

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents and discusses the literature related to the area of Language for Specific Purposes (LSP hereafter) and more specifically the literature in relation with Needs Analysis, including the definition and purposes of NA and different approaches to NA. Furthermore, the theoretical framework of this study is specified, and the definitions of *needs* and *wants* based on Hutchinson and Waters (1987) are presented. In the end, the previous NA studies conducted in Malaysia and other countries are reviewed and discussed in relation with the present research.

2.2 DEFINITION AND PURPOSE OF NEEDS ANALYSIS

Needs analysis refers to "the activities involved in gathering information that will serve as the basis for developing a curriculum that will meet the learning needs of a particular group of learners" (Brown 1995, p. 35). Hutchinson and Waters (1987) refer to those activities as "identifying the target situation and then carrying out a rigorous analysis of the linguistic features of that situation" (p. 12)

Usually, a Needs Analysis uses and analyses both qualitative and quantitative data based on questionnaires, tests, interviews and observations. Curriculum development should start with a Needs Analysis. Theorists define needs analysis in various ways and from different views. Similarly, theorists have chosen different standpoints to argue the purpose of a needs analysis. These different views and definitions will be discussed in the following sections.

One of the main aims of conducting a needs analysis, according to Gardner and Winslow (1983) is “to produce information which when acted upon makes courses better adapted to students’ needs”, and one of the objectives of formal needs identification is “to back up one's proposals with quantitative evidence of their importance”. Furthermore, they argue, “in many cases, concrete evidence of particular needs, such as these surveys produced, could be directly used as part of the course validation/approval procedure” (p. 76).

Richards (1990) states that Needs Analysis serves three main purposes:

- 1) Providing a mechanism for obtaining a wider range of input into the content, design and implementation of a language program.
- 2) Identifying general or specific language needs that can be addressed in developing goals, objectives and the content for a language program.
- 3) Providing data that can serve as the basis for reviewing and evaluating an existing program.

(Richards, 1990, pp. 1-2)

Designing a language course syllabus includes diverse facets such as linguistic content, social factors, cultural issues, and targets’ needs and backgrounds. Even though lack of time often makes it impossible to conduct a needs analysis *before* designing a course syllabus, an existing course syllabus can also benefit from a formal needs analysis. Thus, as Janice Yalden (1983) observed, in many cases, “it is more a question of having to modify an existing programme rather than building up a whole operation from the beginning” (p. 97).

2.3 LANGUAGE FOR SPECIFIC OR GENERAL PURPOSES

To decide if the BM course is an LSP or a General Language course, we need to identify different characteristics of these two types of language courses.

Due to a universal demand for learning the English language, most of the studies done in the area of language teaching and learning have focused on the English language. Therefore, we need to refer to the definitions and characteristics of an English for Specific Purposes (ESP hereafter) course and extend our discussion to compare English language courses with the BM course offered in UM. In this section, the key notions in the area of ESP will be discussed.

In order to compare a course of General English and an ESP course, we can start by specifying the main characteristics of an ESP course.

Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) offered a definition of ESP by identifying its absolute and variable characteristics:

I. Absolute Characteristics

- ESP is defined to meet specific needs of the learner;
- ESP makes use of the underlying methodology and activities of the discipline it serves;
- ESP is centred on the language (grammar, lexis, register), skills, discourse and genres appropriate to these activities.

II. Variable Characteristics

- ESP may be related to or designed for specific disciplines;
- ESP may use, in specific teaching situations, a different methodology from that of general English;
- ESP is likely to be designed for adult learners, either at a tertiary level institution or in a professional work situation. It could, however, be for learners at secondary school level;

- ESP is generally designed for intermediate or advanced students;
- Most ESP courses assume some basic knowledge of the language system, but it can be used with beginners.

(Dudley-Evans and St. John 1998, pp. 4-5)

In a previous definition put forth by Strevens (1988) the absolute and variable characteristics of an ESP course were identified as follows:

I. Absolute characteristics:

ESP consists of English language teaching which is:

- designed to meet specified needs of the learner;
- related in content (i.e. in its themes and topics) to particular disciplines, occupations and activities;
- centred on the language appropriate to those activities in syntax, lexis, discourse, semantics, etc., and analysis of this discourse;
- in contrast with General English.

II. Variable characteristics:

ESP may be, but is not necessarily:

- restricted as to the language skills to be learned (e.g. reading only);
- not taught according to any pre-ordained methodology.

(Strevens, 1988, pp. 1-2)

As we can see in the two definitions, Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) have eliminated the absolute characteristic suggested by Strevens (1988) that “ESP is in contrast with General English” and added a few variable characteristics. They state that ESP is not necessarily related to a specific discipline, occupation, or activity. In addition, ESP is generally designed for adult learners although it could be used with young adults in a secondary school setting. Furthermore, they have asserted that most

ESP courses assume a basic knowledge of the language system and that these courses are designed for students with intermediate or advanced proficiency in English.

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) have provided a broader definition, that “ESP is an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner's reason for learning” (p. 19).

As stated earlier, NA studies have had a much greater impact on designing ESP courses, in which learners have particular needs regarding the English language. However, as Richards (1990) points out, “needs analysis is also fundamental to the planning of general language courses” (p. 2). In an attempt to distinguish between ESP and General English, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) have argued, in ESP, it “is not the *existence* of a need” for learning a language, rather it is a question of “an *awareness* of the need” (p. 53). They refer to the traditional argument that in a course of General English, the learners’ needs are not “specifiable”. However, they maintain, “any course should be based on an analysis of the learners’ needs” and that “ESP procedures can have a useful effect on General English”; therefore, we need a “common approach”. In other words, the same questions can be asked in the needs analysis but the answers are expected to be different (pp. 53-54).

In another attempt to answer the question “What is the difference between the ESP and General English approach?” Anthony (1997) affirms that, due to the great influence of ESP approach on English teaching in general, “the line between where General English courses stop and ESP courses start has become very vague”. He believes that at the time when Hutchinson and Waters (1987) distinguished ESP courses from General English courses, “teachers of General English courses would rarely conduct a needs analysis to find out what was necessary to actually achieve it”. Anthony

(1997) further argues that nowadays, however, even teachers of General English courses “are much more aware of the importance of needs analysis” and course designers carefully consider the needs of learners when producing the course materials (para. 7).

2.4 BAHASA MALAYSIA COURSE, GENERAL OR SPECIFIC?

The BM course offered in the University of Malaya is a language course that aims to prepare international students, at an elementary level, to communicate and interact with Malaysians in a more meaningful and effective way, merely in their everyday life interactions and not in academic or business situations. Therefore, in terms of content, this course can be compared to general language courses.

