

**Developing Business Negotiation Language Skills in the
Business English Course:
A Theoretical Study of Business Negotiation from a Linguistic
Perspective**

HOUTI Yamina
Université d'Oran 2 Mohamed Ben Ahmed

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Abstract

One of the most important skills people can embrace in daily life is the ability to negotiate. In the world of business, negotiating skills are used for a variety of reasons such as negotiating a project, a contract, a salary or even making a sale. Literally, business negotiation; be it a business speaking skill, requires mastery of linguistic skills since they intervene as an important component for the ongoing of the negotiation process. And, because business English is the lingua franca for business transactions in the world of business, effective skills to negotiate projects in English are essential for success on the private individual level as well as the corporate one. Thus, studies on the English users' needs to develop these skills are given importance in the field of ESP in general and BE in particular. With the intent to explore the use of English in the context of business negotiation and for pedagogical considerations, the present paper summarizes the state of the art of research and theory in business negotiation language studies addressed from a linguistic standpoint; a part from our research work on the significance of language skills development for the purpose of an ESBP course design fitting professional needs and aiming to improve Algerian job-experienced users of English company managers and executives' negotiating skills.

Keywords

Business negotiation - business English - ESBP course - linguistic competence - professional needs - job experienced English users - negotiating skills

Résumé

Une des qualifications les plus importantes que les gens peuvent embrasser dans la vie quotidienne est la capacité de négocier. Dans le monde des affaires, des qualifications de négociation sont utilisées pour des raisons diverses comme négocier un projet, un contrat, un salaire ou même effectuer une vente. Littéralement, la négociation d'affaires soit une compétence orale exige la maîtrise des compétences linguistiques

puisque'elles interviennent comme composant important pour le déroulement du processus de négociation. Et, parce que l'anglais des affaires est la lingua franca pour des transactions en monde des affaires, les compétences efficaces pour négocier des projets en anglais sont essentielles pour le succès sur le niveau particulier aussi bien que l'entreprise. Ainsi, le sujet sur comment est-il possible de développer ce type de compétence chez l'utilisateur de la langue reçoit beaucoup d'intérêt dans le domaine de l'anglais à des fins spécifiques en général et celui de l'anglais des affaires en particulier. Avec l'intention d'examiner l'importance d'utiliser l'anglais dans le cadre de la négociation d'affaires et pour des considérations pédagogiques, le présent article résume l'état de l'art en terme de recherche et de théorie des études effectuées sur le registre langagé des négociations et ce d' un point de vue linguistique ; une partie de notre travail de recherche sur l'importance du développement des compétences linguistiques pour le but d'une conception d'une formation en anglais des affaires adressée et adaptée aux besoins de professionnels tels que chefs d'entreprises et cadres supérieurs Algériens.

Mots-clés

Négociation d'affaires - anglais des affaires – cours en anglais des affaires - compétence linguistique - besoins professionnels – registre langagé des négociations –utilisateurs expérimentés de l'anglais des affaires – compétences de négociation

1. Introduction

The word negotiation, originally derived from the Latin word 'negotium' stemming for two words 'neg' meaning 'no' or 'not', and 'otium' referring to 'ease or leisure' (Đurović 2011:498), literally refers to 'lack of leisure' to mean 'carrying on business' (Donald W. Hendon, Rebecca Angeles Hendon, Paul A. Herbig, 1996:1 qtd in Đurović op cit:498). It is also a word from Latin Civil Law which means "trading deliberation leading to agreement" (Golopalakrishnan and Haleem, 2015: 375). For Bell (1995:42), the Latin roots of the term "identify its origin in the marketplace where it referred to the process of haggling in the barter of sale of goods". The meaning of the term negotiation is, then associated with the concepts of business and work, thereby defining it as a human activity shaped into an official discussion between people who aim to reach an optimal agreement, settling differences or attaining results for mutually satisfying interests, therefore, the production of this dialogue requires a process of bargaining in which the parties involved are engaged until agreement is reached. Hence, negotiation shares characteristics with meeting such as discussing but contains further ones like arguing and bargaining for

persuading the other party and reach a final agreement. Negotiation, thus, is probably one of the most challenging tasks in business communication since it deals with conflict that in order to be resolved, parties need to negotiate.

