

PERCEPTIONS OF COLLEGE BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS
INSTRUCTORS AND BUSINESSPERSONS REGARDING
EFFECTIVENESS OF SELECTED PARAGRAPHS
IN BUSINESS LETTERS

By

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CHAPTER I

THE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

Need for the Study

Effective communication is important to the success of today's businessperson. In a study involving executives of Fortune 500 companies, Bennett and Olney (1986) found that 97.7 percent of the executives believed that communication skills had an effect on their promotion to top executive positions. Both written and oral communication consume a major portion of the businessperson's day (Smeltzer and Gebert, 1986).

Many studies have questioned whether the recent business college graduate has sufficient communications skills (Di Salvo and Larsen, 1987; Hamermesh, 1986; Smeltzer and Gebert, 1986). The studies have determined that additional focus should be given to communication skills in the classroom and in the workplace.

Studies have been conducted that ask business people to evaluate various aspects of the business communications curriculum to decide what is important (Adkins, 1982; Lemley, 1983; Roderick, 1985). Some of the studies have also asked business communications instructors to evaluate the importance of items in the business curriculum.

Business communications teachers and businesspersons do not always agree on the importance of different items in the business

communications curriculum (Adkins, 1982; Lemley, 1983). Businesspersons significantly disagreed with business communications educators on psychological aspects of writing, awareness of direct and indirect approaches, and on the importance of grammar (Adkins, 1982). The two groups also disagreed on the topics that should be stressed in the business communications course. In fact, a significant difference in opinion on 22 of the 65 communications skills and knowledges occurred. Further disagreement between business communication educators and businesspersons was noted by Lemley (1983) when the business communication educators ranked 10 of 28 communication skills significantly more important than did businesspersons.

The difference between businesspersons and business communication instructors could be important. If business communications instructors determine that certain issues are important and focus course content on those elements, potential business graduates may find themselves without the communications skills considered important by those in business.

Perhaps one of the reasons that businesspersons and business communications instructors differ in perception is the technique that is used in the studies. Usually, a list of topics is compiled by the researcher. Businesspersons and, in some cases, business communications instructors are then asked to evaluate the topics (Adkins, 1982, Lemley, 1983, Roderick, 1985). In some cases terminology is used that may be clear to a business communications instructor but not to a businessperson. The difference in terminology may account for some of the difference in perceptions between business communications instructors and businesspersons. In fact, Hamermesh (1986) in her

interviews with executives indicated that many executives could define essential qualities of writing even though they did not have the terminology to describe the writing.

If terminology is a barrier in determining how businesspersons relate to concepts important to business communications instructors, then research should be conducted where terminology is not a factor in evaluating the responses of businesspersons and business communications instructors. In her award-winning study Johnson (1987) suggests that further research should be done regarding the meaning of letters that include or exclude writing principles.

While many writing principles are important, several receive special attention in literature. Grammar, you-attitude, direct or indirect approach, and conciseness or wordiness are key issues in many articles and studies. By developing paragraphs that use important principles and asking both businesspersons and business communications instructors to evaluate them on the effectiveness of the writing, any differences between the groups in the practical applications of writing principles can be observed. If differences occur between the groups, business communications instructors must be able to adjust the business communications curriculum so that graduates of business colleges can enter the work force with the most effective writing techniques to ensure success.

Statement of the Problem

What is the relationship between the ratings of businesspersons and college business communications instructors regarding the perceived effectiveness of selected paragraphs in business letters? The selected paragraphs in the study illustrate concepts of you-attitude, indirect or direct option, conciseness or wordiness, and grammar usage.

Statement of the Purpose

The purpose of the study is to contribute knowledge to the field of business communications concerning the following:

1. Do businesspersons see the same importance in the topics of you-attitude, indirect/direct option, conciseness/wordiness, and grammar usage as do business communications instructors?
2. If businesspersons and business communications instructors have different perceptions of writing effectiveness, what are the implications for the business communications curriculum?
3. What changes in the business communications curriculum can be made to meet the needs of both businesspersons and business communication students?

Variables

The independent variable in the study is the ratings of businesspersons and business communications instructors.

The dependent variable in the study is the perceived effectiveness of the selected paragraphs.

Delimitations

The study is delimited to businesspersons who were members of the Administrative Management Society (AMS) in March 1988.

The study is delimited to business communications instructors who were members of the Association for Business Communication (ABC) in March 1988. The study is further delimited to ABC members classified as senior college faculty who have addresses in the United States.

The study is delimited to the perceived effectiveness of the writing in the paragraphs. No attempt was made to have either group define effectiveness or any business communications principles.

Limitations

The study is limited to the extent that respondents answered the research instrument to the best of their knowledge.

The study is limited to the responses from those who responded to the research instrument.

Assumptions

The study assumes that businesspersons who are current members of the Administrative Management Society are involved in writing and reading business letters. The study further assumes that members of the senior college faculty of the Association for Business Communication are involved with the business communications curriculum.

Definitions

For the purposes of the study, the following operational definitions will be used.

Business communications refers to a specific course or series of courses that provide an opportunity for students to learn about appropriate techniques for writing business correspondence.

Conciseness refers to a style of writing where "each word, sentence, and paragraph counts" (Quible, Johnson, and Mott, 1988, p. 44).

Direct option refers to a writing style that presents the negative news first and then follows the negative news with facts and explanations (Quible, Johnson, and Mott, 1988).

Gender differences are those communication differences which may occur between men and women.

Grammar usage refers to grammar that is used correctly according to the generally accepted rules of English.

Indirect option refers to a writing style that uses a pattern of writing that places reasons and explanations before the negative news in the letter (Quible, Johnson, and Mott, 1988).

Level of education refers to formal education and includes categories such as high school diploma, some college, baccalaureate degree, masters degree, and doctoral degree.

Negative news is news that is unwelcome or disappointing to the reader (Quible, Johnson, and Mott, 1988).

Wordiness is an approach to writing that adds length to the writing through unnecessary words, repetitions, and extraneous material (Quible, Johnson, and Mott, 1988).

You-attitude refers to an emphasis on the viewpoint of the reader rather than on the writer of the letter (Bowman and Branchaw, 1987; Quible, Johnson, and Mott, 1988).

Hypotheses

Hypothesis I. No significant difference exists between the ratings of businesspersons and business communications instructors regarding effectiveness of selected paragraphs concerning you-attitude.

Hypothesis II. No significant difference exists between the ratings of businesspersons and business communications instructors regarding effectiveness of selected paragraphs concerning the direct or indirect option.

Hypothesis III. No significant difference exists between the ratings of businesspersons and business communications instructors regarding effectiveness of selected paragraphs concerning conciseness or wordiness.

Hypothesis IV. No significant difference exists between the ratings of businesspersons and business communications instructors regarding effectiveness of selected paragraphs concerning grammar usage.

Hypothesis V. No significant difference exists between the gender of businesspersons and their ratings of the effectiveness of selected paragraphs.

Hypothesis VI. No significant difference exists between the gender of business communications instructors and their ratings of the effectiveness of selected paragraphs.

Hypothesis VII. No significant difference exists between the years of work experience of businesspersons and their ratings of the effectiveness of selected paragraphs.

Hypothesis VIII. No significant difference exists between the years of teaching experience of business communications instructors and their ratings of the effectiveness of selected paragraphs.

Hypothesis IX. No significant difference exists between the age of businesspersons and their ratings of the effectiveness of selected paragraphs.

Hypothesis X. No significant difference exists between the age of business communications instructors and their ratings of the effectiveness of selected paragraphs.

Hypothesis XI. No significant difference exists between the level of education of both businesspersons and business communications instructors and their ratings of the effectiveness of selected paragraphs.

Hypothesis XII. No significant difference exists between completion of previous college business writing courses by businesspersons and their ratings of the effectiveness of selected paragraphs.

Hypothesis XIII. No significant difference exists between the college major of both businesspersons and business communications instructors and their ratings of the effectiveness of selected paragraphs.

Summary

Effective communication is acknowledged as an important skill for the successful businessperson. The communications skills of recent business college graduates have been questioned by the business world.

Research has shown significant differences between businesspersons and business communications instructors regarding the value of communications skills and topics in the business communications curriculum.

Little research has been conducted with written material that actually applies writing principles without using terminology that may be unfamiliar to the businessperson. Johnson (1987) recommended that further research be conducted involving the use of writing principles.

This study utilized the key concepts of you-attitude, indirect or direct option, conciseness or wordiness, and grammar usage in paragraphs developed with practical application of these concepts. The study determined whether a difference exists between the perceptions of businesspersons and business communications instructors on the effectiveness of the writing in selected paragraphs.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Communication plays a critical role in the success of business in today's rapidly changing business environment. Business executives also recognize the importance of effective communication in job advancement (Bennett, 1971; Bennett and Olney, 1986; Fielden and Dulek, 1987; Given, 1982; Seymour, 1983; Stine and Skarzenski, 1979; Storms, 1983).

Communication is a very important managerial tool (Aronoff, 1983; Bennett, 1971; Fine, 1983; Flatley, 1982). In fact, personnel managers revealed that communication skills are a key factor in selecting a first-line manager (Seymour, 1983). A study of managers in San Diego revealed that over 70 percent of the managers predicted that the volume of written communication would increase in the next five years (Flatley, 1982).

Corporations understand the increasing importance of controlling and supervising communication. A study of communication managers in Fortune 500 firms found that of those firms who employed a communications manager, over 80 percent described the position as useful or extremely useful (Harris and Bryant, 1986).

Both written and oral communication consume a major portion of the businessperson's day (Smeltzer and Gebert, 1986). Nearly 75 percent of

managers spend over half of their time communicating (Seymour, 1983) while studies indicate that business graduates may spend at least 25 percent of the work day writing (Rader and Wunsch, 1980; Storms, 1983). In a survey of recent graduates who work in Fortune 500 companies, writing was classified as mandatory in importance by 50 percent of the graduates (Bednar and Olney, 1987).

Over sixty percent of business college graduates rate writing as very important to their jobs (Rader and Wunsch, 1980; Seymour, 1983). In a further study of business college graduates, 98 percent of the graduates indicated that they write as part of their present jobs (Storms, 1983).

Although communication is an important business skill, communication problems are real and widespread (Bennett and Rhodes, 1988; Swindle, 1982). Many executives suffer from writing apprehension that can cause costs to be high for businesses. If an executive is uncomfortable with writing, another individual may be assigned the executive's writing duties, which can result in morale problems for both employees. In fact, employees with high levels of anxiety about writing often avoid jobs that require a great deal of writing and obtain jobs with fewer writing demands (Bennett and Rhodes, 1988).

Some executives report that schools and colleges fail in teaching writing (Swindle, 1982). Other executives feel that communication skills are not emphasized enough in educational institutions (Stine and Skarzenski, 1979). One organization hiring college graduates with superb academic credentials believes that the writing communication problem is severe. Of the reports written by people who were with the

organization less than three years, ninety percent had to be rewritten before they could be presented to clients (Five steps to better, 1984).

Many organizations believe additional training is the answer to some communication problems. Almost three-fourths of the traditional organizations surveyed by Seymour (1983) recognized a need for communication training. A large number of companies are either turning to consultants, teaching in-service writing courses, or asking private schools for writing instruction (Swindle, 1982).

Consultants find that organizations often announce they want plain English writing taught to company personnel. However, the corporate culture and established policies undercut the efforts of the consultant and make changes in writing very difficult. In fact, "some distortions in corporate communications are deliberate" to create a deceptive image about the company (Crow, 1988, p. 87).

Businesspersons and Business

Communication Instructors

Businesspersons may realize that problems exist in business writing; business communication instructors are preparing future business writers. In order for effective preparation of business writers to occur, businesspersons and business communication instructors should share similar perceptions about important aspects of business writing. The literature review will focus on you-attitude, indirect or direct approach, conciseness or wordiness, grammar usage, and gender and communication.

You-attitude

The idea of you-attitude has been in existence for some time. In discussing the qualities of good writing, Benjamin Franklin said "to be good, it ought to have a tendency to benefit the reader" (Arnold, 1986, p. 18). Bowman (1984) contends that the business world has known about writing to benefit the reader for more than 50 years. In fact, it is the most common technique taught to potential business writers. He argues, however, that our society does not quite accept the concepts behind you-attitude or see its importance.

In contrast, Hamermesh (1986) in interviewing executives found that the executives were very aware of the importance of you-attitude. However, the executives did not always describe you-attitude as it is found in business communication textbooks. Business executives could describe the concepts behind you-attitude, although the terminology used by business communications instructors was not used by the executives. An executive related that good business writing ties the writer's business awareness to the reader's response (Given, 1982). Campbell and Hollmann (1985) believe that the reader's interest must be captured within the first fifty words in order to keep the reader involved in the written communication. Clearly stating one's purpose to the reader was listed as the second most important writing skill by business school graduates (Storms, 1983).

When using you-attitude, the writer of a letter considers the value of the information to the reader and writes the communication to point out the benefit to the reader (Bowman and Branchaw, 1987; Quible, Johnson, and Mott, 1988). You-attitude is also known as you-viewpoint

(Harcourt, Krizan, and Merrier, 1987; Lesikar, 1988), you-approach (Treece, 1987), and reader-reaction (Himstreet and Baty, 1987).

You-attitude is used most often to build goodwill in letters by focusing interest on the reader and reducing the emphasis on the writer of the letter (Harcourt, Krizan, Merrier, 1987; Lesikar, 1988). Using you-attitude allows the writer of the letter to demonstrate a clear understanding of the reader's problem or question (Quible, Johnson, and Mott, 1988). By placing the emphasis on the reader, the writer can establish empathy with the reader (Bowman and Branchaw, 1987).

A letter that is effectively written with you-attitude provides a positive approach to the situation, a cheerful outlook, and a pleasant tone (Treece, 1987).

In Direct Marketing, Brock (1986) encourages business writers to discuss their products in terms of how they will benefit the readers who are potential customers.

A certain amount of controversy exists over the use of you-attitude. Critics of the you-attitude describe two major problems: perceptions of insincerity and attempts at manipulation (Lesikar, 1988). Bowman (1984) states that in many cases you-attitude is used in a manipulative fashion because the writer does not attempt to find a common perspective and common goals to relate to the reader.

You-attitude can result in statements that accuse the reader of inappropriate action. For example, negative statements such as "You failed to . . ." or "You neglected to . . ." are not effective uses of you-attitude. The writer should avoid using the you-attitude in accusatory situations (Bowman and Branchaw, 1987).

Businesspersons and Business

Communication Instructors

As a consultant, Fine (1983) believes one of the problems with business writing is that the writers do not understand or relate to the readers. Every business letter should be written with a specific reader in mind (Duckett, 1988) and with plain language to relate the meaning (Savage, 1984). If American business writers started practicing the concept of you-attitude seriously, Tibbetts (1981) contends that business writing would improve immediately.

Some business communications instructors may be placing so much emphasis on you-attitude in the business communications course that they do not emphasize the importance of the writer's purpose in writing the letter (Ewald, 1985).

Businesspersons and business communications instructors have significantly different views toward you-attitude. Business communications instructors placed more importance on the topic than businesspersons (Adkins, 1982).

Indirect or Direct Approach

Business writing usually follows either a direct approach or an indirect approach. The direct approach is used when the purpose or request is stated first. In contrast, the indirect approach provides supportive information first with the purpose or request stated later (Andera, 1987; Fielden and Dulek, 1987; Stout and Perkins, 1987).

In discussing the appropriate use of indirect and direct styles, Bowman and Branchaw (1987) suggest that the direct style should be used

to accomplish a business purpose that will not involve the emotions of the reader. The indirect approach should be used if the purpose may be negative or if the reader may resist the message.

In writing claim letters, Bell (1985) urges the writer to consider the value of an indirect approach. However, Bowman and Branchaw (1987) encourage the writer to use a direct approach in writing claim letters.

Indirect Option

Many executives use the indirect approach for nearly all communications instead of using the indirect approach only for specific situations (Fielden and Dulek, 1987).

In an analysis of 2000 business documents selected from a large organization's files, Fielden and Dulek (1984) found that nearly all of the documents were written in an indirect style. In examining underlying reasons for the large numbers of documents written with an indirect style, they found that social upbringing, educational programming, and job anxiety were factors. During the process of social upbringing, children are encouraged to be polite and to avoid giving the abrupt truth. In education, grades are often awarded for effort, which is sometimes interpreted as length of work. For example, a ten-page report may merit a higher grade than a two-page report because of the extra effort needed to prepare the material. As college graduates enter the work force, they are usually at the bottom rung of the corporate echelon. In order to excel, the recent graduates apply the same effort and circuitous pattern to their business writing that made them successful in college writing.

