

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter will attempt to outline several representative theories, which form the basis of this research. This research adopts the principle that linguistic competence alone might not be sufficient to assess a person's communicative competence or communicative ability. Notice would be given to usage of language or the linguistic features of language but only in so far as it would aid the use of language. The other perception of this research is that language taught with its corresponding 'sociocultural' context known would attain encouraging results both in the teaching and learning processes. This research will focus on the use and value of language in relation to the particular and communicative purposes of language as it is used in its natural environment, in this case a private hospital. The research also aims to examine the concept of learner-centredness and the viability of a needs analysis to answer all the research queries.

#### 2.1. Nature of Language

One of the perceptions of this study is that language, be it English or any other language, is different in real life from the form adopted in textbooks. The antiquated assumption was that with knowledge of the language system, which Widdowson (1978:3) refers to as **usage**, a person is sufficiently equipped to communicate in any situation. However, in reality we are not called upon to demonstrate our knowledge of linguistic rules as it is taught in grammar books. We are required to use our knowledge of the language system in order to achieve some kind of communicative purpose. According to Widdowson (1978:3),

we produce instances of **language use**: we do not simply manifest the abstract system of the language, we at the same time realise it as a meaningful communicative behaviour.

In this respect, **language use** refers to the extent to which knowledge of linguistic rules is used for effective communication. Language is distinctly identified in a similar dichotomous manner. This distinction between usage and use is related to Saussure's distinction between *langue* and *parole* and Chomsky's distinction between competence and performance. Nevertheless, Chomsky's theory of competence and performance is described as narrowly based. Hymes (1971) criticised the fact that Chomsky's competence and performance provide no place for competency of language use, that is the theory fails to account for a whole dimension which is the sociocultural. In relation to the sociocultural dimension we need to consider the concept of 'appropriacy' and 'effectiveness' of language use. For the purpose of this research, **communicative competence** involves not only knowing the language system, but also what to say to whom, and how to say it appropriately in any given situation, in short everything involving the use of language and other communicative dimensions in a particular social setting (Saville-Troike 1989:21). This idea takes a broader view that describing what people do with the language (performance) is important, but equally important is discovering the competence that enables them to do it. The study of language in use therefore should look into not just linguistic features but also at other variables. The medium and channel of communication, role-relationship between participants, the topic, purpose of communication and other features like paralinguistic features, prosodic features, and non-verbal communication (examples; gesture, posture eye contact) are exemplification of some of the essential variables. Since language consists of a myriad of

dimensions we need to be aware of this variables to enable us to study language use in totality.

### 2.1.1. Theoretical Bases for Communication

In order to determine what language skill is the most important, which is one of the proposed research queries, theories of basic communication skills need to be examined. A theory of basic communication skills can be typified, as one that emphasises the minimum level of communication skill needed to get along in, or cope with, the most common situations the learner is likely to face (Canale and Swain, 1980). This area of basic communication skill's theories gives rise to a multitude of concerns. Savignon (1972) and Schulz (1977) were mainly concerned with the skills needed to get one's meaning across. Some of the communicative approaches based on, for example, Palmer's (1978) and Savignon's (1972) work do not emphasise grammatical accuracy. A lot of research on basic communication skills tends to give less emphasis to other aspects of communicative competence such as knowledge of appropriateness of utterances with respect to sociocultural contexts (e.g. Rivers 1973 and Schulz 1977).

It has not been established just what minimum level of skills is necessary to communicate in a given language. Van Ek (1976) provides perhaps the most comprehensive statement of basic communication skills. This study bears in mind Van Ek's model which emphasises 'language functions' (or communicative functions) and 'notions'. He supplies a list of general language functions (e.g. imparting and seeking factual information), specific language functions (e.g. identifying, reporting, asking), general notions (e.g. existential, spatial, temporal), specific notions (e.g. name, likes and dislikes), topic areas

(e.g. personal identification), settings (e.g. work place) and roles (friend, colleague). This model helps to determine vocabulary, structure and grammatical categories of a particular function but not appropriateness of utterances.

The next view that needs to be examined is whether effective English Language learning takes place among adult learners if emphasis is placed on getting one's meaning across rather than on the grammaticalness and appropriateness of one's utterances. This is an important issue for consideration because the targeted language learners are adult learners. It has not been established whether adult learners themselves are prepared at the early stages to put exclusive emphasis on getting meaning across. However, Savignon (1972) found that college students in her experimental class, in which emphasis was put solely on getting the meaning across rather than grammaticality, showed a significant drop in integrative motivation (this concept will be discussed later in this chapter) when compared with students in which emphasis was not put on getting one's meaning across. It is also not clear whether language learners will develop grammatical accuracy in the course of their second language programme if emphasis is not put on this aspect from the start.

These are continuing problem areas in English for Special Purposes programme, the link between linguistic description and pedagogical design. Researchers feel that students should be aware of rules of grammar as well as the rules of language use. Ideally, communication should be grammatically correct. In practice, however this might not be possible. Therefore, language courses teaching language needs of a specific group of learners should discriminate grammatical items which the learners need to communicate efficiently. It is believed that the systems and structures of a language are

best learnt when attention is placed away from the language (Prabhu, 1987). Since this study aims to design a course for adult learners, it would be best that the learners are made aware of the grammatical flaws as and when they are made. It is therefore important that only grammatical flaws that impede communication should be given priority when designing such a course.