Given importance to the linguistic knowledge and abilities non-native English speakers managers and executives need to possess in order to overcome stressful negotiation situation problems, the question to ask is “how to make it possible for them to negotiate successfully in English without any linguistic deficiency”. To answer this question, the present paper presents a literature review of business negotiation studies from a linguistic perspective. In other sense, the language skills including macro and micro skills required to build the negotiator’s linguistic competence. To address this point of discussion and broaden knowledge and understanding of the business negotiation genre and the language used in cross-cultural business negotiations, the paper begins with a literature of business negotiation studies as the spoken business English genre with genre analysis studies, then tackles research on business negotiation language skills that experienced and novice managers need to possess to have a satisfying negotiation process in order next, to explain how these skills can be pedagogically developed with in-house training courses tailored to fit job task requirements as well as diverse language levels. Finally, the paper ends with a conclusion.

2. The spoken business English genre

From the nineties, an enormous interest has been devoted to the analysis of communicative practices in professional settings using genre based approaches whether at the level of content and structure (i.e. vocabulary and grammar) or on the social processes to which these genres belong to giving an increasing interest to the use of business English, *henceforth BE*, for second and foreign language learners. This has resulted a literature on oral and written investigations with authentic materials on cross-cultural business interactions, both oral and written (e.g. Maier 1992; Garcez 1993; Lampi 1993; Ma 1993; Bhatia 1993b; St John 1996; Barbara, Celani, Collins and Scott 1996; Charles 1996; Eustace 1996; Gunnarson 1997; Louhiala-Salminen 1996, 2002; Nickerson 1998). In this context, linguists, (e.g., Mulholland; 2002) agree on the fact that negotiations belong to the spoken genre group of speech events referring to either interaction types between two parties aiming to reach a settlement or attain outcomes that satisfy both of them, a speaking genre, a sub-variety of conversation within its proper speech acts, a spoken interaction since it consists of a structure, or a business talk also known as institutional talk of a specific work-related purpose including a structure which to a large extent has its spoken

form standards (Drew and Heritage, 1992). This means according to Nickerson and Planken (2016: 29) citing Koester (2004), “a particular spoken form (e.g. a sales negotiation) tends to progress through a number of set stages and involves specific turn-taking rules; that is, rules regarding who speaks at what point in an interaction”, besides the use of specific, professional business vocabulary and technical jargon relevant to the participants’ specialism, the business discipline, and the company core activity (Nickerson and Planken, *op cit* : 29).

Generally, the negotiation activity involves a set of generic activities where ones are speaker-related whilst others are hearer-related, its structure is organized in three conventionally accepted phases which serve conventional functions, namely “Initial phase” (i.e. acts of establishing relationships, declaring participants’ roles, providing information about the speaker, receiving the information and using their meaning in the interaction by the hearer, and making the decisions about tactics and communication strategies to be used), “Central phase” (i.e. phase transition for the next part), and “Closing phase” (Mulholland, 2004: 45-7). Choudhury et al. (2009: 339) report that all researchers agree on the fact that a negotiation process can be divided into four broad stages, namely “Opening a negotiation”, “Exchange of information”, “Change of position”, and “Closing”. Moreover, the authors (*op cit*) stating J. L. Graham who views that four stages constitute the negotiating process, and they are “1. non-task sounding” also known as the socializing stage, “2. exchange of information”, “3. persuasion”, and “4. concession and agreement”.

