver in a business letter is very important. Formality is most noticeable in salutations and complimentary closing, style and tone and the linguistic expressions utilized.

### **2.4.1. Formality in Salutations and Complimentary Closings**

Salutations and complimentary closings are potential parts of every business letter. They are considered as signs of formality in business letters. Elliot (1989) explains that “Thirty years ago, most letters passing between large companies began: *Dear Sirs* and ended: *Yours faithfully*, but over recent years a more personal and friendly note has been introduced.” Salutations and complimentary closings should also reflect the relationship between the sender and the addressee.

As mentioned earlier, salutation is a very important part in business letters; it is used to open the letter and address the recipient. According to Brucknerová (2010), the usage of ‘Dear Sir’ or ‘Dear Madam’ in salutations is necessary. She also clarifies that the usage of such formulations depends on the relationship between both sides. In addition, Emmerson (2009) claims that ‘Dear sir/ Madam’ is viewed as the highest level of formality in business letters; he explains that ‘Dear Mr. Grey’ is used when the addressee is known. When the

addressee of the letter is not known, the usage of 'Dear Sir/Madam' is the most appropriate. Emmerson also points out that the abbreviation 'Dear Ms.' is used in case the sender does not know the marital status of the recipient in order to avoid any misunderstanding.

In writing salutations, however, people make common mistakes such as using 'Dear John', or 'Dearest Martha' assuming that such salutations will sound more impressive, but in fact, salutations like those are used in informal letters only.

As for the complimentary closing, it is used to close a letter; it is generally composed of two words. The usage of the closing remarks indicates that the sender knows about the rules of formality set for business letters. The most formal complimentary closing used in business letters is the expression 'Yours faithfully', which must go with the corresponding salutation 'Dear Sir/ Madam'. Other expressions like 'Yours sincerely', 'truly yours', and 'Regards' can be used but in informal letters.

#### **2.4.2. Style and Tone**

In business letters, one of the ways that business professionals can show respect for each other and establish a productive business relationship is to use the proper style and tone of writing. Style is defined in many ways, but is understood as a construction that makes the business letter. Tone, however, refers to the writer's attitude toward the receiver and the subject of the message. Verdonk (2002, p.5) states that: "A style is indeed a distinctive way of using language for some purpose and to some effect. We need to consider what makes an expression distinctive, why it has been devised, and what effect it has" In the same vein, Verdonk (2005) adds that style is defined as production or a strategy for writing; according to him, every style has a purpose and is determined by specific aspects and context. The purpose to be accomplished, the reader's expectations of formality and appropriate etiquettes, the addresser- addressee relationship, and the subject of the message all affect potentially the

style of writing. Furthermore, Cleary (2005) defines the term style as a synonym for the way of writing; she explains that the style used while writing business letters should be convenient to the recipient, and the message should be clear.

There are three styles that are distinguished in stylistics: formal, neutral or semi-formal, and informal, which might be applied to all types of business letters depending on the situation, the social distance and the subject of the message.

The formal style demonstrates information politely and carefully. In a business context where the formal style is required, the sender of the letter has to wisely choose the appropriate language and syntax and also the tone of the letter should sound formal. The common signs of formal style in business letters are the use of modals, impersonality of language, use of the passive voice, indirect requests, and respectful terms of address in salutations and complimentary closings.

The neutral or semi-formal style is an inter-stage between formal and informal style that is characterized by friendly, simple and direct language. It is commonly used in business letters with a tone that sounds more comfortable which indicates that there is an already established relationship between the sender and the recipient of the letter. Signs of formality in this style are approximately close to the formal style.

The informal style is characterized by the informality of language and the use of an amicable tone. Business letters written in an informal style generally contain broken syntax, colloquial expressions, intimate terms of address, and contractions, which indicate familiarity between the sender and the receiver of the letter.

After defining the different styles that might be used in business communication, there is a need to highlight the fact that variation in styles, or stylistic variation, is connected with variation in formality; accordingly, Halliday(1978) states that “ we characterize styles as

varieties of language viewed from the point of view of formality”. Hence, each style mentioned above reflects a certain degree of formality; to demonstrate this point, examples of all three styles are provided within both salutations and complimentary closings.

- Salutations:

Formal: Dear Sir

Neutral: Dear Mr. John

Informal: Dear Smith

- Complimentary Closings

Formal: Yours Faithfully

Neutral: Best Regards

Informal: Yours

### 2.4.3. Formal Language Expressions

Emmerson (2009) points out that the usage of formal language in opening and closing remarks in different types of letters is of significant importance. The following table provides some examples of formal language.

Letter Type	Opening Remarks	Closing Remarks
<b>Business letters asking for advice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I would appreciate if you could give me some advice</li> <li>- I would be grateful for your advice</li> <li>- Could you possibly offer your advice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I look forward to receiving your advice</li> <li>- I would appreciate if you could give me your advice as soon as possible.</li> </ul>
<b>Business letters of apology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I am writing to apologize for</li> <li>- How can I apologize enough for</li> <li>- I must apologize profusely for.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Once again, sincerest apologies for</li> <li>- I hope my apologies will be accepted.</li> </ul>

<b>Business letters of invitation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- We would be honoured if you can come</li> <li>- You are invited to attend</li> <li>- I cordially invite you</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- We would be grateful if you could come</li> <li>- Please indicate whether you will be able to attend.</li> </ul>
<b>Business letters of Refusal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- We thank you for your recent invitation</li> <li>- I regret to inform you.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I am sorry to miss the opportunity</li> <li>- Thank you again for your invitation.</li> </ul>
<b>Business letters of request</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I am writing in connection with</li> <li>- I am writing to enquire about.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I look forward to receiving</li> <li>- I would appreciate it if you could inform me as soon as possible.</li> </ul>
<b>Business letters giving information</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I am writing in reply to your letter asking for information about</li> <li>- In reply to your query.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I hope I have been of some assistance to you</li> <li>- Please inform me if I can be of any further assistance</li> <li>- Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further information.</li> </ul>

**Table2.02: Illustration of Formal Expressions in Opening and Closing Remarks adapted from (Emmerson, 2009)**

## **Conclusion**

Despite the complexity of formality in the English language, the significance of informal and formal English for communicating effectively in all situations, and especially in business correspondence is an important aspect that learners should be aware of. This chapter has dealt with the description of the notion of formality and its main features as well as defining some related concepts such as politeness, social distance, and register. In addition, it has investigated the genre of business letter by giving its definition, types, layout, and style of writing and illustrating formality in business letters as well.

