CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction.

In the context of teaching and learning 'negotiation' in Business English, learners learn by :

> 'doing' the task as claimed by Knowles (1978) and that " training for adults is most successful when it helps them cope with real life problems or task using experiential techniques, when it allows them to direct learning and when adults believe that this training helps them achieve their full potential".
>
> (Schleppegrell & Royster 1990 : 4)

Most ESP practitioners believe in the approach that learners learn by doing the task and thus most ESP classes are provided with tasks that simulate those of the real world. ESP learners especially the undergraduates are generally aware of the kinds of tasks that they are likely to encounter once they enter the career world.

It is not often possible for learners to get a 'hands on' experience as they will only have this experience once they enter the working world. Thus, it is the ESP practitioners' aim to bridge this gap between what is learnt in the classroom and its application in the real world.

When real life problems or tasks are brought into the classroom, learners have at least the opportunity to experience the actual situations of the real world. That is one reason why simulated tasks are used in ESP classes. The practices that the learners get are some form of training to prepare them for the tasks. In light of this, the experiential learning at the same time enable learners to believe in the relevance of the teaching components to their needs. This is one factor that is crucial in determining the success of any teaching and learning in classrooms. One has to take into consideration the importance of realising learners' 'wants' and existing 'needs' as emphasised by Hutchinson & Waters (1986). What learners want to learn and what they need to learn are significant to the teaching and learning of an ESP course.

2.1 Developments and trends in ESP

2.1.1 The three major trends in ESP

This study chooses to look at the developments in ESP as viewed by Peter Strevens in his "*ESP after Twenty years : A Reappraisal* " (1988:1) as he has suggested three clear areas to focus on. He states that there are three great trends that have been taking place in ESP for the past twenty years.

They are briefly summarised as :

(i) the world-wide trend towards learner centred education.

The trend towards learner centred education has led to the concept of needs analysis, that is the teacher can better help the learner by knowing in advance who the learner is, why he seeks to learn English and what he hopes to be able to do with the language at the end.

(ii) the immense spread of English to its present position as the world's principle international language .

He also states that in the process of becoming so globally widespread, major changes have taken place in the status and position of English within education. In particular, the role of English within the national educational system has become steadily less cultural and in particular less bound up with English literature and has become more instrumental. This means that it has become more of a tool whereby the citizen can open a window on to the modern world, especially the world of science, technology, the media, trade and industry and the international aid and administration.

(iii) developments in the principles of syllabus design.

This third perspective is seen in relation to changes in the design of teaching courses: the principles of syllabus design must be linked to a choice of the most suitable methodology.From the earliest syllabus of *linguistics* (where language use is emphasised) and *structural* (that is the grammar component) and *vocabulary* , it then develops the *situational* principle that refers to language use in context. As situations are then seen as a contribution to authenticity, it subsequently develops the concept of *notions* and *functions* where the belief is that certain language forms are used in certain situations like the language to greet people. These concept of notions and functions later add to the principles of syllabus design.

Kennedy & Bolitho's (1984) support this by claiming that :

> "one of the developments which greatly influenced ESP programmes was a move towards a view of language as not only a set of grammatical structures but also a set of functions ". (1984 : 3)

All these changes in turn are most frequently associated with a *communicative* methodology, which basically refers to the use of language to communicate.

Strevens (1988) sums up that teachers can now say ,

> " Tell us what you need to learn and for what purposes. We will then devise a course which will teach you precisely that : no more or no less. And we will do so by means of highly effective teaching methods". (1988 : 4)

Gradually, there exists an awareness that learners should acquire skills in which English is used in the working environment. For example, English for Business, English for Science or English for Doctors and Nurses. All these are forms of specialisation that contributed to the current trends in the teaching of English for Specific Purposes.

2.1.2 *Current trends in ESP .*

Many claims have been made in ESP by several local and well known researchers that contribute to the current trends in which ESP is being focused, presently in terms of its syllabus design, its materials selection and its methodology.

According to K. Izwan and colleagues (1993) in *ESP Malaysia* that the

> " current trends and problems in ESP have reflected the growing trend towards specificity or specialisation". (1993: 65)

First, is the need to equip undergraduates with necessary skills to access literature in their subject areas, that is urgently felt important by many institutions. Secondly, is the development in the private sectors where English is still an important medium of communication and finally, the lack of communication skills between employees in their interface with English speaking clients.