## 2.2. Criteria for Study of Language

It has been repeatedly emphasised that in order to describe the characteristics of language we need to observe it in use (Hymes 1972; Widdowson, 1978). It has also been pointed out that language use is context-dependent. This specifies the different conventions realised by particular choices of pronunciation, lexis, grammar and communicative functions that result from a process of negotiation between the individual and the community involved. Hutchinson & Waters (1987) recapitulate that:

Learning can, and should be seen in the context in which it takes place. Learning is not just a mental process, it is a process of negotiation between the individuals and society ... and the individuals must do their best to get as close to that target as possible

Hymes (1964) also stressed that 'for understanding and predicting behaviour, contexts have a cognitive significance'. If we want to understand how people use and learn language in the real world, we need to study it in its specific context of use because 'context' is a dynamic social phenomenon. It is constructed in real time by language users and what is vital is how people interpret signals that inform them what the context is at any given moment. Utterances can signify a range of meanings but the context

eliminates from consideration all other meaning except what the context can support. It is therefore essential that the contexts in which language is needed as well as the purposes for which language is needed in these domains be identified when a course is designed. An analysis of the learners' needs using the needs analysis approach provides an opportunity to gain such information. Since English differs from one situation of use to another, it should be possible to determine the features of a specific situation and then make these features the basis of the learner's course. By emphasising the context-dependent nature of language use and language learning, learners can devote more attention to their primary need of language uses that is language uses that the learners are more likely to need than the ones that are not.

Hymes (1972) specified the components to study communicative events occurring in natural contexts. According to Hymes, to analyse communication it is necessary to deal with discrete units of some kind that is 'with communicative activities that have recognisable boundaries'. Hymes restates that every communicative event has a set of factors that circumscribes the 'etic' or the initial framework. He focuses on the participants and their role as **addresser or sender**, speaker or writer who produces the utterances, the **addressee** the hearer or reader who is the recipient of the utterance. He also concentrates on other discrete units of context: the **topic** or what is being talked about, the **setting** or where the event is situated in place and time, **channel or medium** of communication example writing or speaking; **key** the emotional tone whether it is formal or jocular, **purpose** both the event in general and the interaction goals of the individual participants and the **rules of interaction**. This research will analyse the communicative needs of the respondents based on some of Hymes 'discrete units' namely the speaker, topic, setting, medium, key, purpose and the rules of interaction.

One of the vital criteria underlying this research is the language learner himself. *In Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* (1965) Chomsky writes: 'Linguistic theory is concerned with an ideal speaker-listener, in completely homogenous speech community, who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors (random or characteristic) in applying his knowledge of the language in actual performance'. This idealisation of the language learner is erroneous because language learners are in no account homogenous and perfect. In fact in most discourse communities the language learners are heterogeneous and the only similarity is their communicative needs based on the mutual goal they have to achieve. It has also been argued that;

English language course designers are often not fully conversant with the task and concomitant language demands of specialised learners. (Candlin, 1976)

In order to be able to refute this perception a needs analysis procedure is adopted to gain essential insights of the tasks and concomitant language demands. This procedure administered using an ethnographical orientation would enable the researcher to probe the language in use, its fabric of interweaving factors that comprise the learning situations. An ethnographic orientation could also reveal any other factors that might have a bearing on the learning situation.

### 2.3. Ethnographic Orientation to Language Studies

The subject matter of ethnography of communication (Saville-Troike, 1989) is best illustrated by one of its most general questions. What does a speaker need to know to

communicate appropriately within a particular speech community, and how does he or she learn? The answers to these questions would exemplify the features required to achieve communicative competence, that is knowing the conventions of language use viz. its language system, what to say to whom, and how to say it appropriately in a particular discourse community. Ethnography's main concern is with natural interaction of the people studied that is what they say and do, as they go about their usual routine (Ainol Haryati, 1993). Its underlying principle is that of any qualitative research method, that is that the researcher will not preconceive any hypothesis or perception about what he or she will find. The researcher will also remain open about what the data reveals, as each situation is understood in its own terms, which help reveal patterns and theories to explain the data. The ethnographer observes, interviews or even participates with the group in the target communicative events to gather genuine data for analysis. Complete escape from 'subjectivity' is not possible but the constraints and guidelines of the methodology is intended to minimise the researcher's perceptual and analytical biases.

The focus of ethnography is

the way communication is patterned and organised as systems of communicative events... and the ways in which these interact with other systems of culture.

(Saville Troike, M; 1989:3)

A study of communicative units is seen in a much broader sense than 'ways of speaking'. The study needs to relate in a systematic way with and derive meaning from other aspects of culture. In a Malaysian context, culture and aspects of culture are concomitant with a study on communication. Analysts need to be aware of the culture of the particular discourse community as well as the cultural alignment of the participants.



For ethnographers functional perspective has priority in description. Therefore adopting an ethnographic approach will divulge the sociocultural element that is pertinent to this research. The communicative function that is meant here is in relation to the purpose and needs of the participants. Other categories of functions of communication, which the ethnographer needs to consider for example metalinguistic, non-verbal communication, are beyond the scope of this research. Even though such functions collectively account for communication at large and ignoring it would not present language as it is actually used, the researcher acknowledges that ignoring it is one of the limitations of this study. It is hoped that the ethnographic approach will throw light on the belief that the function of language provides the primary dimension for characterising and organising communicative processes and products in the discourse community being studied.

