CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews past studies and statements by experts and scholars in the field of language learning in the ESP contexts. Their views are vital in supporting this study and justifying the views of the respondents which will be discussed in the following chapters.

2.2   DEFINITIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF ESP

As language and ESP evolved, it is expected that generally educators should already have a clear idea about what ESP means. Strangely enough, this does not seem to be the case. As quoted by Anthony (1999), for example, a heated debate took place on the TESL-P e-mail list about whether or not English for Academic Purposes (EAP) be considered part of ESP in general. Many other questions arose too in relation to what are the "real" or rather "absolute" characteristics of an ESP course. In fact, at the Japan conference on ESP, there were clear differences on how people interpreted ESP. Some described it as teaching English for any purpose

that could be specified, and English teaching for academic or professional purposes. The idea of what is ESP compared to EAP or even general English is still vague and leads to confusion amongst the ESP community in Japan, as well as many other countries (Izzo, 1999). Therefore, before implementing and agreeing to have ESP courses, it is wise to analyse the characteristics of ESP.

Learners as well as teachers are acquainted with the complexities of language learning and teaching, therefore, the need to define the concept of ESP is vital before further complexity intervenes. The different human activities requiring different communication skills results in the mastery of specific linguistics items. ESP, is in general term, language learning which has its focus on all aspects of language pertaining to a particular field of human activity.

2.2.1   What is ESP?

According to Brown, "English for Specific Purposes or ESP programmes are specifically devoted to professional fields of study"(Brown, 2001). In addition to this definition, Dudley-Evans (1997) gives an extended definition of what ESP is in terms of

"absolute" and "variable" characteristics. According to Dudley-Evans (1997), the absolute characteristics are as follows:-

❖ Meeting specific needs of learners,

❖ Makes use of methods and activities of disciplines it serves, and

❖ Centers on the language appropriate to these activities such as grammar, lexis, register, study skills, discourse and genre.

While variable characteristics of ESP may:-

❖ be related to or designed for specific disciplines,

❖ use different methodology from that of general English,

❖ be designed for adult learners, either tertiary or professional work situation,

❖ be designed for intermediate and advanced students, and

❖ assume basic knowledge of language system.

Based on the division of ESP into the absolute and variable characteristics, it is very helpful in resolving arguments about what is and what is not ESP. From the above, what can be said about ESP is that it is not necessarily concerned with a specific discipline, nor does it aim at a certain group or ability range, but it is as an approach to teaching.

Wright (1998) defines ESP in two other different dimensions which are content and methodology. Content is concerned with how narrow or broad the scope of a particular course is, when compared to the totality of the language. In order to identify the content of any ESP course, a needs analysis must be conducted. This is crucial in order to achieve maximum effectiveness of what is so called ESP. For instance, a course in English for Business Purposes will be concerned with developing all of the required linguistic items and skills in order to function at a professional level in the world of international business (Overtoom, 2000). Similarly, the equivalent skills are needed for areas such as Science and Technology, medicine, and many other professionals as well as non-professional job functions.

Methodology is also a matter of great importance. Since ESP course aims to develop linguistic skills relating to spheres of specific job activity, not only the nature of the linguistic items introduced, but the ways in which they are introduced and how they are practiced, are highly significant (Robinson, 1991:43).

As ESP classes are specific to the subject matter, methodology should be geared towards stimulating students to think and learn through the use of the target language. For example, it should employ authentic reading materials, which require students not only to understand information but to interpret and evaluate the text as well. This is also supported by Wright (1998) suggesting that ESP course should take place in contexts that are as authentic as possible and are content-based. Authenticity means "… that learning materials should use actual texts produced by people working in the ESP field" (Brown, 1994:325). As further elaborated by Brown (1994), a class on how to write reports should use authentic examples of reports as models for reference purposes for the students. This gives a more meaningful learning experience as authentic materials are used in the teaching and learning process.

Thus, the idea of ESP in the dimension mentioned and relevant to this study shows that it uses language for specific purposes or needs and thus requires the educators to consider the needs analysis survey amongst the students in order to achieve maximum requirement in conducting such ESP courses (Brown, 1994:331).