## **Chapter Three**

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## **Chapter Three: Field Work**

### **Introduction**

The present chapter constitutes the practical part of our research on marketing students' needs vis-à-vis formality in business letters. The objective of the study is to identify the students' academic needs concerning their awareness and use of formality in business letters. This chapter synthesizes and discusses the results obtained from the applied data collection tools, namely students' test and teachers' questionnaire; it attempts also to test our research hypothesis and provide adequate answers to the research questions through analysing the results. Hence, three descriptive, analytic, and interpretive sections are devoted to data presentation and analysis of each of the students' test and the teachers' questionnaire followed by an overall analysis and interpretation of results.

### **3.1. Population and Sampling**

The participants in this study are the students and teachers of the department of commercial sciences at Mohammed E'Seddik Ben Yahia University, Jijel during the academic year 2016/2017.

#### **3.1.1. Students**

The target population of the study is first year Master students at the department of commercial sciences at Mohammed E'Seddik Ben Yahia University, Jijel. Forty-eight (48) students, a group, were selected randomly without any kind of criteria applied or certain qualifications required in order to reduce the risk of biasing data, increase representativeness of subjects and ensure objectivity and reliability of the research.

#### **3.1.2. Teachers**

Like students, the ESP teacher plays a prominent role in our investigation. The teacher is another primary source for data collection that could provide some explanations for the

proposed problem. At the stage of administering the questionnaire, it was distributed to eight ESP teachers at the department of commercial sciences, but only six teachers were helpful enough to answer the questionnaire and turn it back.

### **3.2. Methodology and Research Instruments**

The purpose of the present study is to investigate Marketing students' needs vis-à-vis formality in business letters. Additionally, the study aims at testing whether 1<sup>st</sup> year master Marketing students are aware of formal language and its use in business letters. The study, however, is not based on an arbitrary basis, but it is based on a systematic principled approach to Needs Analysis namely the Present Situation Analysis. This model was suggested by Richterich and Chancerel (1980); it is established to describe and identify learners' strengths and weaknesses in language, skills, and learning experiences at the beginning of a course in order to set the foundations for an effective ESP program.

The process of data collection about the study in question is based on the use of two basic instruments, a test for students and a questionnaire for teachers. Hence, this study is both quantitative and qualitative in nature since it relies on numerical data extracted from the adopted research tools and their interpretation and discussion. The collected data have been classified in tables, and, then, converted into percentages for facilitating its interpretation.

### **3.3. The Students Test**

#### **3.3.1. Description and Administration of the Students Test**

One of the essential instruments used in the conducted study is the students' test; it is a diagnostic test or what is labelled also as 'pre-course placement test' that is used as a method for gathering data in the Present Situation Analysis Approach. This kind of tests aims to diagnose the students' needs and perceptions regarding the use of formal language in business letters.

The test is composed of two exercises; in the first exercise, the students were given a random set of fourteen formal and informal letter extracts and asked to decide upon the formal and the informal ones with the provision of a justification for each response. The second exercise is a composition task in which the participants were asked to write a letter of application to a company referring to the information mentioned in the attached advertisement. The test was administered to Forty-eight (48) first year Master students of Marketing studying together in one group. Students were given enough time, approximately an hour, to complete the test.

**3.3.2. Analysis and Discussion of the Students Test**

**Exercise One: in the following letter extracts, put an ‘F’ for ‘formal language’ and ‘I’ for ‘informal language’. Justify your choice.**

- 1 I am writing to inquire about** .....
- .....
- 2 I read in the paper that you’re looking for a receptionist** .....
- .....
- 3 I am incredibly well organized** .....
- .....
- 4 Do get in touch** .....
- .....
- 5 Well, I think that's all for now** .....
- .....
- 6 I am sorry to inform you that** .....
- .....
- 7 I am writing in connection with** .....
- .....
- 8 I am an excellent candidate for the job** .....
- .....
- 9 I've been meaning to write to you for ages** .....
- .....

- 10 I have good language skills and sense of organization** .....
- .....
- 11 Thanks for the invitation** .....
- .....
- 12 Your presence is required at** .....
- .....
- 13 I look forward to** .....
- .....
- 14 I'm looking forward to** .....
- .....

The fourteen extracts are analysed one by one, and by the end a recapitulation of the results is undertaken. It is worthy to note at the start that all the students of the sample left the space for giving justification empty. Hence, the analysis will be restricted to evaluating students' identification of formal and informal language.

**Extract One:**

**1 I am writing to enquire about.**

This extract represents formal language because it is a common formal expression that is used in letters of enquiry. It contains the full form of the auxiliary to be and the formal verb 'enquire'.

<b>Extract 01</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Correct (formal)</b>	11	22.92
<b>Incorrect(informal)</b>	36	75
<b>No answer</b>	01	02.08
<b>Total</b>	48	100

**Table 3.01: Students' Identification of Formality in Extract One**

As shown in table 3.01, the majority of students 75% provided an incorrect answer to this extract. The rest of the population with a percentage of 22.92% answered correctly. However, only one student did not provide the answer.

**Extract Two:**

**2 I read in the paper that you're looking for a receptionist**

This extract represents informal language. It cannot be used in official formal letters because it contains the contraction “you’re” which is the short form of “you are”.

<b>Extract 02</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Correct(informal)</b>	16	33.33
<b>Incorrect(formal)</b>	31	64.58
<b>No answer</b>	01	02.08
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 3.02: Students' Identification of Formality in Extract Two**

The data in table above demonstrate that the highest percentage of students, 64.58%, failed to give the correct answer; whereas, 33.33% of the population answered correctly.