Although the BM course in UM is not designed to prepare the learners to use BM in professional or academic situations, the learners do have their specific language needs and wants. Since the BM course is a single course offered in only one semester, it is different from General language courses offered to schoolchildren throughout their education. It is therefore logical to assume that unlike General language courses, learners of BM in this particular course would not need to be able to perform all language skills at the same level and would need some language skills or functions more than others. Thus, the syllabus of the course should include specific skills, notions, and functions that are most frequently needed by the learners; hence, providing students with resources of language components that are most useful to them. Whether a language course is an LSP or a General language course, an NA study is a necessary step in designing it.

Having Dudley-Evans and St. John’s (1998) definition of ESP in mind, it can be argued that the BM course is similar to ESP courses in a sense that it is designed to meet specific language needs of adult learners. However, it is different from ESP

courses as it does not assume any basic knowledge of the target language system, and it is designed for basic learners of BM and not for intermediate or advanced language learners. Besides, this course, unlike LSP courses, aims to prepare students to interact more effectively using *everyday* functions of language.

Based on the similarities and differences between the BM course and ESP courses, it is necessary to have a review of different approaches and models of needs analysis and produce a suitable modified framework that can best provide us with a means to collect the data that we need to identify learners' specific needs, wants and preferences.

2.5 APPROACHES TO NEEDS ANALYSIS

Since the beginning of ESP courses and later the introduction of Needs Analysis, researchers have designed and implemented different approaches to assess and analyze learners' needs. This section will review the main approaches to Needs Analysis introduced to the field of language teaching.

2.5.1 Target Situation Analysis

As Hutchinson and Waters (1987) discuss, as the purpose of an ESP course is to “enable learners to function adequately in a target situation”, the first step for designing and ESP course is to identify the target situation, followed by “a rigorous analysis of the linguistic features of that situation”. While this process is usually known as *needs analysis*, they “prefer to take Chambers' (1980) term of ‘target situation analysis’ (TSA hereafter), because, they believe, “it is a more accurate description of the process concerned” (p. 12).

According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987), the most thorough explanation of target situation analysis is the model proposed by John Munby in *Communicative Syllabus Design* (1978). They assert, “the Munby model produces a detailed profile of the learners’ needs in terms of communication purposes, communicative setting, the means of communication, language skills, functions, structures, etc.” (p. 12).

Munby’s (1978) approach to needs analysis had a significant influence on the field of NA studies. As Phan Le Ha (2005) summarizes:

Munby's model consists of two stages: Communication Needs Processor (CNP) and the interpretation of the profile of needs derived from the CNP in terms of micro-skills and micro-functions. The CNP is set out under eight variables that 'affect communication needs by organising them as parameters in a dynamic relationship to each other.

(Phan Le Ha 2005, para. 4)

The following are the eight parameters specified by Munby (1987) in his Communication Needs Processor (CNP hereafter), which establishes the profile of needs to gives us a detailed description of particular communication needs:

- **Purposive domain:** this category establishes the type of ESP, and then the purpose which the target language will be used for at the end of the course.
- **Setting:** the physical setting specifying the spatial and temporal aspects of the situation where English will be used, and the psychological setting specifying the different environment in which English will be used.
- **Interaction:** identifies the learner’s interlocutors and predicts relationship between them.
- **Instrumentality:** specifies the medium, i.e., whether the language to be used is written, spoken, or both; mode, i.e., whether the language to be used is in the form of monologue, dialogue or any other; and channel of communication, i.e., whether it is face to face, radio, or any other.

- **Dialect:** dialects learners will have to understand or produce in terms of their spatial, temporal, or social aspect.
- **Communicative event:** states what the participants will have to do productively or receptively.
- **Communicative key:** the manner in which the participants will have to do the activities comprising an event, e.g. politely or impolitely.
- **Target level:** level of linguistic proficiency at the end of the ESP course which might be different for different skills”.

(Munby, 1987, as cited in Songhori 2008, p. 7)

However, for two main reasons Munby’s model was not used in this research. First, as many have observed, the process is too complicated and time consuming to be put in to practice. Second, as Hawkey (1980) argues and Phan Le Ha (2005) quotes, “it presupposes a quite homogeneous language training situation with specific occupational or educational objectives” (para. 10). This study, involves a large group of learners who come from various backgrounds with different language proficiencies, needs and wants; therefore, applying Munby’s approach is impractical. One final criticism to Munby’s approach according to Hutchinson and Waters (1987) is that it does not take into account the learning needs nor does it make a distinction between necessities, wants, and lacks.

Many researchers in the field of target situation analysis have followed Munby’s CNP. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) provide a comprehensive TSA framework that consists of a list of questions to which the analyst should find answers. To them, analyzing the target situation needs is “in essence a matter of asking questions about the target situation and the attitudes towards that situation of the various participants in the learning process” (p. 59). In effect, most of these questions correspond to the Munbian model. Songhori (2008) points out how Hutchinson and Waters’ (1987) “target situation

analysis framework” is similar to Munbian model. Table 2.1 shows the comparison made by Songhori (2008, p. 8).

Table 2.1 Hutchinson and Waters’ TSA Framework and Munbian TSA Model

<p>Why is the language needed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For study; - For work; - For training; - For a combination of these; - For some other purpose, e.g. status, examination, promotion. 	<p>Munbian purposive domain</p>
<p>How will the language be used?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Medium: speaking, writing, reading, etc. ; - Channel: e.g. telephone, face to face; - Types of text or discourse: e.g. academic texts, lectures, informal conversations, technical manuals, catalogues. 	<p>Munbian instrumentality</p>
<p>What will be the content areas be?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Subjects: e.g. medicine, biology, architecture, shipping, commerce, engineering; - Level: e.g. technician, craftsman, postgraduate, secondary school; 	<p>Munbian Communicative event</p>
<p>[* Who will the learner use the language with?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Native speakers or non-native; - Level of knowledge of receiver: e.g. expert, layman, student; - Relationship: e.g. colleague, teacher, costumer, superior, subordinate;] 	<p>[Munbian Interaction]</p>
<p>Where will the language be used?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Physical setting: e.g. office, lecture theatre, hotel, workshop, library; - Human context: e.g. alone, meetings, demonstrations, on telephone; - Linguistic context: e.g. in own country, abroad. 	<p>Munbian Setting (physical and psychological)</p>
<p>When will the language be used?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Concurrently with ESP course or subsequently; - Frequently, seldom, in small amounts, in large chunks. 	

* This question was not included in Songhori’s summary. It is added in this table in order to maintain the original list provided by Hutchinson and Waters (1987).