Dudley Evans & St John (1998) meanwhile believe that:

> " There is currently no dominating movement in ESP....there is now an acceptance of many different approaches and a willingness to mix different types of material and methodologies". (1998 : 30)

This is a justified statement as ESP practitioners often for instance, have to adopt a mixture of different methodologies in their teachings such as the inclusion of task-based activities that are communicative in nature.

Dudley Evans & St John (1998 :31) further stress that one major change, has been the emergence of Business English as the major strand of ESP teaching. The growth of English for Business Purposes (EBP) has coincided with the growth in the economies of countries in South East Asia and the Pacific Rim . This phenomena explains the emergence of the current trend of teaching ESP in Malaysia .

2.2. Business English Purposes and Its Importance.

Business English which is often categorised under the umbrella of English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) has emerged as an important strand in English for Specific Purposes. English in this context has become the universal language and also the international language of business (Dudley Evans & St. John 1998) .

This is because English provides a common platform for communication between different countries and such communication enables negotiations, for instance, to take place in the areas of either commerce or political trade and industry.

The main objective of Business English is to prepare learners to communicate effectively and thus, communication is the most prominent element in the subject of Business English which leads us to another familiar term ; i.e., 'business communication'.

2.2.1 *The importance of Business communication.*

Pickett (1986 : 16) views business communication in two ways .Firstly, he sees it as communication with the public and secondly, as communication within (intra) a company and between (inter) companies. He states that for many businesses , communication with the public is most likely to be in the first language (L1) and Nickerson (1988) at the same time claims that the Business English required by non native speakers is mainly for intercompanies and in international conglomerates, intra company dealings. Malaysia shares a similar trend in the use of English in its business communication.

Leong (1998) in her case study , found that the types of language used by sales personnel in a Chinese dominant firm depended on whom they speak to. In her findings of language(s) used for speaking, she states that the sales personnel spoke Chinese to Chinese contractors that is their first language (L1) , English to the consultants and foreign principals and Bahasa Malaysia (the National Language) to government officers. This means that English is mainly used when dealings are done with native speaker consultants or foreign principals where the only means of communication is via the universal language.

However, the rapid growth of industries in Malaysia along with the expansion of the world's economy have led to many foreign joint venture companies. It explains the dominant use of English in many Malaysian companies whose primary dealings involve foreign counterparts.

The kinds of business communication that take place would be in the forms of either written or oral communication. The former involves letter writing, report writing or even memos and e-mails whereas the latter would involve telephone conversations, discussions, presentations or negotiations.

It would be interesting to note the weightage between the oral and written forms of communication that actually takes place in these firms. It seems that both forms of communication carry similar degree of importance.

A study was conducted by Morais (1990) who observed the patterns of communication in a company which is a joint venture between a local company and a Swedish multinational company.She finds that little written documentation was associated with the vast majority of the business interactions and that the bulk of the business communication was oral.

Furthermore, English was found to be the predominant language of its business communication. Even though, the study was done on one company only , nevertheless, it justifies the fact that oral communication is an essential form of business communication.

This to a certain extent justifies Pickett's (1986) and Nickerson's (1988) interpretations of the importance of business communication. As mentioned in chapter one (pg 18), 'communication' is seen as the main feature of 'negotiation' in the business industry which is the focus of this study.

2.3 Negotiations.

Negotiation is one area that one is likely to encounter in business communication and thus it is seen as an important component in the teaching and learning of Business English. 'Negotiation' in the business domain basically refers to a discussion between at least two parties to discuss issues that will benefit both parties in which the decisions made should satisfy the needs of both parties. A negotiation is often based on "a mutual gain rather than negotiating on a win lose basis" (Rodgers 1997 : 1) .The former refers to a win-win situation while the latter refers to an outcome where decisions made give more advantage to only one party.

2.3.1 Features of 'Negotiations'.

'Negotiation' is said to be

> *"ubiquitous... and is seen as an activity that is skilfully and often indiscernibly woven into the fabric of work practices ".*
>
> (A.Firth 1995: 3-4)

This means that negotiation can occur at any time or at several places at the same time and the work practices referred to include meetings, talks, interviews, consultations, presentations and inquiries. It is worth noting Firths's emphasis that negotiation is 'skilfully and indiscernibly woven into the fabric of work practices'.