In relation to ESP, needs analysis is a major concern as it is used widely in the development of programmes as a basis for securing funding and credibility by linking proposals to genuine needs (Pratt, 1988). In designing a thorough needs analysis to be conducted, several aspects need to be taken into account. This is to ensure a detailed needs analysis is produced and this could lead to the development of relevant and significant language programmes. The aspects of students' immediate language skills and future goals, the requirement of employers, institutions, exam bodies, vision of government organizations are among the criteria brought forward by Richards (2001). From this description, it is evident that in designing an ESP writing programme, a thorough needs analysis is required as currently many language programmes have a gap between current and target needs of the learners (Richards, 2001). Therefore, needs analysis as mentioned above plays an important role in an ESP design curriculum.

Benesch (2001) in his comment on writing skills stated that "in universities, students' needs are typically immediate as they have to cope with external demands such as their future profesional worlds, thus, the writing courses need to prepare them for these circumstances". It is important to bear in mind that a characteristic of most L2 writing courses is insufficient time; thus it fails to meet all needs. Therefore, needs analysis is a dynamic tool to be incorporated when designing an ESP writing course (Holst, 1993). Therefore, in designing an ESP writing curriculum, the needs analysis data are specifically used to formulate course goals or objectives that any institution hopes to accomplished (Brown, 1995). From the above discussion, it can be summarized that there is a clear link of constructing a needs analysis in relation to designing an ESP writing curriculum. The needs analysis findings will provide a direction for course developers as they design the curriculum.

2.3   ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES (EAP)

English for Academic Purposes or EAP is a term that is broadly applied to any course, module or workshops in which students are taught to deal with academically related language and subject matter. EAP is "a discipline

that targets academic objectives and fulfills the proficiency of learners in skills, namely writing, reading, listening and speaking" (Perez & Macia, 2002). With the status of English as an international language and the expansion in the use of English, an increasing number of second language learners are engaged in academic pursuits that require them to write based on great amounts of second language input such as taking notes during lectures or academic discourse.

Academic writing, as one of the skills, is an important skill as most of the universities worldwide require the ability to write for workplace purposes. The ability to master academic writing in English is thus an important need for university students (Flowerdew and Miller, 1992). Therefore, it can be summarized that EAP focuses on proficiency and developing general language skills which are writing, reading, listening and speaking in meeting academic purposes. This is clear that the EAP syllabus does not focus on workplace functions as the name suggests that it is merely addressing learners' needs for academic and college purposes.

2.4   ENGLISH FOR OCCUPATIONAL PURPOSES

Basic skills are central to adult education classes. Reading, writing and Mathematics skills are the bases in almost all jobs (Martinez, 2001).

According to a research conducted by Martinez involving statistics on adult education programme, it was found that "most programme incorporate basic job readiness skills such as job search, interviewing, preparing resumes, letters and filling out work-related form" (2001:5). Therefore, in this context, it can be suggested that most of the language programmes in higher learning institutions offer English for Occupational Purposes or better known as EOP. This is because in EOP, learners are taught on the skills needed for job functions such as writing letters, preparing memos, interpersonal skills and management skills. In EOP' "instructors are more interested to expose learners to workplace skills which are needed to enter, maintain and advance in the world of work" (Bukhart, 1996:43). This is because the learners are more interested to prepare themselves for better or more opportunities for success in the workplace.

EOP can be defined as "the portion of the curriculum which prepares students for gainful employment in occupations ranging from low-skilled to sophisticated jobs in technical fields" (Anthony, 1997:56). EOP courses focus on meeting the demand for workers by providing specific job training and skills through content-based instruction (CBI) activities in order to enhance basic skills development. According to Anthony, most EOP classes will consistently expose students to sufficient training in

reading, writing, speaking and listening (1997). From the training, students then integrate the language skills to their specific job functions using materials which are necessary in their fields of work.

Generally, EOP is covers a much bigger area as compared to ESP as it covers the four language skills which are writing, reading, listening and speaking and it is more on general basic skills required by students in order to enter the workforce. Examples of basic skills needed are reading, writing and Mathematics skills. In the context of this research, writing skills that are general that would be a requirement for most job functions are report writing, letter writing and memo, to name a few.