Indirect structure does not provide true reflection of the way people read (Brent, 1985; Fielden and Dulek, 1984). Rarely do individuals read all the preliminary statements; instead, the good reader skips to the important points of the letter. Therefore, direct structure might be a better choice. Many readers can see through a manipulative strategy and can resent the manipulation as well as the time that is wasted scanning explanatory material to find the purpose of the communication.

The indirect approach is advocated most often in dealing with negative news (Bowman and Branchaw, 1987; Harcourt, Krizan, and Merrier, 1987; Himstreet and Baty, 1987; Lesikar, 1988; Quible, Johnson, and Mott, 1988; Treece, 1987). Quible, Johnson, and Mott (1988) describe the indirect option as follows:

1. Begin with a neutral or buffered beginning
2. Review the facts and analyze the reasons for refusal
3. State the refusal (and make counteroffer if appropriate)
4. Provide courteous closing (p. 171).

The indirect option for negative news has a number of psychological advantages. A calm approach to the problem can unfold pertinent facts and allow understanding to develop (Harcourt, Krizan, and Merrier, 1987). Himstreet and Baty (1987) state that if bad news is disclosed in the first sentence, the reader immediately tries to deny the supporting details instead of coming to an understanding of the writer's position. A much better chance exists for the writer to continue a good relationship with the reader if the indirect option for bad news is used (Himstreet and Baty, 1987). Lesikar (1988) agrees that explanations

before the negative news provide a cushioning effect that reduces unnecessary harshness.

The indirect option provides an opportunity for a counteroffer or alternative to be offered to the reader. A satisfactory alternative may provide continued goodwill and understanding for both parties (Bowman and Branchaw, 1987; Harcourt, Krizan, and Merrier, 1987; Quible, Johnson, and Mott, 1988).

The placement of good news and negative news can impact the reader's reaction to the letter. Good news should be placed in positions of high emphasis at the beginning and ending of paragraphs. Negative news should be located in secondary positions in the middle of paragraphs. The use of space in written communication can also be important. Less space should be given to the negative news with more space allotted for the positive aspects of the letter (Lesikar, 1988).

When conducting writing seminars, Himstreet and Baty (1987) have found executives to be very enthusiastic about the indirect option for negative news. However, the indirect option has some disadvantages for the business executive. Letters with an indirect option require more time and care to write and may be longer than letters written with a direct option. Mendelson (1988), in presenting negative news with both direct and indirect options, found that undergraduate students labeled the indirect option as "sneaky" and "a stalling tactic" (p. 73). Students should understand the appropriate uses of direct and indirect options.

Direct Option

Some business communications textbook authors discuss using a direct option for negative news (Harcourt, Krizan, and Merrier, 1987; Himstreet and Baty, 1987; Lesikar, 1988; Quible, Johnson, and Mott, 1988). The direct option is described by Quible, Johnson, and Mott (1988) as follows:

1. State the refusal
2. Review the facts and analyze the reasons for the refusal
3. Make counteroffer (if appropriate)
4. Provide courteous closing (p. 171).

A direct option for negative news can be effective in one of the following situations (Harcourt, Krizan, and Merrier, 1987; Himstreet and Baty, 1987; Lesikar, 1988):

1. if the reader prefers to have the negative news up front;
2. if the negative news is routine and not upsetting (cancellation of a scheduled meeting);
3. if the negative news should be emphasized (collection letter);
4. if a very small insignificant matter is involved;
5. if the request is obviously immoral, illegal, or ridiculous;
6. if the writer wants to demonstrate authority; or
7. if the writer is not concerned with goodwill.

A direct approach can also be used to state the news by inference at the beginning of the letter (Salerno, 1988). For example, a letter responding to a job applicant might start with an announcement of the name of the person hired for the position. The person receiving the letter would then know that the position had been filled.

Businesspersons and Business

Communication Instructors

Business communications instructors may rely upon textbooks too often in recommending that an indirect option for negative news should always be used. Students should be encouraged to understand why a specific direct or indirect option should be used. In fact, the "why" behind the letter may be much more important than the "how" of constructing the letter (Mendelson, 1988; Salerno, 1988).

Businesspersons and business communications instructors disagree on the importance of direct and indirect approaches to writing. Adkins (1982) found that a significant difference existed between businesspersons and business communications instructors in their perception of the importance of the difference in the direct and indirect approach in letter writing. The business communications instructors placed more importance on the skill than did the businesspersons.

Conciseness or Wordiness

"Effective writing is concise--each word, sentence, and paragraph counts" (Quible, Johnson, and Mott, 1988, p. 44). Concise writing excludes wordy expressions, unnecessary repetitions, and trite expressions (Bowman and Branchaw, 1987). A concise writer must recognize and eliminate the deadwood in sentences (Savage, 1984).

Conciseness

The reader finds concisely written material easy to read because the purpose of the message is not lost in a sea of unnecessary words. Word selection is important in conveying a concise meaning. A message itself can be concisely written by discarding any information that is not essential to the topic (Bowman and Branchaw, 1987; Denton, 1986; Stout and Perkins, 1987).

In writing concisely, the writer should use short sentences that are between 15 and 20 words long (Harcourt, Krizan, and Merrier, 1987; Lesikar, 1988). Short sentences are more effective in emphasizing the content of the sentence, while long sentences de-emphasize the sentence content.

The writer should provide only the information that the reader needs to understand the problem. Too often a writer seeks to convince a reader of his or her expertise by elaborating with unnecessary detail. Additional words are often spent on hedging the writer's position (Harty, 1985). Concise word selection is important.

Business executives believe that conciseness is a key priority for business writing. In fact, executives often believe that lack of conciseness is a big problem in business writing (Bennett and Olney, 1986; Brinkley, 1984; Campbell and Hollmann, 1985; Cost, 1981; Denton, 1986; Hamermesh, 1986).

Business writing is different from public speaking or fiction writing. In public speaking, repetition is used to establish key ideas. In business writing, redundancy is not useful and can even insult the

reader (Denton, 1986). Carefully selected illustrations and analogies can increase the conciseness of writing.

Wordiness

Wordiness, the opposite of conciseness, is an increasingly difficult problem at all levels of corporate writing. Dulek (1982) estimates that thousands of hours are wasted by employees who are trying to decipher and interpret memos that are too long and complex. Levinson (1986) describes MBAs who emerge from business school as unable to write a coherent letter or concise memo. The new MBAs write reports that are too long and could be summarized in a few sentences.

American business faces a tremendous problem in the sheer quantity of material produced each day. On a daily basis, business produces 600 million pages of computer printouts, photocopies 235 million documents, and creates 76 million letters. The executive is expected to read a vast amount of information to keep current in the field (Foegen, 1987). Wordiness can contribute to the increasing volume of business writing.

Communication consultants face a special problem when they are asked to prepare business writers. Employees receive mixed messages about conciseness. Consultants are often asked to instruct writers to be concise. However, in spite of hiring expensive outside consultants to stress concise writing, the corporate culture seems to value wordy writing (Fine, 1983). Underlying causes of wordiness in the corporate culture are numerous. New employees who often know little about the company are asked to prepare technical reports before they understand

the complexity of the subject. The fear of confronting reality and taking credit for a situation encourages the writer to bury the problem in words. A passive approach to writing can help the writer reduce responsibility for the action. Also, a message with a large number of words seems to have more substance than a concise message (Fine, 1983).

Businesspersons and Business

Communications Instructors

A difference exists in the importance placed on conciseness by business executives and business communication teachers. In a survey of business executives and professors, the professors rated conciseness as less important than did the business executives (Stine and Skarzenski, 1979). A study of recent college graduates in business asked the respondents to rank the three writing problems they encountered most often. Of the fourteen possible answers, the respondents ranked conciseness as the second most-often encountered problem (Bednar and Olney, 1987).

Mullins (1984) conducted a Delphi study of business communication instructors. The study revealed that business communications instructors rated ten characteristics of effective communication higher than they rated conciseness.

Business executives and college professors were asked to indicate the aspects of written communication that college business writing courses should teach future employees (Stine and Skarzenski, 1979). Business executives chose conciseness as their second choice (47 percent), while college professors chose conciseness as their third choice (34 percent).

Businesspersons and business communications instructors may see differences in the acceptable length of practical writing samples. Businesspersons may have one view of conciseness while business communication instructors may have a different view.

Grammar Usage

Grammar is important in business writing. A sender of a letter can lose credibility with a receiver if incorrect grammar is used (Harcourt, Krizan, and Merrier, 1987). Poor grammar can also build communication barriers. Grammatical errors are not tolerated in effective business writing (Fielden and Dulek, 1987).

Correct grammar is an important aid in communicating (Lesikar, 1988). Literate individuals recognize a knowledge of grammar as an essential component of social accomplishment (Nunberg, 1985).

In interviews with executives, Hamermesh (1986) found some executives very concerned with the correctness of grammar while others believed correct grammar was the function of the secretary. In a study of managers, Flatley (1982) found that 13 percent of the managers reported leaving spelling, punctuation, and grammar strictly to the typist.

Dulek and Fielden (1986) believed that businesspersons should understand correct grammar in order to manage the writing of others. Correct grammar provides clarity in writing. Dangling modifiers and vague pronoun references make writing difficult to comprehend. However, Dulek and Fielden (1986) also believed that businesspersons should not spend a great deal of time clarifying minor points of grammar.

Communication Courses

Business executives believed that grammar should receive strong attention in business communication courses (Bennett and Olney, 1986; Brinkley, 1984). In a survey of business communication instructors, Herrick (1986) found that the majority of the teachers devoted 14.3 percent of the business communication class time to grammar. In analyzing twenty college-level communication textbooks, Dorrell and Johnson (1982) determined that the amount of space in textbooks that is devoted to mechanics, grammar, and format varies from 1.5 percent to 21.3 percent, with over half of the books devoting at least 10 percent of the space to mechanics, grammar, and format.

Basic writing skills including grammar can be improved in a business communications course (Roberts, 1985; Wunsch, 1986). For maximum improvement in basic writing skills, the business communications teacher should plan to use class time to teach writing skills (Wunsch, 1986). Supnick and Rooney (1985) found that spending more than five class sessions on grammar drill and exercises did not significantly improve the quality of writing.

Businesspersons and Business

Communication Instructors

Adkins (1982) found a significant difference between perceptions of businesspersons and business communications instructors on the issue of correct grammar. Business communications instructors placed a higher priority on grammar than did businesspersons. In a study of business

executives and professors, Stine and Skarzenski (1979) found that when respondents were asked what the college writing course should teach future employees, professors chose grammar as the second highest response (37 percent). By contrast, business executives listed grammar as their fourth choice (23 percent). Storms (1983) found that business graduates listed acceptable grammar, spelling, and punctuation, as their fifth choice of important writing skills.

Some of the grammar standards that provide trouble for business writers include unclear pronoun references, dangling modifiers, subject-verb agreement, and parallelism (Harcourt, Krizan, and Merrier, 1987; Lesikar, 1988; Quible, Johnson, and Mott, 1988). Professors indicated that they encountered subject-verb agreement errors, dangling modifiers, parallel structure errors, and pronoun reference errors more frequently than did business executives (Stine and Skarzenski, 1979).

Another grammar problem for some writers involves infinitives. Business writers should avoid splitting infinitives so that readers will not be distracted by grammar errors (Himstreet and Baty, 1987).

Unclear Pronoun Reference

When pronouns are used in business writing, an important consideration is to be sure that the pronouns clearly refer to specific words. Confusion is possible when two or more words could be represented by the pronoun (Harcourt, Krizan, and Merrier, 1987; Lesikar, 1988; Quible, Johnson, and Mott, 1988).

The pronoun must agree with the antecedent, which is defined as the "word, phrase, or clause that is replaced by the pronoun. An antecedent

is most likely to be a noun" (Harcourt, Krizan, and Merrier, 1987, p. 126.)

Examples of unclear and clear reference are as follows:

Unclear: Beth and Linda attended the meeting where she presented the report. (Confusion can be caused because of the uncertainty about who presented the report.)

Clear: Beth and Linda attended the meeting where Beth presented the report.

Unclear: Jeff talked to the manager about his concerns on his new job. (Confusion can be caused because of the uncertainty about whose concerns are involved or who has a new job.)

Clear: Jeff talked to the manager about the manager's concerns relating to Jeff's new job.

Split Infinitives

Infinitives are a special type of grammar construction that can cause difficulty when split. "An infinitive consists of the word to plus a verb (to speak, to type). You split an infinitive by placing a word between the to and the verb" (Pearlman and DuBose, 1985, p. 75).

Himstreet and Baty (1987) state that split infinitives should be avoided as the grammar error can get more attention from the reader than the message itself. Although the meaning is not usually seriously distorted by split infinitives, the split infinitive often results in awkward phrasing (Cullinan, 1987; Pearlman and DuBose, 1985).

Examples of split infinitives are as follows:

Incorrect: The research team was asked to quickly write the report.

Correct: The research team was asked to write the report quickly.

Incorrect: The award-winning crew was asked to by the end of next month at the very latest assemble a proposal.

Correct: The award-winning crew was asked to assemble a proposal by the end of next month at the very latest.

Dangling Modifiers

A dangling modifier is a modifier that does not logically describe the word or words it is intended to qualify (Treece, 1987). Dangling modifiers can destroy the clarity of sentences (Himstreet and Baty, 1987; Lesikar, 1988; Pearlman and DuBose, 1985; Quible, Johnson, and Mott, 1988).

Dangling modifiers can be corrected by either inserting the noun or pronoun the modifier describes or by changing the dangling modifier to a complete clause (Lesikar, 1988; Quible, Johnson, and Mott, 1988).

Examples of dangling modifiers are as follows:

Incorrect: In order to achieve high levels of efficiency, computers must be used.

Correct: In order to achieve high levels of efficiency, the staff must use computers.

Incorrect: Walking down the sidewalk, the building was the newest one.

Correct: Walking down the sidewalk, he noticed the building was the newest one.

Subject-Verb Agreement

One of the most basic rules in grammar is that the subject and verb must agree in number (Bowman and Branchaw, 1987; Harcourt, Krizan, and Merrier, 1987; Lesikar, 1988; Quible, Johnson, and Mott, 1988). A singular subject must have a singular verb while a plural subject must have a plural verb. Sentences with compound subjects require plural verbs.

When words are found between the subject and the verb, they are not considered when determining the correct singular or plural verb (Pearlman and DuBose, 1985; Quible, Johnson, and Mott, 1988).

Readable writing should always use a pattern with the subject on the left and the verb on the right (Tibbetts, 1981). By following a logical construction of subject on the left and verb on the right, writing is direct and easy to read.

Examples of subject-verb agreement errors are as follows:

Incorrect: Ralph and Edith writes the reports.

Correct: Ralph and Edith write the reports.

Incorrect: Each of the executives plan meetings.

Correct: Each of the executives plans meetings.

Parallelism

Parallelism means "having balance and consistency between or among parts of sentences that serve the same function. Parallelism is achieved by using the same grammatical form for the two or more parts of sentences that serve the same function" (Harcourt, Krizan, and Merrier, 1987, p. 127). Similar definitions are provided by Bowman and Branchaw

(1987), Himstreet and Baty (1987), Lesikar (1988), Quible, Johnson, and Mott (1988), and Treece (1987).

Sentences that use parallel construction are easier to read. More than fifty percent of standard English sentences contain doublets, triplets, or items in a series (Tibbetts, 1981). Sentence clarity is improved when parallel structure is used (Quible, Johnson, and Mott, 1988).

Examples of parallel construction problems are as follows:

Incorrect: Rex decided to listen to music, to ski, and play the piano during his vacation.

Correct: Rex decided to listen to music, to ski, and to play the piano during his vacation.

Incorrect: The new manager must challenge the employees and upgrading the equipment is also important.

Correct: The new manager must challenge the employees and upgrade the equipment.

Gender and Communication

Recent studies of gender and communication provide increasing evidence that communication differences exist between men and women (Aries, 1987). Gender differences have been found in oral communication and in nonverbal communication (Aries, 1987; Hall, 1987). Aries (1987) summarized "men put a greater emphasis on hierarchical organization, on interactions that assert direction and dominance, whereas, women engage in more egalitarian, cooperative participation, and more expressive, receptive, encouraging, and supportive interactions" (p. 155).

In nonverbal communication, Hall (1987) described some characteristics of women in communication. When compared to men, women had more expressive faces, stood closer to others, touched others more, and made fewer speech errors. Aries (1987) found clear differences in communication processes used by men and women.