Swales (1985) recommended this approach to the teaching of English to research scientists and advanced users of English in professional disciplines. Swales argues persuasively for a 'thick description' (Geertz's 1973 terminology) of communication practice in particular occupations. This means "taking into account all relevant and theoretically salient micro and macro contextual influences that stand in a systematic relationship to the behaviour or events one is attempting to explain" (Watson-Gegeo 1992:54). Thus, to understand what language is and how it is used, this study will look at the whole context of use, its reason for being used, the users, the strategies they employ etc. which will account for a thick description. Or in other words, this study takes on an emic, semiotic approach. This approach focuses on the use of language from the actor's point of view (Erickson, 1986).

An ethnographic orientation for a study like this is necessary because the researcher aims not only to find out the skills needed but also other aspects which will directly or indirectly influence the communicative needs of the informants. As Swales (1985) says

“... it is not only texts that we need to understand, but the roles texts have in their environment; the values, congruent and conflictive, placed on them by occupational, professional and disciplinary memberships; and the expectations those memberships have of the patterning of the genres they participate in...”

Swales genre analysis approach examines the structure of communication practices in particular disciplines. Genre is defined by Swales as standardised communicative events with a goal or a set of mutually understood goals occurring within a functional rather than social or personal setting where the emphasis is on the functional perspective.

A review of studies in the ESP area will be able to shed light on the need for an ethnographic orientation in language studies. Ramani et. al. (1988) argues for an ethnographic reorientation to needs analysis and syllabus design in ESP at the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore an advanced postgraduate centre of science and technology. The study describes the use of ethnographic insights and tools for the practical act of revising and redesigning English programmes for advanced students of science and technology at the institute. The study was aimed at identifying the communicative needs of the scientific community by determining how the scientific community at the institute perceived its own communicative patterns and needs and to develop courses based on such analyses. An ethnographic orientation enabled the researchers to arrive at the “beginnings of a thick description of the communicative

practices and needs of a scientific community” Ramani et. al. (1988). In order to obtain a thick description of a needs analysis, the study was carried out over a period of time.

They realised that the course offered should not be based on their objective identification of “types of scientific communication” but a “subjective and practice-driven articulation by the clientele of what they thought an English programme should contain”. The study was conducted by observing the students in their natural academic environment to understand their communication practices, needs and problems. During the interviews the learners and subject specialist were allowed to speak freely about their perception of their own communication needs. Ramani et. al. (1988) were able to analyse the discourse without any biases with an ethnographic orientation to the needs analysis.

The researcher proposes a needs analysis with ethnographic orientation so that all relevant information can be gathered.

#### 2.4. Needs Analysis as a Tool of Inquiry

The primary goal of this study is to determine the content for an appropriate English Language course where all decisions as to content and method are based on being aware of the learner’s reason for learning. Ideally, all language courses should be based on an analysis of the learner’s need. Therefore, it is important that learners are actively involved in setting realistic and challenging goals for their language learning programmes. One way of ensuring learner involvement is to carry out needs analysis.

'analysis of needs' first appeared in India in the 1920's when Michael West introduced the concept to cover *two separate and potentially conflicting concepts of 'need' contributing to the 'surrender value' of learning* that is what the learners will be required to do with the foreign language in the target situation, and how learners might best master the target language during the period of training (West, 1994). The discussion below concentrates on the fundamental questions which arise when carrying out a needs analysis.

#### 2.4.1. Fundamental Questions in Needs Analysis and Parallel Approaches

The term 'needs' is often seen as an umbrella term for several interpretations. In any needs analysis procedure the researcher is faced with a number of unavoidable questions, which enables the researcher to get answers. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) make a basic distinction between **target needs**, that is what the learner needs to do in the target situation and **learning needs**, that is what the learner needs to do in order to learn. The basic questions a researcher needs to keep in mind when conducting a needs analysis is What, Why, When, Who, For Whom and How. These questions answer the queries about the needs of the learners and what they lack. A more thorough analysis would also look into questions concerning the strategies employed and the constraints. These numerous questions offer a useful classification of needs, which reflects differing viewpoints, and give rise to different approaches to needs analysis. Investigation into each of these phenomena is undertaken by the different approaches which are stated briefly below. A successful needs analysis should take into consideration all of these questions and approaches.

It is the advent of ESP which gave prominence to needs analysis, as it is the key instrument in course design (West, 1994). According to Chambers (1980), ESP by nature is student-task oriented and the formalisation of this interest subsumed under the name 'needs analysis'. Needs analysis is also said to be 'the irreducible minimum of an ESP approach to course design' (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987) and it is generally regarded as criterial to ESP (Robinson, 1991). Many experts in the field of ESP have repeatedly demonstrated the importance of needs analysis for course design. Richterich & Chancerel 1977; Munby 1978; McDonough, 1984; Hutchinson and Waters, 1987; and Robinson, 1991; and many more have accorded needs analysis the central place for almost every survey of ESP. ESP is based on designing courses to meet the learner's specific needs. Hence it is the responsibility of the course designers to determine accurately what these specific needs are and the purpose for these needs. This way the course designer is one step nearer to being able to translate these needs into linguistic and pedagogic terms.

Tickoo (1989) states that the two defining characteristics of a lot of work in ESP are specificity and narrowness. Scholars have repeatedly defined the characteristics of an ESP approach to language pedagogy in accordance with specificity, that is to provide learners with sufficient competence to enable the learners to cope with clearly defined tasks. Therefore, the aim of an ESP course, as subscribed by Widdowson (1983), is to ascertain that the learners are equipped with usable skills rather than basic abilities. Swales (1985) suggests that ESP should operate in a triangularity that is experience-reflection-utilisation rather than in a polarity.

