

Teachers' Perceptions of English Language and Communication Skills of Commerce Undergraduates

Ruchi Kaushik

Abstract

Using interview as the research tool, this small qualitative study investigated the English teachers' perceptions of the language and communication skills of commerce undergraduates studying in different constituent colleges of the University of Delhi (DU). An interview schedule comprising 16 open-ended questions was designed and six teachers were purposively selected for two focus group interviews. Results indicate that teachers perceived their students to be lacking in basic English language as well as communication skills and suggested major modifications in the prescribed English for the Business Communication paper. Some significant findings include teachers' emphasis on conducting needs-analysis of stakeholders, revising the curriculum regularly, introducing interactive learning materials and adopting innovative methods of teaching and evaluation.

Keywords: qualitative study, communication skills, focus group interview, needs-analysis

Introduction

With the growing popularity of English as the lingua franca of international business (Charles, 2007), there is an increasing demand for effective English communication skills among graduating students. Today it is widely accepted that well-developed soft skills and communicative competence are imperative in procuring good business employment and achieving long-term career success (Tuleja & Greenhalgh, 2008; Elmuti et al., 2005). According to Navarro (2008, p.