**Extract Three:**

**3 I am incredibly well organized**

This extract represents informal language because the writer uses the adverb ‘incredibly’ instead of ‘very’ which suggests that there is an exaggeration, subjectivity and closeness between him/her and the reader.

<b>Extract03</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Correct(informal)</b>	32	66.67
<b>Incorrect(formal)</b>	15	31.25
<b>No answer</b>	01	02.08
<b>Total</b>	48	100

**Table 3.03: Students' Identification of Formality in Extract Three**

The results in table 03 reveal that almost 67% of the sample answered correctly; whereas 31.25% of it answered correctly.

**Extract Four:**

**4 Do get in touch.**

This extract represents informal language because it is a direct request. Direct requests tend to be used in informal writings.

<b>Extract03</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Correct(informal)</b>	09	18.75
<b>Incorrect(formal)</b>	38	79.17
<b>No answer</b>	01	02.08
<b>Total</b>	48	100

**Table 3.04: Students' Identification of Formality in Extract Four**

Regarding the data displayed in table 3.04, a great number of students representing 79.17% gave a wrong answer. Only 19% of the students gave the correct answer.

**Extract Five:**

**5 Well, I think that's all for now**

This extract represents informal language because it contains the exclamation ‘well’ used to pause and akin to spoken language than written language in addition to contraction “that’s” which is used only in informal settings.

<b>Extract05</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Correct(informal)</b>	14	29.17
<b>Incorrect(formal)</b>	33	68.75
<b>No answer</b>	01	02.08
<b>Total</b>	48	100

**Table 3.05: Students’ Identification of Formality in Extract Five**

Table 3.05 shows that 68.75% of the students answered incorrectly and that 29.17% of them answered correctly. Only one student did not provide the answer.

**Extract Six:**

**6 I am sorry to inform you that.**

This extract represents formal language because it expresses an apology or sends negative information using formal language.

<b>Extract06</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Correct(formal)</b>	12	25
<b>Incorrect(informal)</b>	35	72.92
<b>No answer</b>	01	02.08
<b>Total</b>	48	100

**Table 3.06: Students’ Identification of Formality in Extract Six**

Findings illustrated in table 3.06 reveal that the majority of the students, almost 73%, gave the incorrect answer; whereas, only 25% of them gave the correct answer.

**Extract 07:**

**7 I am writing in connection with.**

This extract represents formal language because it is a common opening formal phrase ‘in connection with’ instead of the less formal ones ‘to’ or ‘so as to’. This use is closely related to official formal letters. It does not contain any signs of informality.

<b>Extract07</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Correct(formal)</b>	15	31.25
<b>Incorrect(informal)</b>	32	66.67
<b>No answer</b>	01	02.08
<b>Total</b>	48	100

**Table 3.07: Students’ Identification of Formality in Extract Seven**

The data in table 3.07 demonstrate that 66.67% out of the 48 students answered incorrectly. The rest except one student, 31.25%, answered correctly.

**Extract 08:**

**8 I am an excellent candidate for the job.**

This extract represents formal language because it does not contain any signs of informality, and the words used are highly formal.

<b>Extract08</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Correct(formal)</b>	10	20.83
<b>Incorrect(informal)</b>	37	77.08
<b>No answer</b>	01	02.08
<b>Total</b>	48	100

**Table 3.08: Students’ Identification of Formality in Extract Eight**

The highest percentage 77.08% of the sample gave an incorrect answer; whereas, only 20.83% of it gave the correct answer.

**Extract Nine:**

**9 I've been meaning to write to you for ages.**

This extract represents informal language because it contains both the contraction “I’ve” and the idiomatic expression “for ages” which are used only in informal settings.

<b>Extract09</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Correct(informal)</b>	03	06.25
<b>Incorrect(formal)</b>	44	91.67
<b>No answer</b>	01	02.08
<b>Total</b>	48	100

**Table 3.09: Students’ Identification of Formality in Extract Nine**

Approximately all the students 91.67% failed to provide the correct answer. On the other hand, only 06.25% answered correctly.

**Extract Ten:**

**10 I have good language skills and sense of organization.**

This extract represents formal language because it is based on the formal words and grammar, giving the description a sense of objectivity.

<b>Extract10</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Correct(formal)</b>	10	20.83
<b>Incorrect(informal)</b>	37	77.08
<b>No answer</b>	01	02.08
<b>Total</b>	48	100

**Table 3.10: Students' Identification of Formality in Extract Ten**

Table 3.10 shows that the majority of the sample 77.08% answered incorrectly and that only 20.83% answered correctly. One student did not answer.

**Extract 11:**

**11 Thanks for the invitation.**

This extract represents informal language because it is identified with casual speech, to be formal, the expression 'thank you' or 'thank you very much' should be used instead of the word 'thanks'.

<b>Extract11</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Correct(informal)</b>	17	35.42
<b>Incorrect(formal)</b>	30	62.50
<b>No answer</b>	01	02.08
<b>Total</b>	48	100

**Table 3.11: Students' Identification of Formality in Extract Eleven**

Few students constituting 35.42% of the sample gave the correct answer; whereas the majority of the students, to the exception of one, 62.50%, gave the incorrect answer.

**Extract 12:**

### **12 Your presence is required at.**

This extract represents formal language because the use of nominalization, the passive voice and the formal verb 'require' implies that there is a social distance and unfamiliarity between the between the writer and reader.

<b>Extract12</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Correct(formal)</b>	21	43.75
<b>Incorrect(informal)</b>	26	54.17
<b>No answer</b>	01	02.08
<b>Total</b>	48	100

**Table 3.12: Students' Identification of Formality in Extract Twelve**

In table 12, nearly half of the target population, 43.75%, gave an incorrect response. And just over half of them, 54.17%, gave a correct answer.

### **Extract 13:**

### **13 I look forward to.**

This extract represents formal language because it is a common formal expression that is used to close letters.

<b>Extract13</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Correct(formal)</b>	19	39.58
<b>Incorrect(informal)</b>	28	58.33
<b>No answer</b>	01	02.08
<b>Total</b>	48	100

**Table 3.13: Students' Identification of Formality in Extract Thirteen**

Regarding the data shown in table 3.13, 58.33% of the students provided the inappropriate choice; however, almost 40% of them provided the appropriate one.