It has been established that in order for a course designer to be able to design a course to equip the learners with usable skills a needs analysis should be conducted. The term

#### 2.4.1.1. Necessities

**Necessities** are the type of need determined by the demands of the target situation, that is **what** the learner has to know in order to function effectively in the target situation (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987: 55). This is achieved by observing the situations the learner will need to function in and then analysing the constituent parts of the situations. Richterich (1973:2) describes these, as objective needs (also known as product-oriented or perceived needs). A needs analysis approach identifying these necessities is frequently known as **Target Situation Analysis (TSA)** (Chambers, 1980). To establish the communication that really happens or occurs in a target situation, analysts go into the target situation and collect data. This approach will explicitly determine the nature of language use; its functions, forms, and frequencies, which would provide a basis for selecting the long term aims of the course or selecting from these some pragmatic pedagogical basis. The best known TSA type of needs analysis was formulated by Munby. A useful feature of the TSA is that it is a comprehensive data bank for micro-skills and attitudes (Robinson 1991) which can assist in grouping the learners. The main focus of this research would be to investigate these 'necessities'.

#### 2.4.1.2. Lacks

Besides necessities what the learners already know is also important so that the necessities that they lack can be identified. Hutchinson and Waters (1987:55-56) reiterate this criterion,

To identify necessities alone is not enough, since the concern in ESP is with the needs of particular learners. You also need to know what the learner knows already, so that you can then decide which of the necessities the learner lacks... The target proficiency in other words, needs to be matched against the existing proficiency of the learners. The gap between the two can be referred to as the learner's lacks.

It is important to know these **lacks** to determine what the syllabus should contain in order 'to bridge the gap'. A needs analysis procedure adopting this approach is called **deficiency analysis** (Allwright and Allwright, 1977, Abbot, 1978). Ideally a pre-course placement or diagnostic test should be done to approximate what the informants 'lack'.

Due to time constraints, in this study, the 'lack' is determined by the strength of the English Language qualification the informants achieved from the national examinations they have sat for. The management's perception of the level of English proficiency of these informants also aided the researcher to determine what the respondents lacked.

#### 2.4.1.3. Wants

Necessities and wants are determined objectively, which makes it easier to investigate since it can be accomplished empirically. The last enquiry of target needs is wants: that is what the learner wants or feels he or she needs. These needs are personal and therefore are also known as **subjective needs** 'which cannot be said to be general...are quite unforeseeable and therefore indefinable' (Richterich 1973: 32). Nunan's (1990) distinction between the terms objective and subjective needs as used for the purpose of needs analysis has been described in the following way.

The "objective" needs are those which can be diagnosed by teachers on the basis of the analysis of personal data about learners along with information about their language proficiency and patterns of language use (using as a guide their own personal experiences and knowledge, perhaps supplemented by Munby-type specification of microskills), whereas the 'subjective' needs (which are often 'wants', 'desires', 'expectations' and other psychological manifestations of a lack) cannot be diagnosed as easily, or in many cases, even stated by learners themselves.

(Brindley, 1984, p.31. as quoted in Nunan 1990, p.18)

These needs sometimes differ, or even conflict, with the ones perceived by the sponsor or employer or even the teacher. The researcher needs to bear in mind the learners' wants or perceived needs to ensure that the learner is sufficiently motivated.

#### 2.4.1.4. Learning Needs and Learning Strategies

Hutchinson and Waters (1987:60) also identify learning needs. Identification of learning needs enable the researcher to find out fundamental questions like why the learners are taking the course. These needs also encompass the learner's preferred learning strategies to progress from his/her present deficiencies/lacks/situation to where he or she wants to reach, the target situation/necessities. The learner's learning strategies or expectations of the language learning experience sometimes conflict with the teacher's interpretation of suitable strategies. **Strategy analysis** identifies preferred learning strategies (Allwright, 1982; Widdowson 1983).



#### 2.4.1.5. Constraints

This is the element that needs consideration for decision-making processes in needs analysis. Constraints are external factors which include resources (staff, infrastructure, time) available. It also includes the prevailing attitudes or culture, and the many aids and methods available. The earlier approaches to needs analysis, for example, Munby (1978) ignored this element. The approach that takes into consideration these constraints is known as **means analysis** (Holliday & Cooke 1982; Holliday 1984). If there were constraints in the availability of resources then the course designer would have to negotiate the objectives.

#### 2.4.1.6. The Language Audit

**Language audit** is needs analysis on a larger scale. It is a large scale survey undertaken by a company, an organisation or even a country to determine the language requirements and all other paraphernalia that is associated with teaching and learning language. These were often political questions that were deemed outside the scope of needs analysis but is now given a much broader remit making it a matter of language planning. A language audit defines the longer-term language-training requirements of a company, country or professional sector and therefore may include all the approaches to needs analysis explained above.

#### 2.4.1.7. The Questions of When and Who

The standard practice has been to conduct needs analysis before the inception of any language course but it has been generally accepted that the procedure should be repeated during the course, so that the needs analysis becomes an on-going process. The **off-line analysis** (Chambers, 1980:28) is conducted before the onset of the course. This analysis provides answer and allows time needed for course designers to prepare the syllabus and select or develop appropriate training materials. This will include all the procedures mentioned above. The limitation of the off-line analysis is that the realisation that the learner's needs, or, at least, their perceptions of their needs may change as the course proceeds (Richterich & Chancerel, 1977: Chambers, 1980). A process of **on-going** needs re-analysis is therefore required in response to these changing perceptions, so that both learner and teacher can identify new short term priorities. It is also said to be valuable from a motivational point of view to have learners reformulate their objectives periodically. (Richterich, 1979) It would be natural for learners to be unable to articulate their needs and preferences, at the onset of a course and so on-going re-analysis is necessary. This needs analysis will only be embarking on the off-line analysis; that is this analysis will attempt to find the answer to enable the course designer to develop an appropriate syllabus before the onset of the course.