Businesspersons and Business

Communication Instructors

In a study of educators and business people, Johnson (1987) asked respondents to evaluate a series of written letters by using a semantic differential scale. Johnson found no gender differences for educators on letters regarding meanings of clarity, conciseness, and courtesy. However, Johnson did find a difference between clarity and the potency factor when analyzing responses and the gender of business people.

Male and female MBA students were asked to write memos. The memos were analyzed on sixteen characteristics. The study found no gender differences in the writing samples (Smeltzer and Werbel, 1986). Further examination revealed that the group was not chosen randomly. The 79 students involved had similar educational background (second-year MBA students) and work experience (3.1 years), which may have equalized gender differences. Also, the students used in the study may not be representative of full-time businesspersons.

However, in a study of accountants and barriers to communication, Golen (1980) found no differences between male and female accountants in perceptions of the seriousness of barriers to communication. In more recent studies of communication barriers, Golen and Burns (1988)

discovered that about half of the dimensions examined revealed differences between males and females in communication. Female students expressed greater concern than male students about communication barriers. In a study involving female and male managers drawn from the Administrative Management Society, significant differences were noted between females and males in their perceptions of conflict and competition on the career ladder (Clarke and Teddlie, 1987). Golen and Burns (1988) suggest that further analysis be conducted to determine why the gender differences occur.

Gender differences may exist in the way businesspersons and business communications instructors evaluate writing samples.

Summary

Because a businessperson must be able to communicate to be successful, both oral and written communication skills are important. Significant portions of the businessperson's day are spent in activities related to communication, which is one reason why successful communication skills are an important factor in job advancement.

Communication problems in business are an issue for educational institutions as some executives believe that colleges should do a better job of preparing business graduates for communication roles. Differences exist between the perceptions of businesspersons and business communication instructors on important aspects of the business communication course.

Many aspects of written communication should be considered. You-attitude is a technique used by the writer that places emphasis on

the reader in an attempt to establish goodwill. Business communications may be written with a direct (present the main idea first and follow with supplementary material) or an indirect approach (present explanatory information before the key idea is mentioned). Although most textbooks recommend an indirect option for writing negative news, students should understand the rationale and value of both direct and indirect options.

Conciseness is a communication technique valued by business executives that provides an easy-to-read style with no repetitions, trite expressions, or unnecessary information. Correct grammar is also important in preparing business writing that is understandable and easy to read. Several aspects of grammar were discussed including unclear pronoun reference, split infinitives, dangling modifiers, subject-verb agreement, and parallelism.

Recent studies of oral and nonverbal communication indicate differences in communication based on gender, while studies of written communication have had mixed results on gender differences.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The study compared businesspersons and business communications instructors to determine their perceptions of the perceived effectiveness of selected paragraphs. The paragraphs used concepts of you-attitude, grammar, indirect or direct option, and conciseness or wordiness. A research instrument was developed and sent to individuals representing two populations.

Chapter III describes the design of the research instrument, validity and reliability of the instrument, selection of the samples, collection of data, measurement of variables, the statistical measurements, and demographic information about the samples.

Research Instrument

In order to evaluate the perceptions of the two groups in the study, the researcher designed a research instrument. The research instrument consisted of two parts: a demographic section and a section with 20 selected paragraphs. The demographic questions were determined after review of literature, analysis of other research instruments, and consultations with faculty members and others.

The section of the research instrument with paragraphs consisted of 20 selected paragraphs written by the researcher. The writing

principles of you-attitude, indirect or direct option, conciseness or wordiness, and grammar were illustrated in the paragraphs. Five paragraphs illustrated different levels of you-attitude, five paragraphs illustrated different styles of indirect and direct option, five paragraphs illustrated different levels of conciseness and wordiness, and five paragraphs illustrated different grammar errors (see Appendix F for labels of paragraphs).

The five paragraphs using you-attitude included different levels of the you-attitude. One paragraph focused on "I" rather than "you". One paragraph was mostly "I" focus. Another paragraph used you-attitude in the first two sentences. One paragraph used you-attitude in all but one sentence. Another paragraph used you-attitude in all sentences.

Five paragraphs were designed with different levels of the direct or indirect option. One paragraph had an indirect opening with the negative news in the middle of the paragraph. Another paragraph began with an indirect approach and hinted at the negative news. One paragraph used a more direct approach with the negative news in the second sentence. Another paragraph was direct with the negative news in the first sentence and no alternative to the negative news was offered. One paragraph used a direct approach with the negative news in the first sentence; an alternative was offered after the negative news.

Different levels of conciseness or wordiness were used in five paragraphs. One curt paragraph used short sentences that all began with verbs while another paragraph used concise sentences. Other paragraphs included some wordiness in the writing, a number of repetitions, and excessive wordiness.

Five grammar errors were selected. Each of the five paragraphs focused on a particular type of grammar error. Each grammar paragraph included two examples of the type of error. Three common grammar errors as noted by Quible, Johnson, and Mott (1988) were used. The errors were subject and verb agreement errors, dangling modifiers, and unclear pronoun references. Parallel construction errors and split infinitives were also selected as grammar errors (Himstreet and Baty, 1987).

The research instrument did not reveal to the respondent which paragraphs were tied to a specific principle. Respondents were asked to judge the quality of the writing and then determine the effectiveness of each paragraph. Each respondent was then asked to rate the paragraphs using a Likert-type scale. The ratings of Very Effective (Rating 1), Effective (Rating 2), Average Effectiveness (Rating 3), Below Average Effectiveness (Rating 4), and Not Effective (Rating 5) were used.

The twenty paragraphs were assigned to the research instrument in random order, thereby reducing any reader response bias to the order of the paragraphs. The random order was determined by the computer statistics program SYSTAT (Wilkinson, 1987). The program was used to generate five lists of random numbers. SYSTAT was then used to generate a random choice from the lists. List #3 was used first, then list #5, and then list #4 until all paragraphs were placed in random order on the survey.

The paragraphs were not numbered or lettered on the research instrument so the respondents would not try to establish some type of order or sequence to the paragraphs.

The research instrument was evaluated for improvements by faculty members, a statistician, and a group of graduate business education

students. As a result of their suggestions, several suggested changes were made.

Validity and Reliability of the Research Instrument

Validity is the "degree to which a test measures what it is supposed to measure" (Mason and Bramble, 1978, p. 373). Reliability concerns the dependability and consistency of a test (Mason and Bramble, 1978).

The research instrument was evaluated by four communication experts from the Administrative Services Department of the College of Business at Oklahoma State University to assist in establishing validity. Each of the communication experts was involved in teaching communication courses. The communication experts were asked to look at each paragraph and determine if the paragraph was valid for some level of you-attitude, grammar, direct or indirect option, or conciseness or wordiness. (See Appendix A for a list of communication experts and the instructions to the experts about validation.) One sentence was modified in one paragraph at the suggestion of two of the communication experts. The communication experts determined that the paragraphs were valid for the four areas.

For further internal validity the research instrument was analyzed by two computer analysis packages--RightWriter Version 2.1 (1987) and Grammatik II (1986). RightWriter Version 2.1 uses the Flesch-Kincaid formula to calculate the Readability Index. The program manual indicates that good business writing is between the 6th and 10th grade reading level. The research instrument was analyzed at the 8th grade

level of reading. The research instrument was within the normal range for use of adverbs and adjectives.

Grammatik II (1986) uses the Flesch formula to calculate a Flesch Grade Level and a Reading Ease Score. A Reading Ease Score in the range of 60 to 70 is standard. Grammatik II indicated that the research instrument had a Reading Ease Score of 65 and a Flesch Grade Level of 10. Grammatik II reported that 60 percent of the sentences were less than 14 words long while 3 percent of the sentences were longer than 30 words.

The computer analysis of the research instrument by RightWriter (1987) and Grammatik II (1986) indicated that the terminology provided a reading level that would be acceptable for the groups in the study. The computer analysis also helped to remove unintentional writing errors in the composition of the paragraphs.

One method of determining reliability is through a stability test (Isaac and Michael, 1981; Mason and Bramble, 1978; Talmage, 1976; Wiersma, 1986). The stability test is also known as a test-retest procedure. The research instrument is given to a group for completion. The procedure is repeated with the same individuals after a lapse of time. The scores are then correlated to determine the degree of reliability of the research instrument.

The research instrument should have a reliability coefficient that is as close to 1.0 as possible. Pfeiffer and Ballew (1988) indicate that "a reliability index of .85 or higher generally is considered to be effective for all purposes. An index of between .60 and .85 indicates reliability that is effective for measuring and talking about groups of people and in doing research" (p. 44). Interest and attitude

inventories usually have lower reliability coefficients than do achievement tests in academic and skills areas (Wiersma, 1986). Standardized tests also have wide ranges of reliability with coefficients from .55 to .97 (Wiersma, 1986).

The reliability of the research instrument in this study was determined by a test-retest procedure. Ten graduate students at Oklahoma State University rated the effectiveness of the paragraphs. Two weeks later the same students completed the research instrument a second time. Reliability figures were then calculated. Tuckman (1978) recommends that the Spearman rank-order correlation be used to assess test-retest reliability.

The Spearman rank-order correlation was used to determine reliability for the research instrument. The computer statistics program SYSTAT (Wilkinson, 1987) was used to compute the Spearman rank-order correlation. Reliability was determined for each of the four types of paragraphs and for the total of the paragraphs. Reliability coefficients for the sets of paragraphs were you-attitude, .88; grammar errors, .83; direct or indirect option, .60; and conciseness or wordiness, .47. The reliability for all of the paragraphs on the research instrument was .79. The reliability coefficient of .79 is acceptable for research according to Pfeiffer and Ballew (1988).

Selection of Samples

The study used two populations. Representing businesspersons, the first population was comprised of members of the Administrative Management Society (AMS). The second population, representing business communication instructors, was comprised of members of the Association

for Business Communication (ABC). A random sample was selected from each of the populations.

The Administrative Management Society was organized in 1919. The association includes professional administrators in information, personnel, and financial management as well as administrative services. The association promotes management methods that will lower costs, increase productivity, and improve employer-employee relationships. The organization operated under the previous names of National Association for Office Managers and National Office Management Association. The membership is estimated at 12,000. The association sponsors accreditation for the Certified Administrative Manager (C.A.M.). The association publishes a number of reports as well as the monthly magazine Management World (Gruber, 1987).

The Association for Business Communication was founded in 1935. It includes in its divisions college business communication teachers, management consultants in communications, training directors and correspondence supervisors as well as others. In 1984 the organization changed its name from the American Business Communication Association. Before 1969 the association was known as the American Business Writing Association. The membership is estimated at 2,400. Publications include the Bulletin and the Journal of Business Communication (Gruber, 1987).

The Association for Business Communication (ABC) classifies members according to occupation and geographic location. The membership of the Association for Business Communication includes the following classifications in the 1988 Membership Directory:

academic-high school (2 members);
academic-junior college (194 members);
academic-senior college (1087 members);
technical school (10 members);
business (147 members);
government (5 members);
student (43 members);
retired (57 members);
and miscellaneous and unknown (168 members).

For the purposes of the study, the individuals in the classification academic-senior college were selected as the most appropriate group. The individuals in the academic-senior college category would be most directly involved with preparing future business writers. Only those ABC members with addresses in the United States were used.

Sample sizes were determined by use of a table (Wunsch, 1986). Factors such as degree of accuracy and cost of the study were considered. The Wunsch table provides sample sizes with a .05 level of probability of accurately reflecting the population. A sample size with a plus or minus accuracy of 7 percent was chosen. For the Administrative Management Society, the sample size was 196 based on an infinite population. The Wunsch table indicates that any population with more than 3,000 subjects is an infinite population. For the Association for Business Communication, the sample size was 164 based on a population of 1,000 instructors in the academic-senior college division of the association.

College instructors can join the Administrative Management Society. Conversely, businesspersons can join the Association for Business Communication. Steps were taken to control for confounding individuals in the two organizations. Names of those identified as educators and those without business addresses were removed from the Administrative

Management Society list in order to remove educators or possible educators from the businesspersons group. Demographic questions were asked on the survey sent to the Association for Business Communication group to identify individuals who were not educators.

The Administrative Management Society generated a random computer list of 273 names from its membership rosters. In order to prevent confounding by including educators in the AMS list, 15 names with education addresses were eliminated from the roster. Further, 31 names with non-business addresses were eliminated because individuals without business addresses could be educators. A total of 227 names remained on the computer roster.

In order to reduce the AMS roster to the sample size of 196, SYSTAT (Wilkinson, 1987) was used to generate a random list based on 227 names. The random list selected 31 numbers that could be withdrawn from the computer roster. In order to ensure randomization, the SYSTAT program was used to generate four random lists. Each list was numbered. The random number function of SYSTAT was used to identify the random list to be used to discard names from the roster. List #3 was used to reduce the roster to 196 names. List #3 had one random number listed twice. In order to select one more number, SYSTAT was used to generate one additional number between 1-227.

The Association for Business Communication provided a list of the 943 members (as of March 23, 1988) in the academic-senior college category who had mailing addresses in the United States. Two names of individuals who were members of the researcher's doctoral committee were removed from the list leaving 941 names. Demographic questions were

asked on the research instrument to ensure that the respondents were business communications instructors and not businesspersons.

Using the computer program SYSTAT (Wilkinson, 1987), four random lists of 164 numbers based on the numbers from 1 to 941 were generated. Each list was numbered. The random number function of SYSTAT generated a random choice of list #3. List #3 contained 13 repetitions. After list #3 was used, SYSTAT was used to generate a choice of the remaining random lists. List #2 was selected to choose the final 13 names for the ABC group.

Collection of Data

The research instrument was mailed to 196 members of the Administrative Management Society and 164 members of the Association for Business Communication on April 13, 1988. The research instrument was mailed with a cover letter and a postage-paid return envelope. The envelopes were individually typed and mailed first class to encourage response to the instrument (Dillman, 1978). Recipients were asked to return the instrument by April 29, 1988.

A follow-up mailing was sent to all nonrespondents on May 6, 1988. The follow-up mailing included a follow-up cover letter, a second copy of the research instrument, and a postage-paid return envelope. The second mailing was also mailed first class.

The total number of surveys returned was 198 of 360 sent. The surveys returned by the Administrative Management Society members were 98 of 196. The surveys returned by the Association for Business Communication members were 100 of 164.

After the first mailing, a total of 152 research instruments had been returned (AMS, 78; ABC, 74). After the follow-up mailing, an additional 46 research instruments were returned (AMS, 20; ABC, 26).

Dillman (1978) provides a formula for determining the response rate to surveys. Dillman indicates that persons who were not reached by the mailings are nonreachable and should not be included in determining the response rate. He defines as noneligible those individuals who should not have been included in the survey.

After the first mailing, two letters from the Administrative Management Society sample were returned and marked that the person was no longer employed by that company. With the Association for Business Communication sample, one survey was returned by an individual who indicated that he was no longer involved in teaching but was employed in business on a permanent basis. The number of individuals who were noneligible was 1 while the number who were nonreachable was 2. The Dillman (1978) formula is as follows:

$$\text{Response rate} = \frac{\text{Number returned}}{\text{Number in sample} - (\text{noneligible} + \text{nonreachable})} \times 100$$

$$\text{Total} \quad 55.5\% \quad = \quad \frac{198}{360 - (1 + 2)} \quad \times \quad 100$$

Using the same formula (Dillman, 1978) to determine response rates for each sample results in the following:

$$\text{AMS} = 50.5\% = \frac{98}{196 - (0 + 2)} \times 100$$

$$\text{ABC} = 61.3\% = \frac{100}{164 - (1 + 0)} \times 100$$

The response rate for all of the research instruments was 55.5 percent. The response rate from the Administrative Management Society was 50.5 percent while the response rate from the Association for Business Communication was 61.3 percent. A response rate of 55 percent was reported by Darsey and Dorrell (1987) in a study of the membership of the Association for Business Communication.

In reviewing the 98 returns from the AMS group, three research instruments were eliminated as the respondents had left more than one page blank on each research instrument. Based on 95 usable research instruments, the usable return was 49 percent for the Administrative Management Society group. In reviewing the 100 returns from the Association for Business Communication group, six research instruments were largely incomplete (more than one page blank) and were eliminated. Based on 94 usable research instruments, the usable return was 57.7 percent for the ABC group. Twelve research instruments that were missing ratings for only one paragraph were included in the study. Four research instruments from the ABC group were missing demographic information located on the back of the first page of the research instrument. Those research instruments were included in the study.

Measurement of Variables

Variables were measured by a Likert-type attitude scale. Likert-type scales are very useful in behavioral research in attempting to quantify attitudes (Isaac and Michael, 1981; Tuckman, 1978).