**Extract fourteen:**

**14 I'm looking forward to.**

This extract represents informal language because it contains the contraction "I'm" which is used only in informal writings.

<b>Extract14</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Correct(informal)</b>	21	43.75
<b>Incorrect(formal)</b>	26	54.17
<b>No answer</b>	01	02.08
<b>Total</b>	48	100

**Table 3.14: Students' Identification of Formality in Extract Fourteen**

As shown in table 3.14, 43.75% of the target population gave the correct choice whereas 54.17% gave the incorrect choice.

**Recapitulation of Exercise One Results:**

Extract	Correct		Incorrect		No answer	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	11	22.92	36	75	01	02.08
2	16	33.33	31	64.58	01	02.08
3	32	66.67	15	31.25	01	02.08
4	09	18.75	38	79.17	01	02.08
5	14	29.17	33	68.75	01	02.08
6	12	25	35	72.92	01	02.08
7	15	31.25	32	66.67	01	02.08
8	10	20.83	37	77.08	01	02.08
9	03	06.25	44	91.67	01	02.08
10	10	20.83	37	77.08	01	02.08
11	17	35.42	30	62.50	01	02.08
12	21	43.75	26	54.17	01	02.08
13	19	39.58	28	58.33	01	02.08
14	21	43.75	26	54.17	01	02.08
<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>437.50</b>	<b>448</b>	<b>933.34</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>29.12</b>
<b>Average</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>31.25</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>66.67</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>2.08</b>

**Table 3.15: Recapitulation of Students' Identification of Formality in Exercise One**

As the recapped data in table 3.15 shows, more than twice as many students (32) supplied incorrect answers as students who provided correct ones (15). This means that, in general, students cannot recognize or identify signs of formality in the language used to write official business letters.

**Exercise Two: in few months you are going to be a graduate. You may subsequently be looking for a job.**

**Here is a job offer; write a letter of application for the position offered.**

**ALGERIAN QATARI STEEL, EL MILIA**

rue Zone industrielle bellara à El milia - Jijel, Algérie.

**Position: Business Analyst**

This is a fantastic opportunity for a business analyst with a Master degree in Marketing. We have an opening in our business analysis team for a technical-minded individual to help plan and implement investment functions for our customers.

Your responsibilities will include:

- Managing multiple projects (testing, implementation and planning)
- Generating technical requirements analysis
- Recognising business problems and growth opportunities

Most students found the exercise very difficult, and almost withdraw from doing it. The teacher has to tell them it is part of an exam, and in this way managed to bring some students, 15 of them in total to perform it.

The table below is used to assess the criteria of formality used by students in their written products. The task was made difficult due to the high number of mistakes made by students, which reveals that students are already lacking on basic linguistic skills such as grammar, vocabulary and spelling.

<b>Criteria of formality in business letters</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Examples</b>
Salutations	07	14.58	Dear Sir
Complimentary closings	05	10.42	Yours faithfully
Respectful terms of address	01	02.08	
Use of passive voice	01	02.08	
Use of indirect speech	0	0	

Use of complex sentences	0	0	
Use of modal verbs	03	06.25	I would include my CV
Use of formal style	0	0	

**Table 3.16: Students' Use of Criteria of Formality in Writing a Business Letter**

As shown in table 15, the students have poor knowledge about formality and its use in business letters. Few students, however, managed to write appropriate salutations, closings and modal verbs.

### **3.4. Teacher Questionnaire**

#### **3.4.1. Description and Administration of the Teacher Questionnaire**

The other used instrument is the teachers' questionnaire. It aims to collect data concerning the teachers' perceptions about the topic of the study. The questionnaire was administered to eight ESP teachers at the department of commercial sciences; they were instructed to fill it in and ask for clarification in case there are problematic or ambiguous questions and we agreed on the place and time for collecting the questionnaire. Eventually, only six teachers turned back their answers.

The questionnaire consists of four sections which seek mainly to know whether teacher has any ESP-related training, and whether they know and respond to students' needs especially with regard to formality of language.

Section One of the questionnaire is entitled 'Background Information'. It establishes in four questions (questions 1, 2, 3 and 4) the teacher's profile in terms of academic qualifications, status at the department of Commercial Sciences, teaching experience and ESP training.

Section Two, Aspects of the ESP Syllabus, encompasses seven questions (from question 5 to question 11). Question 5 and 6 ask whether teachers are instructed to implement a pre-determined syllabus by the administration, and if teachers abide by it, if it exists at all. Question 7 seeks to determine whether the syllabus is based on prior analysis of students' needs and in Question 8 asks for the initial steps followed by teachers in designing their current syllabus. Questions 9, 10 and 11 turn to ask about the language skills, language aspects and language functions that is focused on in the syllabus, respectively.

Section Three, Formality in Writing Business Letters, stretches from Question 12 to Question 14, and aims to find out whether teachers give students practice in writing business letters (Question 12), get a teachers' view on the students' level in using a suitable format of business letters and the appropriate level of formality (Question 13) and get teachers to assess their students' ability to write different types of business letters (Question 14).

The last section, Section Four: Suggestions and Recommendations, explores the teachers' points of view and suggestions towards teaching business letters.

### **3.4.2. Analysis and Discussion of the Teacher Questionnaire**

#### **Section One: Background Information**

##### **01. Qualifications:**

- a. License
- b. Master
- c. Magister
- d. Doctorate

<b>Options</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>a.</b>	01	16.67
<b>b.</b>	05	83.33
<b>Total</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 3.17: Teachers' Qualifications**

As the table indicates, only one teacher has a license degree, and the majority hold a master degree. No higher degrees exist in the sample, which suggests that teachers are not ESP specialists.

**02. Status at the Department of Marketing:**

- a. Full time teacher
- b. Part time teacher
- c. Associate

This question has been posed to know the status of the teachers; 100% of them stated that they are part time teachers.

**03. Specify other ESP specialties you have taught before, if any?**

.....