In addition to ‘target situation analysis’ (TSA), (Munby 1978, Chamber’s 1980, and Hutchinson & Waters 1987), other approaches to analysis of needs include, ‘present situation analysis’ (PSA hereafter), introduced by Richterich and Chancerel

(1980), ‘pedagogic needs analysis’ proposed by West (1994), which includes ‘deficiency analysis’, ‘strategy analysis’ or ‘learning needs analysis’, and ‘means analysis’. Still other relatively new approaches are ‘register analysis’, ‘discourse analysis’, and ‘genre analysis’.

2.5.2 Present Situation Analysis

Present situation analysis (PSA) attempts to identify what learners are like at the beginning of a course as opposed to TSA, which is concerned with what the learners are supposed to be like at the end of the language course. According to Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998, p. 125) “a PSA estimates strengths and weaknesses in language, skills, learning experiences”. To establish a destination point to which the students need to get, first, we need to define the starting point using PSA.

In a present situation NA approach, the learners first identify a list of activities and prioritize them. Then, they rate their proficiency now, and what they need to achieve to fulfil the required activities (Allwright, 1982). PSA can also be carried out by a test at the beginning of a language course together with obtaining background information of learners, including their years of language learning and level of education.

Robinson (1991) states that TSA and PSA are complementary and that together, they can provide an efficient approach to NA. An NA provided by a combination of TSA and PSA is described to be the most popular approach to needs assessment. Such an approach provides sufficient data for course designers to create a language course that can help learners to bridge the gap between their present language proficiency and the target situation requirements.

2.5.3 Pedagogic Needs Analysis

Pedagogic needs analysis proposed by West (1998) is an umbrella term, which covers *deficiency analysis*, *strategy analysis* or *learning needs analysis*, and *means analysis* (Songhori, 2008).

Deficiency analysis can be an equivalent to what Hutchinson and Waters (1987) call 'lacks', i.e. "the difference between the student's present competence and the desired competence". "Deficiency analysis is the route to cover from point A (present situation) to point B (target situation), always keeping the learning needs in mind".

Strategy analysis or learning needs analysis is concerned with "what the learner needs to do in order to learn" (Hutchinson & Waters 1987).

Means analysis focuses on the cultural environment of where the ESP class is held. According to Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) *means analysis* elicits "information about the environment in which the course will be run" to enable course planners to adapt the course to that cultural environment. It is based on the assumption that "what works well in one situation may not work in another" (Dudley-Evans & St. John 1998, p. 124). Means analysis, as Jordan (1997) puts it, "provides us with a tool for designing an environmentally sensitive course" (Songhori, 2008).

2.5.4 Other Approaches to Needs Analysis

Register analysis is concerned with analyzing specific lexical or grammatical characteristics of scientific or technical writings. The rationale for conducting a register analysis is to identify certain grammatical and lexical forms, which are used more frequently in scientific and technical writing (Dudley-Evans and St. John, 1998). However, this approach has been criticized because first, it analyses texts only to the

word and sentence level (West,1994); second, it is only descriptive, not explanatory (Robinson, 1991). Third, most materials designed based on register analysis follow a similar pattern, and lack authenticity (Dudley-Evans and St. John, 1998).

Discourse analysis attempts to identify communicative values and functional units of discourse, as opposed to register analysis that focuses only on lexical and grammatical properties of register. In this approach the “focus is on the text rather than on the sentence, and on the writer’s purpose rather than on form” (Robinson, 1991, as cited in Songhori, 2008). Through this approach, the materials are based on functions, which are determined by how sentences are used in communication (West, 1994).

Genre analysis is the study of “linguistic behaviour in institutionalized academic or professional setting” (Bhatia, n.d., as cited in Songhori, 2008). “Genre analysis approach goes two steps beyond register analysis and one step beyond discourse analysis (though it draws on the findings of both)” (Songhori, 2008, p. 20).

These last three approaches specifically deal with analyzing particular types of discourse and genre used in scientific or technical settings. Thus, they are irrelevant to the purpose of this study, which primarily attempts to identify learning and target situation needs of the learners.

2.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The approach used in this Needs Analysis is the framework proposed by Hutchinson and Waters (1987) for analysis of learners’ and learning needs in *English for Specific Purposes: A Learning-centred Approach*. The main reason for selecting this approach is that it is comprehensive. Unlike Munby’s (1978) model, it distinguishes *necessities, lacks* and *wants*, while maintaining to carry out a *target situation analysis*

(TSA). It is also concerned with *present situation analysis* (PSA) introduced by Richterich and Chancerel (1980) as it seeks to identify learners' present level of language proficiency. Their proposed framework also provides a tool for a *pedagogic needs analysis* (West 1994), including *deficiency analysis* (lacks), *strategy analysis* or *learning needs analysis*, which deals with learning needs. Finally, it enables a *means analysis*, since it asks about the situation in which the course is run. Table 2.2 shows the framework proposed by Hutchinson and Waters (pp. 59-60, 1987) for analysis of the learners' needs.

Table 2.2 Hutchinson and Waters' (1987) Framework for Analyzing Learners' Needs

<p>Why is the language needed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For study; - For work; - For training; - For a combination of these; - For some other purpose, e.g. status, examination, promotion.
<p>How will the language be used?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Medium: speaking, writing, reading, etc. ; - Channel: e.g. telephone, face to face; - Types of text or discourse: e.g. academic texts, lectures, informal conversations, technical manuals, catalogues.
<p>What will be the content areas be?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Subjects: e.g. medicine, biology, architecture, shipping, commerce, engineering; - Level: e.g. technician, craftsman, postgraduate, secondary school;
<p>Who will the learner use the language with?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Native speakers or non-native; - Level of knowledge of receiver: e.g. expert, layman, student; - Relationship: e.g. colleague, teacher, costumer, superior, subordinate;]
<p>Where will the language be used?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Physical setting: e.g. office, lecture theatre, hotel, workshop, library; - Human context: e.g. alone, meetings, demonstrations, on telephone; - Linguistic context: e.g. in own country, abroad.
<p>When will the language be used?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Concurrently with ESP course or subsequently; - Frequently, seldom, in small amounts, in large chunks.

As seen in the above table, the framework consists of five main questions that aim to elicit data about the target situation, and the students' necessities and wants. The

first question concerns reasons why the target language is needed. This question is the most important question, since it determines the main purpose and the main target situation in which the target language should be used. Besides, the learners' reasons for taking a language course can enable a general judgement about their level of motivation. The next two questions (How and What) include the medium, the channel, the type of discourse, the content area, and the level the target language must be used. Another crucial factor in analysing the target situation is the question of with whom the learners will use the language. In different target settings, learners might need to use the language with only a certain group of people and not everyone. Thus, knowing who the learners might have more encounters with, can be very informative to teachers and course designers, when designing and preparing learning activities. The time and the physical setting in which the course is held are also highly significant as they can determine students' motivation to attend classes and engage in learning activities. Asking all these six questions proposed by Hutchinson and Waters (1987) can help the researcher to collect valuable data and create a complete profile of the target situation.