Another EOP study conducted by Murphy and Brown (1998) that involved three different groups of adult learners who were doing an English course revealed the fact that "it is important to provide tangible evidence to these learners that the course would help them to obtain employment and would facilitate a variety of job readiness and employability skills" (1998:76). This shows that EOP curriculum does benefit these groups of learners because in EOP classes, learners are exposed to perform job function skills related to all the language skills which are required in the workplace.

2.5   THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ESP AND EAP

How is ESP different from general English or EAP courses? This is the main concern of many teachers in the ESL and EFL settings. Although ESP has been introduced for quite a while, there is still confusion on what is different about it compared to other English courses available. Hortas (1999) outlines the following distinct differences:

❖ The words and sentences learned and the subject matter discussed, are all related to a particular field or discipline, for instance, a lawyer writing a brief case report, or a Diplomat preparing a policy paper. The course makes use of vocabulary and tasks related to the field such as negotiation skills and effective techniques for oral presentations. This is a crucial element in an ESP programme.

❖ ESP programmes use printed and audio-visual materials that are specially designed to meet the needs of a specific group of learners, usually adult. Typical ESP textbooks are English for Corporate Communications and English for Information Systems.

❖ Tuition for ESP course may be somewhat higher as compared to general English because of the specialized teaching, requiring professionals, the broad range of supporting activities and facilities.

Based on the surface outline provided, it is very clear that the theory of language in ESP and general English is similar as to increase students' confidence and skill in language but in terms of practice, they are different. In brief, ESP is a content-based approach to learning a language, while general English covers knowledge on language and linguistics without specifying the vocabulary and the skills. In addition, in preparing the module for an ESP course, it is vital to conduct a needs analysis amongst the group of learners as that is the basis of an ESP requirement.

2.6   WRITING SKILL: EAP AND ESP

Writing is one of the language skills that requires strong basic knowledge about the language. The complexity of writing is due to the interference of L1 or the first language. According to Raimes, "…students think in their first language and then produce their piece of writing in English" (1996:212). In recent years, the issue of L1 and L2 was widely discussed. Then, evolved another area in writing that are product versus process

writing. As these areas continue to be studied, ESP writing has now come into practice.

According to Zaharah Pilus (1996:45), "students fail to write effectively because they do not have solid grounding in the target language, thus they are unable to manipulate writing skill". The two aspects of writing that they failed to achieve are (i) to develop fluent flow of ideas and (ii) the ability to manipulate written language. Therefore, writing is regarded as a difficult skill. This is often attributed to its inherently complex characteristics which according to Wall (1981:56), "range from control to creativity, with good grammar, knowledge of subject matter, awareness of stylistic conventions and various mysterious factor in between".

Writing is an activity of the minority, mostly done as part of professional obligations except for a few who occasionally produce personal writing. Therefore, the motives of writing are "more abstract, intelectualised, further removed from immediate needs" (Zaharah Pilus, 1996:47). A study by Grabe (1987) indicated that the correlation between maturity and writing ability is very low. The study also analysed the concepts of clarity and readability, and the results indicated that students do not meet the expectation of basic writing skills. According to Zaharah Pilus (1996:46),

Malay students for example, "often use complicated and extensively elaborated sentences that obscure meaning".

Writing, from an ESP perspective is a social practice in ways in which writing and writer are implicated in discourses and institutional practices. In English for Academic purposes (EAP), from elementary school through university graduate courses, students write to succeed in mastering the subject matter. Academic writing ranges from sentences to short paragraphs to essay and even research reports. Thus, in brief, ESP is more concern with the content and format of writing required for specific job disciplines, while in EAP the focus is on general writing techniques such as process and development of ideas and logic in essay, thesis and other academic writing tasks (Grellet, 1996).

In an ESP context, emphasizing the difference in writing purposes and the resultant text structures are crucial in order to match the needs of the workplace skills. Furthermore, according to Baynham (1995:4) "…to characterize the knowledge and skills of a fluent writer, the need to emphasise the dimension of the required metalinguistic must exist. For example, the awareness of the different types of texts as well as the pragmatics is an important dimension".