<b>Specialty</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
English for Physics	01	25
English for Chemistry	01	25
English for Finance	02	50
English for Management	01	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 3.18: Teachers' Experience in Teaching ESP**

This question addresses the teachers' experience in ESP. Although the table above shows four specialties, these represent the experience of two teachers only; one of them taught

English for Physics, English for Chemistry, English for Finance, and English for management. The second teacher taught English for Finance. The other four teachers simply did not answer the question, suggesting that this year marks their first experience.

**04. Have you received specialized training into teaching ESP?**

a. Yes

b. No

**If yes, please specify:**

.....

In spite of the significance of ESP training in making the process of teaching/learning easier, the results obtained for this question show that no teacher has received or sought any training into teaching ESP.

## **Section Two: Aspects of the ESP Syllabus**

**05. Have you been instructed to implement a specific syllabus of English by the administration?**

a. Yes

b. No

The results for this question reveal that all teachers have not been told by the administration to implement a specific syllabus. This suggests that there is either lack of contact or that teachers prefer to be initiative.

**06. If yes, do you abide by all the points mentioned in the recommended syllabus?**

a. Yes

b. No

Since the answer to the previous question was “No”, this question can be skipped.

**07. Is the implemented syllabus of English based on prior analysis of student’s needs?**

a. Yes

b. No

c. Not sure

Options	N	%
b.	05	83.33
c.	01	16.67
<b>Total</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 3.19: Teachers’ Analysis of Students’ Needs for Syllabus Design**

With regard to the implemented syllabus and whether it is based on the students’ needs, 83.33% of the teachers claimed that the English syllabus is not based on prior analysis of students’ needs while the 16.67% stated that they are not sure of that.

**08. What have you done prior to designing and teaching your current syllabus?**

a. A diagnostic evaluation of students’ levels

b. A needs analysis survey for students

c. Discussion with administrators and teaching staff

d. Analysis of topics and concepts tackled in the curriculum

e. Adopt a ready-made ESP course

f. Adapt an ESP handbook or method

g. Others, please specify:

.....

<b>Options</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>b.</b>	01	16.67
<b>e.</b>	04	66.67
<b>c.+ e.</b>	01	16.67
<b>Total</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 3.20: Teachers' Pre-Syllabus design Procedures**

This question attempts to spotlight the preparations teachers do before settling on their current syllabus. Results show that 83.33% (e: 66.67% + c. +e.:16.67%= 83.33%) of the teachers adopt a ready-made ESP course. In addition one teacher said that he/she did a diagnostic evaluation of the students' level before designing the syllabus, and another posited that he/she discusses with the administration and the teaching staff.

**09. According to you, what English language skills should receive more focus and time in the current syllabus?**

- a. Listening**
- b. Writing**
- c. Reading**
- d. Speaking**
- e. All of the above**

This question aims to discover the students' needs regarding the four skills of the English language. The results show that all the teachers emphasized on the importance of all the four skills which their students need to develop.

**10. How often do you provide your students with practice on the following language aspects?**

Frequency	Grammar		Vocabulary		Pronunciation		Spelling	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
a.	0	0	06	100	05	83.33	0	0
b.	02	33.33	0	0	01	16.67	0	0
c.	04	66.67	0	0	0	0	01	16.67
d.	0	0	0	0	0	0	03	50
e.	0	0	0	0	0	0	02	33.33
<b>Total</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 3.21: Frequency of Providing Practice of the Four Language Skills**

The results the frequency of practising the four language skills show that most focus is given to vocabulary which is always practised by all teachers. Second, 83.33% of teachers provide pronunciation practice at every session, and 16.67 % often do so. Third, the teaching of grammar is also highly valued. The least focus is given to spelling with 83.33% of teachers either rarely or never includes spelling activities.

**11. Which of the following social language functions have you taught your students to express?**

- a. Request
- b. Offer
- c. Invitation
- d. Complaint
- e. Offer
- f. Order/Instruction
- g. Acknowledgments
- h. Apology
- i. Others, please specify:

.....

Options	N	%
a.	01	16.67
b.	01	16.67
a.+ b.	01	16.67
a.+d.	01	16.67
a.+h.	01	16.67
b.+g.	01	16.67
<b>Total</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 3.22: Social Language Functions Taught**

The results in the table above show that most teachers taught some social language functions. The most taught function is ‘request’ with 66.68% of teachers [a.:16.67 + (a.+b): 16.67+ (a.+d): 16.67+ (a.+h): 16.67= 66.68]. Second in rank is the function of ‘offer’ with 50% of responses. The three functions ‘complaint’, ‘acknowledgement’ and ‘apology’ are taught only minimally by 16.67%, meaning one teacher, for each. The remaining functions are not practised at all.

### Section Three: Formality in Writing Business Letters

**12. Do you teach your students how to write business letters?**

a. Yes

b. No

Options	N	%
a.	02	33.33
b.	04	66.67
<b>Total</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 3.23: Teaching of Business Letters**

The data demonstrated in table 3.23 show that the majority of teachers (66.67%) do not consider teaching business letters as a part of their teaching syllabus.

<b>13. How good (do you think) are your students at:</b>	<b>a. Excellent</b>	<b>b. Above Average</b>	<b>c. Average</b>	<b>d. Below Average</b>	<b>e. Very Poor</b>	<b>f. Not Sure</b>
<b>a- Using appropriate layout of letters?</b>						
<b>b- Recognizing the level of formality in a business letter?</b>						
<b>c- Using the appropriate level of formality that is required by different situations in a business letter?</b>						

#### **a- Using Appropriate Layout of Letters**

<b>Options</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>c.</b>	01	16.67
<b>d.</b>	04	66.67
<b>f.</b>	01	16.67
<b>Total</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 3.24: Students' Levels at Using Appropriate Layout of Letters**

With regard to using the appropriate layout of letters, teachers most teachers (66.67%) think that students are below average. The other two teachers think their students are either average or very poor at the said aspect.

