CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss some topics related to the present study. The discussion will be divided into six sections.

To begin with, the definitions and developments of ESP and its classifications will be discussed briefly. This is necessary as it provides a short but clear idea of what ESP is all about. The next topic of discussion is regarding ESP in Malaysia. It is chosen because it is related to the previous topic, and, because the present study is conducted in a polytechnic in Malaysia, it will be useful to have some idea about ESP in Malaysia today.

This research is about ESP course evaluation. Therefore, it will be useful to discuss about the process of course development in which course evaluation is a part. Here, six features of course development will be discussed. These include needs analysis, goals and objectives, syllabus and course designs, materials selection, ESP methodology, and finally evaluation. These features are chosen because they are related to the aspects of investigation in this study. They also provide a better understanding of the related issues discussed in the next section.
that follows. Among the issues discussed include the debates on needs, course objectives, syllabus, materials, methodology, and evaluation. These issues will be discussed briefly except the last one, that is, evaluation, which is the focus of this study. This will be discussed in more detail in the following section. The chapter concludes with a short summary.

2.2 ESP: Definitions, Developments, and Classifications

ESP can be defined in many ways. Most of the well-known researchers [e.g., Hutchinson and Waters (1987), Strevens (1988), Robinson (1991), and Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998)] prefer to define ESP as an approach rather than a product, meaning that ESP does not involve a particular kind of language, teaching material or methodology. Their definition is based on the primacy of need in ESP, which is the reining lead in most ESP definitions.

Over the years, the concept has gained, to some extent, a universal understanding among ESP practitioners. It is normally seen to involve a combination of both criterial and characteristic features. For example, Robinson’s (1991) criterial features include goal-directedness and needs analysis. As for the list of characteristic features, it is more debatable, simply because some apply only to branches of ESP rather than the whole. For
example, Fanning (1993) has questioned the time pressure feature suggested by Robinson (1991).

Other ESP practitioners such as Strevens (1988) and Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) prefer to define ESP in terms of absolute and variable characteristics. The discussion above shows that it is not possible to produce a universally applicable definition of ESP for everybody. However, from the various definitions made by Hutchinson and Waters (1987), Strevens (1988), Robinson (1991), Fanning (1993), and Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998), a conclusion can be made on the common traits of ESP.

A) Common primary traits.
   
i. An approach rather than a product.
   
   ii. Designed to meet specific needs of learners.
   
   iii. Centred on the language, skills, discourse and genres.
   
   iv. Goal-directed.

B) Common secondary traits.
   
i. Designed for adult learners.
   
   ii. Constrained by a limited time period.
   
   iii. Level of homogeneity vary from ‘quite’ to ‘very’.
   
   iv. Learners have basic knowledge of English.
Having discussed briefly the definitions of ESP, let us now take a look at its developments briefly. There were several factors which led to the emergence of ESP in the late 1960s. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) identify three main reasons for the emergence of ESP – the demands of an international language for science and commerce industry, a revolution in linguistics, and the focus on the learner.

Since the 1960s ESP has undergone a number of phases of development. But it should be pointed out that ESP has developed at different speeds in different places or countries. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) have identified five stages of development: Register analysis, rhetorical / discourse analysis, target situation analysis, skills and strategies, and the learning-centred approach.

The first four stages were based on descriptions of language use, that is, the concern was to describe what people do with language, while at the fifth stage where we are now, that is, the learning-centred (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987) or learner-centred (Nunan, 1988, 1995), the concern in ESP is not with language use, but with language learning. What they mean is that we cannot assume that by describing what people do with language will make a person learn it, it must be based on the understanding of the processes of language learning. Whether learning-centred or learner-centred, we can conclude that the
trend today is to focus on the needs of the learners, not the language itself.

Having discussed the developments of ESP, it is useful to know how ESP is classified. ESP is an umbrella term embracing a number of sub-divisions, of which two key ones are English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP). In terms of subject matter, an important branch of ESP is English for Science and Technology (EST), which is often differentiated from other subject areas such as Management, Law and Economics.

EAP courses have been developed for the purpose of teaching particular skills to students who intend to take up tertiary and advanced academic courses in the medium of English. It is formulated on the assumption that a language syllabus must consider the eventual uses the learner will make of the language for academic purposes. EAP curriculum development is guided by learner needs, defined by Johns and Dudley-Evans (1991) as the ‘identifiable elements of the target situations’. In short, EAP involves academic study needs (Robinson, 1991).

EOP courses, on the other hand, are designed for work-related needs and training (Robinson, 1991; Hutchinson and Waters, 1987). Examples include English for Technicians, English for Secretaries and English for Doctors.
Although ESP is divided into EAP and EOP, it was felt that there is no clear-cut distinction between them (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987). This may be due to the fact that people can work and study at the same time. It is also likely that the language learnt for academic study need will be used later when the learner takes up a job after graduation. The Commercial English 1 course under this present study is basically an EAP course because it is designed for the purpose of teaching particular skills to commerce students in Malaysian polytechnics.

2.3 ESP in Malaysia

As mentioned in the previous section, ESP has developed at different speeds in different countries. In Malaysia, for example, the interest and development in ESP programmes as a branch of ESL teaching and learning was reflected in the emergence of some major ESP projects in the mid seventies and early eighties, notably the University of Malaya Special Purposes Project (UMESPP) and the University of Malaya Spoken English Project (UMSEP). These projects were launched in accordance with the belief that it was more cost-effective and time-saving to teach English related to a specific purpose (Tan and Goon, 1988). UMESPP was launched to cater to the need of Malay-medium undergraduates to be able to read so that they can have access to the wealth of information in written form. UMSEP, on the other hand, was aimed at
preparing the students to meet the outside world as professionals in their respective jobs.