Thus, in as ESP context, the pragmatics and types of texts have to be explicit and narrowed. The interests and needs of the learners are necessary for them to realize the significance in acquiring the skill. In many ESP studies and modules, the needs analysis leads to a well structured and organized ESP programme. Hence, for an effective and significant writing programme, the job nature has to be analysed.

In brief, as the name suggests, ESP focuses on professional settings of the students. This is because the need to fulfill the employers' expectation is important in a workplace. Undergraduates are expected to be able to handle various writing texts or genres for the professional setting.

Writing instruction and content are the crucial part in the learning process. In the ESP syllabus, the courses and skill selected are intended to provide students with the ability to effectively communicate in English through specific task disciplines. "Effective writing is a necessary skill for professionals; as claimed, scientist, engineers and management people spend 55% of their time writing a variety of technically oriented document" (Huckru, 1991:56). This means that more than half of the time, professionals are required to write at workplaces.

An example of an effective ESP writing course is offered at the University of AIZU in Japan. It was proven effective because the students became extensive writers and their written communication was well understood by the instructors who claimed that they had zero knowledge in writing at the beginning of the course and in the mid course, they were able to produce good writing tasks. The technical writing course was established to help Computer Engineering majors in writing skills needed for their academic and future career activities. The course has been undergoing continued evaluation and alteration. Therefore, to prepare students for the endeavors, a two-term English Technical writing course has been included in the required curriculum for the students of University of AIZU (Izzo, 1996).

In conducting the course, the planning on course content was given emphasis. The initial preparation centered on developing a basic course structure and to select an appropriate text for the level of ESP. Besides that, the need to restrict instruction material and comprehensive technical writing course were also determined.

As a result of the Technical writing course for the students in University of AIZU, the students showed eagerness and high interest to engage in writing activities. They were more willing to write as compared to previous writing classes, whereby the focus was not ESP. In addition, the

progress and development were fast and effective. The students showed high academic as well as professional task based achievement.

This is an example of a study to show the effectiveness of an ESP approach. This is because as reported teachers and students benefited from the programme in which the teachers participated actively whilst the students achieved significant result in the writing skill.

The development of ESP in Polytechnic and Vocational School in Malaysia begins with content course offered in the schools and the various stages leading to ESP syllabuses. The purpose is to cater to the needs of the students in the institutions. Besides that, its access is to aid students to survive in the current labour intensive job market. This is because in the present situation, those who can use English effectively are able to gain promotion to supervisory and managerial position at their workplaces.

Generally, the use of English is getting much attention especially in the private sectors. Students and graduates are expected to attain a certain level of English in order to secure better opportunities at workplaces. Areas such as Business, Technology, Computer Engineering and many others require staff who are proficient in English. The books, the materials and reports are written in English. These are most of the courses that are

offered in higher learning institutions. Thus, with the implementation of ESP syllabus, the hope is to gain positive feedback from learners and instructors.

With the implementation of ESP syllabus in the various Polytechnic and Technical schools in Malaysia, the following areas have been observed:

(a)   A comprehensive development programme focusing on language and content in the respective disciplines.

(b)   Good and effective responses from the students in tasks and classroom based activities, and

(c)   High level of interest in participation and attendance due to job-specific disciplines.

According to the teachers in Polytechnic and Vocational schools, feedbacks from students is that they are more satisfied as writing classes are more geared towards the development of relevant knowledge and skills. In fact, teachers involved in the classes claim that the students' attitude show remarkably positive improvement in language classrooms.

A computer-mediated scientific writing programme was conducted at the center for Biological Research in La Paz, Mexico in 1996. The objective is to improve scientific writing from a specific English Language Writing Programme. Besides that, the programme aims to look for ways of improving the writing skills of its biologists, thereby empowering them in the competitive environment of scientific publication.

The biologists were expected to correspond their ability to write based on the reading materials through the access of the scientific forums on the internet. The entire process of writing is closely maintain using the learning log; for editing as well as reviewing errors. At the end of the course, a questionnaire is established.

Based on the findings, the learning log showed immediate and positive results. The programme created a metalinguistic awareness that was helpful to scientific writers. According to Booth (1993:5), "leaders in the field of scientific writing agree that communication should be clear and concise and effective as well as covers straight to the point in as few words as possible". The scientific writing programme through the use of computer mediated way has proven to help biologists write better with minimal errors.