#### **b- Recognizing the Level of Formality in a Business Letter**

<b>Options</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>d.</b>	04	66.67
<b>e.</b>	01	16.67
<b>f.</b>	01	16.67
<b>Total</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 3.25: Students' Levels at Recognizing the Level of Formality in a Business Letter**

Teachers hold negative attitudes towards the students' ability to recognize formality in a business letters with 66.67% thinking that their students are below average and 16.67% qualifying them as having a very poor level.

**c- Using the Appropriate Level of Formality**

Options	N	%
d.	02	33.33
e.	04	66.67
<b>Total</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 3.26: Students' Levels at Using Formality in a Business Letter**

The table shows that 66.67% of teachers claimed that students have a very poor level in using formal language that is required in business letters, and the rest (33.33%) qualify them as below average.

In summary of the three elements of this questions, teachers make it clear that students are either 'below average' or 'very poor' in recognizing and using the levels of formality in business letters.

**14. How do you assess your students' skills at writing the following types business letters? (Tick the appropriate cells next to the types practiced only)**

Type of Letter	a. Excellent	b. Above Average	c. Average	d. Below Average	e. Very Poor	f. Not Sure
1) Application						
2) Inquiry						
3) Sales						
4) Collection						
5) Complaint						
6) Adjustment						
7) Order						
8) Acknowledgement						
9) Recommendation						

<b>10)Apology</b>						
<b>11)Others:</b>						
.....						
.....						

As a matter of fact, half the teachers left this question unanswered because they say they are not sure in view of the fact that they have not taught these types of letters or how to write letters.

In summary of the results obtained for Question 14, the following patterns are found:

- Most teachers think that their students have a ‘below average’ ability to write letters of 1) application, 2) inquiry 5) complaint and 10) apology
- Most teachers think that their students have a ‘very poor’ ability to write letters of 3) sales , 7) order and 9) recommendation
- Most teacher are not sure about students’ levels in writing 4) collection , 6) adjustment and 8)acknowledgement

**Section Four: Suggestions and Recommendations**

**16. Given the status of English in the Marketing curriculum, how do you suggest writing, formality, and business letters be taught?**

.....

.....

.....

The last section asks for the teacher’s points of view and their suggestions towards teaching business letters. All the target teachers left the space for suggestions and recommendations empty.

### **3.5. Overall Analysis and Interpretation of Results**

In respect to the previous analysis of the obtained data from the adopted tools of research, the students' test and the teachers' questionnaire, answers can be formulated to the research questions, namely determining the general level of the first year Master students of marketing in writing business letters, their target needs with regard to formality in business letters and the attitudes and perceptions of teachers of ESP about teaching formal language.

#### **3.5.1. Marketing Students' Levels in Writing Business Letters**

Referring back to the findings presented in table 3.16 (exercise two) and table 3.24, the answer to the first research question can be revealed in that marketing students' level in writing business letters is below the average and almost very poor since they were not successful enough in accomplishing the task of writing a business letter to apply for a job; their final written products lack the use of the appropriate layout and the criteria of formality as well.

#### **3.5.2. Marketing Students' Target Needs vis-à-vis Formality in Business Letters**

As an answer to the second research question, the findings presented in table 3.15 (exercise one), table 3.25, and table 3.26 lead us to state that 1<sup>st</sup> Year Master marketing students, without any doubt, are unaware of the usage of formal English, yet this has been proved by their poor performance in the test in which 69.19% of students representing the majority of the participants answered incorrectly in the first exercise failing to differentiate between formal and informal extracts of business letters. Hence, the knowledge of formality in business letters is identified as an urgent target need that marketing students lack and must develop regarding its significance to their future career. In addition to some other identified target needs that should be ameliorated namely the four skills of the English language in general.

### **3.5.3. Attitudes and Perceptions of ESP Teachers about the ESP Syllabus and Teaching Formal Language**

Most teachers stated that they are not provided with a specific syllabus by the administration and the students' needs are not fully taken into consideration in implementing the teaching syllabus as demonstrated in table 3.19 and 3.20 in which the results reveal that 83.33% of the teachers claimed that the ESP syllabus is not based on prior analysis of the students' needs, and that they adopt a ready-made ESP course without any pre-course diagnosing of the students' needs. The students' needs, however, change over the years which will require an updated needs analysis to their needs each new starting year of teaching to cope with the change. Moreover, the findings from the teacher questionnaire reveal that the issue of formality in business letters is neglected in both the syllabus designed for students and the teachers' course of teaching.

#### **Conclusion**

We have devoted this chapter to analysing and interpreting the results of the students' test and teachers' questionnaire. According to the findings, students have a poor level in adopting formal English language in writing business letters, and this strongly supports our hypothesis that 1<sup>st</sup> year master students of marketing are not aware of the formality of the language and its use in business letters, which calls for an immediate effective solution to overcome and cover their need regarding this important area.

## **General Conclusion**

1. Putting it altogether
2. Pedagogical Recommendations
3. Limitations of the Study
4. Suggestions for Further Research

## **General Conclusion**

### **1. Putting it altogether:**

The ultimate objective of this study is to conduct a needs analysis vis-à-vis formality in business letters on First Year Master marketing students who are required to achieve certain levels regarding being skilful in using formal language aspects in writing business letters. The findings will set the foundation for an appropriate course design where the identified needs will be the core elements of the language course.

The focus was on placing the study within a strong and reliable theoretical framework which is a collaboration of ESP, NA and aspects of formality in business letters. The practical part dealt with the demonstration of the results obtained from the students test and teacher questionnaire. Last but not least, the last chapter provided a general conclusion and suggested some recommendations.

The outcomes are probably very significant since the study is relatively focused on the students' needs in using formal aspect language in writing business letters. Both teachers and students can benefit from this investigation; for teachers, it is important to implement a course with predetermined objectives that make the task unambiguous and goal-directed; while the students are fairly satisfied to receive the intended input and ready to make efforts. Furthermore, they wish that once they graduate, they would be skilful and competent in writing different kinds of business letters, a task that will surely be required of them in their future careers.