The successful launching of the two ESP projects by the University of Malaya with the co-operation of the Ministry of Education and the British Council resulted in the emergence of several CICHE (Committee for International Co-operation for Higher Education) programmes in the nineties, for example, the Professional Writing and Academic Writing Project. This project is meant for people who have graduated from universities but have to perform certain writing tasks in English. It is also meant for those who have chosen to join the academic world, where they have to write out their research results in English. According to Asmah Hj. Omar (1994), the writing of research results is in accordance with the 'Publish or Perish' axiom adhered to by local universities where publications in English provide wider readership internationally. This also enables an academician to be promoted to higher posts such as Associate Professor or Professor.

Elsewhere, more ESP courses were designed for different groups of learners in various institutions of higher learning. For example, the Ministry of Education has introduced new ESP courses in Malaysian polytechnics beginning in 1995 after conducting a needs analysis in 1994. The courses introduced include Technical English (Level 1 to 4), Commercial English (Level 1 to 4),
and Secretarial English (Level 1 to 4). The Commercial English 1 is the course selected for this study.

At the University of Science, Malaysia (USM), three types of ESP courses in Oral English Skills were offered to undergraduates, namely, LKI 241, LKI 341, and LKI 441. These courses represent intermediate, post-intermediate, and advanced levels. Recently it was felt that the materials used in these courses have outlived their usefulness (Lynch et al, 1999). Therefore, a three-year new Spoken English Project involving triangular co-operation between USM, the British Council and the University of Edinburgh was launched. It was divided into five phases, where the whole duration of the project would be from December, 1994 to November, 1997. The aim of the project was to update, adapt or replace the three courses in order to produce a comprehensive and pragmatic Spoken English programme which could cater to the specific needs of USM students and their prospective employers (Lynch et al, 1999: 62).

ESP courses were also offered to students in semi-government institutions of higher learning such as the Tunku Abdul Rahman College (TARC) and the newly upgraded MARA University of Technology (UiTM). In private institutions of higher learning such as INTI College, HELP Institute, Taylors' College, Universiti Telekom, Universiti Tenaga, and Universiti Petronas, various ESP courses are being offered to their students. All these
courses are constantly being upgraded to cope with the changing needs and demands of the consumers of ESP.

The discussion so far shows that ESP in Malaysia is slowly but surely becoming more and more important. In its inaugural issue, *ESP Malaysia*, 1(1), an ESP journal published by Universiti Teknologi Malaysia beginning 1993, contains an editorial that has proposed that English as a second language in Malaysia be looked upon as a tool for human resource development in accordance with the Second Outline Perspective Plan, (1991-2000) (Khairi Izwan Abdullah et al, 1994).

Since its first publication in 1993, *ESP Malaysia* has been playing an important role in publishing a collection of useful articles in the field of ESP. Among the issues raised and which are indirectly related to this study include ESP in Malaysian polytechnics and vocational schools (Ministry of Education, 1993); Using a functional linguistic approach to teaching English for Business Purposes (Gregory-Smith, 1995); and Proficiency via ESP: English for the workplace (Hajibah Osman, 1997).

Although the topics discussed in *ESP Malaysia* between 1993 to 1997 were all current issues in ESP, it was unfortunate that none of them are related to ESP course evaluation. For most of the projects or courses discussed earlier
(except the USM Spoken English Project), very little research has been conducted to evaluate their effectiveness. Research on ESP programme evaluation conducted in recent years include Tan (1993), Munisamy (1997), and Karuppan (1999). This shows that there is generally a lack of research in this area. It is hoped that evaluation of ESP programmes will be given due consideration in the near future.

In sum, ESP is an important movement around the world today. In Malaysia, ESP is not new, but is relatively unresearched. ESP has been in existence in Malaysia for more than twenty years, but many students and teachers in primary and secondary schools still do not understand the concept of ESP. ESP has been playing a rather restrictive role in tertiary education before the nineties. According to Sargunan (1999: 15), it is only in the nineties that ‘saw the sudden shift in paradigm..., ESP is now the tool of HRD which has resulted in the sudden mushrooming in the demand for ESP courses’. However, there is still a lack in terms of trained and qualified ESP practitioners, training in teaching ESP, and training in designing quality ESP courses to cater to the increasing needs of different learners at different levels (Chitravelu, 1993; Sargunan, 1999). It is hoped that steps would be taken to rectify this situation as Malaysia is striving to be a centre of educational excellence in the new millennium.
2.4 Features of ESP Course Development

ESP curriculum design specialists have developed many types of frameworks that break down the complex process of course development into components (see, for example, Hutchinson and Waters, 1987; Nunan, 1988; Johnson, 1989; Richards, 1990). Generally, the components include needs analysis, goals and objectives, syllabus design, materials selection, teaching methodology, and evaluation. These components will be discussed briefly here because they are not only related to one another, but also related to some important issues in ESP course development today (which will be discussed in the next section). They form the major aspects of investigation in this study.