Respondents were asked to rate the paragraphs on the effectiveness of the writing. Respondents used a scale with five levels of effectiveness. The levels were Very Effective, Effective, Average Effectiveness, Below-Average Effectiveness, and Not Effective.

The Likert-type scale is an equal-appearing interval scale that is usually used to record the agreement or disagreement with a given statement concerning an attitude or belief. The Likert-type scale usually has five points (Mason and Bramble, 1978; Tuckman, 1978; Wiersma, 1986). The points correspond with numerical values such as 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5. The respondent simply circles the number that most closely approximates the respondent's opinion about the statement. Common sets of Likert-type responses include Very satisfactory, Satisfactory, Undecided, Unsatisfactory, Very unsatisfactory or Highly appropriate, Appropriate, Neutral, Inappropriate, Highly inappropriate (Wiersma, 1986). Likert-type scales are often used in educational research. The Likert-type scale allows for determining differences in intensity on a specific trait (Mason and Bramble, 1978).

Statistical Measurement

The statistical measurement for the study included frequencies, percentages, the Mann-Whitney U-test, and the Kruskal-Wallis One-Way Analysis of Variance. A post hoc test was not needed for significant results on the Mann-Whitney U-test because only two groups were being compared so the specific comparison test was the same as the test of significance (Linton and Gallo, 1975). The post hoc test used to

analyze the nature of significant differences for the Kruskal-Wallis One-Way Analysis of Variance was the Dunn procedure (Jaccard, 1983).

The Mann-Whitney U-test may be used when ordinal measurement has been achieved. The Mann-Whitney U-tests two independent groups. The test is one of the most powerful nonparametric tests and is a useful alternative to the parametric t-test (Siegal, 1956).

The Mann-Whitney U-test is based on the following idea:

If the scores of two similar groups are ranked together (as though the two groups were one), there will be a considerable intermingling of the two groups' rankings; but, if one group significantly exceeds the other, then most of the superior group's rankings will be higher than those of the inferior group. The value of U is computed after the combined ranking by concentrating on the lower ranked group and counting the number of ranks of the higher group which fall below the lower ranked group (Popham, 1967, p. 281).

Popham (1967) further relates that the Mann-Whitney U-test is a test where a lower value of the Mann-Whitney U statistic is more significant than a higher value.

Adams (1976) relates in the Delta Pi Epsilon Journal that nonparametric statistical tests can be used in business education survey research. Adams further states that the Mann-Whitney U-test makes better use of the ordinal data generated with Likert-type scales than the popular Chi-square test. The Chi-square test can be more effectively used with frequency data. A Likert-type scale provides an

opportunity for ordering the data. Ranking is possible with ordered data.

In order to use the Mann-Whitney U-test, the variable being measured must be continuous and must be at least ordinal measurement. These two assumptions are normally met when Likert-type scales are used (Adams, 1976). The Mann-Whitney U-test can be used when the two samples have an unequal number of subjects (Huck, Cormier, and Bounds, 1974; Siegal, 1956).

The Mann-Whitney U-test does not require a post hoc test for significant results. Linton and Gallo (1975) report that a post hoc test is not necessary when only two variables are being compared. In those cases, the test of significance is the same as the specific comparison test.

The nonparametric Kruskal-Wallis One-Way Analysis of Variance can be used if more than two levels of the independent variable are compared (Popham, 1967). The nonparametric Kruskal-Wallis One-Way Analysis of Variance is comparable to the parametric one-way ANOVA. The Kruskal-Wallis One-Way Analysis of Variance does not need to have the same number of subjects or measurements for each sample (Huck, Cormier, and Bounds, 1974; Siegal, 1956). Siegal (1956) indicates that the Kruskal-Wallis One-Way Analysis of Variance requires an underlying continuous distribution as well as at least an ordinal measurement. Adams (1976) indicates that Likert-type scales provide a continuous distribution and ordinal measurement.

Popham (1967) provides this rationale for the Kruskal-Wallis One-Way Analysis of Variance:

If there are no differences among the several groups representing the independent variable, then when all scores are ranked, irrespective of groups, from highest to lowest, the average sum of ranks for each group should be roughly comparable. If there are significant differences among the groups, then a marked disparity among the several group's average sums of ranks will exist (p. 285).

The Kruskal-Wallis One-Way Analysis of Variance provides a value known as H (Popham, 1967).

A post hoc test must be conducted if any significant results are noted on the Kruskal-Wallis One-Way Analysis of Variance. The most frequently reported post hoc test for the Kruskal-Wallis One-Way Analysis of Variance is the Mann-Whitney U-test (Huck, Cormier, and Bounds, 1974). The post hoc test used in the study was the Dunn procedure, which applies the Mann-Whitney U-test to all pairs of rank sums (Jaccard, 1983). The Dunn procedure maintains an overall significance level by adjusting the alpha level for the pairs tested. Dunn recommends a formula where the alpha level is divided by two times the number of pairs of ranks.

Demographic Information About the Samples

Demographic information about the two groups in the sample was compiled from the research instrument. The groups can be compared by years of work or teaching experience, years at the current company or institution, gender, and age. Information employment status and business writing course was also assembled for the Association for

Business Communication while information about previous college business writing courses was assembled for the Administrative Management Society.

Years of Experience

The largest percentage in both the Administrative Management Society and the Association for Business Communication groups concerning total years of experience was in the 21 or more years category. Of the AMS members, 47.4 percent indicated that they had 21 or more years of work experience, while 37.2 percent of the ABC members indicated that they had 21 or more years of teaching experience (Table I, p. 51). Similarly, Lewis (1983) found that the mean years spent by business communication teachers in their careers was 19.7.

The stability of the groups with their current company or institution indicated that the largest percentage for the AMS was in the 6-10 years category with 30.5 percent (Table II, p. 51). The percentage was closely followed by a percentage of 26.3 in the 0-5 years category. The ABC group reversed the categories with the highest percentage of 23.4 located in the 0-5 years category with 22.3 percent in the 6-10 years category. If the first two categories were combined, the AMS group would have 56.8 percent of the respondents working 10 years or less with the current company while the ABC group would have 45.7 percent of the respondents working 10 years or less with the current institution. With similar results, Lewis (1983) in his 1982 study of the American Business Communication Association members (ABCA) found that the mean number of years for respondents in their current location was 11.2.

TABLE I
TOTAL YEARS OF EXPERIENCE FOR
AMS AND ABC GROUPS

Experience	AMS Work Experience		ABC Teaching Experience	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
0-5 years	2	2.1	4	4.3
6-10 years	10	10.5	7	7.4
11-15 years	18	18.9	25	26.6
16-20 years	20	21.1	23	24.5
21 or more years	<u>45</u>	<u>47.4</u>	<u>35</u>	<u>37.2</u>
Total	95	100.0	94	100.0

TABLE II
YEARS OF EXPERIENCE AT CURRENT COMPANY FOR
AMS AND ABC GROUPS

Experience	AMS Current Company		ABC Current Institution	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
0-5 years	25	26.3	22	23.4
6-10 years	29	30.5	21	22.3
11-15 years	14	14.7	19	20.2
16-20 years	8	8.4	18	19.1
21 or more years	<u>19</u>	<u>20.0</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>14.9</u>
Total	95	99.9	94	99.9

Gender

In analyzing gender, both groups had a greater percentage of females responding to the research instrument. The percentages were comparable. The AMS group had 55.8 percent females while the ABC group had 58.5 percent females (Table III). In similar fashion, Lewis (1983) in his study of ABCA members found that 53 percent of the respondents were female. Darsey and Dorrell (1987) noted that 56.04 percent of the respondents in a 1985 study of the membership of the Association for Business Communication were women.

TABLE III
GENDER OF AMS AND ABC GROUPS

Gender	AMS		ABC	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Female	53	55.3	55	58.5
Male	<u>42</u>	<u>44.7</u>	<u>39</u>	<u>41.5</u>
Total	95	100.0	94	100.0

Age

In comparing the ages of the two groups, the largest percentage for the Administrative Management Society was 34.7 percent in the 36-45 category (Table IV, p. 53). The Association for Business Communication group has its largest percentage in the 46-55 age group with 36.2

percent. The twenty-year age span from 36-55 represented 60.0 percent of the Administrative Management Society sample and 71.3 percent of the Association for Business Communication sample. Lewis (1983) also found in his study of business communication instructors that 63 percent of the respondents were in the 36-55 age group.

TABLE IV
AGE OF AMS AND ABC GROUPS

Age (years)	AMS		ABC	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
25 and under	1	1.1	1	1.1
26 - 35	24	25.3	3	3.2
36 - 45	33	34.7	33	35.1
46 - 55	24	25.3	34	36.2
56 - 65	13	13.7	18	19.1
Over 65	0	0.0	5	5.3
Total	95	100.1	94	100.0

Employment Status

Questions were asked to ensure that the Association for Business Communication group was representative of the type of sample needed for the study. In viewing the teacher's position in the organization, 86.7 percent of the respondents were employed full time (Table V, p. 54). With somewhat different results Lewis (1983) reported that 58 percent of the respondents to his study of business communication instructors were full-time faculty members.

In examining the professional rank of the educators, the highest percentage was in the associate professor category (28.9 percent). When the ranks of professor and associate professor were combined, 54.5 percent of the respondents to the research instrument were included. In the Darsey and Dorrell (1987) study of the Association for Business Communication membership, the associate professor rank consisted of 28.95 percent of the respondents. Totals in the two categories of professor and associate professor were 51.32 percent in Darsey and Dorrell's (1987) study.

TABLE V
POSITION AND RANK OF ABC GROUP

POSITION	Number*	Percent
Employed full-time	78	86.7
Employed part-time	7	7.8
Retired	4	4.4
Other (on leave)	<u>1</u>	<u>1.1</u>
Total	90	100.0
RANK		
Chairman/Director	10	11.1
Professor	23	25.6
Associate Professor	26	28.9
Assistant Professor	16	17.8
Instructor	10	11.1
Other	<u>5</u>	<u>5.6</u>
Total	90	100.1

*N is lower because of missing values.

Business Writing

The Association for Business Communication members were asked if they had ever taught a college business writing course. Of those who responded to the research instrument, 95.6 percent indicated that they had taught such a course.

The individuals in the Administrative Management Society sample were asked if they had completed a college business writing course. Of the respondents, 43.2 percent revealed that they had completed a college business writing course. The percentage is very similar to the percentage found in a study of managers in the San Diego area conducted by Flatley (1982). Flatley found that 41.3 percent of the managers in the study had completed one or more formal courses in business communications.

The samples from the Administrative Management Society and the Association for Business Communication appeared to be roughly equal on important demographic information.

Summary

The study utilized a research instrument that was developed, checked for validity and reliability, and sent to samples from two populations. Data were collected, statistical measures were indicated, and comparisons between the samples were indicated.

The research instrument included two sections. One section contained demographic information and the second section consisted of twenty paragraphs containing various levels of four writing principles:

you-attitude, indirect or direct option, conciseness or wordiness, and grammar usage. The research instrument used a Likert-type scale that indicated levels of effectiveness to determine the quality of the writing in the paragraphs. The twenty paragraphs were randomly assigned to the research instrument to help reduce reader response bias.

The research instrument was checked for validity by a group of communication experts. The reliability of the research instrument was determined by using a test-retest procedure with ten graduate students. The reliability for the total research instrument as calculated using the Spearman rank-order correlation was .79.

Random samples were drawn from two populations. Businesspersons were represented by the Administrative Management Society. Business communication instructors were represented by the Association for Business Communication.

The research instrument with a cover letter and postage-paid return envelope were mailed first-class to the 360 individuals in the two samples - AMS, 196; ABC, 164. After the first mailing, 152 research instruments were returned. A follow-up mailing resulted in the return of an additional 46 research instruments. The response rate for the research instrument was 55.5 percent using the Dillman (1978) formula.

Statistics to be used in analysis of the data were frequency and percentage statistics as well as the nonparametric Mann-Whitney U-test and Kruskal-Wallis One-Way Analysis of Variance. Both the Mann-Whitney U-test and the Kruskal-Wallis One-Way Analysis of Variance involve ranking of the data. The post hoc test to determine the nature of the significant differences on the Kruskal-Wallis One-Way Analysis of

Variance is the Dunn procedure, which uses the Mann-Whitney U-test on all pairs and revises the alpha level in order to maintain an overall significance level.

Comparison of the demographic information from the two samples indicate that the groups were roughly equal on the important demographic variables of total work or teaching experience, years with current company or institution, gender, and age. The Association for Business Communication group was composed primarily of full-time teachers at the professor or associate professor rank. Nearly all of the members of the Association for Business Communication respondents had taught a college business writing course. Over forty percent of the respondents from the Administrative Management Society had completed a college business writing course. The two samples seemed to be nearly equal on important demographic information.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Introduction

The study used samples from two populations representing businesspersons and business communication instructors. Each group evaluated the quality of writing of selected paragraphs to determine the effectiveness of paragraphs that incorporated concepts of you-attitude, direct/indirect option, conciseness, and grammar.

The research instrument was sent to a random sample of members of the Administrative Management Society and a random sample of members of the Association for Business Communication. A response rate of 55.5 percent was obtained. A Likert-type scale was used to measure attitudes about the effectiveness of the writing.

Chapter IV presents the findings of the study, analyzes the thirteen hypotheses, and compares findings of other studies.

Testing of Hypotheses

Data were collected for statistical analysis in order to determine if the hypotheses in the study should be rejected. Statistics were calculated with the computer program SYSTAT (Wilkinson, 1987). Frequencies and percentages were obtained for each of the paragraphs and each sample. For those hypotheses that involved only two groups, the

Mann-Whitney U-test was used. A post hoc test was not needed for the Mann-Whitney U-test as comparisons can be made between the groups. For those hypotheses which involved more than one level, the Kruskal-Wallis One-Way Analysis of Variance test was used. The post hoc test for the Kruskal-Wallis One-Way Analysis of Variance is the Dunn procedure (Jaccard, 1983) which involves performing a number of Mann-Whitney U-test comparisons on all pairs of rank sums. In determining the significance of the relationship between pairs, the Dunn procedure adjusts the alpha level so the level will remain comparable to the .05 level used for other hypotheses.

You-attitude

Hypothesis I stated that no significant difference exists between the ratings of businesspersons and business communications instructors regarding perceived effectiveness of selected paragraphs concerning you-attitude.

Frequencies and percentages were calculated for the five paragraphs using concepts of you-attitude (Table VI, p. 62). In a paragraph with the focus on I rather than you, 43.6 percent of businesspersons rated the paragraph effective while the largest number of business communications instructors (31.5 percent) rated the paragraph of average effectiveness. The paragraph that was mostly I focus was rated either very effective or effective by 49.4 percent of businesspersons while 36.2 percent of business communications instructors rated the paragraph very effective or effective (see Appendix F for labels of paragraphs).

Three paragraphs had different levels of you-attitude. In a paragraph with you-attitude in the first two sentences, 50.5 percent of businesspersons rated the paragraph very effective; only 22.6 percent of the business communications instructors rated the paragraph very effective. In a paragraph with you-attitude in all but one sentence, the ratings were closer - 43.2 percent of businesspersons and 37.2 percent of business communications instructors rated the paragraph very effective. In a paragraph with you-attitude in all sentences, businesspersons and business communications instructors selected average effectiveness as the category with the highest percentage. Businesspersons provided a rating of 33.7 percent while business communications instructors recorded a rating of 31.9 percent (Table VI).

The Mann-Whitney U-test was applied to Hypothesis I (Table VII, p. 63). Significant differences occurred on three of the five paragraphs. The paragraph with the focus on I rather than you ($U = 2218$, $p < .001$), the paragraph with mostly I focus ($U = 3504$, $p < .01$), and the paragraph with you-attitude in the first two sentences ($U = 2818$, $p < .001$) indicated that businesspersons rated the paragraphs as more effective than did business communications instructors. A Mann-Whitney U-test was also conducted on the total of all five paragraphs with you-attitude. The test indicated that a significant difference existed between the two groups on paragraphs with you-attitude ($U = 2544$, $p < .001$).

As a result of the statistical analysis, Hypothesis I was rejected. A significant difference exists between the ratings of businesspersons and business communications instructors regarding perceived effectiveness of selected paragraphs concerning you-attitude.

Businesspersons rated the paragraphs as more effective than did business communications instructors.

Direct or Indirect Option

Hypothesis II stated that no significant difference exists between the ratings of businesspersons and business communications instructors regarding perceived effectiveness of selected paragraphs concerning the direct or indirect option.