The students test aimed at investigating the students' level in writing an application letter and to what extent they can differentiate between formal and informal language, thus their recognition of the level of formality. Additionally, a questionnaire was adopted and administered to the ESP teachers for the sake of discovering the whole situation, i.e. what is

happening behind the scenes as the goal is to dig deeper in the student's mind and learn about their thoughts.

The results confirmed the vitality of English as the world's business language that continues to grow and dominate the world. Because Algeria has become open on the international market, English is gaining more attention. Nowadays, students have, in turn, become aware of the new changes and are ready to cope with modern age of technology. Hence, learning English is the key for a successful academic and a professional life. The majority of students showed interest in learning writing English business letters and continue developing their competences even after graduation. They are ready to be more attentive as long as the English courses respond to this need.

As far as the students test is concerned, it has shown that students have an inadequate level, being incapable of fulfilling the given tasks correctly which confirms that they are in need of special care concerning their necessities, wants and lacks. First of all, First Year Master marketing students need to develop English vocabulary associated with business and marketing, in general, and writing business letters, in particular. Second, the majority of students said that they want to improve their formality level. This is consistent with the test results which revealed that they are not aware of formality aspects in business correspondence, and how to use the terminology correctly in writing formal letters and emails. In addition, when discussing the students' target needs, most of the learners are kinaesthetic so the teacher should accommodate his/her role to respect their preferences and provide an opportunity to his students to learn how to use formal English in business situations. Despite the fact that most of the references in the internet are in English, students use Arabic or French due to their deficiency in the language. Finally, both students and teachers agree that formality is important and complementary. Hence, having a full command of formal academic English language is necessary without forgetting to mention an emphasis on four skills.

Globally, the results are in the direction of our assumption; it would be possible for students to make progress and achieve acceptable levels in using formality if the ESP teachers at the department of Commercial Sciences, University of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia were provided with a syllabus that covers formality aspects that are identified as necessities, wants, and lacks. In other words, students will be able to achieve better formal English language if there were some kind of course books or curriculum that deal with it. They will be motivated to receive the input that complies with this need instead of haphazard lessons. One of the most important demands is study-related lessons that will develop their writing formal business letters competency whether in the time being as students or later as workers. Additionally, a remarkable progress in the academic achievements will not occur unless the students are ready to cooperate and are satisfied with the ESP courses. Consequently, teachers should take into account their needs in designing and planning lessons.

## **2. Pedagogical Recommendations:**

In an attempt to suggest some solutions in order to overcome the issue of formality in business letters, which has been revealed and proved to be a neglected need that the students really require to master, we recommend that the students should pay more attention to formal English language in writing business letters in particular and in business communication situations in general. Moreover, concerning business letters, students should consider carefully the format and style of writing business letters through receiving sufficient knowledge and practice on the matter. Additionally, even though the English module is considered secondary or marginal to marketing students, students should be more self-motivated to learn the English language and try to ameliorate their level in mastering all its skills since the English language has become the dominant international language of business and trade.

As far as teachers are concerned, they should take students' needs into consideration and should grant more time to teaching formality in business letters along with providing the related aspects of business letters such as the correct format and style of writing. They should also receive more specialized training in ESP in order to be competent teachers who are capable of dispensing effective ESP courses.

Regarding the ESP syllabus, the department of commercial sciences should provide a well-designed syllabus that really covers all the students' needs and includes the study of formality in business letters as one of the students' prioritised and necessary needs that must be covered.

### **3. Limitations of the Study:**

It is worth mentioning that throughout conducting this research, several constraints have been encountered; one of them was the limited insufficient amount of time which stands as an obstacle against accomplishing this work in a more appropriate manner. Another hinder was the external reliability of the findings since the needs are located in Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University and could change from one university to another and as the subjects are few in number, the findings cannot be fully generalized even within the current context. Accordingly, the present study may appear to lack the required in-depth treatment of the data and findings.

### **4. Suggestions for Further Research**

Regarding the fact that ESP and Needs Analysis are such wide and interesting fields of research, further investigations may take place to clear up the area of students' needs concerning the English language for specific purposes. Since this study tackled marketing students' needs from one angle and focused mainly on the formality of language, this does not mean that all the students' needs were fully analysed; rather, we found that first year

marketing students have also target needs concerning the four skills of the English language in general; hence, further research can be undertaken to tackle and overcome this problem.

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# Appendices

## Teacher Questionnaire

This questionnaire constitutes an essential part of our master dissertation on marketing students' needs vis-à-vis formality in business letters. We would be grateful if you help us to collect data for our study by answering the questions below. Thank you in advance.

### Section One: Background Information

15. Qualifications:

e. License

f. Master

g. Magister

h. Doctorat

16. Status at the Department of Marketing:

d. Full time teacher

e. Part time teacher

f. Associate

17. Specify other ESP specialties you have taught before, if any?

.....  
.....  
.....

18. Have you received specialized training into teaching ESP?

Yes

No

If yes, please specify:

.....  
.....  
.....

## Section Two: Aspects of the ESP Syllabus

19. Have you been instructed to implement a specific syllabus of English by the administration?

a. Yes

b. No

20. If yes, do you abide by all the points mentioned in the recommended syllabus?

a. Yes

b. No

21. Is the implemented syllabus of English based on prior analysis of students' needs?

a. Yes

b. No

c. Not sure

22. What have you done prior to designing and teaching your current syllabus?

h. A diagnostic evaluation of students' levels

i. A needs analysis survey for students

j. Discussion with administrators and teaching staff

k. Analysis of topics and concepts tackled in the curriculum

l. Adopt a ready-made ESP course

m. Adapt an ESP handbook or method

n. Others, please specify:

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23. According to you, what English language skills should receive more focus and time in the current syllabus?

f. Listening

g. Writing

h. Reading

i. Speaking

j. All of the above

24. How often do you provide your students with practice on the following language aspects?

Language aspects	Frequency				
	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
1) Grammar					
2) Vocabulary					
3) Pronunciation					
4) Spelling					

25. Which of the following social language functions have you taught your students to express?

- j. Request
- k. Offer
- l. Invitation
- m. Complaint
- n. Offer
- o. Order/Instruction
- p. Acknowledgments
- q. Apology
- r. Others, please specify:

.....