2.4.1 Needs Analysis

Needs analysis is an important feature in ESP, although ESP is not the only exclusive educational enterprise related to it. There have been numerous accounts of needs analysis in ESP. Some of the best accounts include those provided by Richterich (1980), Widdowson (1981), Berwick (1989), and Brindley (1989). Various research has been carried out on learner needs, for example, classifying assignments (Horowitz, 1986); observing students in natural settings (McKenna, 1987); description of discourse and classroom
behaviour (Ramani et al., 1988); and surveying students’ backgrounds and goals (Tarone, 1989).

So the question is, what is a needs analysis? Graves (1996) says needs analysis involves finding out what the learners know and can do and what they need to learn or do so that the course can bridge the gap. Graves’s definition shows that needs analysis involves seeking and interpreting information about one’s students’ needs so that the course will address them effectively. However, how one defines a student’s needs is a complex issue open to interpretation.

Perhaps one way of conceptualizing needs is to distinguish between objective and subjective needs. Brindley (1989: 70), for example, defines objective needs as ‘derivable from different kinds of factual information about learners, their use of language in real-life communication situations...’ and subjective needs as ‘derivable from information about affective and cognitive factors such as personality, confidence, attitudes, learners’ wants and expectations...’. Brindley’s definition alone is enough to show that for any course to be successfully drawn up, all these needs should be taken into consideration.

Different students have different needs. The question is, who provides information about needs and who determines the needs? Ideally, needs analysis
should include information from various people related to the course. Unfortunately, in the Malaysian context, this has not always been carried out during the writing up of some ESP courses. For example, Singh (1993) reports that to meet the demand of clients in private organizations to train their personnel, some ESP practitioners have produced many *ad hoc* courses without a thorough needs analysis being carried out. Another problem is that a course is designed based on feedback from certain parties only to find out later that there were weaknesses in the course. For example, prior to the introduction of new Commercial English courses in Malaysian polytechnics in 1995, the old English courses were not drawn up with a proper needs analysis study and, were therefore replaced after the Ministry of Education conducted a needs analysis in 1994. However, no research has been carried out so far (until 2000) to gauge the effectiveness of all the new Commercial English courses. As such, the research on one of these courses, that is, the Commercial English 1 course, will be useful as a basis for determining whether the needs of the students have been met.

2.4.2 Goals and Objectives

Definitions for goals and objectives are numerous. For example, Stern (1992) proposes four types of goals for learners: proficiency goals (e.g., mastery of the four skills); cognitive goals (e.g., mastery of linguistic knowledge);
affective goals (e.g., confidence as a user and learner); and transfer goals (e.g., learning how to learn). Stern’s definition shows that these goals address not only the attainment of knowledge and skills but also the development of attitudes and awareness. Richards (1990) says that a goal should also be realizable, for example, the development of favourable attitudes toward a program can be a goal of the program.

As for objectives, Nunan (1988b: 60) says that ‘objectives are really nothing more than a particular way of formulating or stating content and activities.’ This definition shows that how one conceptualizes and states objectives depends on how one conceptualizes the content of the course, that is, content as knowledge (e.g., students will know...); content as skill (e.g., students will be able to...); or content as attitude (e.g., students will develop an attitude of...). Besides, objectives may also be stated in terms of what students will do in the course (Saphier and Gower, 1987).

From the discussion above, we can sum up goals as general statements of the overall, long-term purposes of a course, while objectives express the specific ways in which the goals will be achieved. That means, the goals represent the destination and the objectives, the various points that guide the course towards it. This study will attempt to find out whether the goals and objectives of the course under study are clearly stated for the students and the teachers to
determine which activity is appropriate and important and which is not. For example, is interpreting a text from Malay to English (as one activity stated in the course objectives) deemed appropriate and important by the students and the teachers?

2.4.3 Syllabus and Course Design

The terms *curriculum* and *syllabus* have always given rise to confusion in terms of their definitions and use. Part of the confusion comes from the North American interpretation of the term ‘curriculum’, which is often used interchangeably with syllabus. These two terms are used in North America to mean a teacher’s requirements for a particular course (Hadley, 1998; Yalden, 1983), but in the British sense, the term is used to refer to a plan of work to be taught in a particular course (Robinson, 1991).

Long and Crookes (1993) have highlighted the diversity of syllabus types that are in existence. In ESP, there are three broad types: content-based, skill-based, and method-based syllabuses. Detailed accounts of these syllabuses are provided in Robinson (1991) and Hadley (1998), but here, they will be discussed briefly to see their differences.
There are several types of content-based syllabuses namely, the structural, the functional/notional, the situational, and the topic. The structural syllabus focuses on language forms and has been quite important in ESP in the 1960s (Robinson, 1991). In the 1970s, the functional/notional syllabus was developed in EAP courses based on functions. Situational syllabus can be found in English for Business, English for Technology, and some EAP courses. Finally, the topic syllabus deploys the content of the students' work. Newer models have integrated subject content with language content (for e.g., Brinton et al, 1989; Gaffield-Vile, 1996).

Skill-based syllabuses are basically considered halfway between content-based and method-based syllabuses. There are three types here: language, learning, and communication skills. The first one focuses on one of the four traditional basic language skills (e.g., the UMESPP focused on academic reading strategies). The second one looks beyond the basic skills. Courses in learning skills may include one or more of the basic skills (e.g., Munby's [1978] taxonomy of language skills). For the last one, the linguistic and communicative competencies are both emphasized (see, for e.g., Koh and Cheung, [1986]).