2.1. Genre analysis studies

As regards genre analysis; one of the key concepts of ESP needs analysis, a great interest from ESP researchers has been recently dedicated to the study of spoken genres (Starfield, 2016: 156) with focus on the analysis of a communicative practice in professional setting despite the difficulties encountered to find a satisfactory amount of data to be analyzed. Neu and Graham (1995: 245) note that a few researchers (for example, Dwyer-Walker 1981; Farley-Swinth 1981; Lewis-Fry 1977; Pennington 1968, Pruitt-Lewis 1975; Olshavsky 1973) have focused on the process of business negotiations while many of them (for example, Angelman-Stern 1978; Bales 1950; Bonoma-Felder 1977; Pennington 1968; Pruitt-Lewis 1975; Walton-Mc Kersie 1965) succeeded to categorize the aspects of the negotiation content in a scheme serving in the analysis of the verbal content of bargaining interactions. As an example of the study of business negotiation content, the authors (*op cit*: 244-5) provided the theoretical perspective of marketing negotiation process and classified them in three categories of theoretical constructs, namely individual characteristics, situational

constraints, and process measures, adding on the basis of Ely Robin and Bert Brown's (1975) conclusions on bargaining activity in business negotiations that during the process, bargainers' behaviors including opening moves, countermoves, types of appeals, and demands affect the negotiation result. Moreover, Angelmar and Stern (1978) developed a content-analysis scheme for buyer-seller negotiations in which most categories were based on speech act categories serving for the bargaining behaviors' coding.

Regarding literature on discourse-based negotiation studies, Ehlich and Wagner (1995), and Firth (1995) offered insights on the structural elements of the negotiation genre, the strategies used by negotiators to reach their conversational goals besides the factors affecting the discourse (Nickerson and Planken, 2016: 34). Ehlich and Wagner's (op cit) and Firth's (op cit) studies targeted the pedagogical field for the creation of teaching materials reflecting authentic practices and authentic examples of negotiations. Later, Mirjaliisa Charles (1996) with her language-oriented study performed an investigation on the discourse of negotiations based on a corpus of six British business negotiations equaling 15 hours of spoken business English. Charles' investigation demonstrated that a negotiation is structured in three parts, namely initiation, development and ending. Furthermore, Bülow (2009: 143) provides four types of negotiation studies, namely (1) studies based on conversation analysis (CA) (i.e. centered on patterns of talk through the use of short fragments of natural speech (Firth, 1995b), (2) studies based on pragmatics and interaction theory (i.e. pragmatics refers to the use of speech acts to investigate the management of face concerns especially in cross-cultural negotiations while interaction studies include coding long sequences of speech), (3) studies based on rhetoric and social constructivism (i.e. concerned with types of arguments and claims) and (4) studies based on social psychology (i.e. focus on the individual negotiator and his/her conflicting goals in terms of external factors like power relations and internal factors such as goal motivation underlying communicative patterns). Among the pioneering works on negotiation studies based on CA, we can find Donohue (1981) and Donohue et al. (1984) who coded a collection of negotiations for actions of attack, defense and integration for the aim to map negotiation exchanges and check for correlations between types of move, sides and phase structure (Bülow, 2009: 144). We can also find Neu and Graham's (1995) research on sellers' talk. Neu and Graham cross-checked types of questions, self-disclosures, admonitions and prescriptions with structural variables such as role and profit to find that some variables in the talk co-varied with their profit level.

2.2. Language analysis studies

Negotiation be it a dialogue, an official discussion or a decision making process implies language use which has power reflected in the interpretation of the speaker's ideas, values, and opinions considered as events communicated to the hearer into words and meanings. Therefore, the problem of the working language is relevant for non-native speakers who conduct their negotiations in English. Parties with linguistic and cultural differences may not succeed to communicate knowledge to each other (Maude, 2014: 64). In this context, Mäkelä et al. (2006) identified that many globally operating companies based in countries such as Russia face the challenge of English language use in negotiations. Cellich and Jain (2012: 172) see that when parties negotiate in a language that is not their mother tongue, negotiators need to use to a large extent visual aids, documents and figures besides the avoidance of ambiguous and irritating language such as "To tell the truth", "I'll be honest with you", "I'll do my best," and "It's none of my business but ...", thus, guaranteeing the other party's full attention with his/her trust and cooperation. In parallel, a negotiator should not reply or accept the answer "No problem" during the discussion of specific points; s/he should rather be explicit or ask for clarification from the other party to understand what they mean. Baber and Fletcher-Chen (2015: 75) list six functions to which the phrases used during business negotiations are related, namely "relationship building", "problem solving", "accepting, agreeing, proposing and rejecting offers", "summarizing and clarifying", "breaking deadlock" and "sharing information". Hunter (2011: 75), for instance, illustrates with examples of language patterns, such as "May I put in a few words here ..." for interrupting, "Does anything I have suggested / proposed seem unclear to you?" for clarifying, and "Can we summarise what we've agreed so far?" for summarizing.