### Section Three: Formality in Writing Business Letter

26. Do you teach your students how to write business letters?

- a. Yes
- b. No

27. How good (do you think) are your students at:	Excellent	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Very Poor	Not Sure
c- Using appropriate layout of letters?						
d- Recognizing the level of formality in a business letter?						
c- Using the appropriate level of formality that is required by different situations in a business letter?						

28. How do you assess your students' skills at writing the following types of business letters? (Tick the appropriate cells next to the types practised only)

Type of Letter	Excellent	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Very Poor	Not Sure
8) Application						
9) Inquiry						
10) Sales						
11) Collection						
12) Complaint						
13) Adjustment						
14) Order						
15) Acknowledgement						
16) Recommendation						
17) Apology						
18) Others:						
.....						
.....						

**Section Four: Suggestions and Recommendations**

16. Given the status of English in the Marketing curriculum, how do you suggest writing, formality, and business letters be taught?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

**Thank you very much**

## Students Test

**Exercise One: Write a letter of application for the job mentioned in the advertisement.**

<b>ALGERIAN QATARI STEEL, EL MILIA</b>	
rue Zone industrielle bellara à El milia - Jijel, Algérie.	
<b>Position: Business Analyst</b>	
This is a fantastic opportunity for a business analyst with a Master degree in Marketing. We have an opening in our business analysis team for a technical-minded individual to help plan and implement investment functions for our customers.	
Your responsibilities will include:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Managing multiple projects (testing, implementation and planning)</li><li>• Generating technical requirements analysis</li><li>• Recognising business problems and growth opportunities</li></ul>	

**Exercise Two: in the following letter extracts, put an ‘F’ for ‘formal language’ and ‘I’ for ‘informal language’. Justify your choice.**

1 I am writing to enquire about .....

.....

2 I read in the paper that you're looking for a receptionist .....  
.....

3 I am incredibly well organized .....  
.....

4 Do get in touch .....  
.....

5 Well, I think that's all for now .....  
.....

6 I am sorry to inform you that .....  
.....

7 I am writing in connection with .....  
.....

8 I am an excellent candidate for the job .....  
.....

9 I've been meaning to write to you for ages .....  
.....

10 I have good language skills and sense of organization .....  
.....

11 Thanks for the invitation .....  
.....

12 Your presence is required at .....  
.....

13 I look forward to .....  
.....

14 I'm looking forward to .....  
.....

## **Résumé**

### **Les Besoins des Apprenants ESP vis- à -vis de la Formalité des Correspondances Commerciales. Une étude de cas d'étudiants en Première Année Master en Marketing à l'Université Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia, Jijel.**

La minutieuse étude a visé l'examen des besoins des étudiants de première année en marketing vis- à- vis de la formalité de la correspondance commerciale au niveau du département des sciences commerciales a l'Université Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia, Jijel. L'étude a été exclusivement exploratoire ayant une structure théorique de l'anglais spécifique, l'analyse des besoins, et la formalité des correspondances commerciales. La population ciblée a été introduite dans des classes ESP sans aucuns objectifs prédéterminés ou un programme existant. L'échantillon comprenait un groupe d'étudiants sur trois autres en première année en Master marketing et six 06 enseignants d'ESP. Pour la collecte des données, deux méthodes ont été utilisées: un test pour les étudiants et un questionnaire pour les enseignants. Les résultats ont révélé que les étudiants ont des besoins cibles (nécessités, besoins et lacunes) et qu'ils ignorent la formalité de la langue et son utilisation dans les correspondances commerciales. En plus d'avoir de faibles compétences dans la connaissance des aspects de la langue formelle ,la rédaction des lettres commerciales et la différenciation entre l'anglais formel et informel, les apprenants ont également une mauvaise connaissance de l'anglais en général. A cet effet et pour répondre aux besoins cibles des étudiants, des mesures doivent être prises par les concepteurs de programmes en fournissant des solutions pratiques et des procédures pédagogiques pour surmonter les obstacles mentionnés ci-dessus , comme l'offre ou l'assurance d'un programme éducatif approprié qui couvrira entièrement les besoins identifiés des apprenants, en particulier la question de la formalité des correspondances commerciales et l'organisation , également, d'un programme de formation pour les enseignants ESP .

## ملخص

تتعلق الدراسة الحالية باستكشاف متطلبات اللغة الإنجليزية لطلبة السنة الأولى ماستر تسويق بجامعة محمد الصديق بن يحيى، جيجل فيما يخص اللغة الإنجليزية الرسمية في الرسائل التجارية. الهدف الرئيسي من الدراسة هو البحث في مدى وعي طلبة فرع التسويق بأهمية اللغة الإنجليزية الرسمية في مجال التواصل و الأعمال التجارية ومدى كفاءتهم في التفريق بينها وبين لغة غير رسمية. إضافة إلى استكشاف مدى كفاءتهم في استعمال اللغة الرسمية في كتابة الرسائل التجارية.

تركز هذه الدراسة على إشكالية أن طلبة السنة الأولى ماستر تسويق بجامعة محمد الصديق بن يحيى، جيجل يجهلون مدى أهمية اللغة الإنجليزية الرسمية و كيفية استعمالها في كتابة الرسائل التجارية. اعتمدت الدراسة على اختبار للطلبة لإظهار كفاءتهم و تحديد متطلباتهم في هذا المجال و استبيان لأساتذة اللغة الانجليزية لأهداف محددة لمعرفة تقييمهم لتلاميذهم من هاته الناحية. كشف تحليل المعطيات أن طلبة السنة الاولى ماستر تسويق يفتقرون الى لغة انجليزية رسمية عند كتابتهم للرسائل التجارية ولتلبية احتياجات الطلبة المستهدفة، يجب اتخاذ إجراءات من قبل معدي البرامج التعليمية و مطوري المناهج التي يجب أن توفر برنامجا تربويا مناسباً يأخذ بعين الاعتبار استخدام لغة انجليزية رسمية في المراسلات التجارية وإعطائها مكانا في المنهج الدراسي المقبل.