Method-based syllabuses can be divided into two sub-categories: process and task. The former focuses upon the learner and the learning processes in the classroom. Negotiation between the students and the teacher is the key feature
here (Breen, 1987). Task or Procedural syllabus focuses on meaning rather than form. The tasks are planned in advance but not the linguistic content. An important feature is that each task has an identified specific subject content, linguistic level, and performance requirement (Prabhu, 1984).

The discussion on syllabus types so far has shown the diversity in the design of an ESP syllabus according to the different needs of the students. However, syllabus design is only part of the whole process of course design. Course design involves putting the theoretical decisions about objectives and syllabus into a context (Robinson, 1991). Approaches to ESP course design are in abundance. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) list three main types: language-centred, skills-centred, and learning-centred approaches. Below the researcher discusses each of these approaches briefly to show their differences.

The language-centred approach is the simplest and most familiar to English teachers. Here, the syllabus is the prime generator of the teaching materials. The process involves identifying the learner's target situation and its linguistic features, then proceeding to various stages of analysis to create a syllabus and to establish evaluation procedures to test the mastery of the syllabus items.
The skills-centred approach takes the learner more into account. It also starts with identifying the target situation and analyzing the needs of the learners before the syllabus is written. The selection of texts and exercises is based on specific skills or strategies required. The evaluation procedures test the use of skills or strategies learnt, not the syllabus items.

The third approach which is heavily recommended by Hutchinson and Waters (1987) takes into account the learner at every stage of course design. The process is more complicated here. It starts with identifying learners’ needs, then followed by analysing learning and target situations, identifying attitudes, wants, potentials and constraints before the syllabus is written. Evaluation here is to test the mastery of skills and knowledge, and to find out if learners’ needs are being met.

Although the first two approaches are still in use in some places, the trend has now changed. It is the learner who must remain at the centre and do the learning (Nunan, 1995). The learning-centred (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987) or learner-centred (Nunan, 1988a) approach to course design is the trend in today’s ESP world. In this study, therefore, the syllabus of the course under study will be examined so as to find out whether there are any weaknesses in areas such as the language skills, the topics and the activities. The investigation will tell us
whether course designers of this course had taken the factors discussed above into due consideration.

2.4.4 Materials Selection

In any course, the materials used will normally form the backbone of the course. This shows that selecting the right materials for the course is an important process. Choosing material may mean the development of new material when teaching a course for which there are no suitable materials, collecting a variety of materials, or adapting the existing materials. Many factors have to be considered in choosing, developing, or adapting materials. Two of the most important factors are the effectiveness of the materials in achieving the purposes of the course, and their appropriateness for the students and the teacher (Graves, 1996). Here, appropriateness means students' comfort and familiarity with the materials, language levels, interests, and relevance. This also implies that to produce effective ESP materials, one must employ the right technique. There are numerous techniques available. For example, Djiwandono (1995) has developed a technique based on Hutchinson and Waters's (1987) material design model.

What kind of material is the best for an ESP course – published or in-house? A common assumption is that a true ESP teacher should use in-house
materials instead of published materials such as textbooks (Robinson, 1991). But developing new in-house materials and activities requires time and a clear sense of why they will be used, how, and by whom. Because of the lack of time (which is a common situation in the Malaysian context), ESP teachers are often constrained and prefer to adapt existing materials.

However, it was felt that the time-constraint should not always be used as an excuse to refrain from developing and using in-house materials. With some flexibility, creative and experienced ESP teachers can develop a set of core materials and activities which they can adapt each time they teach a course (Graves, 1996). The materials can be flexible and used in a number of ways. For example, newspaper articles can be used as a basis for developing reading skills or discussing culture. Omaggio Hadley (1993) points out that many teachers tend to use authentic materials as much as possible for content-based courses. This study also investigates the kind of materials used, and whether they are suitable and effective for the course under study.

2.4.5 The ESP Methodology

The term *methodology* is generally referred to what the teachers and students are doing in the classroom. Robinson (1991: 46) refers it as 'what goes on in the classroom, to what the students have to do.' Schleppegrell (1991) says
that in an ESP lesson, teachers must provide opportunities for language skill practice, leading students to apply what they have learned in the class in their academic studies or real-life jobs later. The explanations above show that the methods of teaching in an ESP class should be interesting and practical, and should follow certain techniques of teaching which are guided by an approach.

If we study recent trends in language teaching, the emphasis is increasingly on the learner and learning. This has led to a range of approaches that are referred to as 'learner-centred or learning-centred'. The increased emphases on the learner and on the learning situation are indicated by more attention being given to: a) the aims and purpose of learning a language; b) motivating the learners and to interest them in learning; and c) the process involved in learning a language.

Giving more attention to studying learners' future needs for the target language is usually done by the use of needs analysis. ESP courses are designed in this way. The needs analysis is useful as it can ensure that the course content and topics are relevant to the learners. In order to motivate and stimulate learners to learn, teachers can use appropriate teaching aids. Teachers who allow the learners to practise the language during the lesson can build up their confidence in using the language. Since there has been a change of emphasis from the content of what is taught in the class (the product of learning) to how
learning takes place (the process of learning), formal and informal teaching and learning styles can be used in the classroom.

The discussion on methodology above has shown that teaching ESP courses is very demanding and requires creativity. An ESP teacher should be able to make clear links between the tasks performed in English class and their real-life uses of English outside the class. This study will attempt to find out the effectiveness of the methods of teaching and whether the students perceive the course under study as enjoyable or boring.