Consequently, as professional requirements of employees, it is worth to consider the business English language competence within the context of business negotiations a very important feature necessary to conduct successful and effective international business communication. The objective behind the business negotiation skills with particular emphasis on ESP, is to raise Algerian managers' and executives' at different job hierarchies awareness on the need to master English as a medium of business communication, particularly the language of negotiations, in order to develop communicative skills and have access to better opportunities in their job career.

3. Business negotiation language skills

As a general rule and to be in pace with the fast improving world, good communication skills, be they oral or written, are required for the one to convey thoughts to the world around and because English is the window language, they must be equipped with the various aspects of the language such as grammar, phonology, syntax, and morphology. Thus, speaking about the development of language skills in language pedagogy consists of developing learner's integrated micro skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing by taking into account that the aforementioned inter-dependent language aspects are necessary for each skill and the best way to learn a language is by engaging in a balance of each of these interconnected skills. In business negotiations, therefore, listening and speaking are said to be the basic required skills to be at the command. Emphasizing the importance of communication in business negotiation through being able to ask pertinent questions and listen intently to ensure clear understanding, scholars (for example, Sambey; 1999, Lewicki and Hiam; 2006, Cellich and Jane; 2012, Colby; 2015) each suggest a number of basic skills negotiators need to learn that we gathered in four business negotiation language skills, namely (1) active listening, (2) asking questions, (3) ensuring clear understanding, and (4) bargaining.

3.1. Active listening

In the world of business and in any cultural context, the ability to listen carefully to what the other party is saying is an asset an experienced negotiator possesses leading him or her to a successful business negotiation process. However, poor listening affects performance in business communication and can be costly leading the negotiation to failure and even deadlock. Ivey et al. (2013), as outlined by Kaplan and Owings (2015: 198), distinguish five essential elements amongst other ones active listening is dependent on, they are: "attending, observing, questioning, encouraging, and paraphrasing". The authors (op cit, 198-9) define attending as the process of being alert to the conversation including that the listener should be culturally, individually and situationally aware about eye contact and body language, and staying focused on the conversation, while observing means watching attentively the speaker's verbal and non-verbal behavior such as words, facial expressions, voice tone with the way it changes during the conversation, and eye contact. Observing enables the listener to understand if the speaker appears friendly, angry, firm, congruent or anxious and to have additional insights into the speaker's message. Questioning involves asking questions for clarification in

order to fully understand the speaker's concern and meaning and avoid vagueness and confusion, for instance "Could you give an example of what you mean?", whereas encouraging referring to "encouraging behaviors" are the listener's actions to help the conversation advance meaning silence and emphatic acknowledgements through the use of small verbal cues like "yes", " I see", "uh-huh", and "tell me more" and even non-verbal cues such as smiling, leaning forward and head nodding. Paraphrasing, on the other side, entails repeating the essence of the speaker's message with fewer words to make sure that the message has been accurately interpreted providing a feedback to the speaker about what is gained from the conversation.

3.2. Asking questions

The ability to ask pertinent questions is an important skill in business negotiations because during the discussion negotiators can retrieve supplementary information to complete collected data in the preparatory phase to exchange concessions, and move toward agreement (Cellich and Jane, 2012: 177). Questions, therefore, can be subdivided into two types: probing or conditional and open-ended questions (op cit: 178). Asking probing or conditional questions makes the respondents talk freely about their needs. Open-ended questions, however, aim to have clarification about some details for information completion. Gates (2015: 86) who believes that a skillful negotiator should have the confidence to be flexible proposes a combination of 14 questioning styles shown in Table 1.