Five paragraphs with different direct or indirect options were rated for effectiveness by the two groups. Percentages were computed (Table VIII, p. 64). An indirect paragraph with bad news in the middle was accorded average effectiveness by 40.4 percent of business communications instructors while only 28.4 percent of businesspersons gave the paragraph the same rating. In examining the category with the highest percentage, a paragraph with an indirect approach with the bad news hinted received a rating of very effective by 38.3 percent of the businesspersons while a rating of average effectiveness was provided by 29.8 percent of business communications instructors.

In a paragraph with a direct option with bad news in the second sentence, 13.7 percent of businesspersons rated the paragraph very effective, while only 1.1 percent of business communications instructors used the same rating. In another paragraph that used a direct option with bad news in the first sentence and no alternative, a large difference occurred between the two groups. Very effective or effective was the rating given by 56.8 percent of the businesspersons as opposed to 8.5 percent of business communications instructors.

TABLE VI
 FREQUENCIES AND PERCENTAGES OF AMS AND ABC GROUPS
 ON YOU-ATTITUDE AND EFFECTIVENESS

Paragraph and Effectiveness	AMS		ABC	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Focus on I rather than you				
Very effective	33	35.1	10	10.9
Effective	41	43.6	26	28.3
Average effectiveness	16	17.0	29	31.5
Below avg. effectiveness	4	4.3	21	22.8
Not effective	<u>0</u>	<u>0.0</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>6.5</u>
	94	100.0	92	100.0
Mostly I focus				
Very effective	18	18.9	6	6.4
Effective	29	30.5	28	29.8
Average effectiveness	30	31.6	29	30.9
Below avg. effectiveness	15	15.8	26	27.7
Not effective	<u>3</u>	<u>3.2</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>5.3</u>
	95	100.0	94	100.1
You-attitude in first two sentences				
Very effective	48	50.5	21	22.6
Effective	30	31.6	34	36.6
Average effectiveness	16	16.8	26	28.0
Below avg. effectiveness	1	1.1	10	10.8
Not effective	<u>0</u>	<u>0.0</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2.2</u>
	95	100.0	93	100.2
You-attitude in all but one sentence				
Very effective	41	43.2	35	37.2
Effective	29	30.5	28	29.8
Average effectiveness	16	16.8	21	22.3
Below avg. effectiveness	5	5.3	8	8.5
Not effective	<u>4</u>	<u>4.2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2.1</u>
	95	100.0	94	99.9
You-attitude in all sentences				
Very effective	11	11.6	9	9.6
Effective	25	26.3	26	27.7
Average effectiveness	32	33.7	30	31.9
Below avg. effectiveness	24	25.3	24	25.5
Not effective	<u>3</u>	<u>3.2</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>5.3</u>
	95	100.1	94	100.0

TABLE VII
 RATINGS ON AMS AND ABC GROUPS ON
 YOU-ATTITUDE IN PARAGRAPHS

Paragraph Description	Group	N	Rank Sum	Mann-Whitney U Statistic	Probability
Focus on I rather than You	AMS	94	6683.0	2218	.000**
	ABC	92	10708.0		
Mostly I focus	AMS	95	8063.5	3504	.008*
	ABC	94	9891.5		
You-attitude in first two sentences	AMS	95	7378.0	2818	.000**
	ABC	93	10388.0		
You-attitude in all but one sentence	AMS	95	8686.5	4127	.343
	ABC	94	9268.5		
You-attitude in all sentences	AMS	95	8882.0	4322	.693
	ABC	94	9073.0		
TOTAL of all paragraphs	AMS	94	7009.0	2544	.000**
	ABC	91	10196.0		

*Significant at $p < .01$

**Significant at $p < .001$

Another difference between the two groups took place in the rating of a paragraph that used the direct option with bad news in the first sentence and an alternative. While 22.1 percent of the businesspersons thought the paragraph was effective, only 8.5 percent of the business communications instructors thought the paragraph was effective. On the opposite end of the rating scale, 18.9 percent of the businesspersons listed the paragraph as not effective. The business communications

TABLE VIII
 FREQUENCIES AND PERCENTAGES OF AMS AND ABC GROUPS
 ON DIRECT/INDIRECT AND EFFECTIVENESS

Paragraph and Effectiveness	AMS		ABC	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent

Indirect, bad news in middle				
Very effective	12	12.6	9	9.6
Effective	23	24.2	17	18.1
Average effectiveness	27	28.4	38	40.4
Below avg. effectiveness	30	31.6	22	23.4
Not effective	<u>3</u>	<u>3.2</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>8.5</u>
	95	100.0	94	100.0
Indirect, bad news hinted				
Very effective	36	38.3	17	18.1
Effective	33	35.1	25	26.6
Average effectiveness	9	9.6	28	29.8
Below avg. effectiveness	12	12.8	19	20.2
Not effective	<u>4</u>	<u>4.3</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>5.3</u>
	94	100.1	94	100.0
Direct, bad news, second sentence				
Very effective	13	13.7	1	1.1
Effective	17	17.9	9	9.6
Average effectiveness	19	20.0	19	20.2
Below avg. effectiveness	24	25.3	25	26.6
Not effective	<u>22</u>	<u>23.2</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>42.6</u>
	95	100.1	94	100.1
Direct, bad news in first sentence, no alternative				
Very effective	18	18.9	3	3.2
Effective	36	37.9	5	5.3
Average effectiveness	14	14.7	13	13.8
Below avg. effectiveness	16	16.8	32	34.0
Not effective	<u>11</u>	<u>11.6</u>	<u>41</u>	<u>43.6</u>
	95	99.9	94	99.9
Direct, bad news in first sentence, alternative				
Very effective	5	5.3	2	2.1
Effective	21	22.1	8	8.5
Average effectiveness	22	23.2	15	16.0
Below avg. effectiveness	29	30.5	34	36.2
Not effective	<u>18</u>	<u>18.9</u>	<u>35</u>	<u>37.2</u>
	95	100.0	94	100.0

instructors nearly doubled the not effective rating, with 37.2 percent marking the paragraph not effective (Table VIII, p. 64).

The Mann-Whitney U-test determined that a significant difference existed between the two groups on four of the five indirect paragraphs as well as the total of the paragraphs (Table IX, p. 66). Businesspersons rated the following paragraphs as more effective than did business communication instructors (see Appendix F for labels of paragraphs):

1. Paragraphs that were indirect with bad news hinted ($U = 3104$, $p < .001$),
2. Paragraphs that were direct with bad news in second sentence ($U = 3095$, $p < .001$),
3. Paragraphs that were direct with bad news in first sentence and no alternative ($U = 1829$, $p < .001$),
4. Paragraphs that were direct with bad news in the first sentence and an alternative ($U = 3111$, $p < .001$), and
5. The total of all direct and indirect paragraphs ($U = 1936$, $p < .001$).

Hypothesis II was rejected as a difference did exist between businesspersons and business communication instructors concerning perceived effectiveness of paragraphs with direct or indirect approach. The businesspersons rated the paragraphs with indirect and direct options as more effective than did business communications instructors.

TABLE IX
 RATINGS OF AMS AND ABC GROUPS ON
 DIRECT AND INDIRECT PARAGRAPHS

Paragraph Description	Group	N	Rank Sum	Mann-Whitney U Statistic	Probability
Indirect, bad news in middle	AMS	95	8751.5	4192	.450
	ABC	94	9203.5		
Indirect, bad news hinted	AMS	94	7568.5	3104	.000*
	ABC	94	10197.5		
Direct, bad news in second sentence	AMS	95	7654.5	3095	.000*
	ABC	94	10300.5		
Direct, bad news in first sentence, no alternative	AMS	95	6388.5	1829	.000*
	ABC	94	11566.5		
Direct, bad news in first sentence, alternative	AMS	95	7671.0	3111	.000*
	ABC	94	10284.0		
TOTAL of all paragraphs	AMS	94	6401.0	1936	.000*
	ABC	94	11365.0		

*Significant at $p < .001$

Conciseness

Hypothesis III contended that no significant difference existed between the ratings of businesspersons and business communications instructors regarding perceived effectiveness of selected paragraphs concerning conciseness or wordiness.

Paragraphs with different levels of conciseness and wordiness were rated by the two groups. Percentages were calculated (Table X, p. 68).

In a curt paragraph with each sentence starting with a verb, 31.6 percent of businesspersons as compared to 13.8 percent of business communications instructors rated the paragraph either very effective or effective. In the same curt paragraph, businesspersons classified the paragraph as not effective in 10.5 percent of the responses. The not effective category was over three times more popular with business communications instructors who gave the paragraph a rating of 38.3 percent.

A concise paragraph was listed as very effective by 16.8 percent of businesspersons and 7.4 percent of business communications instructors. On the same paragraph, 28.7 percent of the business communications instructors rated the paragraph as below-average effectiveness. Businesspersons gave the below-average effectiveness rating only 13.7 percent of the time.

A paragraph with some wordiness was marked effective by 30.9 percent of the business communications instructors while 30.5 percent of the businesspersons rated the paragraph one category lower (of average effectiveness).

A wordy paragraph was marked as very effective by 9.6 percent of the businesspersons and 5.4 percent of the business communications instructors. The most popular rating category for the paragraph was an average effectiveness rating, which was given by 34 percent of the businesspersons and 31.2 percent of the business communications instructors.

TABLE X
 FREQUENCIES AND PERCENTAGES OF AMS AND ABC GROUPS
 ON CONCISENESS AND EFFECTIVENESS

Paragraph and Effectiveness	AMS		ABC	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
<hr/>				
Curt, sentences start with verbs				
Very effective	10	10.5	3	3.2
Effective	20	21.1	10	10.6
Average effectiveness	14	14.7	22	23.4
Below avg. effectiveness	41	43.2	23	24.5
Not effective	<u>10</u>	<u>10.5</u>	<u>36</u>	<u>38.3</u>
	95	100.0	94	100.0
Concise				
Very effective	16	16.8	7	7.4
Effective	24	25.3	23	24.5
Average effectiveness	38	40.0	31	33.0
Below avg. effectiveness	13	13.7	27	28.7
Not effective	<u>4</u>	<u>4.2</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>6.4</u>
	95	100.0	94	100.0
Some wordiness				
Very effective	16	16.8	7	7.4
Effective	22	23.2	29	30.9
Average effectiveness	29	30.5	20	21.3
Below avg. effectiveness	22	23.2	28	29.8
Not effective	<u>6</u>	<u>6.3</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>10.6</u>
	95	100.0	94	100.0
Wordy				
Very effective	9	9.6	5	5.4
Effective	26	27.7	21	22.6
Average effectiveness	32	34.0	29	31.2
Below avg. effectiveness	20	21.3	28	30.1
Not effective	<u>7</u>	<u>7.4</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>10.8</u>
	94	100.0	93	100.1
Very wordy				
Very effective	7	7.4	4	4.3
Effective	9	9.5	8	8.6
Average effectiveness	19	20.0	14	15.1
Below avg. effectiveness	26	27.4	31	33.3
Not effective	<u>34</u>	<u>35.8</u>	<u>36</u>	<u>38.7</u>
	95	100.1	93	100.0

A very wordy paragraph received similar ratings from both groups with not effective as the rating with the highest percentage. Of the businesspersons, 35.8 percent used the not effective category while 38.7 percent of the business communications instructors used the not effective category (Table X, p. 68).

Statistical analysis was conducted with the Mann-Whitney U-test. Of the five paragraphs with different levels of conciseness, two paragraphs were found to be statistically different (Table XI, p. 70). The paragraph with curt sentences that started with verbs ($U = 3178$, $p < .001$) and the concise paragraph ($U = 3562$, $p < .05$) indicated that businesspersons ranked curt and concise paragraphs as more effective than did business communications instructors. The total of all paragraphs was also significantly different ($U = 2918$, $p < .001$).

Hypothesis III was rejected. A significant difference exists between businesspersons and business communication instructors on paragraphs with levels of conciseness. Businesspersons ranked paragraphs with different levels of conciseness and wordiness as more effective than did business communications instructors.

TABLE XI
RATINGS OF AMS AND ABC GROUPS ON
CONCISE AND WORDY PARAGRAPHS

Paragraph Description	Group	N	Rank Sum	Mann-Whitney U Statistic	Probability
Curt, sentences start with verbs	AMS	95	7737.5	3178	.000**
	ABC	94	10217.5		
Concise	AMS	95	8121.5	3562	.012*
	ABC	94	9833.5		
Some wordiness	AMS	95	8497.0	3937	.148
	ABC	94	9458.0		
Wordy	AMS	94	8182.5	3718	.067
	ABC	93	9395.5		
Very wordy	AMS	95	8636.0	4076	.338
	ABC	93	9130.0		
TOTAL of all paragraphs	AMS	94	7383.0	2918	.000**
	ABC	92	10008.0		

*Significant at $p < .05$

**Significant at $p < .001$

Grammar Usage

Hypothesis IV stated that no significant difference exists between the ratings of businesspersons and business communication instructors regarding perceived effectiveness of selected paragraphs concerning grammar usage.

Frequencies and percentages were calculated for paragraphs with grammar errors (Table XII, p. 72). Each of five paragraphs included two examples of the same type of error. Ratings of a paragraph containing

unclear pronoun references resulted in a below-average effectiveness rating by 36.8 percent of the businesspersons and 33.0 percent of the business communications instructors.

The paragraph with split infinitives was listed very effective or effective by 31.9 percent of businesspersons as compared with 17.4 percent of business communications instructors. The two groups were nearly unanimous in rating the paragraph not effective with 17 percent of businesspersons and 17.4 percent of business communications instructors using the rating.

A paragraph with dangling modifiers was marked not effective by 48.9 percent of businesspersons. Business communications instructors were more critical as 64.9 percent rated the same paragraph as not effective.

Businesspersons and business communications instructors almost equally disliked the paragraph with subject and verb agreement errors. When the categories of below-average effectiveness and not effective were combined, 78 percent of businesspersons and 78.8 percent of business communications instructors were represented.

When the categories of very effective and effective were combined on a paragraph with parallel construction errors, 29.5 percent of businesspersons were included as contrasted with 12.8 percent of business communication instructors (Table XII, p. 72).

TABLE XII
 FREQUENCIES AND PERCENTAGES OF AMS AND ABC GROUPS
 OF GRAMMAR ERRORS AND EFFECTIVENESS

Paragraph and Effectiveness	AMS		ABC	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Unclear pronoun reference				
Very effective	7	7.4	5	5.3
Effective	17	17.9	13	13.8
Average effectiveness	25	26.3	22	23.4
Below avg. effectiveness	35	36.8	31	33.0
Not effective	<u>11</u>	<u>11.6</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>24.5</u>
	95	100.0	94	100.0
Split infinitives				
Very effective	6	6.4	3	3.3
Effective	24	25.5	13	14.1
Average effectiveness	22	23.4	28	30.4
Below avg. effectiveness	26	27.7	32	34.8
Not effective	<u>16</u>	<u>17.0</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>17.4</u>
	94	100.0	92	100.0
Dangling modifiers				
Very effective	0	0.0	0	0.0
Effective	2	2.1	2	2.1
Average effectiveness	8	8.5	2	2.1
Below avg. effectiveness	38	40.4	29	30.9
Not effective	<u>46</u>	<u>48.9</u>	<u>61</u>	<u>64.9</u>
	94	99.9	94	100.0
Subject-verb agreement errors				
Very effective	1	1.1	0	0.0
Effective	7	7.4	5	5.3
Average effectiveness	12	12.6	15	16.0
Below avg. effectiveness	41	43.2	34	36.2
Not effective	<u>34</u>	<u>35.8</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>42.6</u>
	95	100.1	94	100.1
Parallel construction errors				
Very effective	13	13.7	3	3.2
Effective	15	15.8	9	9.6
Average effectiveness	27	28.4	21	22.3
Below avg. effectiveness	30	31.6	37	39.4
Not effective	<u>10</u>	<u>10.5</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>25.5</u>
	95	100.0	94	100.0

The paragraphs with grammar errors were analyzed with the Mann-Whitney U-test (Table XIII, p. 74). Two of the five paragraphs as well as the total of the paragraphs revealed a significant difference. Differences between the two groups occurred on paragraphs with dangling modifiers ($U = 3650, p < .05$), paragraphs with parallel construction errors ($U = 3105, p < .001$), and total paragraphs ($U = 2975, p < .001$).

Hypothesis IV was rejected because of a significant difference between businesspersons and business communication instructors on perceived effectiveness of paragraphs concerning grammar usage. Businesspersons rated the paragraphs with dangling modifiers and parallel construction errors as more effective than did business communications instructors.