In brief, the findings showed that the students write more as they are familiar with content. The final product of the text is both comprehensible and easily accessible. This is also one of the CMC ESP writing programmes that prove ESP does work effectively for writers.

Writing is a complex skill. In order to be a technical writer, one should be able to write it in a precise and concise manner. Either way, the job is to clearly tell the audience exactly what they need to know. Next is the knowledge of technical subject. Emphasis should be given to content in order to deliver sufficient information to readers. The combination of both elements in an ESP course brings a lot of benefits and advantages to writers.

A survey conducted among 200 public relations practitioners in Hull, Canada by Philips and Powers (1999) was intended to investigate the type of writing varieties that were involved in the profession. The aim here was to find out whether writing efficiency comes with writing experience. The result indicated that the practitioners spend a lot of time writing with varieties of text such as memos, reports and proposal. Other findings were:

(a) writers improve their text from time to time

(b) they write better for work-related writings, and

(c) they show evidence of becoming better writers through the quality of the end product..

Boothby (2001) conducted a research in literacy skill, the knowledge content of occupations and occupational mismatch. The research examined aspects of the knowledge content of work and its relationship with workers' education level and literacy. IALS (International Adult Literacy Survey) in Canada showed that university graduates with low level of literacy skills are far more likely to experience job-education mismatch. The suggestion to educe the gap of mismatch is to increase the number of content and specific job functions language programme.

Based on IALS findings, ESP course can help students to overcome the mismatch expectations of workplace with the learning situations. This recommendation emerges from professionals to find out more innovative workplace learning strategies to support more effective transformations from education. These projects are to encourage the ESP modules in order to achieve effective learning to workplace performance.

Another research which addresses the issue of ESP teachers' knowledge of students' speciality was conducted by Selinker (1981). He noted that many students were writing at a higher level of academic achievement through ESP and EAP courses. They subsequently try to apply what they have learned to operations at workplace. A general-based study conducted by Thomas and Monica (1999) on ESP to analyse the nature and effects of ESP was conducted among 80 trainee legal advisors. The results show that 73 out of the 80 respondents that is 91.25% highly suggested that ESP courses should be implemented as it is more beneficial for workplace literacy training. Amongst some reasons that were concluded from this research is the involvement in the field of workplace literacy must acknowledge the need of the employers. In addition to that this research also suggests that the knowledge of ESP which emerges from education contexts and concerns can benefit workplace participations. Thus, it indicates here that ESP is more acceptable rather than EAP or General English.

The next study by Sidey (1999) examined the relevancy of freshman composition to writing in the workplace. Four professionals who had been out of college for several years were surveyed about their writing in the workplace, college, writing classes and the important skills expected by employers. The results indicated that:

i.   all participants felt that effective workplace writing must be job-related, concise and clear.

ii.   all participants have negative attitudes towards the writing classes they had because there is a vast mismatch with the job expectations.

In general, findings from this research suggest that the participants could not relate what they did in the freshman writing classes to writing they do in the workplace. Due to this, professionals were brought in to talk to participants the kinds of writing required in jobs that interest them, and to encourage students to reflect on their writing in order to develop usefulness of writing skill and processes in meeting the needs of employers. Therefore, this is another strong and relevant study to indicate the benefits of ESP.

Contextual integration of employability skills into curriculum has been a slow but encouraging process. However, more research is needed on creating and assessing a curriculum that integrates the learning of employability skills contextually. Equally important is open and free-flowing systems of communication between research outcomes,

educational institutions and employers, and communication must be consciously and carefully crafted.

It is equally important to analyze the needs of the undergraduates and current situation in order to design a well-researched curriculum and pedagogy. Thus, the nature of military needs should be examined in order to minimize the mismatch between skills learned and superiors' expectation and service requirement.

The specific purpose of content of English for Officers in the infantry corps should include language situations to prepare them for military-related events, in which English is used to communicate with superiors and foreign personnel either orally or in writing. The writing needs for most Army Officers should conform to the service correspondences where they are required to write and respond to written requests from their superiors and their subordinates. These trainings to write formally in military related situations are exciting prospects for ESP teachers.