2.4.6 Evaluation

Evaluation is an important feature of ESP in the process of course development. For most teachers, evaluation means evaluation within the course: assessing students’ proficiency, progress or achievement (Hughes, 1989). This is called student assessment. The same testing instrument may be used for more than one purpose. For example, an oral entrance interview for placement purposes may also be used as an exit interview for purposes of assessing achievement. However, tests are not the only means teachers use to assess their students. Teachers can structure their classroom activities so that they can assess their students while they participate. Teachers may involve their students in
deciding what should be assessed and how (Hull, 1992, cited in Graves, 1996: 30).

Evaluation also includes evaluation of the course itself (course evaluation). The present study attempts this kind of evaluation. Such an evaluation may not be directly linked to an assessment of the student's progress, although student evaluation can provide feedback on the effectiveness of the course. If the students do well on tests, presumably the course has been effective, and vice-versa. In the present study, the Commercial English 1 course is evaluated to determine its effectiveness with regards to the major aspects discussed earlier. Other aspects not discussed here, such as time allocation, problems faced by teachers and students and their perceptions about the course in general will also be investigated. More details about this will be provided later (in section 2.6).

2.5 Issues in ESP Course Development

Current issues in ESP today are numerous and diverse, and thus it will be impossible to discuss all here. Hence, only issues related to the important aspects of investigation in this study will be discussed. The issues to be discussed here are also related to the features of ESP course development
discussed briefly in the previous section. The issues are concerned with needs, course objectives, syllabus, material, methodology, and evaluation.

2.5.1 The Debate on Needs

The unresolved theoretical question here is that of the nature and role of the so-called *common-core or wide angle* (a basic set of language items which can be used in all situations), as opposed to the *narrow angle* (language and skills taught through topics drawn from students' own discipline) approach. In other words, the question is regarding how specific ESP courses should be. This question was first raised by Williams (1978) who was in favour of the former. His argument was supported by Widdowson (1983), Spack (1988), and Hutchinson and Waters (1987). Hutchinson and Waters (1987: 166-167), for example, argue that students should be grouped for ESP classes across broad subject areas with materials drawing from topics that give 'access to a number of different specialist areas', thus making them aware of the 'lack of specificity of their needs'.

On the other hand, supporters of the narrow angle approach such as Swales (1990a) argue that the seeming suitability of the wide angle approach to prestudy courses does not mean that it is suitable for all other ESP courses. The various team teaching experiments reported (e.g., Johns and Dudley-Evans,
1980), the concern with the nature of the discourse community (Joliffe, 1988), and related studies in rhetoric (Hansen, 1988) confirm the need for the ESP teacher to focus upon the differences among disciplines and professions.

From the arguments above, the researcher feels that in theory the narrow-angle approach is the best for ESP because different types of learners have different language needs. For example, in academic studies, the rhetorical conventions differ between anthropology and sociology. ESP courses should therefore be very specific so as to suit the specific needs of learners due to differences in disciplines and professions. However, in practice, this approach is not suitable in Malaysian polytechnics due to the fact that there are far too many types of students, even in the commerce department alone. It is not easy to design so many types of ESP courses based on each and every student’s course of study. Therefore, the wide-angle approach would be more appropriate here, just like the CE 1 course under study which is offered to all first year commerce students, irrespective of their specific course of study.

2.5.2 The Debate on Goals and Objectives

Every ESP course has its own goals and objectives. The goals and objectives are usually reflected by the language skill or skills which the students will acquire at the end of the course. In this respect, the debate is on with regard
to whether an ESP course should focus upon one particular skill, (for example, reading), or should the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) always be integrated into the course?

According to Johns and Dudley-Evans (1991), the single skill focused on in most ESP courses is usually reading. Single skill reading courses have proven to be popular and successful in many parts of the world such as China (Johns, 1986). The exemplary Brazilian ESP project has generated a number of reports on the relevance of teaching reading alone (Celani et al, 1988).

However, it has been argued that concentrating on just one skill to be achieved at the end of the course is limiting because some attention to other skills is likely to improve performance in the target skill (Chitravelu, 1980; Hutchinson and Waters, 1987).

These conflicting views have resulted in the emergence of both types of ESP courses which focus upon one single skill such as those mentioned above, and those which integrate the four basic skills such as the Commercial English and Technical English courses offered to polytechnic students in Malaysia. The researcher supports the view of Chitravelu (1980) and Hutchinson and Waters (1987) because learning a language will inevitably involve all the four skills, although at different levels of emphasis.
2.5.3 The Debate on Syllabus Design

As mentioned earlier, syllabus types can be divided into two major classes: synthetic and analytic (Wilkins, 1976), or type A and type B (White, 1988). Synthetic or type A syllabuses such as structural (Ewer and Latorres, 1969), topical (Radice, 1981), and notional-functional (Jordan, 1990) focus on what is to be learned, that is, the second language, while analytic or type B syllabuses such as process (Breen, 1987), procedural (Prabhu, 1987), and task (Long and Crookes, 1992) focus on how the language is to be learned.

Advocates of synthetic or type A syllabuses maintain that the language to be taught has to be preselected, divided into small pieces, and learning objectives determined in advance. On the other hand, proponents of analytic or type B syllabuses argue that learning a language should not involve artificial pre-selection of items. Objectives should be determined by a process of negotiation between learners and teachers as joint decision-makers as a course evolves. Also, these should be carried out over the duration or evolution of a course.