Table 1 question types in negotiations (qtd in Steve Gates, 2015: 86-7)

<i>Types</i>	<i>Help you to ...</i>	<i>Examples</i>
Contact questions	establish rapport	How have you been since we last met?
Probing questions	seek further information	What do you think about your competitor's latest activities?
Interrogative questions	encourage them to think about solutions for themselves	Why is that important to you?
Comparative questions	explore in detail	What has business been like since the introduction of product?
Extension questions	challenge	What do you mean when you say ...?
Opinion seeking questions	test their knowledge and thinking	What do you think about...?
Hypothetical questions	test their knowledge and thinking	What if we were to order 500 units?
Reflective/summary questions	draw ideas together and test their understanding and summarize what has been said.	So, you think that we need to introduce this new range? As I understand it, you reckon that you can deliver it?
Closing questions	secure agreement	I can deliver on the first or second week of that month; which would suit you best?
Mirror questions	serve to reverse the question and confirm the point	"We think we can deliver this for you". "you think you can deliver this?"
Leading questions	secure a desired answer	It's a great deal offer, isn't it?
Rhetorical questions	prevent them from saying anything as they do not require an answer	Do we really want to do that? And how did it happen?
Multiple questions	gain agreement to a package	You did say that you could meet the deadline? Oh, and you will meet our specification and, ah, by the way, you can do this for us can't you?
Closed questions	establish specific facts /information	Can you meet our requirement? Do you need help with this offer?

3.3. Ensuring Clear Understanding

In business negotiations, ensuring clear understanding during the discussion is vital for the ongoing of the process, for this very reason Cellich and Jane (2012: 182) consider four techniques helping negotiators avoid misunderstanding and ambiguity, namely "restating, rephrasing, reframing and summarizing". The two first techniques are meant to make the listener acknowledge the other party's view point and what has been just heard such as by saying "If I understand you correctly, what you are really saying is ...". Another way to ensure good communication between parties is to be an assertive speaker. Assertiveness is a style of communication which implies being

respectful toward others and at the same time determined, clear and firm. Then, the use of the present simple tense and assertive language are required (Sambey, 1999: 117) and are used by skillful negotiators to show seriousness to attract the other party's attention, whereas weak language is used by below-average negotiators, as illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2 Comparison between assertive and weak language in negotiations (Sambey, 1999: 117)

<i>Assertive language</i>	<i>Weak language</i>
I (don't) want	I would(n't) like
I (don't) need	I would rather (not)
I must	I feel
I insist	I hope
I require	I wish
And in conversational form, some examples:	
What I/we (don't) want is	What I/we would(n't) like is
What I/we (don't) need is	I/we would rather (not) have
I/we must have	I/we feel we should have
What I/we insist on is	I/we hope that
What I/we require is	What I/we would like to see is

Another way of ensuring clear understanding in business negotiation is being able to decode verbal signals subdivided into framing signals, such as 'Now then', 'Ok then', 'Right' often emphasized with a non-verbal signal, and focusing signals, 'we'd better get down to work on this', 'let's start', 'all agreed', 'let's move to' and 'That's settled', for instance. Negotiators use verbal signals for the reason to show their interest in the other party's message as well as a move to transit from the initial phase of negotiation to the closing one.

3.4. Bargaining

Bargaining also known under other terms such as 'horse-trading', 'concession-trading', 'give-and-take', 'haggling' and 'bartering' is usually associated with the term negotiation when defined since it refers to the real action in a negotiation process, quoting Oliver (2003: 1) "negotiation is discussing or bargaining to reach an agreement. [...]". It is the act or process of bargaining to reach mutually acceptable agreement or objective". Negotiation, therefore, is about bargaining with the principle of "Never give something for nothing" and the structure of an offer "IF I give you X THEN will you give me Y? (Peeling, 2008: 69). On the other side bargaining means making offers and counteroffers, trading concessions as well as offering alternatives.