When administering needs analysis, besides the needs of the individual or group currently working in the target situation, the researcher has to also take into consideration the teacher perceived needs and the company perceived needs. The teacher-student-sponsor co-operation is considered the ideal situation whereby the formulation of an appropriate syllabus can be realised. Chambers (1980) highlights the question 'whose needs' as one

of the problems that need to be considered when administering needs analysis. It has been reiterated that the 'needs' of all parties need to be considered. The tendency has been to tap as many alternative sources as possible to gather information regarding the needs of the learners. There are also various other informants who could be equally informative. The importance of having a number of sources of information makes the identification of needs more reliable. Having a number of sources of information would also ensure that the researcher achieves the 'thick description' that is aimed for. The involvement of the learner in the process in a participatory stance has several advantages; the most fundamental of it is the motivational concern.

## 2.5. Criticisms of Needs Analysis

Although it has been acclaimed as the prerequisite to any ESP course, it is equally important to be aware of its limitations. These limitations stem from the most fundamental shortcoming, which is the lack of awareness of the existence of needs analysis as a tool in course design, as well as the problem of familiarity and expertise. This is augmented by the lack of information on the validity or reliability of the instruments used and the results obtained. (van Hest & Oud-de-Glas, 1990 as quoted in West 1994). Some of the criticisms that need to be acknowledged for the success of any course as discussed in West (1994) and Mountford (1988) are stated below:

- i. Methodological issues- Mountford suggests three methodological problems related to needs analysis, which needs to be taken into account; the problem of perception (whose perception of needs?), the problems of principle (what should

the analysis include and exclude as relevant content?), and the problems of practice (how should the analysis be undertaken and applied).

- ii. **Self-Assessment of Needs.** Early models of needs analysis did not have avenues for the learners to assess their achievement of their objectives. Hutchinson (1987, as quoted in West, 1994) suggests a needs analysis 'aims and objectives' questionnaire can be used to help learners to assess their achievement of their objectives according to the necessity and priority of each objective. This type of self - assessment could encourage learners to find avenues to fulfil their perceived lack either by self-instructional language learning or consultation with the language teacher.
- iii. **Converting needs into goals.** Needs analysis has been said to be both too limiting and not too limiting enough: Richterich (1972) and Widdowson (1983) suggest that syllabuses specify precise needs and end result in restricted competence. Whereas Dubin & Olshtain (1986) complain that ' an assessment of individual needs could result in multiple course objectives'. Shaw (1982) and Holec (1985) offer alternative procedures for converting individual needs into teaching objectives either through group negotiations or through the development of self-directed or autonomous learning programmes or self-access programmes.
- iv. **Requirements for an effective needs analysis procedure.** As Richterich (1983) points out, 'the very concept of language needs has never been clearly defined and remains at best ambiguous'. This is because needs cannot be conceptualised as objective reality and they cannot be picked in a classroom. Instead, they will

depend on the conceptual predisposition (view on language, learning and teaching) of the people who take part in the needs analysis procedure (Csilla, 1998). The lack of more rigorous discussion of needs analysis has resulted in a lack of knowledge and application of the various needs analysis approaches and, therefore, teaching programmes which are more firmly based on the various needs of the learners. It is suggested by (Harbord, forthcoming, quoted in West, 1994) that there is most to be gained from adopting simpler approaches to needs analysis or improved training in needs analysis techniques.

## 2.6. Studies on Needs Analysis

A historical perspective of the development of needs analysis should be able to provide an appreciation of other works because it can clarify the motivation for certain decisions and then trace the repercussions. The general conceptualised development is said to give reasonable basis for deciding what is utilisable for the present and what is not (Swales 1986). Need analysis figures prominently largely due to the far-reaching effects of John Munby's *Communicative Syllabus Design* (1978). It is the most thorough and widely known work on needs analysis. The size and scope of Munby's work have meant that needs analysis is now crucial to any consideration of an ESP course design. Munby presented a highly detailed set of procedures for discovering target situation needs. He called this set of procedures the *Communication Needs Processor (CNP)*. The CNP consists of a range of questions about key communication variables which can be used to identify the target language needs of any group of learners. These procedures showed that the language centred approach to needs analysis did not quite take into consideration the distinction between target needs (that is what the learner needs to do in the target

situation) and learning needs (that is what the learner needs to do in order to learn). He proposed an instrument, which is supposed to enable need analysts to draw up an accurate profile of an individual language learner. This profile has been useful in subsequent needs analysis. This instrument provides detailed lists of language skills and sociosemantic functions so that a needs analyst can identify the skills and function which the learner is likely to need. Despite its thoroughness and influence, Munby's work has been criticised.

Brindley (1984) questions Munby's work on three counts: that the learners' need cannot necessarily be equated with the target language behaviour, that the analysis excludes affective factors, and that learners themselves are not involved in the investigation of their own needs. Coffey (1984) criticises the model for being over-complicated and static. Davies (1981) objects that there is no reliable way in which the syllabus designer can relate specific communicative events with particular attitudinal tones. Whereas Richards (1984) observes that Munby fails to provide a procedure for moving from the creation of the learner profile to the identification of skill and functions which need to be incorporated into the syllabus. These disadvantages all derive from Munby's tendency to idealise the individual language learner. According to Coleman (1988), thus it would appear that 'a group of language learners is to be approached as a homogenous whole, precisely the sum of its parts'. This idealisation of the language learner implies that groups of learners are static, homogenous units. This implies that each member of a group, ideally, has the same needs, the same motivations, and the same initial competence and also that each group of learners, by extension, is totally distinct and hermetically sealed from every other group. This research takes into account these criticisms when working out the procedure for its needs analysis.