Basically, what he is emphasising is the nature of a negotiation where its occurrence is not in isolation. This is true as negotiations, most importantly occur because of prior events that have taken place in business dealings. For example, in circumstances where one party proposes to sell a product which the other party is interested in, negotiations will then have to take place to discuss further the terms and conditions before a deal is clinched. Indirectly, it will involve meetings, presentations, consultations and this is why negotiation is interwoven in the work practices. Therefore, the success or failure of the negotiation will depend on how effective the negotiation is and this will determine the outcome of the entire business deal.

2.3.2 *Effective strategies in negotiations.*

There are three aspects which according to Cotton & Robins (1993), need to be taken into consideration in negotiations. They are identified as preparation, techniques and language use. In terms of preparation, there has to be careful planning on the part of the negotiators. Firstly, negotiators need to prepare carefully to achieve satisfactory outcomes. Next, negotiators need to research their opponents' business background.

Besides that, it is advisable for the negotiators to decide on a range of objectives so that they can be more flexible and are able to offer more alternatives during the negotiation. Negotiators also need to set their own limits to help them to negotiate more comfortably and confidently.

Finally, it is important for the negotiators to plan their strategies carefully taking into consideration the personality of the opponents as well as their own weaknesses and strength.

In terms of techniques used to negotiate, Cotton and Robins (1993 : 67) have identified several techniques and they are as follows :

1. Rapport: negotiators need to establish good rapport by beginning with some general social talk in order to break the ice.
2. Parameters: there is a need to confirm the subject or purpose of the negotiation at the early stage to try and establish areas of common grounds and areas of likely conflict.
3. Listen: it is important for negotiators to listen attentively at every stage of the negotiation to help avoid any misunderstandings and to create a sense of co-operation.
4. Attitude: negotiators should be constructive and not destructive and thus, they need to treat the opponents with respect, sensitivity and tact to encourage a willingness to compromise.
5. Approach: negotiators should keep their objectives in mind so as to help them concentrate on the key points.
6. Flexibility: negotiators need to prepare a range of alternatives and try to come out with creative suggestions to resolve any problems. They should be prepared to compromise to avoid a deadlock.
7. Review: negotiators should summarise and review the progress of the negotiation regularly to confirm exactly what they have agreed upon.
8. Agreement: When agreement has been reached, the deal should be closed firmly and clearly.

9. Confirmation: write a follow up letter to confirm in writing the points agreed upon during the negotiation and clarify any outstanding matters and
10. Language use : it should be kept simple and clear to avoid complicating a difficult task with difficult language. Negotiators should also ask questions to clarify anything that was not understood to avoid any misunderstandings that might jeopardise the success of the negotiation.

2. 3 .3 Research on 'negotiations'.

The focus of most researchers on 'negotiations' is the study of its discourse i.e., 'discourse in negotiations'. Swales (1990) claims that the study of the discourse in 'negotiations' is undoubtedly a meaningful one.

> " It is meaningful in the sense that from the linguistic point of view, a study on the analysis of business genres will contribute insights to the language used which will then assist ESP teachers to provide learners with the language used in a particular domain of business communication" . (1990: 54)

According to Neu and Graham (1965) , social psychologists and marketing scientists like Anglemar- Stern (1978) and Pruitt- Lewis (1975) have focused on the verbal content of negotiation in their research which basically explores the language content of negotiations. Sociolinguists , on the other hand, (e.g: Gumperz 1979 ; Soldow- Thomas 1984) believe that :

> "the consideration of only verbal content is insufficient as it yields inadequate understandings of interpersonal interactions" .
>
> (1995 : 243)

They perhaps are aware of not only verbal content but also the non-verbal content of negotiations. The latter may refer to the importance of body language or facial expressions. This indicates a strong emphasis on the importance of the context of communication – non-verbal and structural aspects of language.

Neu and Graham (1995 : 243) at the same time, focus on the issue of "content -what - vs. context -how- " in the negotiation process . Their study seeks to understand the relationship between the language performance of sellers and the outcomes of the speech event negotiation and takes a quantitative approach in determining the systematicity of that relationship. 'Outcome' here, refers to the success or failure of the negotiation task in terms of buyer and seller's satisfaction.