This requires first and second conditional sentences; the very best language technique making the negotiator be sure that any concession that will be made is tied to something s/he wants to get in return (e.g. we might be able to bring the price down by 5%, but only if you can increase your order by at least 10%). However, negotiators must be as explicit as possible to avoid misunderstandings and negotiation failure. For this very reason they tend to use hedging phrases before conditional sentences to make it clear that they are not making a firm offer, but simply exploring possible solutions. For example, “Just thinking aloud for a moment, but ...”, “This might not work, but ...”, “Just to give a hypothetical example, ...”

Bargaining also includes the use of diplomacy and persuasion language. On the basis of Roloff, Tutzauer and Dailey’s (1989: 117) experimental study which results indicated that the degree of communication deadlock increased with the parties’ engagement in persuasive argumentation, Bülow-Møller (2005: 27) believes that language constitutes one of the elements making the persuasion skill foundation in negotiations. Farhathullah (2002: 15) illustrates with some expressions used for persuasion, “*Why don’t you ...?*”, “*The most sensible thing to do would be ...*”, “*I’m hoping I can persuade you to change your mind.*”, “*Are you sure you can’t ... ?*”, “*Why don’t you think about it?*”, “*I think you should ...*” and “*Think about it again*”.

4. Business negotiation language pedagogy

In the line of business negotiation language pedagogy, consideration is given to the teaching of business English, *henceforth BE*, an area of ESP (Hutchinson and Waters 1987; Dudley-Evans and St John, 1998; Donna, 2000; Ellis and Johnson, 2003; Frendo, 2005; Bereczky, 2009) and a distinct field from General English (Bereczky, 2009: 84), an umbrella branch of English for occupational purposes; *EOP*, sharing the important elements of needs analysis, syllabus design, course design and materials selection and development (Ellis and Johnson, 2003: 3) characterized by context, content and learners’ specificity. BE, therefore, according to Marija Stevanović and Vesna Stanković (2015:38) refers to “the English taught to a wide range of professional people as well as students who are preparing themselves to start their professional career in the world of business”, and for Claus Gutznam (2009: 517) citing Ken Hyland (2007: 390) “language research and instruction that focuses on the specific communicative needs and practices of particular social groups”. The BE course which implies short or long courses and classes which may be taught in-company or in a language school, or other rented premises (Donna, op cit) includes content dependent on learners’ linguistic competence and work experience in the business field. Consequently, two BE

components are identified: “English for general business purposes (EGBP)” which courses are designed for pre-experience learners or novice workers, and “English for specific business purposes (ESBP)” for job-experienced learners who contribute to the language-learning situation throughout their professional knowledge and skills (Dudley-Evans and St John, 1998: 55). Discussion continues with the ESBP approach to BE teaching; teaching language to job-experienced users of English for specific business purposes who need as Stevanović and Stanković (op cit) outline “a linguistic framework which will help them develop their language skills within the business context”.

4.1. Business negotiation: the ESBP course

The last decade witnessed some major influences that had a great impact on the process of BE teaching and learning; for instance the constant technological progress as well as the increasing economic demands of the business world which favored English to become the tool for global communication, thereby, requiring people’s efficiency and effectiveness in their business environment for the quest of foreign business partnership (Stevanović and Stanković, op cit: 38-9). As a result, BE students whose needs and interests were no longer content with grammar or even basic business language learning, began to care for knowledge of specialized vocabulary and mastery of spoken business communication skills. In this line, “they need to be fluent and quick when communicating; however, they also need to be aware of cultural differences and their implications in the world of business” (Stevanović and Stanković, op cit). According to Louhiala-Salminen (2002: 229 qtd in Maria Del Carmen Lario de Oñate, 2007: 12), nowadays professionals’ business needs exceed the mastery of the four English skills; however, they need to further develop their communicative competence to cope with the fast increasing business world requirements.