Similar to the process used for target needs analysis, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) suggest a list of questions as a framework for analyzing learning needs, each divided into questions that are more detailed. Table 2.3 shows the framework proposed by Hutchinson and Waters (pp. 62-63, 1987) for analysis of learning needs.

Table 2.3 Hutchinson and Waters' (1987) Framework for Analyzing Learning Needs

<p>Why are the learners taking the course?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - compulsory or optional; - apparent need or not; - Are status, money, promotion involved? - What do learners think they will achieve? - What is their attitude towards the ESP course? Do they want to improve their English or do they resent the time they have to spend on it?
<p>How do the learners learn?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is their learning background? - What is their concept of teaching and learning? - What methodology will appeal to them? - What sort of techniques bore/alienate them?
<p>What sources are available?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - number and professional competence of teachers; - attitude of teachers to ESP; - teachers' knowledge of and attitude to subject content; - materials; - aids; - opportunities for out-of-class activities.
<p>Who are the learners?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - age/sex/nationality; - What do they know already about English? - What subject knowledge do they have? - What are their interests? - What is their socio-cultural background? - What teaching styles are they used to? - What is their attitude to English or to the cultures of the English speaking world?
<p>Where will the ESP course take place?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are the surroundings pleasant, dull, noisy, cold etc?
<p>When will the ESP course take place?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Time of day; - Everyday/ once a week; - Full-time/ part-time; - Concurrent with need or pre-need.

Their proposed framework for analysing learning needs requires a researcher to ask detailed questions about almost all aspects of the learners' learning style preferences. Similarly, the learners' needs framework, comprehensively covers all the main questions regarding the learners' needs and wants. The last two questions of the learning needs framework are the questions that concern the situation in which the course takes place, including, where, and when the classes are held. Data gathered through these last questions enables a *means analysis*.

The BM course offered in UM has similarities with both General language courses and LSP courses. Therefore, the approach that should be used for analysis of target situation and learners' needs must be flexible and adaptable. Apart from being flexible, the frameworks that Hutchinson and Waters (1987) suggest for target situation analysis are simple and yet comprehensive. The questions they provide cover almost all the information that a course designer needs to gather. Each question is broken down into questions that are more detailed. This enables the researcher to include questions that can provide the details they need to know about a particular group of learners.

In the end of this section, two graphs will be presented that show the relationship between the theoretical framework chosen and this study's three research questions. Figure 2.1 displays the first two research questions in relation with Hutchinson and Waters' (1987) framework for analysing learners' needs. The answers to the questions posed by Hutchinson and Waters (1987) in their learners' needs framework can be used for both the first and the second research questions in some cases (for more detail, see 4.3 ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH QUESTION 1 and 4.4 ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH QUESTION 2); therefore, these two questions are put together in Figure 2.1. to illustrate the relationship between the framework chosen and the first two research questions.

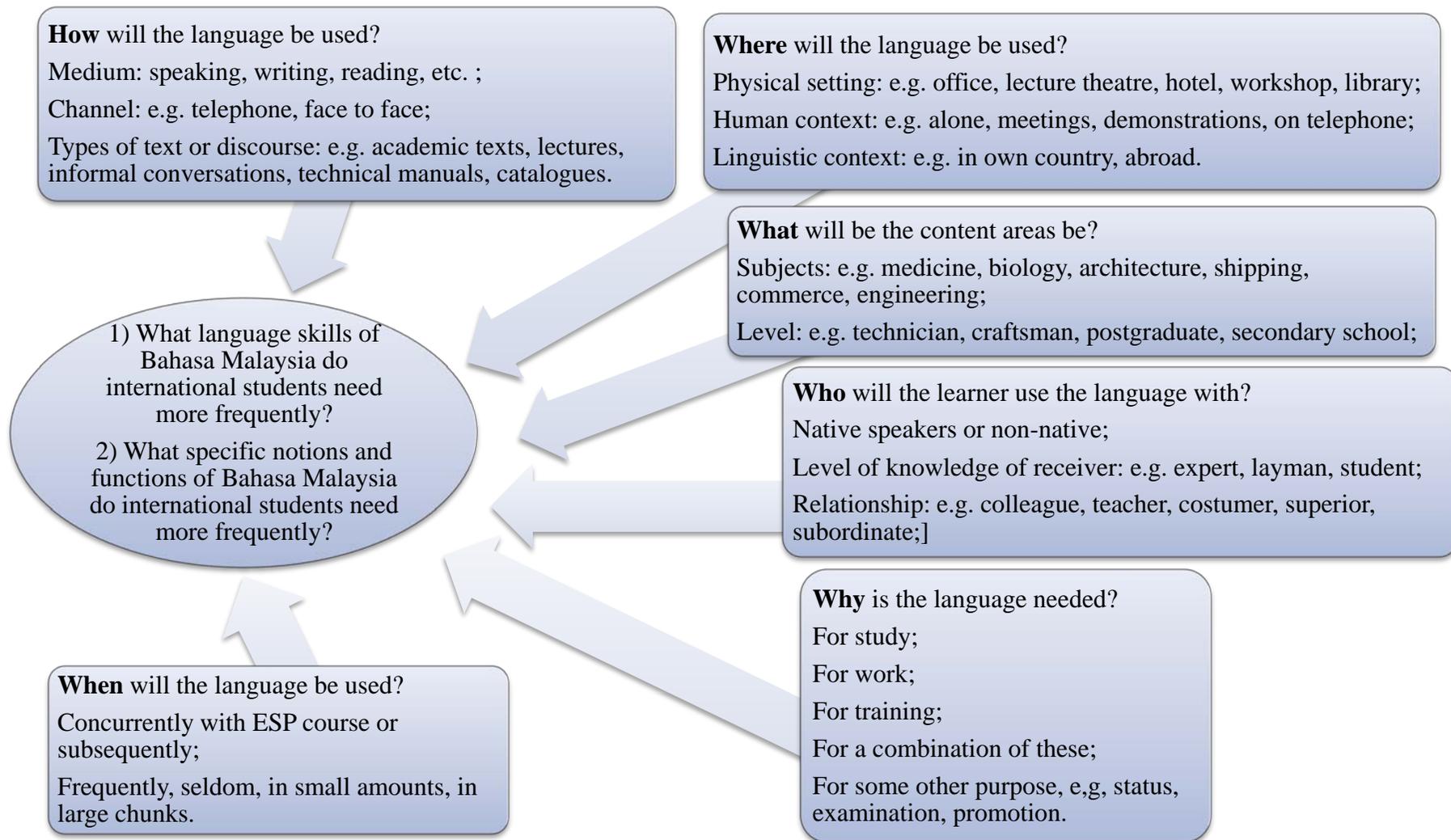


Figure 2.1 Relationship between Research Questions 1 & 2 and Hutchinson & Waters' (1987) Framework for Analysing Learners' Needs