This is an old issue which was the topic of debates before the 1970s, when the structural syllabus based upon grammatical form was prevalent throughout the world. It remained an issue as the trend moved towards focussing
on the communicative aspects of language and on learner autonomy until the early 1990s. Now, the debate is still going on as considerable attention has been given to the task-based syllabus (Long and Crookes, 1993). But Hadley (1998) claims that in recent years, there has been a drift towards re-introducing form and topicality.

From the discussion above, the researcher is of the opinion that in theory, the analytic or type B syllabuses are ideal for ESP courses. But in practice, it is not practical especially in Malaysian polytechnics because of the large student population and the lack of experienced ESP course designers to design courses for so many types of students. The synthetic or type A syllabuses will be more suitable here. Perhaps analytic syllabuses can be designed for students in a particular private institution with more specific needs.

2.5.4 The Debate on Materials

Authenticity is a key concept in ESP. Authentic materials are normally related to those used in the students' own specialist workplace or study situation (Robinson, 1991). Widdowson (1978: 80) makes the distinction between genuineness and authenticity. The former being a quality of materials while the latter is a quality of interactions. However, Yalden (1987) and Cunningsworth
(1984) both use the term authentic to refer to qualities inherent in the materials themselves.

There is a considerable debate revolving around the issue of whether to use adapted or authentic text in an ESP lesson unit. Widdowson (1979) proposes a choice between simple and simplified accounts where the former is preferred. Simple accounts are specially written for students based on their linguistic level, whereas simplified accounts are like 'doctored' versions of the original text. Bhatia (1983), on the other hand, suggests the use of 'easification devices' which are presented together with unsimplified original texts to help the learners.

There are many other suggestions on the selection and use of authentic materials. For example, Philips and Shettesworth (1978, in Robinson, 1991:56) propose the use of authentic materials and grading them according to the 'accessibility' of the task demanded of the students. They maintain that adapted texts have a number of weaknesses, two of which are the failure to prepare the learners towards dealing with authentic materials, and the distortion of the originality of the subject matter, resulting in inaccurate content.

McDonough (1984: 77) says that there are other factors that are more important. He lists out three of them: students' interest and motivation, the total
time available, and the goals of the ESP course. He prefers having a 'fabricated' text to go along with authentic tasks. Djiwandono's (1995) model lesson unit for secretarial students is an example which makes use of inauthentic input text but still yields authentic tasks for the students.

Arnold (1991) argues that most writers take a simple view of authenticity, restricted to authentic materials. In terms of classroom activities, there is no guarantee that authentic materials mean authentic interaction or communication. He proposes the group project work approach as a solution and offers several advantages of using this approach.

In conclusion, it can be seen that the various considerations above put constraints on text selection. The researcher is of the view that both adapted and authentic materials are useful in the ESP context, so long as the materials serve our purpose well. We must not insist on using authentic materials all the time because as Robinson (1991: 56) puts it, 'the danger exists that interesting looking authentic materials are used in an uninteresting way because too much of the preparation time has been spent in looking for the materials, and not enough in considering their exploitation.'
2.5.5 The Debate on Methodology

There has always been a controversy with regard to whether ESP has its own methodology (Johns and Dudley-Evans, 1991). In other words, can an appropriate ESP methodology be developed? According to Philips and Shettlesworth (1978), historically this issue was questioned by only a few. However, with the learning-centred bias of Hutchinson and Waters (1987), interest in methodologies has increased. For example, Hall and Kenny’s (1988) report on courses in Thailand shows this influence.

Johns and Dudley-Evans (1991) believe that ESP requires methodologies that are specialized and unique. They claim that an EAP class taught by a language teacher and a subject teacher requires a considerably different approach than the one found in a General English class. Their claim is supported by Brinton et al (1989), Lompers (1991, in Johns and Dudley-Evans, 1991: 305), and Gaffield-Vile (1996).

On the other hand, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) say that there is nothing specific about ESP methodology. They claim that ESP teachers can learn a lot from EGP teachers. In other words, the classroom skills and techniques obtained in teaching the EGP classes can be usefully employed in the ESP classrooms. Robinson (1991) shares this view by saying that in terms of
methodology, there is very little difference between ESP and general ELT.

The discussion above shows that while ESP is now accepted as an important part of ELT, the issue of methodology has remained a hot topic of debate amongst ESP practitioners. In this respect, the researcher feels that ESP and EGP are like two brothers in the broad field of ELT. Therefore, in terms of methodologies used, there are bound to be similarities and differences. It is impossible to say who has borrowed from who. It is a good idea that the best of both methodological options available in both worlds be fully utilised by teachers for the benefits of the learners.

2.5.6 The Debate on Course Evaluation

In ESP the main concern is the needs of the learners. So an ESP course has to be accountable to its sponsors. For these reasons, ESP course evaluation has considerable importance. Publications on project or course evaluation are abundant and vary according to their focus of attention. Some are more theoretical and present a comprehensive package of evaluation procedures (Mackay, 1981); others concentrate on specified sub-areas of importance such as needs and resources (Munby, 1978), project design (Mackay and Palmer, 1981), materials (Alderson, 1979), and objectives (Bachman and Stricle, 1981); yet
others describe specific language teaching projects (Rea, 1983).