Gender and Businesspersons

Hypothesis V stated that no significant difference existed between gender of businesspersons and their ratings of the effectiveness of selected paragraphs.

A Mann-Whitney U-test was conducted on each set of paragraphs (Table XIV, p. 75). A significant difference was found between females and males on paragraphs with different levels of you-attitude ($U = 810, p < .05$). The males rated the paragraphs as more effective than did females. No other significant difference was found.

Hypothesis V was rejected as a significant difference was found between the gender of businesspersons and their ratings of the effectiveness of selected paragraphs.

TABLE XIII
 RATINGS OF AMS AND ABC GROUPS
 ON GRAMMAR IN PARAGRAPHS

Paragraph Description	Group	N	Rank Sum	Mann-Whitney U Statistic	Probability
Unclear pronoun reference	AMS	95	8348.0	3788	.062
	ABC	94	9607.0		
Split infinitives	AMS	94	8266.0	3801	.141
	ABC	92	9125.0		
Dangling modifiers	AMS	94	8115.0	3650	.019*
	ABC	94	9651.0		
Subject/verb agreement errors	AMS	95	8760.5	4201	.452
	ABC	94	9194.5		
Parallel construction errors	AMS	95	7664.5	3105	.000**
	ABC	94	10290.5		
TOTAL of all paragraphs	AMS	93	7345.5	2975	.000**
	ABC	92	9859.5		

*Significant at $p < .05$

**Significant at $p < .001$

TABLE XIV
GENDER OF BUSINESSPERSONS AND
EFFECTIVENESS OF PARAGRAPHS

Paragraph and Gender	N	Rank Sum	Mann-Whitney U statistic	Probability
You-attitude				
Female	53	2241.0	810	.034*
Male	41	2224.0		
Direct or Indirect				
Female	53	2280.0	849	.068
Male	41	2185.0		
Conciseness				
Female	52	2434.5	1057	.785
Male	42	2030.5		
Grammar				
Female	52	2526.5	1149	.521
Male	41	1844.5		

*Significant at $p < .05$

Gender and Business Communication Instructors

Hypothesis VI stated that no significant difference exists between the gender of business communications instructors and their ratings of the perceived effectiveness of selected paragraphs.

No significant difference was found in a test of the hypothesis with the Mann-Whitney U-test (Table XV, p. 76). The study failed to reject Hypothesis VI.

TABLE XV
GENDER OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION INSTRUCTORS
AND EFFECTIVENESS OF PARAGRAPHS

Paragraph and Gender	N	Rank Sum	Mann-Whitney U statistic	Probability
You-attitude				
Female	55	2446.0	906	.493
Male	36	1740.0		
Direct or Indirect				
Female	55	2601.0	1061	.929
Male	39	1864.0		
Conciseness				
Female	53	2503.5	1073	.757
Male	39	1774.5		
Grammar				
Female	53	2494.5	1064	.811
Male	39	1783.5		

Years of Work Experience

Hypothesis VII indicated that no significant difference exists between years of work experience of businesspersons and their ratings of perceived effectiveness of selected paragraphs.

A Kruskal-Wallis One-Way Analysis of Variance was conducted on the four sets of paragraphs representing concepts of you-attitude, direct or indirect option, conciseness, and grammar usage. No significant difference was found (Table XVI, p. 77). The study failed to reject Hypothesis VII.

TABLE XVI
YEARS OF WORK EXPERIENCE OF AMS GROUP
AND EFFECTIVENESS OF PARAGRAPHS

Paragraph	N	Kruskal-Wallis H Between Groups	Probability
You-attitude	94	1.99	.737
Direct or indirect	94	3.75	.441
Conciseness	94	3.35	.501
Grammar	93	.49	.975

degrees of freedom = 4

Years of Teaching Experience

Hypothesis VIII stated that no significant difference exists between the years of teaching experience of business communications instructors and their ratings of the perceived effectiveness of selected paragraphs.

A Kruskal-Wallis One-Way Analysis of Variance revealed no significant difference on any of the four concepts of you-attitude, direct or indirect option, conciseness, or grammar (Table XVII, p. 78). The study failed to reject Hypothesis VIII.

TABLE XVII
YEARS OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE OF ABC GROUP
AND EFFECTIVENESS OF PARAGRAPHS

Paragraph	N	Kruskal-Wallis H Between Groups	Probability
You-attitude	91	2.21	.697
Direct or indirect	94	4.79	.309
Conciseness	92	6.35	.174
Grammar	92	4.21	.379

degrees of freedom = 4

Age of Businesspersons

Hypothesis IX stated that no significant difference existed between the age of businesspersons and their ratings of the perceived effectiveness of selected paragraphs.

A statistical analysis was performed with the Kruskal-Wallis One-Way Analysis of Variance on age and paragraphs with concepts of you-attitude, direct or indirect option, conciseness, and grammar (Table XVIII, p. 79). As no significant difference was found, the study failed to reject Hypothesis IX.

TABLE XVIII
AGE OF BUSINESSPERSONS AND THE
EFFECTIVENESS OF PARAGRAPHS

Paragraph	N	Kruskal-Wallis H Between Groups	Probability
You-attitude	94	1.21	.876
Direct or indirect	94	5.63	.228
Conciseness	94	1.64	.802
Grammar	93	8.10	.088

degrees of freedom = 4

Age of Business Communication Instructors

Hypothesis X related that no significant difference exists between the age of business communication instructors and their ratings of the perceived effectiveness of selected paragraphs.

No significant difference concerning age was found when four groups of paragraphs were analyzed with the Kruskal-Wallis One-Way Analysis of Variance (Table XIX, p. 80). The study failed to reject Hypothesis X.

TABLE XIX
AGE OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS INSTRUCTORS
AND PARAGRAPH EFFECTIVENESS

Paragraph	N	Kruskal-Wallis H Between Groups	Probability
You-attitude	91	5.60	.347
Direct or indirect	94	4.78	.444
Conciseness	92	4.44	.488
Grammar	92	2.92	.712

degrees of freedom = 5

Level of Education

Hypothesis XI stated that no significant difference exists between the level of education of both businesspersons and business communication instructors and their ratings of the perceived effectiveness of selected paragraphs.

The levels of education included high school diploma, some college, baccalaureate degree, masters degree, and doctoral degree. A Kruskal-Wallis One-Way Analysis of Variance was conducted (Table XX, p. 81). A significant difference was found in paragraphs with you-attitude ($H = 34.34$, $df = 4$, $p < .001$), direct or indirect option ($H = 55.05$, $df = 4$, $p < .001$), conciseness ($H = 22.30$, $df = 4$, $p < .001$), and grammar ($H = 16.16$, $df = 4$, $p < .01$).

As a result of the statistical analysis, Hypothesis XI was rejected as a significant difference exists between level of education and ratings of the effectiveness of paragraphs.

A post hoc test using the Dunn procedure was used to determine the nature of the difference (Table XXI, pp. 83-84). The Dunn procedure uses a series of Mann-Whitney U-tests on each pair of levels of education. The Dunn procedure revises the alpha level (Jaccard, 1983). Using the ten pairs of ranks in the post hoc test, the revised alpha would be $.05/(2)(10) = .0025$.

TABLE XX
LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF BOTH AMS AND ABC GROUPS
AND EFFECTIVENESS OF PARAGRAPHS

Paragraph	N	Kruskal-Wallis H Between Groups	Probability
You-attitude	185	34.34	.000**
Direct or indirect	188	55.05	.000**
Conciseness	186	22.30	.000**
Grammar	185	16.16	.003*

degrees of freedom = 4

*Significant at $p < .01$

**Significant at $p < .001$

The post hoc test on level of education compared pairs of education levels and effectiveness of types of paragraphs (Table XXI, pp. 83-84).

On paragraphs with levels of you-attitude, respondents with some college rated the paragraphs as more effective than did those with masters degrees ($U = 311, p < .001$), respondents with some college rated the paragraphs as more effective than did those with doctoral degrees ($U = 426, p < .001$), and respondents with baccalaureate degrees rated the paragraphs as more effective than did those with doctoral degrees ($U = 860, p < .001$).

Paragraphs with direct or indirect option indicated that respondents with some college rated the paragraphs as more effective than did those with masters degrees ($U = 341, p < .0025$), respondents with some college rated the paragraphs as more effective than did those with doctoral degrees ($U = 318, p < .001$), respondents with a baccalaureate degree rated the paragraphs as more effective than did those with doctoral degrees ($U = 577, p < .001$), and respondents with a masters degree rated the paragraphs as more effective than did those with doctoral degrees ($U = 829, p < .0025$).

Respondents with some college rated the paragraphs as more effective for levels of conciseness than did the respondents with doctoral degrees ($U = 618, p < .001$). In evaluating paragraphs for levels of conciseness, baccalaureate degree holders rated the paragraphs as more effective than did doctoral degree holders ($U = 856, p < .001$).

High school graduates rated paragraphs with grammar errors as more effective than did those with doctoral degrees ($U = 13, p < .0025$).

TABLE XXI

POST HOC TEST OF PAIRS ON LEVEL OF EDUCATION FOR
 DIRECT/INDIRECT, YOU-ATTITUDE, CONCISENESS,
 AND GRAMMAR ERRORS

Paragraphs	HS by SC	HS by BS	HS by MS	HS by DR	SC by BS	SC by MS	SC by DR	BS by MS	BS by DR	MS by DR
YOU-ATTITUDE										
Number	38	47	41	71	77	71	101	80	110	104
Rank Sum	81.0	74.5	43.0	50.5	1149.0	906.0	1020.5	1512.0	1806.0	1829.5
	660.0	1053.5	818.0	2505.5	1854.0	1650.0	4130.5	1728.0	4299.0	3630.5
Mann-Whitney U	71	65	33	41	554	311	426	566	860	1127
Probability	.885	.408	.070	.019	.067	.000*	.000*	.026	.000*	.440
DIRECT/INDIRECT										
Number	38	47	41	74	77	71	104	80	113	107
Rank Sum	68.5	70.0	45.5	35.5	1189.0	936.0	913.0	1512.5	1522.5	1531.5
	672.5	1058.0	815.5	2739.5	1814.0	1620.0	4547.0	1727.5	4918.5	4246.5
Mann-Whitney U	59	60	36	26	594	341	318	567	577	829
Probability	.649	.318	.089	.006	.158	.001*	.000*	.026	.000*	.002*

TABLE XXI (Continued)

Paragraphs	HS by SC	HS by BS	HS by MS	HS by DR	SC by BS	SC by MS	SC by DR	BS by MS	BS by DR	MS by DR
CONCISENESS										
Number	37	48	40	73	77	69	102	80	113	105
Rank Sum	90.5	113.5	79.0	100.0	1255.5	1009.0	1178.5	1618.5	1846.0	1617.0
	612.5	1062.5	741.0	2601.0	1747.5	1406.0	4074.5	1621.5	4595.0	3948.0
Mann-Whitney U	81	104	69	90	695	448	618	629	856	951
Probability	.475	.559	.892	.242	.744	.078	.000*	.111	.000*	.048
GRAMMAR										
Number	37	46	40	74	75	69	103	78	112	106
Rank Sum	36.5	30.0	28.5	22.5	1267.5	1062.5	1404.0	1527.0	1931.5	1791.5
	666.5	1051.0	791.5	2752.5	1582.5	1352.5	3952.0	1554.0	4396.5	3879.5
Mann-Whitney U	27	20	19	13	707	502	843	624	1029	1126
Probability	.052	.012	.015	.002*	.885	.262	.026	.183	.008	.366

*Significant at $p < .0025$ as determined by Dunn procedure.

HS = High school diploma; SC = Some college; BS = Baccalaureate degree; MS = Masters degree;
DR = Doctoral degree

College Business Writing Course

Hypothesis XII stated that no significant difference exists between the previous college business writing courses of businesspersons and their ratings of the perceived effectiveness of selected paragraphs.

A Mann-Whitney U-test was computed for four types of paragraphs with you-attitude, direct or indirect option, conciseness, and grammar (Table XXII). AS no significant difference was found, the study failed to reject Hypothesis XII.

TABLE XXII

COLLEGE BUSINESS WRITING COURSE FOR BUSINESSPERSONS
AND EFFECTIVENESS OF PARAGRAPHS

Paragraph and Writing Course	N	Rank Sum	Mann-Whitney U statistic	Probability
You-attitude				
Yes	41	1750.0	889	.129
No	53	2715.0		
Direct or indirect				
Yes	41	1983.0	1122	.785
No	53	2482.0		
Conciseness				
Yes	40	1878.0	1058	.865
No	54	2587.0		
Grammar				
Yes	40	1849.5	1030	.812
No	53	2521.5		

College Majors

Hypothesis XIII stated that no significant difference exists between the college major of both businesspersons and business communications instructors and their ratings of the perceived effectiveness of selected paragraphs.

A Kruskal-Wallis One-Way Analysis of Variance was calculated (Table XXIII, p. 87). No difference was found in college major and ratings of paragraphs with concepts of you-attitude, direct or indirect option, conciseness, or grammar. Another Kruskal-Wallis One-Way Analysis of Variance was conducted to determine differences in ratings of paragraphs by business communication instructors concerning graduate college major (Table XXIV, p. 87). No difference was found in graduate college major and ratings for the ABC group.

The study failed to reject Hypothesis XIII as no statistical difference was found between college major and ratings of paragraphs.

Comparison of Findings

The findings in the study can be compared to findings from other studies. The findings report similar nonsignificant findings in the areas of work experience, college writing course, and college major.

Storms (1983) surveyed former business college graduates. The study compared years of work experience with survey responses and found no significant differences in responses to the survey based on work experience. The current study also found no significant differences in the way paragraphs were evaluated based on years of work experience of members in the Administrative Management Society sample.

TABLE XXIII
COLLEGE MAJORS FOR BOTH AMS AND ABC GROUPS
AND EFFECTIVENESS OF PARAGRAPHS

Paragraph	N	Kruskal-Wallis H Between Groups	Probability
You-attitude	148	3.18	.672
Direct or indirect	151	3.62	.605
Conciseness	150	2.19	.823
Grammar	149	3.36	.644

degrees of freedom = 5

TABLE XXIV
GRADUATE MAJOR FOR ABC GROUP AND
EFFECTIVENESS OF PARAGRAPHS

Paragraph	N	Kruskal-Wallis H Between Groups	Probability
You-attitude	87	6.90	.330
Direct or indirect	90	8.59	.198
Conciseness	88	2.15	.829
Grammar	88	6.23	.284

degrees of freedom = 6

Golen (1980) conducted a study of communication barriers in public accounting firms. He found that accountants who had completed a communications course and those who had not completed a communications course viewed communication barriers the same. The current study found that those AMS members who had completed a college business writing course evaluated the paragraphs in the same manner as did AMS members who had not completed a college business writing course.

Storms (1983) concluded that college major was not a factor for business college graduates. Regardless of major, graduates indicated the same importance for writing and the same amount of time spent on writing. The current study found no difference in the evaluation of effectiveness of paragraphs based on college major.

Summary

Thirteen hypotheses were tested in the study. Six hypotheses were rejected while the study failed to reject seven hypotheses. The Mann-Whitney U-test or the Kruskal-Wallis One-Way Analysis of Variance tests were used. A post hoc test is not needed for the Mann-Whitney U-test. The Dunn procedure involving multiple Mann-Whitney U-tests was used as a post hoc test for the Kruskal-Wallis One-Way Analysis of Variance test.

Hypotheses that were rejected indicated the following:

1. A significant difference existed between the ratings of businesspersons and business communications instructors on perceived effectiveness of selected paragraphs with concepts of you-attitude, direct or indirect option, conciseness, and grammar usage.

2. A significant difference also existed between gender of businesspersons and their ratings of paragraphs with levels of you-attitude.

3. The level of education for both groups indicated a significant difference in how paragraph effectiveness was rated.

The study failed to reject the following hypotheses:

1. No significant difference existed between years of work experience and ratings of businesspersons.

2. No significant difference existed between years of teaching experience and ratings of business communications instructors.

3. No significant difference existed between age and ratings of businesspersons.

4. No significant difference existed between age and ratings of business communications instructors.

5. No significant difference existed between the ratings of those businesspersons who had completed a college business writing course and those who had not.

6. No significant difference existed between college major of businesspersons and business communications instructors and their ratings of the effectiveness of paragraphs.

Other relevant studies found nonsignificant results on work experience, college business writing course, and college major.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The problem of the study was to determine if businesspersons evaluated the effectiveness of selected paragraphs the same way as business communications instructors. Paragraphs included concepts of you-attitude, direct or indirect approach, conciseness, and grammar.