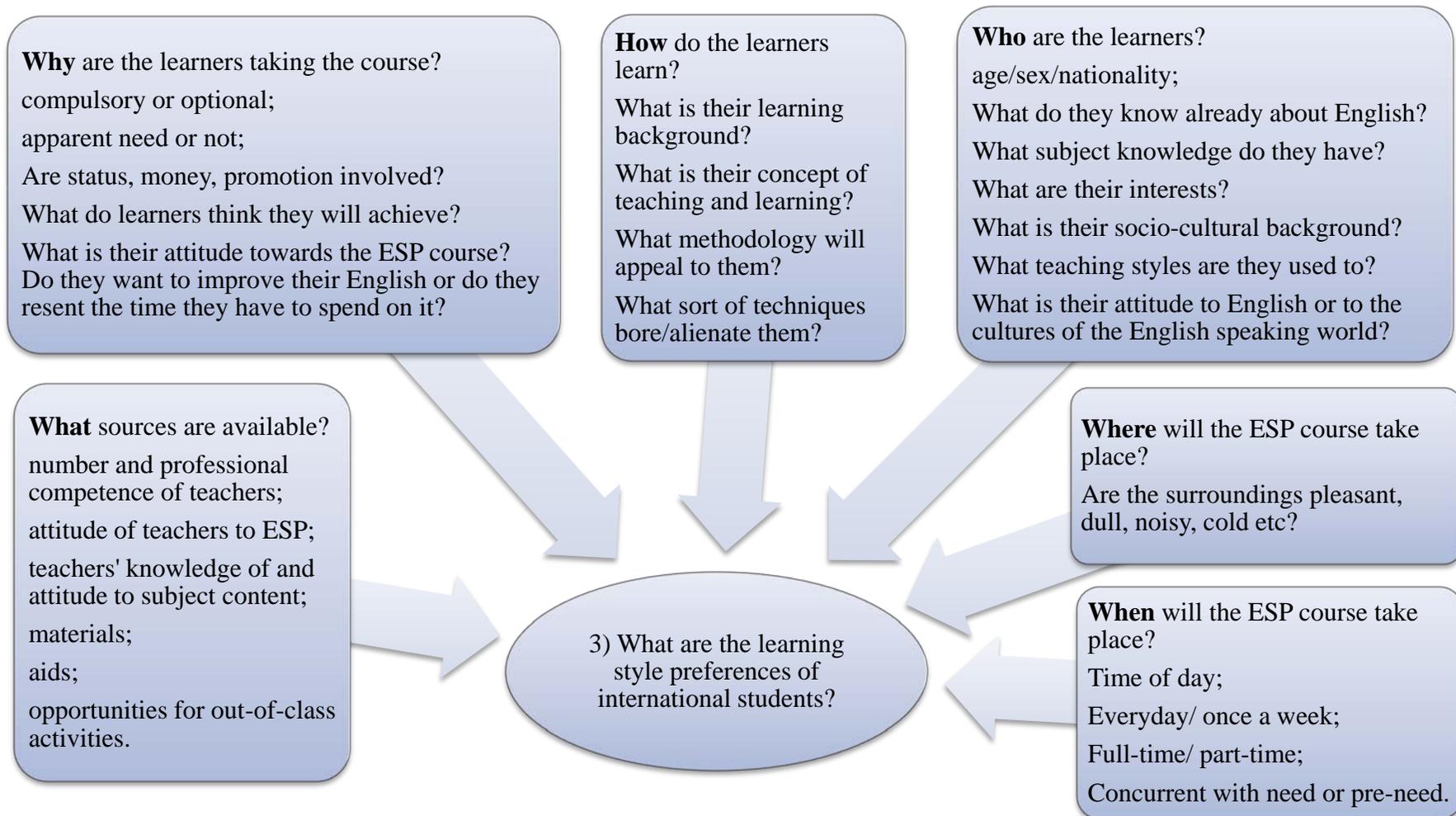


Figure 2.2 Relationship between Research Question 3 and Hutchinson & Waters' (1987) Framework for Analysing Learning Needs

Figure 2.2 shows the third research question in relation with Hutchinson and Waters' (1987) framework for analysing learning needs.

2.7 TYPES OF NEEDS

Specific language needs can be defined as the requirements that arise from the use of language in the relevant work situation of learners. In analyzing learners' needs, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) have differentiated *target needs* and *learning needs*. *Target needs* are the learners' language requirements in the target situation, be it occupational or academic. Target needs of learners are classified as *necessities*, *lacks* and *wants*. *Learning needs*, on the other hand, are the learners' requirements to learn.

2.7.1 Necessities

According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987), 'Necessities' are the type of needs "determined by the demand of the target situation". In other words, necessities are "what the learner has to know in order to function effectively in the target situation". For example, a businessperson needs to understand business letters in order to communicate effectively (p. 55). Considering this definition and by observing the situations in which the learners of BM need to function, that is, everyday non-academic and non-professional situations, international students who, as a requirement to their admission, have at least an intermediate command of English can fulfil their everyday social interactions by using the English language. This is because English is widely spoken as a second language in Malaysia. Nevertheless, there are certain situations in which foreign residents of Malaysia are exposed to some extent of BM be it in written form, such as public signs and notices, traffic signs, bills, forms and bank receipts; or in spoken form as in local markets, buses or trains where BM is much more commonly

used. Similarly, there must be some conditions in which international students have to comprehend (read or listen) or produce (speak or write) their host country's official language. Therefore, in order to identify their necessities, we are bound to identify the target situations. Part B in the questionnaire (see Appendix B) was dedicated to this purpose.

2.7.2 Lacks

'Lacks' is the term used to refer to the gap between the existing proficiency of the learners and their target proficiency. It can be presumed that almost none of the international students of UM who have to attend the BM course have any knowledge of BM before attending this course. In fact, the syllabus of the current BM course is based on this assumption since it begins with the introduction of the alphabet and sounds in BM. Nevertheless, because many of the international students might have had stayed a few months or even years in Malaysia (or other countries where BM or similar languages are spoken) before taking the course, an item in Part A of the questionnaire asks the students about their knowledge of BM before attending the course.