This present study on the other hand, moves away from this kind of research and progresses to investigate 'negotiations' in the classroom environment i.e. the simulation of a 'negotiation' task by Business English learners. It analyses the relationship between learners' perception of business negotiations and the demands of actual negotiations in the real business environment.

2.3.4 The teaching of 'negotiations' in Business Communication.

Negotiation is viewed as an important component in the teaching and learning of Business English :

> "more important than qualifications and a background in business is the right balance of personal skills...to be a good negotiator".
>
> (Ellis & Johson 1994 : 27)

A negotiation requires the negotiators to posses appropriate skills in order to achieve a successful outcome.

One aspect which has not been very much emphasised and is often neglected in the teaching of 'negotiations' itself is the evaluation of the effectiveness of the negotiation tasks performed by students in Business English classes. Studies of oral classroom interaction in 'negotiations' are more often conducted where the focus of the study may lean more towards the discourse of negotiations such as the forms of language used or an analysis of the kinds of interruptions or turn taking. These are studies that investigate the display of learners' competence in the negotiation discourse.

Evidently, in teaching business performance skills, the instructors have to adopt suitable materials selection, approach and methodology to ensure that the objectives of the course are achieved. A major concern in the teaching of ESP by most of its practitioners is the question of ' How do I teach this ESP course to make it meaningful to the learners ?'.

2.4 Approach and methodology

Widdowson(1983) believes that :

> "the distinction between learning ESP and GPE is the way in which its purpose is defined and the manner of its implementation. It basically yields the question of ' why do you teach the course and how do you go about teaching it". (1983 : 5)

Strevens (1988) states that :

> "what kind of methods and materials should be used in ESP - has no direct answer". (1988: 10)

Thus, the usual approach taken is often an eclectic kind of approach , that is a mixture of methodologies that extremely depends on the learners' needs.

Apart from the kinds of methods and materials that should be used in ESP , there is also a need to provide students with the underlying competence as Hutchinson & Waters postulate, that the main objective of ESP was not to develop 'target performance repertoire but to give some aspects of underlying competence' . (Bhatia's, 1994:20). This according to Bhathia (1994) takes ESP back to some kind of general linguistic and communicative competence.

Undoubtedly, learners need to have the underlying competence as claimed by Hutchinson & Waters. However, the fact is that these learners need to be competent in the target performance repertoire. Therefore, there has to be a link between what learners can do and what is expected of learners to do in the target situation. Learners need to be aware of the authentic communication that takes place in a professional setting to enable them to display an acceptable level of competence.

As the nature of ESP courses is very much related to task activities in the real world, it may not be sufficient for learners to develop only their linguistics and communicative competence without being exposed to the actual demands of the target performance repertoire. In the light of this, one should take into consideration the role of 'authentic communication'. Bhathia (1994) declares that :

> " the notion of authentic communication.... is firmly based on the notion of authenticity of communication purpose which a particular text is intended to serve in a specific professional setting ".
>
> (1994:23)

Bhatia (1994) further explains how he takes three authentic texts from legal judgements and demonstrates that only one of them is useful for ESP classrooms. He perceives authenticity in professional communication as an authentic discourse that goes a long way in helping learners cope with the unknown in professional settings especially in cases where we are 'handicapped by a paucity of adequate insights into the nature and use of professional discourse'. Therefore, with this emphasis on authenticity, one approach that is often adopted by teachers is the task - based approach.

2.4.1 Task - based approaches.

'Task' is defined by Oxford Dictionary of Current English (1978: 670) as " a piece of especially hard work (to be) done". Richards, Platt and Weber (1985) however, state that 'task' is :

> " an activity or action which is carried out as the result of processing or understanding language (i.e. as a response)" . (1985 : 289)

These two definitions may share one common element and that is these tasks do not necessarily require the use of language or even the production of language.

Hutchinson and Waters (1986) on the other hand , believe that :

> " the ultimate purpose of language learning is language use ....
> (where they claim that) .. "materials should be designed ... to lead towards a communicative task in which learners use the content and language knowledge they have built up through the unit".
>
> (1986 : 108)

As language use is seen as an important criteria, most ESP teachers adopt the method of communicative classroom tasks to enhance the learning of the English language. The adoption of a particular method in any classroom teaching interrelates with the objective of the particular course. Morrow (1981) claims that 'method is the overall means of achieving the general objectives of a course' . This explains why ESP practitioners in teaching ESP courses need to adopt a mixture of methodologies in order to cater to learners' needs. Therefore, in the case of teaching Business English courses, 'negotiation' is one task, which is communicative in nature.