The Council of Europe's study was largely responsible for the advent of needs analysis. It is an example of a well-worked out procedure for needs analysis which is potentially capable of incorporating the multiplicity of factors to suit the multitude of situations which Munby's CNP could not achieve.

## 2.7. Related Research Applying Needs Analysis Procedure

This section examines some related studies that applied needs analysis procedure. Coleman (1988) considered Munby's approach in analysing the language needs of a large organisation, viz. Hasanuddin University, a large state university in Indonesia. It was felt that a needs analysis would enable the British participants in the project [this project was a British Council-ODA key language teaching (KELT) Project] and the university authorities to jointly determine the direction which the project should take. This research questions the validity of the two assumptions which underlie this approach: that is the identity of the learners is not problematic, and that there is a one-to-one relationship between the identification of needs and the ways of satisfying them.

The study revealed that the two assumption were invalid. As the university is a large and complex organisation, there is a potential for an extremely complex array of interactions between the many units which constitute it. The units do not function in a vacuum, independently of each other. It was noted that the units do not only interact in a synchronic dimension but diachronically as well. An understanding of how these units interact with each other was therefore a prerequisite for an analysis of both the respective needs of the different units and the way in which those units influence one another. Coleman found that Munby's approach was impractical in a large organisation such as

this. Coleman also states that in spite of all the work which has been done on language needs analysis, no instrument has yet been developed which specifically enables analysts to investigate complex organisations. Therefore, Coleman' gathers data using four different sources:

- A considerable number of people in a wide range of units throughout the university were interviewed.
- A questionnaire survey of the attitudes and language learning experience of undergraduates was administered.
- The data of a previously administered sociological survey of the attitudes of the teaching staff were re-analysed.
- A large corpus of facts about the university was garnered.

The needs analysis was performed in two stages. The first stage analysed the patterns of language use, which is both complex and dynamic, to enable the analyst to identify the target groups. The second stage paid attention to the particular 'objective' needs and 'subjective' wants. It appeared that the students do not need to listen to lectures given in English. They consider skills in spoken English to have more importance for academic study and certainly more important than an ability to read English. It was proposed that the development of basic study and library skills should take priority and then only the development of the reading skill among first year undergraduates. It is hoped that these efforts would produce a group of students who were not nervous and apprehensive of English. Eventually, if any of the students from this group are recruited into the teaching staff they would influence their students in a positive manner. This proposal was potentially unpopular but in the long-term perspective it was hoped that it would encourage more students to appreciate the English Language.



A look at this study is important because the proposed research site is a large organisation and the researcher should be aware of the difficulties that might arise. This study is a reminder that 'objective needs' could differ from 'subjective wants'. One other important factor is that this study shows is that a number of tools must be employed to gather reliable data.

Svendsen and Krebs (1984) study is similar to the study that is proposed by the researcher that is to describe the language required for two entry level jobs, the central supply technician and the hospital transporter, at a health care centre. The study was conducted to discover the necessary language forms and the context in which they are used. The study identifies and prioritises language that need to be taught which was job-specific for a Vocational English Language course conducted at the actual site not in a language classroom. The teachers in partnership with industry supervisors work with students on site to help them learn the skills of the job. The researchers tape recorded typical dialogues among workers, conducted interviews and observed the workers to fill in the gap left by initial conversation. This research divulges the limitations and advantages of each of the techniques when it is used. They found that the unedited language sampling did not capture context or non-linguistic communication. However, the interview and observation filled in the gap. During the observation the researchers notice environmental details such as noise levels, the proximity of workers to each other, the amount of movement about the department. Communicative patterns became more apparent and they found that conversation between workers may take place in order to accomplish set tasks and also to socialise.

Analysis of the language needs revealed fairly simple repeated patterns, which are within the capacity of the learners. The transporters needed to inform the patients of everything that is going to be done to them. One of the most essential language areas is the ability to ask for clarification. They believe that the language areas are common to many jobs. This study illustrates the expected answers from the study proposed in this study.

In Malaysia ESP and needs analysis came to the fore in the seventies. The landmark ESP research was undertaken by the University of Malaya's Language Centre. They embarked on a research project known as University of Malaya English for Special Purposes Project (UMESPP). This led to the production of materials for teaching reading comprehension in the academic field. This came about because the university's authorities realised that the Malay-medium university students were unable to make references independently since they did not have the competence in reading to enable them to read a number of specialist texts which are available only in English. Before embarking on this project they had to define the problems and needs using a variety of instruments, one of which was needs analysis.

Further investigations revealed that this brought about an imbalance in the acquisition of skill in English. The graduates were unable to cope in the real world under real circumstances. There was an urgent need to train these graduates to be able to speak well in English. The need for oral skills in English brought about the University of Malaya Spoken English Project (UMSEP). Since the existing English Language syllabus could not fulfil the communicational requirement of the workforce there was a need to train people to be able to communicate well in the different situations. Research for this project embarked on a needs analysis to investigate the role of English in the target

professions. The basic question that was asked was 'What are the particular purposes for which English is used? Tools of enquiry consisted of a model of the initial profiles of communication needs drawn using a modified version of Munby's Communicative Syllabus Design (1978), surveys and interviews conducted across various sectors of profession that the graduates would eventually join.