2.7.3 Wants

The last type of target needs as Hutchinson and Waters (1987) explain is 'wants'. They refer to 'wants' as "subjective" or perceptive needs that are determined by learners' "view as what their needs are". They further argue that learners may have a clear idea of their 'necessities' and their 'lacks' ("objective needs"), but what might be different and in conflict with the course designers and teachers' views, is their *perceptions* of what they need, which may vary according to each learner's standpoint. With a few examples of case studies, they conclude, "there's no necessary relationship between necessities as perceived by sponsors or ESP teacher and what the learners want

or feel they need". Thus, since one important issue in language learning is learner's motivation, we cannot ignore learners' perceived wants (p. 57). In section 2.8 , the role of motivation in language learning will be further discussed.

Based on various studies, views of students about what and how they want to learn, could be considerably different from those of teachers or syllabus. The results of a study done by Barkhuizen (1998) (cited by Riazi and Riasati, 2007), reveal that "teachers were frequently surprised to learn about the thoughts and feelings of their students". Spratt's (1999) study, too, shows a "considerable lack of correspondence between the learners' preferences and teachers' perceptions of them". She "concludes that teachers' perceptions of learners' preferences corresponded in approximately 50% of cases with learners' actual preferences" (as cited in Riazi and Riasati, 2007, p. 102).

One study that revealed the mismatches between *necessities* perceived by course designers and teachers and those perceived by learners (wants) is an English language NA undertaken at the College of Petroleum and Engineering, Kuwait University in 1996. Helen Basturkmen (1998) reviewed this NA study in terms of its methodology, procedure, results, and conclusion. "A major objective of the NA was to establish a database of information concerning the use of English by students in the College". The specific information that was aimed to be gathered included "English language demands in engineering studies, the areas of difficulty encountered meeting these demands, and the students' assessment of the usefulness of the English language instruction given." (p. 3). Findings revealed some mismatches between the perceptions and views of students and faculty. For example, students believed that listening skills were much more important than reading skills, whereas the faculty considered the two skills as almost equally important. Another divergence, as Basturkmen (1998) reports, appeared to exist between faculty and students' views about language problem areas. While faculty

members perceived the students' writing skills as inadequate, the majority of the students regarded themselves as having inadequate speaking skills.

Another study on learners' perceptions of their English language needs is an NA of students at a university in Japan by Martin Balint (n.d.). The findings from a questionnaire indicated that students considered English valuable for general knowledge and future work. They also believed that "while English is challenging it is also enjoyable". In another section, students confirmed that they were interested in English mostly for future work or conversational purposes rather than for academic needs (p. 32). Findings also revealed that "students feel learning English should help them watch movies or TV programmes in English" or be used at hotels and restaurants during their trips overseas (p. 33).

These studies can imply that teachers' awareness of their students' learning style preferences, their attitude towards learning the target language will enable them to facilitate the target learning objectives in the classroom. To raise such awareness for both teachers and students, learners must be given chances to express their learning preferences. Furthermore, teachers should be asked about their perceptions of students' learning needs and preferences so that by comparing these two groups' attitudes and perceptions, students and teachers can establish a closer cooperation to decide what learning activities must be used in the classroom.

Regarding the purpose of this study, to be able to compare the findings about the international students needs with the course designers and teachers' perceptions of the students needs, the current syllabus and textbook of the BM course can account for the teacher and course planners' perceptions and views of the students' needs. The reason this can be assumed is that the primary teacher of the course has prepared and organized

the classroom booklet, which is the main course material. The course administrators do not use any course book offered in the market in the classes and the activities and the topics that are found in the current classroom booklet, are selected and sorted by the course designers in the faculty of Languages and Linguistics. Furthermore, since only one teacher has been involved in the planning of the syllabus, the issue of anonymity of the participants would not have been respected, if that person had to be interviewed for his views and perceptions.

Findings of above studies and many such researches, reconfirm the valuable role of needs analysis in exploring and understanding learners' true language needs and identifying their perceptions, and what they consider important and useful in their challenging journey of language learning. Frequent and regular NA surveys about language courses of any kind or purpose help syllabus designers and language planners to provide programmes that would more efficiently cater for particular language learners.

2.7.4 Learning Needs

To clarify yet another category of needs, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) compare the ESP course to a journey in which learners begins from 'lacks', as the starting point and travel forward to the destination which is the 'necessities', or another particular destination perceived by learners which is 'wants'. *Learning needs* is another kind of needs by knowing which, one can find the 'route' for this journey (p. 60). Since the ultimate purpose of an ESP course is for the students to *learn*, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) believe it is naive to base an ESP course only on target objectives and not on how students *learn* those targets. Table 2.3 shows their proposed framework for identification of learning needs.

2.7.5 Learning Style Preferences

McLaughlin (1981) defines *learning* as a process where there is interaction between a learner and the context of learning. Different learners learn differently based on their particular learning styles. Learning style is the general approach a learner uses to understand and learn a subject or solve a new problem including a second or foreign language (Oxford & Ehrman 1993).

2.7.6 Categorization of Learning Styles

As cited in Riazi and Riasati (2007), Reid (1995) categorizes learning styles into three major types: *cognitive learning styles*, *sensory learning styles*, and *personality learning styles*.

Cognitive Learning Styles

In this category, we have *Field-independent* as opposed to *Field-dependent* learners. “Field-independent learners learn more effectively step by step, beginning with analyzing facts and proceeding to ideas. Field-dependent learners, in contrast, prefer to learn in context and holistically”.

Another group are *Analytic* and *Global* learners. “Analytic learners learn individually, and prefer setting goals. Global learners, on the other hand, learn more effectively through concrete experience and by interaction with other people”.

The third category includes *Reflective* and *Impulsive* learners. “Reflective learners learn more effectively when they have time to consider options before responding. Impulsive learners, however, are able to respond immediately and take risks” (Riazi & Riasati, 2007, p. 99).

Sensory Learning Styles

The Sensory learning styles are divided into two categories of *Perceptual learning styles* and *Environmental learning styles*.

Perceptual learning styles include *Auditory* learners who learn more effectively through the ear (hearing), *Visual* learners, who “learn more effectively through the eyes (seeing)”, *Tactile* learners, who “learn more effectively through touch (hands-on)”, *Kinesthetic* learners, who “learn more effectively through body experience (movement)”. Finally, the last group are *Haptic* learners, who “learn more effectively through touch and body involvement”.

Environmental learning styles category includes learners who are *Physical* or *Sociological*. *Physical* learners “learn more effectively when variables such as temperature, sound, light, food, time, and classroom arrangement are considered”; whereas, *Sociological* learners learn better “when variables such as group, individual, pair, and teamwork, and level of teacher authority are regarded”.