The research instrument was evaluated for validity by a panel of communication experts. Reliability was established by a test-retest procedure with a group of ten graduate students. Reliability for the research instrument was determined by the Spearman rank-order correlation to be .79.

Random samples were chosen from two populations. Businesspersons were represented by a sample of 196 members of the Administrative Management Society (AMS), while a sample of 164 business communications instructors was randomly chosen from the academic-senior college division of the Association for Business Communication (ABC). In order to prevent confounding of the samples, names with education addresses or without business addresses were removed from the AMS list and demographic questions were asked to remove businesspersons from the ABC list.

A response rate of 55.5% for the research instrument was calculated by the Dillman (1978) formula.

Respondents were asked to use a Likert-type scale to evaluate the quality of the writing and to determine the effectiveness of the twenty random-order paragraphs. Statistical analysis, frequencies and percentages were calculated with the computer program SYSTAT (Wilkinson, 1987). Statistical analysis was completed with two nonparametric tests. The Mann-Whitney U-test was used when two groups were compared. The Kruskal-Wallis One-Way Analysis of Variance was used with more than two levels. A post hoc test was not necessary for the Mann-Whitney U-test because only two groups were used. The post hoc test for the Kruskal-Wallis One-Way Analysis of Variance consisted of repeated Mann-Whitney U-tests, which were conducted by using the Dunn procedure.

Demographic information from both samples indicated that the groups were nearly equal on the variables of years of experience, years of experience at current company or institution, gender, and age. The sample from the Association for Business Communication was comparable to other samples from ABC used in research studies. The sample from the Administrative Management Society was similar to another sample of business managers on the variable of completion of a business writing course. Both samples appeared to be representative of their populations.

Summary of Findings

Thirteen hypotheses were tested statistically. The findings were as follows:

Hypothesis I was rejected. A difference existed between the ratings of businesspersons and business communications instructors regarding the perceived effectiveness of paragraphs concerning you-attitude. Businesspersons rated the paragraphs with an I focus or with some you-attitude as more effective than did business communications instructors.

Hypothesis II was rejected. A significant difference existed between the ratings of businesspersons and business communications instructors regarding the perceived effectiveness of paragraphs concerning the direct or indirect option. Businesspersons rated four of the five paragraphs as more effective than did business communications instructors.

Hypothesis III was rejected. A significant difference existed between the ratings of businesspersons and business communications instructors regarding the perceived effectiveness of paragraphs concerning conciseness or wordiness. Businesspersons rated the curt and concise paragraphs as more effective than did business communications instructors.

Hypothesis IV was rejected. A difference existed between the ratings of businesspersons and business communications instructors regarding the perceived effectiveness of paragraphs with grammar errors. Business communications instructors were more critical in

rating paragraphs with dangling modifiers and parallel construction errors than were businesspersons.

Hypothesis V was rejected. A difference existed between the gender of businesspersons and their ratings regarding the perceived effectiveness of selected paragraphs. Men rated the paragraphs with various levels of you-attitude as more effective than did women.

The study failed to reject Hypothesis VI. No difference existed between the gender of business communications instructors and their ratings regarding the perceived effectiveness of selected paragraphs.

The study failed to reject Hypothesis VII. No difference existed between years of work experience and the ratings of businesspersons regarding the effectiveness of selected paragraphs.

The study failed to reject Hypothesis VIII. No difference existed between years of teaching experience and the ratings of business communications instructors regarding the perceived effectiveness of selected paragraphs.

The study failed to reject Hypothesis IX. No difference existed between the age of businesspersons and their ratings regarding the perceived effectiveness of selected paragraphs.

The study failed to reject Hypothesis X. No difference existed between the age of business communications instructors and their ratings regarding the perceived effectiveness of selected paragraphs.

Hypothesis XI was rejected. A difference existed between the level of education and the ratings of businesspersons and business communications instructors on selected paragraphs. The Dunn procedure was used as a post hoc test to determine the nature of the differences.

On paragraphs with concepts of you-attitude, respondents with some college rated the paragraphs as more effective than did those with masters degrees or doctoral degrees. Respondents with baccalaureate degrees rated the paragraphs with levels of you-attitude as more effective than did those with doctoral degrees.

Level of education also had an impact on ratings of paragraphs with direct or indirect options. Respondents with some college rated the paragraphs as more effective than did those with masters degrees or those with doctoral degrees. Respondents with baccalaureate degrees or masters degrees rated the paragraphs as more effective than did those with doctoral degrees.

Paragraphs with conciseness or wordiness also received different ratings based on level of education. Respondents with some college rated the paragraphs as more effective than did those with doctoral degrees. Baccalaureate degree holders marked the paragraphs as more effective than did doctoral degree holders.

Level of education impacted on one area of paragraphs with grammar errors. High school graduates rated the paragraphs as more effective than did the respondents with doctoral degrees.

The study failed to reject Hypothesis XII. A significant difference did not exist between previous college business writing course and the ratings of businesspersons regarding the perceived effectiveness of selected paragraphs.

The study failed to reject Hypothesis XIII. No significant difference existed between the college major of both businesspersons and business communications instructors and their ratings of the perceived effectiveness of selected paragraphs.

Conclusions

Based on the findings, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. Businesspersons and business communications instructors differ in their evaluation of the perceived quality of business writing. The findings that supported the conclusion were significant differences between businesspersons and business communications instructors on perceptions of paragraphs with you-attitude, direct or indirect option, conciseness, and grammar. Businesspersons were less critical in analyzing the writing than business communications instructors.

2. Men and women in business differ in their perceptions of you-attitude but are similar in perceptions of direct or indirect option, conciseness, and grammar. Men and women business communications instructors have related beliefs about all writing concepts. The findings indicated significant gender differences on you-attitude for businesspersons. Women ranked the paragraphs with different levels of you-attitude more critically than did men. No significant differences existed on the concepts of direct or indirect option, conciseness, and grammar. No significant gender differences were found for business communication instructors and writing concepts.

3. Years of experience, age, and college major made no difference in the respondents' evaluation of the effectiveness of the writing. The findings revealed that no significant differences existed between years of work experience and ratings of paragraphs by businesspersons, years of teaching experience and ratings of paragraphs by business communications instructors, age of businesspersons and ratings of paragraphs, age of business communications instructors and ratings of

paragraphs, college major of both businesspersons and business communications instructors and ratings of paragraphs, and graduate college major and ratings of business communications instructors.

4. All concepts of writing were viewed more critically as the level of education increased. The findings indicated that significant differences existed when level of education was compared with the writing concepts in the paragraphs. Differences occurred between respondents with high school diplomas and doctorates; respondents with some college and respondents with masters or doctorates; and respondents with bachelors degrees and respondents with masters or doctorates.

5. Writing concepts learned in college business writing courses did not affect the way businesspersons evaluated business writing. The findings supporting the conclusion were that businesspersons who had completed previous college business writing courses (43.2 percent) evaluated the writing in the paragraphs similarly to those businesspersons who had not completed previous college business writing courses (56.8 percent).

Recommendations

A number of recommendations can be made from the study for use by business communications instructors, textbook authors, and researchers.

1. Business communications instructors should ensure that a direct approach in writing negative news is discussed in the communications course. As business communications students may be faced with employers who prefer a direct approach, students should

thoroughly understand the value and rationale of both direct and indirect options toward negative news. In turn, textbook authors should include the direct approach to writing negative news in business communications textbooks.

2. Business communications instructors should place a higher value on conciseness in the business communications curriculum in order to better prepare students for business writing.

3. As businesspersons who have completed college business writing courses are not recognizing business communications concepts as facets of effective writing, textbook authors should include more rationale and options for future business writers.

4. Researchers may consider further studies concerning the perception of the you-attitude concept, the effect of gender on written communication, and the importance of level of education on written communication.

5. Researchers should conduct further studies that use practical writing examples to determine perceptions of businesspersons.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

**COMMUNICATION EXPERTS AND
VALIDITY INFORMATION**

COMMUNICATION EXPERTS

The following individuals agreed to serve as communication experts for the validation of the research instrument.

Dr. Dennis Mott
Administrative Services
College of Business
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, OK 74078

Dr. Zane Quible
Administrative Services
College of Business
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, OK 74078

Dr. Jane Hammer
Administrative Services
College of Business
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, OK 74078

Dr. Jeanine N. Rhea
Administrative Services
College of Business
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, OK 74078

March 28, 1988

INSTRUCTIONS TO COMMUNICATION EXPERT

Please examine the attached paragraphs to see if they illustrate the concepts of you attitude, grammar, indirect or direct writing, and conciseness or wordiness.

You should decide if each paragraph is valid or invalid in expressing some level of the concept mentioned at the top of each page.

Please write any comments you have on the survey.

On the actual survey, the paragraphs will:

1. Be in random order from Paragraph #1 to #20.
2. Be unnumbered
3. Not contain any terminology identifying the characteristics of the paragraph
4. Be sent to two groups - business communication instructors and businesspersons.

Participants in the study will be asked to rate the paragraphs on a 5-point scale which includes these steps.

Very		Average	Below Average	Not
Effective	Effective	Effectiveness	Effectiveness	Effective
1	2	3	4	5

Your assistance with the validation procedure is appreciated.

Marsha Bayless

Marsha Bayless

NOTE TO VALIDATOR: These 5 paragraphs use various levels of you attitude.

1. _____ Valid _____ Invalid

Thanks for recommending Ms. West for a management position. I have found her to be very competent. I like her attitude toward the job. I also think she has a great deal of potential for the future.

2. _____ Valid _____ Invalid

Thank you for your recent order. Your shipment of books will arrive by May 1. Considering your interest in history, you will want to read The West in Crisis. You will find information about several new books that will be published in the coming months in the enclosed newsletter.

3. _____ Valid _____ Invalid

I was impressed with your new facilities. Your explanations and enthusiasm during the tour enabled me to visualize the new ABC Industries plant. I am looking forward to its opening on May 15.

4. _____ Valid _____ Invalid

I would like to thank you for visiting with me yesterday. I found your information very helpful for my report on the "Crisis in American Industry." I hope to have the opportunity to talk with you again.

5. _____ Valid _____ Invalid

Congratulations! I just received notification that your firm won the regional award based on work completed by your department. The association selected an outstanding firm for the award. Please convey my best wishes to all members of your department.

NOTE TO VALIDATOR: These five paragraphs include grammar problems. The paragraphs use unclear pronoun reference, split infinitives, misplaced modifiers, disagreement of subject and verb, and faulty parallel construction.

Each paragraph attempts to address one kind of error.

6. _____ Valid _____ Invalid

John discussed the problem with the manager. He thought that some changes should be made. Do you think this should be placed on the agenda for the next meeting?

7. _____ Valid _____ Invalid

To quickly solve the problem, a team should complete a computer analysis. In order to effectively conduct the computer analysis, each department head must provide the appropriate information.

8. _____ Valid _____ Invalid

The annual inventory will be conducted thoroughly next week. Working effectively on the inventory, the forms will be completed more quickly than last year.

9. _____ Valid _____ Invalid

Mr. Webb as well as the board members are pleased with your progress. Your team with its very capable employees expect to complete the project on schedule.

10. _____ Valid _____ Invalid

The team must visit the site, assess the possibilities, and analyze. The next steps are to produce the report, to distribute it, and utilize the information effectively.

NOTE TO VALIDATOR: The five paragraphs on this page use various direct and indirect approaches to providing bad news.

11. _____ Valid _____ Invalid

Your application arrived today. Your qualifications, especially in the area of management, are most impressive. Our firm hires nearly two dozen new managers each year. However, at the present time we have no openings. With your permission we would like to keep your application on file.

12. _____ Valid _____ Invalid

Your request for a loan is denied. After carefully examining your application, it appears that you have worked for four employers in the last two years. We grant credit only to those who have been employed by the same firm for at least two years.

13. _____ Valid _____ Invalid

Thank you for expressing your concern about the size of your ad in this week's newspaper. You will find attached a photocopy of the order form completed by our salesperson. As you can see on the form you signed, the size of the ad is clearly specified as the same size that was printed in the newspaper. Should you have further questions, please contact us.

14. _____ Valid _____ Invalid

Your request for a price quotation arrived today. We will not be submitting a price quotation. Our current line of products will not meet the highly technical specifications you list in your request. Once you have selected the equipment, we would like an opportunity to prepare a quote on any supplies you may need. Thank you for considering our firm.

15. _____ Valid _____ Invalid

Your computer cannot be repaired for less than \$1000. Several of the electronic components are damaged which will require a number of new boards. As 90 days have passed since you purchased the machine, the warranty has expired. Our sales people would be happy to visit with you should you decide to purchase a new computer instead of repairing this machine.

NOTE TO VALIDATOR: The five paragraphs include different levels of wordiness and/or conciseness in the writing.

16. _____ Valid _____ Invalid

The April issue of your magazine was of great value to me in designing a project that I have been working on. I notice that membership in your organization which includes a subscription to the magazine is \$65 per year. Please find enclosed a check for \$65 for membership for this year.

17. _____ Valid _____ Invalid

You will find enclosed a purchase order for 17 dozen speciality hand towels for an advertising promotion. Please have the towels delivered by April 30.

18. _____ Valid _____ Invalid

Come at 10 a.m. on the 4th. Will discuss interagency cooperation. Plan an hour for the meeting.

19. _____ Valid _____ Invalid

You will find enclosed my conference registration. I am requesting a double room beside the indoor pool. Usually at most conferences a location near the pool is better for the extensive conference entertaining that our firm will be conducting during the conference. One year our room was located on the isolated seventh floor which seemed to be too difficult for people to find. Please let me know if there will be any difficulty in assigning me a room next to the pool.

20. _____ Valid _____ Invalid

Thanks for your interest in our annual report. You will find enclosed a copy to examine. Several professionally prepared and quite detailed brochures relating to our company are also enclosed.

APPENDIX B

COVER LETTER



Oklahoma State University

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

STILLWATER, OKLAHOMA 74078-0555
BUSINESS 201
405-624-5064

April 8, 1988

Dear Businessperson or Business Communication Instructor:

Every day you may read or write letters. You also evaluate the writing of others each time you analyze a piece of correspondence. Effective written communication is important to business success.

Do business communication instructors have the same perceptions about writing as do businesspersons? If differences in perception exist, business communications instructors should be aware of the differences when preparing future business writers.

I am conducting a study which will survey randomly selected business persons who are members of the Administrative Management Society and randomly selected business communication instructors who are members of the Association for Business Communication. The survey instrument will ask members of both groups to evaluate the effectiveness of paragraphs.

You were selected to participate in this study. If you are willing to help with the project, simply read each of the paragraphs and make your judgment on the effectiveness of each paragraph according to the scale provided. All responses will remain confidential and no names will be used in the study.

Please take a few minutes to contribute to this study by completing the enclosed survey and returning it in the postage paid envelope. Please respond by April 29, 1988.

Any assistance you can provide will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Marsha L. Bayless

Marsha L. Bayless
Graduate Assistant

Zane L. Quible

Dr. Zane Quible, Major Advisor
Administrative Services

Enclosure



Celebrating the Past . . . Preparing for the Future

APPENDIX C

FOLLOW-UP LETTER



Oklahoma State University

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

STILLWATER, OKLAHOMA 74078-0555
BUSINESS 201
405-624-5064

May 6, 1988

Dear Businessperson or Business Communication Instructor:

Recently you should have received a letter asking you to assist with a study of perceptions of business writing.

If you have already returned the survey, thank you for your cooperation.

If you have not yet completed the survey, please take a few moments to do so. Members of the Administrative Management Society and the Association for Business Communication were randomly selected for this study on perceptions of effective paragraphs.

Please join your colleagues who have already returned the survey. Another copy of the survey and a postage-paid envelope are enclosed for your convenience in responding.

Your cooperation is very important to the success of the study.

Sincerely,

Marsha L. Bayless

Marsha L. Bayless
Graduate Assistant

Zane H. Quible

Dr. Zane Quible, Major Advisor
Administrative Services

Enclosure



APPENDIX D

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT FOR

BUSINESSPERSONS

**QUALITY OF PARAGRAPHS SURVEY
For Businesspersons**

Demographic Information

Please check the appropriate category.