Most of the localised ESP researches using needs analysis are set in an academic setting. In Malaysia with the changes taking place there is a great demand for ESP courses from the private sector. The demand has come about because of the same realisation that Malay-medium students entering the workforce cannot cope with the English Language requirement at the workplaces. The demand is also for the courses to be conducted specifically for the workforce in particular communities. One such research is the research by Sarjit Kaur (1997).

Sarjit Kaur's (1997) research conducted at an established organisation in Petaling Jaya, Malaysia, uses needs analysis to identify the English Language needs of the Malay consultants at NCVC (a pseudonym). This company is actively involved in determining and guiding the standards of productivity in the country. The tools of inquiry used to obtain data in this research consist of questionnaires, structured interviews and field observations. The primary objective of the study was to find out (i). the language needs of the consultants at NCVC and (ii). what elements should go into the construction of an effective needs analysis package for NCVC. The study revealed that the consultants/learners needed to master the speaking and writing skills, rather than the reading and listening skills. The study also revealed that the course should use materials and methodology that were more relevant to their work.

The secondary aim of the study was to devise a set of guidelines that can be used for analysis packages pertaining to ESP courses, especially in Malaysia. It was established that the socio-cultural background of the respondents was of paramount importance when designing needs analysis packages for ESP courses as this determined hidden answers to the researcher's questions. Another important aspects that emerged is the need to adopt the 'system approach' to the whole issue of needs analysis, where the learner is considered against the background of the organisation within which the learner operates (Halliday and Hasan, 1989).

Sarjit Kaur's model for needs analysis is drawn mainly on aspects forwarded by Holliday and Cook (1983) and Hutchinson and Waters (1987). The important aspects taken into consideration were an ecological approach to ESP, the types of three ecosystems mentioned by Holliday and Cook (the host system), identifying target needs and identifying learning needs. Her research revealed many aspects of an effective needs analysis package suitable for local packages, two of which will be of importance for the proposed research are the use of a 4-point scale in a questionnaire and the cultural alignment.

## 2.8. Affective Factors That Need to be Considered

Researchers need to be aware of the affective factors or variables that could affect the language learning process of a learner before embarking on a needs analysis. The discussion below examines some of the affective factors, which are crucial for consideration for this study.

### 2.8.1. Adult Learners

Research on curriculum design needs to give due consideration that the language learners for whom this course is going to be designed are adult learners. Some of the principles of adult learning as identified by Brundage and Mackeracher (as quoted in Nunan, 1988) which the researcher feels should be highlighted for the purpose of this study are that:

- ❖ Adults who value their own experience as a resource for further learning or whose experience is valued by others are better learners.
- ❖ Adults learn best when they are involved in developing learning objectives for themselves which are congruent with their current and idealised self-concept.
- ❖ The learner reacts to all experience, as he perceives it, not as the teacher perceives it.
- ❖ Adults learn best when the content is personally relevant to past experience or present concerns and the learning process is relevant to life experiences.

Mackay (1978:21) states that:

Learners of English as an auxiliary to academic or professional skills are generally more aware of what they want to use English for. In order to design and teach effective courses, the teacher and planner must investigate the uses to which the language will be put. Informal approaches to learners... in whatever professional field they belong to will invariably lead to vague, confused and even erroneous results.

### 2.8.2. Motivation

There is a link between learner's needs and motivation. Learners are emotional being therefore the cognitive factor presupposes the affective factors of motivation. Motivation is said to be an essential foundation to the initiation of the cognitive process. How the learner perceives the learning will affect what learning takes place (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987:47). Since motivation is the private domain of the learner, as educators it is not for us to manipulate learners' motivation but to be sensitive to it. A learner is said to be integratively motivated when the learner wishes to identify with another discourse community. This research is undertaken on the premise that the learner's reason for learning is the basis of the curriculum and planned language course. For this group of students learning English would mean career advancement. This instrumental motivation, that is the person learns a language as a tool for some pragmatic purpose, should suffice as a strong drive for language learning. Learners who are actively involved in setting realistic and challenging goals for their language learning programme are said to be highly motivated. Needs analysis is a way of ensuring learner involvement. Effective cognitive realisation would be achieved if the tasks as well as the content were largely determined by the participatory decision of both the teacher and the learner. The involvement of the learner in the process would give the learner more realistic insight of what can be achieved in a given course and at the same time it can be seen to reflect the learner's real life needs. The involvement of the learners ensure that there they are motivated.

The attitude of the learner too would play a great role in motivating the learner. Knowles(1975) [ quoted in Chitavelu]states that;

... there is convincing evidence that people who take the initiative in learning (pro-active learners) learn more things and learn better than do people who sit at the feet of teachers, passively waiting to be taught (reactive learners). They enter into learning more purposefully and with greater motivation. They also tend to retain and make use of what they learn better and longer than do reactive learners.

Another factor that needs to be considered would be that the commitment to English among the learners would be different. Learners who come from a Bahasa Malaysia medium of education would tend to value English more highly. In this context acquisition of the language is motivated by the fact that it could present wider opportunities in the realm of professional or social gains.