Personality Learning Styles

In this category, we have learners who are either *Extroversion* or *Introversion*, *Sensing* or *Perception*, *Thinking* or *Feeling*, *Judging* or *Perceiving*, *Ambiguity-tolerant* or *Ambiguity-intolerant*, or *Left-brained* or *Right-brained* (Riazi & Riasati, 2007, p. 99). The following section briefly describes the characteristics of each of the Personality Learning Styles (as cited in Riazi & Riasati, 2007, p. 100).

Extroversion vs. Introversion: Extroverted learners are interested in concrete experience, contact with outside, and relationship with others. Introverted learners, on the other hand, are more interested in individual, independent situations.

Sensing vs. Perception: Sensing learners learn best from reports of observable facts and happenings, and rely on their five senses. This is while, perception learners learn more effectively from meaningful experiences and relationships with others.

Thinking vs. Feeling: Thinking learners learn best from impersonal circumstances and logical consequences. On the other hand, feeling learners prefer personalized circumstances and social values.

Judging vs. Perceiving: Judging learners learn by reflection, analysis, and processes that involve closure. Perceiving learners, in contrast, learn through negotiation, feeling, and inductive processed that postpone closure.

Ambiguity-tolerant vs. Ambiguity-intolerant: Ambiguity-tolerant learners learn best when opportunities for experience and risk, as well as interaction, are present. Ambiguity-intolerant learners, however, learn most effectively when in less flexible, less risky, and more structured situations.

Left-brained vs. Right-brained: Left-brained learners tend toward visual, analytic, reflective, self-reliant learning. Right-brained learners, on the contrary, are more interested in auditory, global, impulsive, interactive learning.

(Riazi & Riasati, 2007, p. 100)

To investigate learning style preferences of second language learners of English, Reid (1987) carried out a study on 1234 non-native speakers of English with different nationalities, such as Chinese, Spanish, Japanese, Malaysian, Korean, Arab , and Indonesian. From the findings of her research, Reid (1987) concluded that, students from different cultures and learning backgrounds have different learning style preferences. She also found that “variables such as sex, length of time spend overseas, major field, and level of education” play important roles in favouring a particular type of learning style in language learners.

In an attempt to identify EFL learners’ learning style preferences, Riazi and Riasati (2007), administered Brindley’s (1984) questionnaire to 219 male and female Iranian EFL learners studying in different language institutes in Iran. They also

involved 14 English language teachers in their study by asking them the same questions about their perceptions of the learners' preferred learning styles. The results of their study indicated that the majority of the students involved in their study seemed to "favour a *communicative* approach to perfecting their language skills by working in pairs/ groups, tending to be actively engaged in classroom discussions, practicing their English by talking to their peers and having interaction with other people" (Riazi & Riasati, 2007, p. 115). Since similar to the present study, Riazi and Riasati have adopted Brindley's (1984) questionnaire to assess the students' learning style preferences, the results reported and discussed in their study are comparable with the results of the present study. Therefore, in Chapter 4, the similarities and differences will be discussed in more details (see 4.5 ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH QUESTION 3, page 119).

Several other studies have been done to explore the extent to which students' learning based on their learning style preferences helps students achieve higher scores. The results have shown that when teaching methods and learning activities match the students' preferred learning styles, they achieve higher scores and learn better (see Debello, 1985; Perrin, 1984; Perrin, 1990).

Thus, it is necessary for the teachers and educators to identify their students' preferred learning styles so that they can enable students to learn better by designing and implementing lessons that match those learning styles.

2.8 MOTIVATION IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

There are different ways to define motivation. Harmer (2001) refers to motivation as "some kind of internal drive which pushes someone to do things in order to achieve something" (p. 51). Brown (1994) defines motivation as "a term that is used to define the success or the failure of any complex task" (p. 152). Another way of

defining it is to state that “to be motivated means to be moved to do something” (Ryan and Deci 2000, p. 54). To sum up, based on these definitions, motivation refers to the force that assists to steer students to either do well or otherwise.

In academic setting, one of the most influential factors on the students’ success or failure is motivation. While physical factors such as class facilities can be controlled and improved by the teacher or other authorities, students’ motivation is not easily achieved or controlled. In fact, lack of motivation among students can become an obstacle in their learning process. Santrock (2006) believes “unmotivated students will not expend the necessary effort to learn”. (p. 414). In conclusion, in order to teach and learn effectively, motivation must be infused.

2.8.1 Extrinsic or Instrumental Motivation

Students can be motivated by factors such as rewards, praises, passing examinations or securing jobs; however, the achievements gained through this type of motivation tend to disappear as soon as those encouraging factors are gone. Santrock (2006) refers to this kind of motivation as instrumental motivation and defines it as “doing something to obtain something else (a means to an end)” (p. 418). Woolfolk (2004) believes when a person is doing “something in order to earn a grade, avoid punishment, please the teacher or for some other reasons other than the task itself”, he or she is influenced by extrinsic or instrumental motivation (p. 351). Regarding the BM course of UM, one of the main extrinsically motivating factor for the international students to attend the BM classes is that it is compulsory.

Extrinsic or instrumental motivation might not seem to have much value since willingness to learn fades away as the extrinsic factors disappear. Nevertheless, inducing this type of motivation should not be discarded. In fact, encouragement and

praises from the side of the teacher and feeling of job security and fulfilling educational requirements can be rewarding and satisfying for the students.

Apart from external motivating factors, some external elements can have destructive and demotivating effects on the learning. Classroom conditions such as unsuitable air-conditioning or lighting, distractive noises, and uncomfortable furniture, often disturb learning and discourage students. These factors, however, can be controlled and improved by the teacher and course administrators, to ensure a comfortable and effective classroom environment for the students.

2.8.2 Intrinsic or Integrative Motivation

Motivation that comes from a person's desire to learn the subject matter, regardless of gifts, better grades or better job perspectives, is usually assumed to last longer and facilitate better learning. This type of motivation is referred to as intrinsic or integrative motivation. Santrock (2006) defines it as the desire to do something "for its own sake (an end in itself)" (p. 418). Woolfolk (2004) believes "the natural tendency to seek out and conquer challenges as we pursue personal interests and exercise capabilities" is called intrinsic motivation (p. 351). In addition, Falk (1978) believes that the most successful language learners are students with internal desire to learn the target language as well as its culture. Thus, integrative motivation can play an effective role in the learning process. Internally motivated students are enthusiastic and active in class. A class with motivated and participating students is dynamic and interactive. One strategy to increase the student's desire to learn and to keep them internally motivated is incorporating what they believe is useful to them in the content of the language course.

The definitions provided by various researchers affirm that although these two forms of motivations are different, they are equally important. In fact, there are times in

which extrinsic or instrumental motivation is required in order to persuade students to, at least, try to listen and understand the subject matter being discussed. Woolfolk (2004, p. 352) stated “...in school, both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations are useful”.