2.4.2 Communicative Tasks.

While Hutchinson & Waters (1986) regard communicative tasks as one that utilises language, Nunan (1989) on the other hand, views communicative tasks from a different angle in which he differentiates it as 'pedagogic task' and 'real - world task'.

'Pedagogic task' here refers to the classroom activities or actions which are carried out as a result of processing or understanding language such as drawing a map while listening to a tape as described by Richards, Platt and Weber (1985: 289). A 'real world' task would refer to tasks that simulate those that learners are likely to perform in the real world. For example, to give directions or to take messages in telephone conversations.

In recent years according to Hyland & Hyland (1992) task based syllabuses have received a great deal of attention as representing a pedagogically appropriate and effective means of teaching communicative competence. They insist that the teaching of communicative competence should involve an interaction between *knowledge* and *procedure.* This basically refers to the idea of a purposeful communication where learners know the language and know how and when to use it.

In relation to this study, the researcher looks at 'negotiation' task , which is an interactive task between participants involved. The objective of the task is to enable learners to perform negotiations in the real world and thus making the task a communicative one. With reference to purposeful communication ESP teachers take into consideration the use of 'simulations' as a tool to reach this objective.

2.4. 3 Simulation as a tool.

Sturtridge (1981) regards 'simulation' and 'role play' as :

> "suitable vehicles to use in a communicative approach to language teaching .....(which) can reduce the artificiality of the classroom, provide a reason for talking and allow learners to talk meaningfully to other learners. " (1981: 126)

These concepts seem to adhere to the idea of teaching ESP and in this case the teaching of Business English. She also provides a clearer picture of what actually entails a 'simulation' that is a situation where

> " the learner is given a task to perform or a problem to solve; the background information and the environment of the problem is simulated". (Sturtridge 1981 : 126)

In a 'negotiation', the nature of its task is mainly that of problem solving matters which requires learners to possess pimarily the skills to interact, one of which is the ability to speak. Since negotiation is a key feature in business communication, spoken skill is necessary for communication purposes.

2.5 Spoken skill in oral communication.

One of the features of oral communication is 'speaking' and oral communication is :

> " typified as an activity involving two or more people in which the participants are both hearers and speakers having to react to what they hear and make their contributions at high speed".
>
> (Scott 1981:70)

This definition applies to Business English students who are learning how to use the second language (L2) to negotiate in business communication.

2.5.1. Negotiation task

The nature of a 'negotiation' task does involve the participants to react to what they hear most importantly and make contributions instantaneously. Therefore, it is not sufficient to know only the appropriate forms to use but also how and when to use them . The teaching of learning how to 'negotiate' then does not necessarily focus only on "plenty of talk" but also on "learning to communicate".

According to Scott (1981), the terms , "plenty of talk and learning to communicate are not synonymous" as the former refers to the learning of English usages that is the learning of all forms of language use whilst the latter refers to the use of language. In relation to classroom interactions he believes that learners should be concerned with using language and not English usage.

2.6 ESP Learners.

In the case of Business English courses which are categorised under English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) at higher institutions, the common goal of the stakeholders or institutions would be for the learners to be able to perform effectively in their future job situations. This means that these stakeholders expect their learners to be able to perform the task as required by the professionals in the business world. For example, business students should be able to do oral presentations, report writing, business conversations and particularly negotiations.

One should be aware that effective presentations, negotiations or business conversations will produce satisfactory outcome which will directly benefit the companies. Hence , in the teaching of Business English , these skills form the main part of the teaching components of the course.

As ESP practitioners are concerned with learners' needs, one may ask whether these classroom tasks actually help learners to achieve their goals and objectives primarily. According to Sturtridge (1981) , in a simulation, a learner must feel the importance of the outcome, for he will be using the language to achieve his objective as he would need to do outside the classroom.

This brings us back to the aspect of purposeful communication and authenticity as discussed in chapter two (pg 46) where learners need to believe that the task they are doing will serve its purpose in that , it is closely related to what is expected in the target situation. Bearing this in mind, learners will be aware of the objective of the task and at the same time the objectives of the real tasks.