Generally, when speaking about language teaching, the teacher is expected to have much knowledge than the learner but in ESBP the situation is relatively different, s/he is required to be an expert in the subject matter and have a certain knowledge background to perform his or her tasks. For this reason, ESP scholars speak about training rather than teaching because focus is primarily applied on learners’ needs and expectations in setting the course objectives and aims at developing their specific skills helping them improve their communicative competence in order to be more efficient in their work (Frendo, 2005: 5). For Ellis and Johnson (2003: xiv), this entails the process of business communication skills acquisition, they point out “training implies developing skills in using language as a means of communication”, while Xie Qing (2016: 121) believes that workplace

training implications lie in the combination of language skills with job requirements and that the trainer is expected to adapt the training methods to comply with the learner's needs, goals and expectations as well as the training institution's educational and financial resources whereas teaching is viewed as a social practice having emphasis on students' predetermined goals and needs for second language proficiency (Qing, op cit: 34).

Since BET is needs-directed, outlining the ESBP course involves making a number of decisions in light of data accumulated by means of a needs analysis process. This means that the content and the aims of the training course are fixed by the specific learners' needs with language taught that should be a true reflection of the language used in real-life context taking into account some factors that may influence the learning atmosphere, namely the learner work-relationship (e.g. boss and subordinates), finance (i.e. who is paying for the course), timing (i.e. lessons time planning in accordance to the work-time), and motivation (i.e. the status of English in the working environment). In addition, the ESBP course content might be taught with the selection of a variety of activities and the use of a great range of teaching techniques which should be in accordance with the teaching aims and learner response (Donna, 2000: 5).

However, there is no super method in language teaching. For this reason, language trainers need to be equipped with a repertoire of methods and skills to be applied in the language learning context (Qing, 2016: 33). According to Qing (op cit), there are three levels framing the theoretical interpretation of methods: 'the approach' prescribing "the supporting theories of language and language learning", 'the design' including "the specification of linguistic content and the roles of the teacher, learners, and instructional materials", and 'the procedures' prescribing "the techniques and activities used in the class". Nevertheless, the selection of approaches and methodologies is required to be adequate with the learning styles and strategies proper to the ESBP context where learners are expert possessing "the knowledge of content, communication and a learning style" (Dudley-Evans and St John, 1998). Thus, there is no particular working method but rather a selection of creative and efficient training methodologies which have been a result of the discussion between the teacher and the stakeholders tailored to learners' business context.

4.2. Skills development

English, in fact, has emerged as the international language for business as it is widely used by the majority of international business companies in every type of communication. So, for delivering effective

oral business communication, job-experienced BE users need to learn effective oral business communication skills to function successfully and professionally. Thus, for developing receptive (i.e. listening) and productive skills (i.e. speaking) for specific business communication purpose, language learners need to be engaged in activities that enable them to enrich English language skills because the lack of English language skills is an important constraint for career advancement. For this reason, it is worth to give an insight into approaches and methodologies applicable to the BE negotiation course that aim at developing these language skills.

In practice, Qing (2016: 35) views that BE training programs following the communicative functional procedures using a variety of training practices be they task-based or skills-based target the progress of the functional skills in the business communication process, the author outlines (op cit) “In workplace English program context, functional skills in the business communication process are the focus of communicative competence development, such as telephoning, presentation, negotiation, and socializing”. This entails the use of group or pair work activities for learning “the conversation strategies” predesigned to develop ESBP learners’ communicative competence focusing on the functional skills such as, starting a conversation, clarifying, interrupting, soliciting attention, summarizing and ending the conversation (Kehe and Kehe, 1994: iii qtd in Qing, op cit: 35). In line with this, researchers and instructors (e.g. Camerer, 1990; Thomson and DeHarpport, 19994; Boyatzis and Mainemelis, 2000; Nadler et al., 2003; Loewenstein et al., 2003; Salacuse, 2010; Van der Vagt et al., 2010 qtd in Maude, 2014:142); aiming to develop managers’ and executives’ advanced skills required for effective performance in international business negotiations proposed training programmes based on a variety of training methods to teach the negotiation skills. These methods include “negotiation simulations, role plays, feedback and debriefings, case studies, lectures, group discussions, presentations, and behaviour modelling”.

