

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter concludes the findings of this study. Furthermore, some suggestions are presented in order to provide measures in improving the current English language course. Further discussions on trainings for graduates are also highlighted.

5.2 CONCLUSION

An ESP course design is usually based on the specific needs of learners of a particular discipline. There are different purpose-oriented ESP courses, such as EST, EAP, EOP, EBP, ESS, etc. (see, e.g. Trimble 1985, Hutchinson and Waters 1987, Robinson 1991, Holliday 1995). Many articles have discussed the course design for special learners who have specific professional or academic needs (see, e.g. Bloor 1998, Puzyo and Val 1996, Stapp 1998, Yogman and Kaylani 1996). Several successful experiences in designing ESP courses are outlined in which the ESP course designers conduct needs analyses to ascertain the learners' target

needs and learning needs (Hutchinson and Waters 1987: pp.54-63) and then integrate the required linguistic elements and skills into the syllabus. This is evident in this study where a review for a more effective ESP syllabus is required. This is to facilitate the learners to enable them to utilize the writing skills acquired in the workplace environment. Hence, it is timely for NDU to look into this review to ascertain that the learners' needs and expectations are met in the learning process. In the development of an ESP curriculum for undergraduates of Computer Engineering at NDU, according to ESP principles, it is clear that "the goals should be realistic; otherwise the students would be de-motivated." The integration of a considerable amount of General English along with various functions with computing terminology into the syllabus was based on the needs assessment from students, and was consequently considered as being realistic by the learners.

Therefore, this study is another evidence that it is also true for ESP students whose specific needs emanate from disciplinary content English. In such cases, they usually have a sound language background before they proceed to ESP study. Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998, as cited in Gatehouse 2001) define ESP as being generally designed for intermediate or advanced students and is likely to be suited to adult learners, either at a tertiary level institution or in a professional work situation.

5.3 SUGGESTIONS

From the findings and discussion, a few suggestions are viewed as important and practical in the process of improving the writing syllabus for Computer Engineering students in UPNM. Among the suggestions are:

5.3.1 Evaluate Contents And Consider Inputs From Personnel

In the light of this study, it is crucial for the course designers to put forward effort in evaluating content of the English course from time to time. In doing so, a more applicable and relevant syllabus can be expected and the outcomes can be enriching for both learners and course designers. In evaluating contents of the English course, it is instrumental to take into account feedback from the IT personnel as they are the source of reference in the Armed Forces. In different areas and aspects of workplace functions, the demand and expectations are different. Thus, in signifying the needs and wants, it is best to conduct needs analysis and gain input from the personnel.

Syllabus review is also an initiative of the University to improve and enhance the English course offered. Hence, it is essential for language practitioners and course designers in NDU to identify and

to rectify the problems faced by the students. The outcome of this is to achieve a fruitful objective for a more effective teaching and learning.

5.3.2 Conduct Consistent Training Needs Analysis

Training needs analysis is focal in education training and course design. It is required as it contributes to the betterment of the education and training syllabus. Training needs analysis will reveal a clearer direction for the development of an effective English course. It is an evaluation tool that can provide accurate information and feedback in order to review syllabus and content.

The various approaches mentioned above all have their own value and have each moved the activity of finding particular characteristics of ESP texts a stage further. The work of the register analysts have shown that an ability to use certain key writing features is vital in ESP work and those other language features of little relevance to ESP work can be ignored. The work of rhetorical analysis first introduced the idea that writing features found in specific contexts, such as an academic writing, might follow rules that in certain subtle ways differ from the general

rules as set out in general syllabus. This work also stresses the predominance of rhetorical considerations in determining writing skills options.

5.4 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

In the completion of this study, there are many areas that reveal the need to work further on ESP. Therefore, these are some suggestions for future researchers who have intention of pursuing ESP research.

5.4.1 Increase Sampling

Due to time constraints, the sampling selected for this study is small and limits to undergraduates who have undergone practical training. It is important to increase the number of respondents to gain more information and achieve higher reliability and validity in the findings. Therefore, in future, to guarantee a more précised representation of data, the number of respondents needs to be multiplied.

5.4.2 Conduct thorough interview with students

The methodology of the study can be further improved by interviewing students to validate information gained from the questionnaires. In interview sessions, many underlying problems could be attained and revealed. Thus, in future, other researchers might consider including more samplings for interview and this can assist in giving precision to data collected from questionnaire. In this study, students were not interviewed to validate data collated from questionnaire, thus, raw data was used to represent the feedback without further clarification from subjects of this study. It is recommended that interview be conducted among the students to collect more information.

5.4.3 Evaluation of other English Language courses

Due to limited resource and time constraints, other English courses offered at NDU were not evaluated. For future study, it is crucial that other English courses are evaluated and compared to identify the learning outcomes. The comparison could lead to other improvised version of the study to enhance the current syllabus and curriculum designers could take further initiative to review the

courses from time to time. The benefit of comparing the courses is to enable the curriculum designers to identify strengths and weaknesses of a particular course or modules. In future research, other researchers may want to gain the value of comparing the English language courses as to recognize which works best for the learners.

5.5 IN-HOUSE TRAINING FOR GRADUATES

In this study, it is obvious that the English language course has failed to prepare the learners to workplace functions, thus, it is imperative that in-house trainings be conducted from time to time. These trainings are as an initiative of the IT Department to facilitate the graduates in performing their workplace functions. The outcome of these trainings is a more effective and efficient workforce. In fact, these trainings can be specifically designed and tailored to meet the specific requirements of writing skills that need to be employed in the day-to-day job functions in the Armed Forces.

The trainings have to begin with thorough needs analysis from the IT personnel and curriculum designers must evaluate and review the required writing skills. Hence, by doing so, the use of an effective training analysis

needs tool can further enhance and aid course designers to develop a successful and operational syllabus. The outcome is a better transition or transfer of knowledge from learning to workplace. In brief, in-house trainings are essential and part of a self-development programme for employees. It is a timely initiative that needs to be addressed by the IT Department of the Armed Forces to reduce and eventually overcome writing problems among the graduates of Computer Engineering in NDU.

5.6 SUMMARY

This study has investigated the origins of ESP development and then discussed some key issues relevant to ESP course design on the basis of the empirical studies by ESP professionals. ESP course design should start from analyzing learners' particular needs and wants. Based on learners' needs and their future language use, goals and objectives of the course can be determined, a process which involves consideration of specific grammatical functions, terminology comprehension, and the abilities required for future workplace communication. Last but not least, assessment and evaluation should also be integrated into the design process to ensure that these goals and objectives are achieved. It is hoped that this study may bring benefits to other ESP course designers involved in developing similar courses in other universities or similar contexts.