2.7   WRITING IN THE MALAYSIAN ARMED FORCES

The military is an active, fast moving profession and so it would have little need or time for the written word. Nevertheless like any other branches in

the government, the MAF is obsessed with paper work, reports and other service correspondences prepared by the staff officers.

Certainly the military needs records. Thousands of documents make their way into various units and formations everyday. This is a routine matter. Commanders at all levels find themselves with numerous papers flowing into their trays, and some into their briefcases at the end of the working day. Considerable energy, time and effort go into reading all the paperwork.

Paperwork and a lot of the basis of the MAF duties besides the weaponry system and several other major duties require the ability to write. People in leadership and staff appointment will always need to deal with a certain amount of writing. Little can be done to affect the quantity of what comes through their office but limited writing ability can do a great deal to affect its quality. Traditionally, military writings are inherited from the British Military Service. Writing rules strictly follow the sets used by the British Military. Therefore, there is a need to adopt the writing requirements outlined by the MAF. For instance, very often, a military writer follows the set in the Staff Duties Manual (T100). The structures of writing tasks are governed in the Staff Duties Manual (T100).

Military writing does not give way to temptation. It is one thing for a poet to refuse to eliminate good lines that do not really work, but military writers are not in the business of composing poetry. In military a writer has to be prepared to defend whatever he writes. It is all in the interest of efficient mission accomplishment.

One thing people in the MAF understand is the rank structure and their relative position within it. One's authority and obligations are dictated by status, rank and situation that fundamentally determine the way one acts.

In military, an assignment is directed to the officers by their immediate superiors. So, the military writers have to get outside of themselves and assume the persona of the person who will ultimately endorse the officer's work. This is difficult to follow if the writer is a Major who is writing for a Major General. Having a third party between the two of them makes the writing process even more complex. This requires the officer to write and think at the level of the superior. Military staff writer's success as a writer for another's signature will depend on how well he assumes a persona that satisfies the intended signer's self-image. That means the writer must adopt a voice that portrays this person not necessarily as the way he appears to him but rather the way he thinks he appears.

The military writers have to play a different role depending on their commanders. Does the writer have to go ahead and change the role play? If the results are good, nobody will complain if they are not the writer would not lose anything but at least the officer had tried an approach. It takes a lot of time, patience and practice to master these skills. Very often the writer is forced to write consciously using the voice and tone of the person whose signature will appear on his work.

In summary, a military writer has to be precise, fluent and accurate in doing any writing tasks. This is because apart from accomplishing the task, he also has to write on behalf of somebody else who is higher in rank as compared to him. Thus, he must also be ready to produce pieces of writing at levels suitable for higher ranking officers.

2.8   NEEDS ANALYSIS

According to Mackay and Mountford (1978) the first major step in the designing and planning of a course is to identify the needs of learners. Such information is essential in planning and designing of a course. This will help to identify the specific needs of the learners and the course could be tailored to the requirement of learners. Valden (1983) too support the importance of a need survey in the development of language programme.

The threshold level (Van Ek, 1976) is often considered as the pioneering work in needs analysis. The first step is the identification of learners' needs and the types of language contact he is likely to engage in communication.

The development of needs analysis in recent years has been concerned with the development of ESP. In recent years, the focus has been on identifying students' need. The rationale for needs analysis is that it is an important point of reference for language teaching. When planning a language course, ideally, needs of all parties concerned should be considered. To a certain extent, the communicative syllabus was based on the needs of learners. It catered for the needs of job seekers after their form five examination.

However, it only catered for the needs of job seekers in the vocational field. For those who wanted to pursue further studies, this syllabus was inadequate. Furthermore, the syllabus planners have to take into consideration the needs of multilingual society. Therefore, very often the setting did not reflect the cultural background. Sometimes it became too sensitive to place an ethnic group with a particular setting i.e. Ramasamy as a rubber tapper, Ah Chong as a gardener and Ali as a farmer. Some

textbooks identify certain ethnic groups with a particular economic activity. The communicative syllabus does consider the needs of the learners but not all. However, it is not possible to meet the needs of everyone in meeting the objective of the course. From the discussion presented, it is clear that needs analysis is a required and essential process in ensuring a syllabus meets the needs and expectations of learners. It is further noted that an ESP curriculum which is designed based on the needs is more effective as learners are more receptive as they are able to relate their learning to workplace situations (Strodt-Lopez,1991).