However, these methods have been criticized in terms of their degree of significance to the learners’ work. For instance in lecture-based learning learners cannot often transfer the principles they learned to real life negotiations. On the other side, the case study learning has been criticized as sometimes offering case study circumstances that are not similar to the learners’ real-life situation, for this reason Maude (op cit) suggests the use of several short case studies in order to help learners “deepen their understanding of the process of international business negotiation” and this by finding “the right balance between generalisations about international business negotiation and the task-

related specificity of actual negotiating situations”. Nevertheless, these learning methods such as behavioral modelling and simulations supported by practical exercises like role plays and case studies must be followed by feedback/debriefing sessions which involve trainer-led discussions on aspects such as the negotiation goal, and the negotiating team’s interests, positions, and behaviors. The feedback certainly makes it possible for learners to improve their negotiation strategies as well as outcomes (Camerer, 1990 qtd in Maude, op cit: 45). In this respect, “Feedback has long played a central role in theories of learning and performance achievement. Feedback helps the trainees, reflect, adapt, and self correct until desired performance standards are achieved” (Maude, op cit).

Known to be an eclectic approach to language teaching centered on the learner and learning needs to reach the end target, Dudley-Evans and St John (1998: 26) believe that BE is based on the idea of considering the learners’ skills as a resource to be exploited in the classroom to vehicle the information (John and Davies, 1983 qtd in Dudley-Evans and St John, 1998: 26) by encouraging learners throughout pair-work, group work and problem solving activities. Qing (2016: 34) citing Huckin, (1988: 61) views that BE training methodologies including “problem solving, high-order reasoning and argumentation”, generally involve the task-based approach drawn on a series of activities designed for one-to-one or group training, such as role-play, simulations, case studies, oral presentations, and scenarios favoring the use of scenarios in teaching cross-cultural business communication since they are brief, clear and focus on a specific stage in the communication process.

Similarly, Frendo (2005: 78) views that the task-based approach is perhaps the most appropriate approach to develop non-linguistic negotiating skills providing a relevant way for language practice. The author proposes class activities such as role-playing and simulations with the use of the camera to review learners’ practice for observation and feedback, while Ellis and Johnson, (2002: 187) cited in Qing (2016: 34) believe that these types of activities are, indeed, the best way to practise negotiations provided that they include scenarios reflecting real life situations containing the necessary background knowledge for practice in order not to frustrate learners with the invention of information they have not been given. Another approach for business communication training known as “the communication skills training approach” focuses on communicative competence development by the practice of one particular communication skill, for instance questioning, active listening, or bargaining. For the implementation of this approach in the ESBP classroom, the following

stages are required “preparation, sensitization (identification of the skill by reading, discussion and video), practice (role-play and simulation), and evaluation”. However, the skills approach has been criticized for the reason that the interpersonal interaction might lose its entirety, spontaneity and authenticity (Hargie, 2006: 551 qtd in Qing, op cit: 39).

5. Conclusion

The present paper examined business negotiations from a linguistic perspective emphasizing business negotiation language research; the business spoken genre also considered as a spoken interaction in which, indeed, the micro skills of speaking and listening are key components and an asset to which non-native speakers company managers and high executives are in constant search for development as a reason for career advancement. These components involve the four business negotiation skills of active listening, asking questions, ensuring clear understanding and bargaining which require from the BE teacher with the cooperation of job-experienced learners the design of a training course tailored to meet their needs and expectations besides the search for effective strategies and practical approaches to be implemented in the classroom with the principle of increasing language proficiency throughout intensive practice for appropriate and effective use of business negotiation relevant vocabulary, patterns and expressions in order to well develop business negotiation skills and competence, and attain a satisfactory outcome.

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- ❖ **HOUTI Yamina**
 - ❖ **Maitre-assistant**
 - ❖ **Université d'Oran2 - Mohamed Ben Ahmed**
 - ❖ **houti_yamina@esgee-oran.dz**