In support of this, Cairns (1951) believes that:

> "a simulation must model all the important skills necessary for a successful transition to work that is being able to apply what is learnt in the classroom to their job situations and in subsequent employment maintenance". (1995:1)

This successful transition is what the teachers and learners similarly expect. To what extent can the learners' performance in the classroom ensure learners' understanding of the task and to what extent does it mirror the actual performance of the real world. Savignon (1972) has defined the term 'performance' as "what one does" in contrast to her definition of ' communicative competence' that is "what one knows". This is an essential distinction in looking at any learning task as what one **knows** may or may not correspond to what one **does.** It is of primary importance that learners' perception of the task is similar to the demands of the target situations.

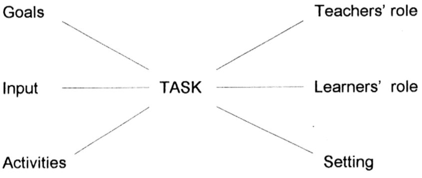
Therefore, the approach has to focus more towards the learner.This is termed by Nunan (1989) as a 'learner centred approach' . According to him,

> "information by and from learners is used in planning, implementing and evaluating language programmes". (1989 : 19)

2.6.1 Learners' performance

In order to examine or analyse learners performance in doing any classroom task one can look at Nunan's (1989 : 11) suggestion of a framework for analysing a 'communicative task' where he discusses the components of a task as shown in Diagram 1.

Diagram 1



Adapted from Nunan (1989: 11)

Looking at the components that contribute to the 'task' as suggested by Nunan (1986), the learner's role can be seen as one of the main factors that makes the task work. This is the reason why this study focuses on learners' performance in a 'negotiation ' task in the classroom.

In the present study the researcher's analysis of the 'negotiation' task is based on Nunan's (1989) framework of analysing task (diagram 1) and Skehan's (1998) criteria on task based instruction. It is important to determine the task's ingredients before learners' performance can be evaluated. Thus, on this basis, the 'negotiation' task is based on the framework below:

1. **Goals** : to reach an agreement on a business issue.
2. **Setting** : Group work (six subjects).
3. **Activity** : to negotiate on a problem solving.
4. **Input** : explanations, handouts, video on 'negotiation'
5. **Learner role** : performance and perceptions.
6. **Teacher role** : to provide task input and to evaluate performance.

In relation to Nunan's framework of analysing task (1989), Skehan (1998) stresses four criteria of task-based instruction. They are :

1. meaning
2. goal
3. activity
4. real world relationship.

According to him, meaning is primary, there is a goal which needs to be worked towards, the activity is outcome evaluated and there is a real world relationship.

The final factor highlights the link between classroom practice and the real world tasks in the working world. Skehan's idea focuses more on the end product that is the actual performance of the task . Therefore at the end of it ,it is important to look at how learners actually carry out the task .

Teachers who have their own expectations of the outcome of a task usually observe learners' performance of a task in either an ESL or ESP context. According to Ellis (1984) when :

> "learners of L2 (second language) perform tasks ... they will be evaluated in one way or another ... " in terms of its "correctness (or) communication i.e. communicative effectiveness". (1984: 39)

The term , 'correctness' refers to more of the correct use of language in terms of its grammatical use whilst 'communicative effectiveness' refers to a holistic view of the process of the task. In addition, the latter sees if the task performed serves the same purpose of real world tasks.

In an ESP context the latter may seem more desirable. Often teachers perceive the outcome of a task as a means to evaluate the teaching and learning that has taken place in the classroom. At this point, teachers are also able to observe whether the outcome of teaching and learning have met the objectives of the course, as according to Breen (1987),

> " one of the crucial issues is that the outcomes of tasks are not easy to predict and too frequently give rise to dissatisfaction on the part of the learner". (1987 : 23)

One should be aware that the effectiveness of task performance can also be evaluated in terms of its **process** or product . It is interesting to see if the process i.e. the way the task is handled affects the outcome of the task in any way. In the case of this study, the researcher, however, is more interested to investigate the effectiveness of the task rather than its process. According to Legutke & Thomas (1991),