2.9   THE CONCEPT OF NEED – THE TARGET SITUATION NEEDS ANALYSIS APPROACH

According to Munby (1978), needs analysis was firmly established in mid 1970s as course designers came to see the learners' purposes rather than specialist language as the driving force behind the ESP programme. According to Chambers, early instruments for establishing needs are by investigating the target situation for which learners were being prepared:

> "By the language I mean the language of the target situation. Thus, needs analysis should be concerned with the establishment of communicative needs and their realizations, resulting from an analysis of the communication in the target situation – what we will refer to as target situation analysis".
>
> (Chambers, 1980)

Another important factor is to ensure the target group of learners as well as the goal identified for the needs analysis has to be relevant and appropriate based on the study to be conducted.

The central approach to ESP indeed is the necessary starting point in materials and course design. This is important because practitioners have to be selective in terms of specific content-based materials and topics to ensure relevance. In order to achieve a reliable needs analysis, various forms of pedagogy and needs have to be identified to provide information about learners and the educational environment. In doing so, researchers are able to come up with three specified areas of needs analysis. They are:-

❖ Deficiency analysis. This gives information about what the learners' learning needs are, what students think they need and they lack.

❖ Strategy analysis. This seeks to establish how the learners wish to learn rather than what they need to learn. By investigating the learners needs, it provides for some directions in the development of the syllabus as well as curriculum.

❖ Means analysis. This is the point of investigations on precise issues and conditions related to educational environment in which the ESP course is to take place and the considerations involved.

Hence, it is evident that the role of needs analysis in an ESP setting is crucial as the focus is very much on learners and also the language and linguistics skills. Furthermore, analyzing the language requirement of a profession and analyzing students' needs is important as to match the suitability and to verify the contents necessary for the ESP course. It is vital that a comprehensible needs analysis be conducted to ensure materials and course design later reflect ESP rather than general or EAP course for higher learning students.

2.10   STUDIES RELATED TO NEEDS OF LEARNERS

A research at the Bureau of Research and Consultancy (BRC) of UiTM revealed the existence of seven research reports related to needs analysis. Five reports were confined to the needs of the learners with regards to specific, albeit narrow fields within the area of language learning such as listening skills, reading in English for academic purpose and the effectiveness of teaching materials used. The reports indicated that the learners are more willing to learn in an ESP environment as their needs are

met. It was further elaborated that the learners show eagerness and readiness to learn in their English classroom if the context of learning is ESP rather than EAP. This means that an ESP approach brings about a more meaningful learning process to learners as authentic reports are shown to them and they are able to relate the skills more closely in their learning.

One study conducted in 1997 for the interest of the Bureau of Research and Consultancy UiTM by a group of lecturers from the School of Accountancy in UiTM (Penafort et al, 1997) had attempted to find out if the quality of the graduates conformed to the requirements of the business world of employers. They gathered data from three different groups of informants – the graduates, the employers and the content subject lecturers in the School of Accountancy. Interestingly, one of the findings of this study showed that the graduates needed to improve their written correspondence skills, especially in writing business reports. The study also revealed that these areas needed immediate and serious attention. This clearly supports the fact that in many EAP programmes, the writing tasks are general; essay, grammar and others which are more focused on proficiency. Hence, the students lack the required skills which are demanded in their profession such as reports and written correspondence.

2.11   SUMMARY

From the review, the principles of ESP have given some directions on how important the process of developing a syllabus is. This is to achieve effectiveness of the syllabus designed for learners. At tertiary level, it is crucial to take into considerations the learners needs and expectations in order to allow for transition of knowledge and skills to occur from university to workplace. Therefore, the EAP, EOP and ESP options need to be revisited by many higher learning institutions to allow for more meaningful learning to take place. Writing skills, on the other hand, is a skill that requires sufficient training and exposure. Hence, learners need to be given sufficient facilitation to acquire and perform writing skills. Due to this, underlying theories and principles have to be looked into to achieve meaningful learning and to allow for effective and efficient transfer of knowledge from university to workplace.