Amidst this abundance and variety in evaluation, the question here is whether all ESP courses should be evaluated, and who should evaluate all the courses? We all know that teachers tend to avoid extensive evaluation because they feel inadequate to a task in an area which they consider is the domain of 'experts', for which special training is necessary (Graves, 1996). Most ESP practitioners do not regard evaluation as a part of their activity but as someone else's job. They may not know how to evaluate too. In addition, for teachers and learners, course evaluation is likely to take time away from the 'main business' of the ESP course, and there will always be doubt about whether there will be a compensating gain in learning (Waters, 1987).

In sum, the discussion above shows that while course evaluation is becoming more and more important now (Rea-Dickins and Germaine, 1992), the question of who should carry out the evaluation is still unsolved. In this respect, the researcher feels that more ESP teachers, as well as specialists, should be trained to carry out evaluation for various courses. Evaluation should be made an integral part of the language teaching process. More discussion about ESP course evaluation will be provided in the next section.
2.6 Evaluation in ESP

The practice of evaluation is fast becoming an indispensable activity within the context of old and new programmes or courses alike (Rea-Dickins and Germaine, 1992). Although programme evaluation is essentially a complex process, it seeks to answer a simple question, such as: "Is this programme doing what it sets out to do?", or "Is it working well?"

In this section, various definitions of evaluation will be discussed, with a brief explanation about its stages of development. Next, considerations in evaluation which answer a series of 'wh' questions will be discussed. This will be followed by discussion on the major evaluation approaches and dimensions. After that, discussion will focus on the evaluation criteria used in this study and the various stages involved in evaluation. The chapter ends with the review of a related study.

2.6.1 Evaluation: Definitions and Developments

One of the first definitions of evaluation was proposed by Tyler (1942). He defines evaluation as the process of determining whether the objectives of a program have been met (Tyler, 1942, cited in Brek, 1981:4). Tyler has had enormous influence on educational evaluation and testing. He is often referred to
as the father of educational evaluation (Madaus, 1983). By the middle of the 1940s, Tyler had laid down the foundation for his enormous influence in the next 25 years. Since then, the definitions that have appeared in the evaluation literature have been numerous and diverse (example, Alkin, 1972; Popham, 1975; Cooley and Connes, 1976; Wolf, 1979).

In the early 1970s, the field of evaluation began to crystalize and emerge as a distinct profession related to, but quite distinct from, testing. There was big progress made by educational evaluators to professionalize their field (Madaus, 1983). For example, journals such as the Evaluation Review, Evaluation News, New Directions for Program Evaluation, and a few others were published, and they proved to be excellent vehicles for recording information about various facets of program evaluation.

Between the 1970s and 1990s, various definitions for program evaluation appeared. Richards et al (1985), for example, define evaluation as a systematic gathering of information for the purpose of making decisions. This is a broad definition which can also apply to needs analysis. Popham (1975), however, provides a more restrictive definition of evaluation as consisting a formal assessment of the worth of the educational phenomena.
In educational theory, evaluation is generally cited as one of the key elements of curriculum design (Kerr, 1968). Evaluation has come into prominence largely because of outside pressure on educators to explain and justify what they are doing (McCabe, 1980). Therefore, evaluation is about feedback on the working of a curriculum in operation (Alderson, 1985).

A critical survey of these definitions reveals that there was a single common thread running through them, that is, evaluation is the process of providing information for decision making. With regard to ESP, evaluation is the process of seeking the effectiveness and efficiency of teaching programmes (Robinson, 1991). Perhaps the definition provided by Brown (1989) is the best in the sense that it is neither too restrictive nor too broad in scope. He defines evaluation as the systematic collection and analysis of all relevant information necessary to promote the improvement of a curriculum, and assess its effectiveness and efficiency, as well as the participants' attitudes within the context of the particular institutions involved.

With the conclusion made regarding the definition of evaluation, we will now discuss briefly, its development. Until the 1980s, a number of writers considered evaluation as a neglected area in ESP (e.g., Mackay, 1981; Murphy, 1985). However, in the 1990s, evaluation gained a lot of attention due to the greater concern for more effective courses and of big-scale projects. Many
useful articles on course evaluation have appeared in international journals such as TESOL Quarterly, English for Specific Purposes, ELT Journal, and Language Teaching. Among the articles published were: Staff/student participation in course evaluation (Sharp, 1990); Process evaluation in an INSET course (Morrow and Schocker, 1993); Participatory evaluation (Mackay et al, 1995); and Team evaluation of language teaching and language courses (Blue and Grundy, 1996).

The list of articles shown above is by no means an exhaustive one. But one thing for sure is that evaluation in ESP, especially issues related to course or project evaluation, will continue to attract a lot of attention in the new millennium as more and more people realise its importance. It is hoped that this trend will encourage more research on ESP course evaluation in our Malaysian context.

2.6.2 Considerations in Course Evaluation

An ESP course should regularly show that its existence in its present form is justified. The existence of the ESP course is normally related to satisfying a particular need and meeting certain aims. Thus, evaluation helps to show how well the course is fulfilling the need and its aims. Information gathered will form valuable feedback for a revision of the course. To carry out
an ESP course evaluation, some factors need to be considered (Alderson and Waters, 1983; Hutchinson and Waters, 1987; Robinson, 1991; Graves, 1996). They consist of ‘wh’ questions which will be discussed briefly below.