> " tasks are not isolated events but parts of a process whose goals are determined by the interaction between learners and their expressed interests and needs, the challenges inherent in the task, the teacher and her assessment of learner needs and knowledge of the target culture". (1991 : 202)

2.6.2 Learners' contribution to task.

Breen (1987) draws attention to :

> " the frequent disparity between what the teacher intends as the outcome of a task and what the learners actually derive from it.........
> (and points out that)......learning outcomes will be influenced by learners' perceptions about what they should contribute, their views about the nature and demands of the task and their definitions of the situation in which the task takes place..." (1987 : 23)

Breen (1987) continues that any learning outcome will be significantly shaped by the learners' own perceptions of :

1. their assumptions about what they themselves should contribute.
2. their views of the nature and demands of the task itself.
3. their personal definitions of the task situation.

Therefore, in the case of ESP tasks, there is a need for the experts to verify learners' perceptions of these factors with those that are used in the real world. This is important, as these perceived factors determine 'successful transition' from the classroom to the outside world.

Nunan (1999 : 236) on the other hand, emphasises that there are factors affecting task difficulty in speaking and he has listed them briefly as :

- the degree to which the language event is embedded in a context that facilitates comprehension.
- the degree to which the language event makes cognitive demands on the learner.
- the degree to which background knowledge can be used.
- the amount of assistance provided to the learner.
- the complexity of the language that the learner is required to produce.
- the degree of emotional stress involved in completing the task
- the interest and motivation of the learner.

These factors according to Nunan are beyond the control of the teacher or the instructional designer.

The factors involve , firstly, the data that learners are working with, for example, the complexity of the texts, learners are required to process. In this study, it may refer to the topic of the negotiation. Secondly, the learners' experiences, such as how relevant and meaningful the task is . This may refer to learners' purpose of learning and finally, factors that are internal to the speakers themselves, for example , level of confidence and motivation of the learners .

In brief, these factors have been categorised by Nunan as task factor, learner factor and language factor. Thus, in the case of this study , it is appropriate to take Nunan's views on task difficulty in examining learners' perception of an effective negotiation task.

2.7 Past research studies

A study was conducted by Hyland and Hyland (1992) to examine an example of a task- based ESP syllabus by focusing on its syllabus design. The researcher analysed the selection and sequencing of content and learning tasks.The learning task is one aspect which is the main interest of Hyland & Hyland (1992).

Hyland and Hyland looked at a particular course called ' Go for Gold' or GFG which is an ESP task-based course for second year business students run by the language and communication department at the Papua New Guinea (PNG)

University of Technology. The course centred on the awarding of a contract to mine one of the worlds richest gold reserves on a small island off the PNG coast. It focused on communication tasks that integrated the various skills of gathering information, decision making and co-operation in interactive problem solving.

The study used Candlin's (1987) suggestions on learning activities where they should contain input, roles, activities, monitoring, outcomes and feedback in analysing the task. In relation to the researchers' study that is to examine learners' perception and performance of a negotiation task, it is appropriate to look at the way the outcome of GFG course was examined by the researchers of this course.

In examining the outcomes, Hyland & Hyland (1992), (citing Breen's 1978 and Wright's 1987) claim that learning tasks are reinterpreted by individual learners according to their own perceptions and needs. This may mean that the learning that takes place may differ between learners as the learning task is often interpreted according to the way individual learners perceive the task to be and how the task could meet their needs.

The researchers in this case, had discussed the objectives of the course with the participants at the beginning of the course. This was because the researchers believe that " the pedagogical success of the activity depends on learners' assumptions that the project has direct reference to their perceived learning needs" (Hyland & Hyland 1992: 225).

One of the conclusions derived from this study was that many of the tasks provided in 'Go for Gold' were useful to the learners and corresponded to their perceived learning needs. The tasks provided a ' rehearsal' situation in which learners were able to :

> " approximate the kind of behaviours required of them beyond the language class in both academic and professional environment"
>
> (Widdowson 1987:68) .

The activities that drew on real world context managed to develop language skills that relate to the learners' current and eventual real world communicative needs.

In this present study, the researcher believes that the subjects will perceive 'negotiation' differently. However, these differences can be clarified by the specialist informants. (refer appendix G). As their jobs require them to negotiate frequently, the researcher hopes that they can explain why the learners in this study perceive otherwise.