1. How many years of work experience do you have?

- 0-5
- 6-10
- 11-15
- 16-20
- 21 or more

2. How many years have you worked at this company?

- 0-5
- 6-10
- 11-15
- 16-20
- 21 or more

3. What is your age?

- 25 and under
- 26-35
- 36-45
- 46-55
- 56-65
- Over 65

4. What is your gender?

- Female
- Male

5. What is your highest level of education?

- Less than high school diploma
- High school diploma or equivalent
- Some college
- Baccalaureate degree
- Masters degree
- Doctoral degree

6. If you earned a baccalaureate degree, what was your major for that degree?

- Liberal arts
- Business administration
- Education
- Science
- Social Science
- Other

7. Have you ever completed a college business writing course(s)?

- Yes
- No

Instructions: Please rate the following paragraphs on YOUR perceptions of the quality of the writing. Circle the appropriate number for each paragraph using the following scale:

Very Effective 1	Effective 2	Average Effectiveness 3	Below Average Effectiveness 4	Not Effective 5
------------------------	----------------	-------------------------------	-------------------------------------	-----------------------

1 2 3 4 5

Your application arrived today. Your qualifications, especially in the area of management, are most impressive. Our firm hires nearly two dozen new managers each year. However, at the present time we have no openings. With your permission we would like to keep your application on file.

1 2 3 4 5

Thank you for your recent order. Your shipment of books will arrive by May 1. Considering your interest in history, you will want to read The West in Crisis. You will find information about several new books that will be published in the coming months in the enclosed newsletter.

1 2 3 4 5

The April issue of your magazine was of great value to me in designing a project that I have been working on. I notice that membership in your organization which includes a subscription to the magazine is \$65 per year. Please find enclosed a check for \$65 for membership for this year.

1 2 3 4 5

Mr. Webb as well as the board members are pleased with your progress. Your team with its very capable employees expect to complete the project on schedule.

1 2 3 4 5

The annual inventory will be conducted thoroughly next week. Working effectively on the inventory, the forms will be completed more quickly than last year.

1 2 3 4 5

Thanks for your interest in our annual report. You will find enclosed a copy to examine. Several professionally prepared and quite detailed brochures relating to our company are also enclosed.

Over

Very Effective 1	Effective 2	Average Effectiveness 3	Below Average Effectiveness 4	Not Effective 5
------------------------	----------------	-------------------------------	-------------------------------------	-----------------------

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Your request for a price quotation arrived today. We will not be submitting a price quotation. Our current line of products will not meet the highly technical specifications you list in your request. Once you have selected the equipment, we would like an opportunity to prepare a quote on any supplies you may need. Thank you for considering our firm.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Thanks for recommending Ms. West for a management position. I have found her to be very competent. I like her attitude toward the job. I also think she has a great deal of potential for the future.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

I was impressed with your new facilities. Your explanations and enthusiasm during the tour enabled me to visualize the new ABC Industries plant. I am looking forward to its opening on May 15.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

To quickly solve the problem, a team should complete a computer analysis. In order to effectively conduct the computer analysis, each department head must provide the appropriate information.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

You will find enclosed a purchase order for 17 dozen specialty hand towels for an advertising promotion. Please have the towels delivered by April 30.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Congratulations! I just received notification that your firm won the regional award based on work completed by your department. The association selected an outstanding firm for the award. Please convey my best wishes to all members of your department.

Over

Very Effective	Effective	Average Effectiveness	Below Average Effectiveness	Not Effective
1	2	3	4	5

1 2 3 4 5

Come at 10 a.m. on the 4th. Will discuss interagency cooperation. Plan an hour for the meeting.

1 2 3 4 5

I would like to thank you for visiting with me yesterday. I found your information very helpful for my report on the "Crisis in American Industry." I hope to have the opportunity to talk with you again.

1 2 3 4 5

Your request for a loan is denied. After carefully examining your application, it appears that you have worked for four employers in the last two years. We grant credit only to those who have been employed by the same firm for at least two years.

1 2 3 4 5

John discussed the problem with the manager. He thought that some changes should be made. Do you think this should be placed on the agenda for the next meeting?

1 2 3 4 5

You will find enclosed my conference registration. I am requesting a double room beside the indoor pool. Usually at most conferences a location near the pool is better for the extensive conference entertaining that our firm will be conducting during the conference. One year our room was located on the isolated seventh floor which seemed to be too difficult for people to find. Please let me know if there will be any difficulty in assigning me a room next to the pool.

1 2 3 4 5

Your computer cannot be repaired for less than \$1000. Several of the electronic components must be replaced. As 90 days have passed since you purchased the machine, the warranty has expired. Our sales people would be happy to visit with you should you decide to purchase a new computer instead of repairing this machine.

Over

Very Effective 1	Effective 2	Average Effectiveness 3	Below Average Effectiveness 4	Not Effective 5
---------------------------------	------------------------	--	--	--------------------------------

1 2 3 4 5

The team must visit the site, assess the possibilities, and analyze. The next steps are to produce the report, to distribute it, and utilize the information effectively.

1 2 3 4 5

Thank you for expressing your concern about the size of your ad in this week's newspaper. You will find attached a photocopy of the order form completed by our salesperson. As you can see on the form you signed, the size of the ad is clearly specified as the same size that was printed in the newspaper. Should you have further questions, please contact us.

Thank you for your assistance with the study.

APPENDIX E

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT FOR BUSINESS

COMMUNICATION INSTRUCTORS

**QUALITY OF PARAGRAPHS SURVEY
For Business Communications Teachers**

Demographic Information

Please check the appropriate category.

1. How many years of teaching experience do you have?

- 0-5
- 6-10
- 11-15
- 16-20
- 21 or more

2. How many years have you taught at this institution?

- 0-5
- 6-10
- 11-15
- 16-20
- 21 or more

3. What is your age?

- 25 and under
- 26-35
- 36-45
- 46-55
- 56-65
- Over 65

4. What is your gender?

- Female
- Male

5. What is your highest level of education?

- Less than high school diploma
- High school diploma or equivalent
- Some college
- Baccalaureate degree
- Masters degree
- Doctoral degree

6. If you earned a baccalaureate degree, what was your major for that degree?

- Liberal arts
- Business administration
- Education
- Science
- Social Science
- Other

Over

7. If you earned a graduate degree, what was your major for the most advanced degree?

- Administration
- Business administration
- Business education
- English
- Higher education
- Speech communication
- Other

8. Have you ever taught a college business writing course(s)?

- Yes
- No

9. What is your present position with your educational institution?

- Employed full-time
- Employed part-time
- Not employed
- Retired
- Other

10. What is your rank at your institution?

- Chairman/Director
- Professor
- Associate Professor
- Assistant Professor
- Instructor
- Other

Instructions: Please rate the following paragraphs on YOUR perceptions of the quality of the writing. Circle the appropriate number for each paragraph using the following scale:

Very Effective 1	Effective 2	Average Effectiveness 3	Below Average Effectiveness 4	Not Effective 5
------------------------	----------------	-------------------------------	-------------------------------------	-----------------------

1 2 3 4 5

Your application arrived today. Your qualifications, especially in the area of management, are most impressive. Our firm hires nearly two dozen new managers each year. However, at the present time we have no openings. With your permission we would like to keep your application on file.

1 2 3 4 5

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1 2 3 4 5

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1 2 3 4 5

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1 2 3 4 5

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1 2 3 4 5

Thanks for your interest in our annual report. You will find enclosed a copy to examine. Several professionally prepared and quite detailed brochures relating to our company are also enclosed.

Over

Very Effective	Effective	Average Effectiveness	Below Average Effectiveness	Not Effective
1	2	3	4	5

1 2 3 4 5

Your request for a price quotation arrived today. We will not be submitting a price quotation. Our current line of products will not meet the highly technical specifications you list in your request. Once you have selected the equipment, we would like an opportunity to prepare a quote on any supplies you may need. Thank you for considering our firm.

1 2 3 4 5

Thanks for recommending Ms. West for a management position. I have found her to be very competent. I like her attitude toward the job. I also think she has a great deal of potential for the future.

1 2 3 4 5

I was impressed with your new facilities. Your explanations and enthusiasm during the tour enabled me to visualize the new ABC Industries plant. I am looking forward to its opening on May 15.

1 2 3 4 5

To quickly solve the problem, a team should complete a computer analysis. In order to effectively conduct the computer analysis, each department head must provide the appropriate information.

1 2 3 4 5

You will find enclosed a purchase order for 17 dozen specialty hand towels for an advertising promotion. Please have the towels delivered by April 30.

1 2 3 4 5

Congratulations! I just received notification that your firm won the regional award based on work completed by your department. The association selected an outstanding firm for the award. Please convey my best wishes to all members of your department.

Very Effective	Effective	Average Effectiveness	Below Average Effectiveness	Not Effective
1	2	3	4	5

1 2 3 4 5

Come at 10 a.m. on the 4th. Will discuss interagency cooperation. Plan an hour for the meeting.

1 2 3 4 5

I would like to thank you for visiting with me yesterday. I found your information very helpful for my report on the "Crisis in American Industry." I hope to have the opportunity to talk with you again.

1 2 3 4 5

Your request for a loan is denied. After carefully examining your application, it appears that you have worked for four employers in the last two years. We grant credit only to those who have been employed by the same firm for at least two years.

1 2 3 4 5

John discussed the problem with the manager. He thought that some changes should be made. Do you think this should be placed on the agenda for the next meeting?

1 2 3 4 5

You will find enclosed my conference registration. I am requesting a double room beside the indoor pool. Usually at most conferences a location near the pool is better for the extensive conference entertaining that our firm will be conducting during the conference. One year our room was located on the isolated seventh floor which seemed to be too difficult for people to find. Please let me know if there will be any difficulty in assigning me a room next to the pool.

1 2 3 4 5

Your computer cannot be repaired for less than \$1000. Several of the electronic components must be replaced. As 90 days have passed since you purchased the machine, the warranty has expired. Our sales people would be happy to visit with you should you decide to purchase a new computer instead of repairing this machine.

Over

Very Effective 1	Effective 2	Average Effectiveness 3	Below Average Effectiveness 4	Not Effective 5
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1	2	3	4	5
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The team must visit the site, assess the possibilities, and analyze. The next steps are to produce the report, to distribute it, and utilize the information effectively.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Thank you for expressing your concern about the size of your ad in this week's newspaper. You will find attached a photocopy of the order form completed by our salesperson. As you can see on the form you signed, the size of the ad is clearly specified as the same size that was printed in the newspaper. Should you have further questions, please contact us.

Thank you for your assistance with the study.

APPENDIX F

LABELED PARAGRAPHS

Paragraphs are labeled according to level of use.

YOU-ATTITUDE

FOCUS ON I RATHER THAN YOU

I would like to thank you for visiting with me yesterday. I found your information very helpful for my report on the "Crisis in American Industry." I hope to have the opportunity to talk with you again.

MOSTLY I FOCUS

Thanks for recommending Ms. West for a management position. I have found her to be very competent. I like her attitude toward the job. I also think she has a great deal of potential for the future.

YOU-ATTITUDE IN FIRST TWO SENTENCES

I was impressed with your new facilities. Your explanations and enthusiasm during the tour enabled me to visualize the new ABC Industries plant. I am looking forward to its opening on May 15.

YOU-ATTITUDE IN ALL BUT ONE SENTENCE

Congratulations! I just received notification that your firm won the regional award based on work completed by your department. The association selected an outstanding firm for the award. Please convey my best wishes to all members of your department.

YOU-ATTITUDE IN ALL SENTENCES

Thank you for your recent order. Your shipment of books will arrive by May 1. Considering your interest in history, you will want to read The West in Crisis. You will find information about several new books that will be published in the coming months in the enclosed newsletter.

The five paragraphs on this page use various direct and indirect options for negative news.

DIRECT/INDIRECT

INDIRECT, BAD NEWS IN MIDDLE

Your application arrived today. Your qualifications, especially in the area of management, are most impressive. Our firm hires nearly two dozen new managers each year. However, at the present time we have no openings. With your permission we would like to keep your application on file.

INDIRECT, BAD NEWS HINTED

Thank you for expressing your concern about the size of your ad in this week's newspaper. You will find attached a photocopy of the order form completed by our salesperson. As you can see on the form you signed, the size of the ad is clearly specified as the same size that was printed in the newspaper. Should you have further questions, please contact us.

DIRECT, BAD NEWS IN SECOND SENTENCE

Your request for a price quotation arrived today. We will not be submitting a price quotation. Our current line of products will not meet the highly technical specifications you list in your request. Once you have selected the equipment, we would like an opportunity to prepare a quote on any supplies you may need. Thank you for considering our firm.

DIRECT, BAD NEWS IN FIRST SENTENCE, NO ALTERNATIVE

Your request for a loan is denied. After carefully examining your application, it appears that you have worked for four employers in the last two years. We grant credit only to those who have been employed by the same firm for at least two years.

DIRECT, BAD NEWS IN FIRST SENTENCE, ALTERNATIVE

Your computer cannot be repaired for less than \$1000. Several of the electronic components must be replaced. As 90 days have passed since you purchased the machine, the warranty has expired. Our sales people would be happy to visit with you should you decide to purchase a new computer instead of repairing this machine.

The five paragraphs on this page use different levels of conciseness.

CONCISENESS OR WORDINESS

CURT, SENTENCES START WITH VERBS

Come at 10 a.m. on the 4th. Will discuss interagency cooperation.
Plan an hour for the meeting.

CONCISE

You will find enclosed a purchase order for 17 dozen speciality hand towels for an advertising promotion. Please have the towels delivered by April 30.

SOME WORDINESS

Thanks for your interest in our annual report. You will find enclosed a copy to examine. Several professionally prepared and quite detailed brochures relating to our company are also enclosed.

WORDY

The April issue of your magazine was of great value to me in designing a project that I have been working on. I notice that membership in your organization which includes a subscription to the magazine is \$65 per year. Please find enclosed a check for \$65 for membership for this year.

VERY WORDY

You will find enclosed my conference registration. I am requesting a double room beside the indoor pool. Usually at most conferences a location near the pool is better for the extensive conference entertaining that our firm will be conducting during the conference. One year our room was located on the isolated seventh floor which seemed to be too difficult for people to find. Please let me know if there will be any difficulty in assigning me a room next to the pool. The paragraphs use unclear pronoun reference, split infinitives, misplaced modifiers, disagreement of subject and verb, and faulty parallel construction.

Each paragraph addresses one kind of error.

GRAMMAR

UNCLEAR PRONOUN REFERENCE

John discussed the problem with the manager. He thought that some changes should be made. Do you think this should be placed on the agenda for the next meeting?

SPLIT INFINITIVES

To quickly solve the problem, a team should complete a computer analysis. In order to effectively conduct the computer analysis, each department head must provide the appropriate information.

DANGLING MODIFIER

The annual inventory will be conducted thoroughly next week. Working effectively on the inventory, the forms will be completed more quickly than last year.

SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT ERRORS

Mr. Webb as well as the board members are pleased with your progress. Your team with its very capable employees expect to complete the project on schedule.

PARALLEL CONSTRUCTION ERRORS

The team must visit the site, assess the possibilities, and analyze. The next steps are to produce the report, to distribute it, and utilize the information effectively.

VITA ²

Marsha Lynn Bayless

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Thesis: PERCEPTIONS OF COLLEGE BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS INSTRUCTORS AND BUSINESSPERSONS REGARDING EFFECTIVENESS OF SELECTED PARAGRAPHS IN BUSINESS LETTERS

Major Field: Business Education

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Dodge City, Kansas, March 10, 1953, the daughter of Edward Dwight and Wilma Jean Bayless.

Education: Graduated from Dodge City Senior High School, Dodge City, Kansas, in May 1971; received Associate of Arts degree from Dodge City Community College, Dodge City, Kansas, in May 1973; received Bachelor of Science degree in Business Education and English from Emporia State University, Emporia, Kansas, in May 1975; received Master of Science degree in Business Education from Emporia State University, Emporia, Kansas, in August 1978; completed requirements for the Doctor of Education degree at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, in December, 1988.

Professional Experience: Office Education Coordinator, Hays High School, Hays, Kansas, through the North Central Kansas Area Vocational Technical School, Beloit, Kansas, 1975-76; Office Education Coordinator and Head of the Business Department, North Central Kansas Area Vocational Technical School, Beloit, Kansas, 1976-1980; Office Education Coordinator and Director of the Business and Economics Division, Garden City Community College, Garden City, Kansas, 1980-1987; Graduate teaching associate, College of Business Administration, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, 1987-88; Director of the Business and Economics Division, Garden City Community College, Garden City, Kansas, 1988-present.

Professional Organizations: Delta Pi Epsilon, Mountain-Plains Business Education Association, National Business Education Association, Kansas Business Occupations Association, Kansas Vocational Association, American Vocational Association, Office Education Association (Classroom Educators Advisory Council), North Central Kansas Higher Education Association, Garden City Higher Education Association, Kansas National Education Association, National Education Association, Delta Kappa Gamma, Association for Business Communication.