## 2.9. Authenticity

'Data' pertaining to the type of teaching materials should consist of authentic materials or text used for the various purposes. Research into ESP should make use of authentic materials, that is language materials actually used by the professionals while carrying out their duties. In real life, for example people do not answer questions so explicitly, they do not speak in full grammatical sentences and do not keep to clear sequence of turns. From the linguistic point of view, a taped real life speech situation would produce data which contains various types of grammatical construction that recur in that particular discourse community. Asmah (1991) states that the authentic materials turn out the construction form and the linguistic characteristics of the discourse, and that participants in such discourse have to understand and be able to use such construction. Besides characteristic linguistic construction, oral as well as written discourse may produce jargons and

idiomatic expressions, which are peculiar to each type of profession. This raw data is important to refashion authentic data to take the form of language exercises and tasks. Authenticity also helps in the selection and gradation of items to be taught. Authentic texts take what Sager and Dungworth [quoted in Asmah (1991)] call “ the naturalness approach”.

Two justification for the use of authentic materials [Little et al.(1988), quoted in Cook (1991)].

- i. Motivation and interest- Students will be better motivated by texts that have served a real communication purpose.
- ii. Acquisition and promoting content- Authentic text provide a rich source of natural language for the learner to acquire language form.

Another reason why authentic texts should be used is to fill in the gaps. Designers of syllabus may miss some of the aspects of the language used in real life situation. Giving students the appropriate real-life situation can fill this lack most easily.

## 2.10. Communicative Patterns and Needs of a Large Organisation

A brief overview of the type of communicative patterns prevalent in a service industry should be acknowledged before the inception of a study on English Language needs of these service providers. An awareness of these communicative patterns shows how language actually works in an organisation. (Stevens, 1965:6) states that one of the differences that the learners need to be aware of is the differences of social situation. This is reflected in the choice of language according to the relation between the speaker and his audience, especially along a polarity between ‘most formal’ and ‘most intimate’.



### 2.10.1. Communication as a Multidirectional Process

In a service industry like other large organisation communication is a dynamic transaction of simultaneously exchanged verbal and non-verbal messages resulting in shared meaning between two or more people. Messages, particularly in an organisation, occur through the formal or informal channels in upward, downward or horizontal direction. Wolf and Kuiper (1989) in their book, *Effective Communication in Business* divide communication into two categories:

- I) Internal Communication.
- II) External Communication

#### 2.10.1.1 Internal Communication

Internal Communication is organisational communication, which occurs inside the organisation. This type of communication involves messages and responses in a vertical, horizontal and diagonal directness (Wolf & Kuiper, 1989). The diagram overleaf illustrates the path taken by this directness.

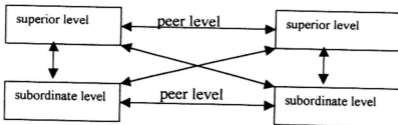


Figure 2.1: Organisational Communication as a Reciprocal, Multidirectional Process

(Source: Wolf & Kuiper, *Effective Communication in Business*)

This reciprocal multidirectional process contributes in different ways to organisational communication. The term 'reciprocal' is important because communication cannot exist in a communicational vacuum. In diagonal and vertical communication, the subordinates communicate with their superiors. This type of communication is also called **upward communication**. Its primary job is to supply information for making decisions and to ensure the accuracy of the information that they present, to communicate progress on projects and to give ideas on how to improve a situation. This type of communication accomplishes two tasks. First it provides feedback that the superior might need and second it involves subordinates in decision-making and change. Vice versa, when the superiors communicate with their subordinates their reason is to share information related to their concerns with work requirements and organisational policies. This type of communication is categorised as **downward communication**. The peer to peer level communication or **horizontal communication** is typically the most frequent type of communication that staff engage in. It takes place with people whose power and status are equivalent to each other. This type of communication is essential to answer basic questions and answers besides socialising.

#### 2.10.1.2. External communication

On the other hand, external communication is any communication that takes place between a member of an organisation with any one from outside of the organisation. A study on communication will need to keep in mind this multidirectional process. Therefore any study on communication requirements in a large organisation will have to take into account this multidirectional process.

## 2.10.2. Organisation as a Communication Network

A business organisation is therefore seen as a communication network. Most organisations adopt a systems approach. This approach treats the organisation as networks of interdependent, interacting parts tied together by common goals and shared mechanisms for realising these goals. One such shared mechanism is language and the situations of language use. In an organisation a unit does not operate by itself. This is more important now with the paradigm shift in management practices in business organisations.

Traditionally management practices or management by objectives set numerical goals for productivity, efficiency and profitability. That way everybody conformed to authority and procedures because of fear. Communication based on this clearly defined hierarchical structure is normally unidirectional. Traditional management practices used fear and intimidation to get workers to perform their tasks. Organisations were characterised by formal and impersonal downward communication and little upward communication. The hierarchical organisation is slowly being de-emphasised among more progressive companies. With the shift to management by fact, an organisation relies on adequacy of data and information and it attempts to envisage problems before the problems set in. Modern organisations comprise several subsystems, divisions, functions and departments that are interdependent. Communication is an open system that allows information to flow in and out rather than being a closed system that exists as a static unchanging entity. This modern management practice or the systems approach dictates that the personnel within an organisation need to be communicatively competent. A breakdown in communication would have detrimental repercussions. This type of management approach is important when dealing with, among other things, customer satisfaction. This

type of management advocates multidirectional communication. In the business world a person is likely to be rewarded for what his/her communication effort achieves and for the goals which his/her communication efforts attain. Communication is therefore seen as essential machinery for the effective running of a business unit especially in the service sector.

A study of communicative patterns and needs in a modern service industry is necessary in contributing:

- i. towards understanding the increasingly acknowledged presence of multiple literacies in the world by providing data for refining the still roughly grained construct and
- ii. towards ESP pedagogy by identifying norms and regularities in communication within a specific institution or industry.