2.6.2.1 Why does one evaluate?

This is related to the purpose of evaluation. Generally a course is evaluated to improve its effectiveness (Alderson and Waters, 1983; Murphy, 1985). This is done for the benefit of the students and the teachers (internal reason). However, courses are also evaluated for policy reasons such as the continued funding of the course by the sponsoring body and for the purpose of accountability to corporate clients (external reasons). The evaluation exercise in this study is solely for improving the effectiveness of the course under study.

2.6.2.2 What should be evaluated?

Generally, any part of the course can be evaluated (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987). This includes the analysis of students’ needs, goals and objectives, syllabus, materials, methodology, roles of students and teachers and so on. But in deciding what is to be evaluated, two important constraints should be considered, that is, the ability to collect the information, and the ability to use the information collected. It will be of no use to spend so much time collecting
all sorts of information at the expense of inconveniences caused to others, and then do nothing about it. This study has taken into consideration the two constraints mentioned above and therefore, only evaluate one ESP course at a polytechnic, not two or three courses at different polytechnics. Details about the various aspects of the course under evaluation will be provided in chapter three.

2.6.2.3 When does one evaluate?

It is not easy to answer this question because course evaluation is usually time-consuming, complex and frustrating (Weir and Roberts, 1994). People involved as respondents have only little time to provide the right quantity and quality of information you need. Therefore, careful planning is indeed very important. Evaluation can be carried out during the planning and teaching stages of the course (formative evaluation), or after it is over (summative evaluation). The present study is a formative evaluation as the course being evaluated is currently being offered to polytechnic students in Malaysia.

2.6.2.4 Who evaluates?

An ESP course can be evaluated by anyone who is interested in it, but in practice, it is likely that the teachers and the students are the principal evaluators (Graves, 1996). Other people such as the administrators, sponsors, parents and
clients may also play a role in evaluation. It is better to get views from as many people as possible because views from different groups of people vary according to their own interests and concerns. Also, obtaining views from various groups of people will make our study more reliable. In this study, the evaluator is an outsider who seeks views from the teachers and the students with regard to the course under study. Views from other people mentioned above are not included because it is felt that getting the views from the students and teachers are good enough.

2.6.2.5 How does one evaluate?

In theory, a variety of ways are available. However, in practice, most of the ESP courses are evaluated using one or more of the following methods: questionnaire, interview, observation, informal chart, discussion, and test result (Robinson, 1991). The selection of the techniques will depend on what suits the evaluator and the situation he is going to evaluate. For example, in this study, questionnaires and interviews are the two instruments used because they are deemed effective and suitable for this particular study.
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2.6.3 Programme Evaluation Approaches

Various programme evaluation approaches have been developed over the years and various writers have also discussed the major evaluation models available (see, for example, Morris, 1978; House, 1983; and Brown, 1989). In general, the various approaches can be classified into four main categories: product-oriented, process-oriented, decision facilitation, and static characteristic.

Under the first category, that is, the product-oriented approach, the focus is on the goals and objectives of a programme, with the purpose of determining whether they have been achieved at the end of the programme. Advocates of this approach include Tyler (1942), Metfessel and Michael (1967), and Popham (1975). The second category, the process-oriented, utilizes evaluation procedures to facilitate change and improvement in the curriculum. Scriven (1967) and Stake (1967) are two famous proponents of this approach.

The decision facilitation approach is one which focuses on programme evaluation for the decision makers who are usually the administrators. Here, evaluators are wary of making judgements, preferring to collect information for those in a programme who must make the judgements and decisions. This approach is related to the works of Stufflebeam et al (1971) and Provus (1971). Finally, the static characteristic approach is linked to the institutional
accreditation process and is conducted by a team of outside experts to determine the effectiveness of a particular programme. Worthen and Sanders (1973) refer to this as professional judgement evaluation.

The classification of the evaluation types discussed above shows that programme evaluation varies according to the focus on the area of the evaluation function. Therefore, different types of evaluation serve different purposes. As mentioned earlier, Patton (1981, 1982) lists over 130 types of specific evaluations which is by no means an exhaustive list. The point is that the tentative listing of the numerous evaluation types by Patton alone is enough to illustrate the complexity and diversity in programme evaluation.

2.6.4 Dimensions of Evaluation

Knowing the types of evaluation approaches is necessary, but knowing the patterns can also help, not only in understanding the similarities and differences between the existing approaches, but also in formulating the approach most suitable to a particular programme. These patterns generally centre on three dimensions: formative and summative, process and product, qualitative and quantitative. The difference between each pair will be discussed in turn.
2.6.4.1 Formative vs Summative

The difference between formative and summative evaluation is not new in language programme evaluation literature. Writers such as Bachman (1981) and Long (1984) offer good discussion on this issue. Generally, the distinction can be seen in the purposes for information gathering and the types of decisions that evolve from each purpose. Formative evaluation aims at gathering information that will be used to improve a programme. It takes place during the running of the programme. The types of decisions will be relatively small scale. The present study belongs to this kind of evaluation.

Summative evaluation, on the other hand, is usually conducted at the end of a programme. The purpose is to determine whether the programme was successful and effective. The types of decisions will be fairly large scale and may result in the continued funding of the programme or its cancellation.

2.6.4.2 Process vs Product

The distinction between process and product evaluation is based on differences in the kind of information considered. Process evaluation emphasizes more on what it is that is going on in a programme or the process that helps to arrive at those goals. Product evaluation, on the other hand, centres