To enhance language learners’ intrinsic or extrinsic motivation, it is essential to not only adapt the content of the course to students’ necessities, lacks and wants (intrinsic motivation), but also provide students with suitable class facilities and encouraging rewards (extrinsic motivation). This once again brings us to the crucial and significant role of a needs analysis study, in identifying those needs, wants and preferred learning and teaching styles.

2.9 THE PRELIMINARY STUDY

In the second session of the academic year 2008-2009, the researcher carried out a preliminary Needs Analysis study on the BM course in UM. A questionnaire was designed and handed out to the postgraduate international students attending the course at the time. A total number of 75 out of 90 handed out questionnaires were completely filled out and were used in the data analysis. The data were analyzed through the frequency analysis of SPSS software. The results revealed several mismatches between the language needs of the international students of UM and the components of the present course of BM. The mismatches were especially evident when the functional use of the language was concerned. The majority of international students admitted that they frequently needed daily functional use of BM, such as understanding traffic signs, or bills, communicating with shopkeepers, taxi drivers, or waiters, asking for and giving directions, or filling out forms.

2.9.1 Research Design and Procedure

A mixed methods research design was used in the preliminary study used. The qualitative stage, which included interviews, was conducted before the quantitatively oriented stage. The interviews were held with 5 postgraduate international students who were selected from different nationalities and had not taken the BM course. The objective of the first stage was to gather information about the students' Malay language needs. The interviews were held in an informal and friendly setting. The information gathered at this stage was used to prepare the items for the questionnaire, which was the main data collection instrument and produced the main bulk of the data.

A semi-structured questionnaire (see Appendix F) was used for the quantitative stage which consisted of both closed-ended and open-ended questions. The reason to include open-ended questions was to let the students feel free to express any further needs and wants, which might have not been included among the closed-ended items. Besides, open-ended questions on the questionnaire help the researcher to collect qualitative data, which could later be used in further studies such as the present study. Although compared to the present research, more respondents were involved in the preliminary study, the study was done on a smaller scale in terms of the number of items on the questionnaire and the types of needs covered. The preliminary study only aimed to explore the *necessities* and *wants* of the international students regarding the Malay language. There were no questions on the students' preferred learning and teaching styles, or as Hutchinson and Waters (1987) call it, the *learning needs*. Furthermore, the preliminary study only addressed the postgraduate international students while the present study included the undergraduate participants as well.

2.9.2 Summary of the Main Findings

The postgraduate participants included 54 master's students and 21 PhD students, from five different faculties in UM. 59.5% of the respondents asserted that they would have taken this course even if it were not compulsory. This shows that more than half of the students were internally motivated to participate in the course. 70% of the respondents had faced a situation when they needed to use BM which signifies the importance of the international residents to know their host country's lingua franca. A majority of 77.3% of the participants was satisfied with the venue and 88% were satisfied with the time of classes. However, in their further comments, some suggested that the venue should have been somewhere close to the main library, so that they would not have to walk a long distance to the IPS building, where the classes were held. Finally, 74.7% of the students believed that they needed to know more about the cultural context of the language (e.g. body language, eye contact, facial expressions, and national celebrations). Table 2.4 summarizes the results discussed above.

Table 2.4 Needs and Preferences of the Postgraduate Students

Question	YES	NO
10. Do you have problems understanding (electricity, water, or internet) bills?	57.3	42.7
11. Are you satisfied with the location of the class (IPS building)?	77.3	22.7
12. Are you satisfied with the time of the classes?	88.0	12.0
13. Along with learning Bahasa Malaysia, do you think you need to know more about the cultural context of this language?	74.7	25.3
14. Would you have taken this course if it were not compulsory?	59.5	40.5
15. Have you been in a situation when you needed to know Bahasa Malaysia?	70	30

Table 2.5 shows the results from a similar table on the questionnaire, on which the students were asked to rate the extent to which they had problems in each of the

given situations. The items included in the table were the language functions and skills needed as identified by the international students in the initial interviews. In the discussion of findings, the percentages of the first two columns (All the Time and Some Times) have been added up to refer to the more problematic areas. Similarly, the percentages provided in the second two columns (Not Very Often and Never) have been added up to refer to the language functions which are not needed by the international students very often or at all.

Based on the findings, 54.7% of the international students, who participated in the study, had difficulty in understanding traffic signs. Over 55% found it difficult to communicate with shopkeepers. For 63% of the respondents communicating with taxi drivers was difficult. 53.3% of the respondents faced difficulty in communicating with waiters. However, 52.1% of the students did not find it difficult to communicate with police/security officers. The 61.3% of students found it difficult to ask for addresses and give directions, whereas, over 53% of them did not have problems with communicating in offices inside and outside the university. On the other hand, a large group of 79.7% had problems filling out forms in BM, and 61.3% had difficulty in understanding notices on campus or in their faculty. Besides, 57% of students found it difficult to understand electricity, water, or internet bills and 80% of students believed that translation of bills should be included in the coursework. In most cases, the findings did not have very strong tendencies towards a particular language notion or function. However, the figures do highlight that the language functions and language skills related to the situations given on the questionnaire can be added to the coursework of the current BM programme to make the contents relevant to real-life activities and situations that international students deal in their daily interactions.

Table 2.5 Necessities and Wants of the Postgraduate Students

Situation	I have problems:					
	All the Time %	Some Times %	Sub Total %	Not Very Often %	Never %	Sub Total %
1. Understanding traffic signs and notices	12.0	42.7	54.7	38.7	6.7	45.3
2. Communicating with shopkeepers	16.2	39.2	55.4	35.1	9.5	44.6
3. Communicating with taxi drivers	12.3	50.7	63.0	27.4	9.6	37.0
4. Communicating with waiters in restaurants	8.0	45.3	53.3	32.0	14.7	46.7
5. Communicating with police officers and security officers	9.5	38.4	47.9	27.4	24.7	52.1
6. Asking for addresses and giving directions	22.6	38.7	61.3	30.7	8.0	38.7
7. Communicating in different offices inside and outside university	4.1	42.5	46.6	34.2	19.2	53.4
8. Filling out forms in Bahasa Malaysia	40.5	39.2	79.7	14.9	5.4	20.3
9. Understanding notices on campus or/in your faculty	24	37.3	61.3	24.0	14.7	38.7

2.10 CONCLUSION

The review of the related literature presented in this chapter, together with the findings from the preliminary study on the BM course, signify the importance and value of a Needs Analysis study in helping the course designers of this programme to obtain a clearer understanding of the international students' necessities, lacks, wants, and learning style preferences.