

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The study is aimed at investigating tertiary students, ESL lecturers and subject lecturers' perceptions towards the foundation students' academic English language needs and the students' opinions pertaining to the two English language courses offered currently at the university – Proficiency English 1 and Proficiency English 2. This needs analysis takes the form of survey research, which investigates the students' English language strengths and weaknesses, language needs, learning preferences and their feedback towards the two English language courses taken while they were doing foundation programmes at the university .

This chapter gives an account of the methodology used in conducting the needs analysis. It describes the selection of subjects, instrument used, the analytical framework, the collection of data, the analysis of data and the pilot study. For this particular study, the major data was collected via questionnaire survey of undergraduates and lecturers from different faculties. Questionnaire was used in the study because it involved a large number of participants and the structured responses could be analysed more accurately using SPSS software. As the study takes the form of a survey, the analysis report is descriptive in nature. Before the methodology is discussed in detail, some background information about the target population or subjects involved in this study will be discussed.

3.1 Subjects

Three groups of respondents participated in the study: undergraduate students, ESL (English as a second Language) lecturers and subject lecturers. These respondents were selected as they were able to provide relevant and meaningful input regarding the students' academic English language needs from different perspectives and with which their perceptions or views could be compared. This is in line with the arguments that needs analysis should use multiple sources to increase its reliability and validity (Brown, 1995; Long, 1999; Witkin & Asltschuld, 1995). In addition to that, Keita (2004), in the Proceedings of the 3rd Annual JALT Pan-SIG Conference, also stressed that "collect information from various kinds of participants, one would do well to compare data from several sources".

3.1.1 The Students

The present study is based on the data collected from 93 undergraduates of Universiti Industri Selangor (UNISEL) during the first semester of 2009/2010 academic session. The students of this study were, at the time of the research, pursuing full-time bachelor's degree from three faculties of the university. The whole population of the target group of students was 102 students but 9 students were absent during the data-collection session. The students into which these faculties were grouped are presented in the following proportions: Faculty of Engineering (21 students), Faculty of Industrial Management (39 students) and Faculty of Information Technology (33 students). The target population of this study were the second semester degree students and they were also the

post-foundation students of May 2008 semester (3/2008/2009 session) intake. Therefore, the post-STPM or post-Matriculation students were excluded from the study as they were not able to provide relevant input for the study. In the three-semester foundation programmes, the students took two English language courses which are Proficiency English 1 and Proficiency English 2, besides other core subjects. These two courses, which constitute three credit hours each, are offered in the first and second semester. The students have to pass the two English courses before they are allowed to further their studies in the degree programmes.

The significance of having these students as respondents is that they were all formerly from the one-year Foundation programmes (Foundation in Science, Foundation in Management and Foundation in Information Technology) where they had undergone PE1 and PE2 in the first and second semester so they were in the right position to provide relevant data needed for the study based on their experience of learning the two courses. With this direct experience, they were able to provide feedback pertaining to how PE1 and PE2 were helpful and sufficient in assisting them to learn in their academic studies. In addition to that, they had completed at least four semesters of university study (three semesters of foundation programme and one semester of degree programme) and were in the midst of completing the second semester, thus, they were able to judge their own performance for instance their language proficiency level, language difficulties encountered in the process of learning, language needs and learning preferences.

Although the 93 post-foundation students were taking different degree programmes in the respective faculties, they were still gathered according to the previous groups while

taking the faculty core subjects. Therefore, the collection of data from the target students was made possible and convenient.

3.1.2 The Lecturers

Information concerning the students' academic English language needs was also obtained from the perspective of lecturers. Besides the ESL lecturers, the participants in this study also included the subject lecturers from other faculties. The inclusion of the subject lecturers in this study is considered important as their respective demands and needs pertaining to the students' language needs could be different from those perceived by the ESL lecturers. Therefore, this is an additional dimension to overcome the gap of responses derived from both lecturers as the use of multiple sources such as published or unpublished literature, learners, teachers and domain experts (Long, 2005) can ensure that a wide variety of data can be gathered and compared. Regarding this, Long (2005:32) also adds that "it is difficult to overemphasize the likelihood that use of multiple measures, as well as multiple sources, will increase the quality of information gathered". Furthermore, Cowling (2007) speculates the same in this issue that this method (involvement of different sources in conducting needs analysis) was particularly useful as "by casting a large net to cover many sources allowed for more opportunities to identify needs and also to filter out any inaccurate perceived needs through the use of triangulation".

A total of 18 lecturers participated in the study: ten ESL lecturers, three Engineering lecturers, three Information Technology lecturers and two Management lecturers. The lecturers shared two characteristics which qualified them to participate in the study: (i) they were teaching the students while the study was carried out (in degree classes) and (ii) they

taught the students in the previous semesters (in foundation or degree classes). The 10 ESL lecturers, through their experience of teaching PE1 and PE2 to the students when they were in foundation programmes, were able to identify the students' English language problems and needs based on the students' classroom performance and on-going assessments. The subject lecturers, on the other hand, could provide feedback about the students' English usage after many years of teaching experience and contact with the students at respective faculties. Thus they have good knowledge of the students especially their strengths and weaknesses in using the language to accomplish various academic tasks such as oral presentation, group discussion, course assignments and research report. After discussing the population, the analytical framework used by the researcher in the study - Hutchinson and Waters' (1987) Target Situation Analysis (TSA) framework and Learning Needs Analysis (LNA) Framework, will be discussed in the next section.

3.2 The Framework of Analysis

The analytical framework of this study is based on the work of Hutchinson and Waters (1987). They advocate the 'learner-centred approaches' which cover both 'target needs' and 'learning needs' in analysing language needs: the Target Situation Analysis (TSA) Framework and the Learning Needs Analysis (LNA) Framework. The approaches and the frameworks are considered well established as their works have influenced many researches and they have been widely adopted or adapted in studies carried out in different contexts as in Dudley-Evans and St. John's (1998), Kavaliauskiene and Uzpaliene (2003), Qi Shen (2008), Deutch (2003), Huanran Mo (2005), Rizvi (2005), Muhammad Nadzri (2004), Saraswathy (2003), Law (2003) and Yeoh (2006).

In explaining the terminology ‘needs’, Hutchinson and Waters bring in two broad concepts: “target needs” (what the learners need to do in the target situation) and “learning needs” (what the learner needs to do in order to learn) which are specifically referred as language needs and not other aspects (Jordan, 1997). Jordan (1997:25) also believes that learning is a ‘process of negotiation between individuals and society which includes teaching, syllabus, methods, material, etc’. Therefore, based on this, they stress that needs analysis has to be a ‘learning-centred approach’. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) classify target needs into ‘necessities’, ‘lacks’, and ‘wants’. ‘Necessities’ are what the learners ‘have to know in order to function effectively in the target situation’ which would involve obtaining information about the situations in which the language will be used, e.g. lectures, seminars, etc. (Jordan, 1997). ‘Lacks’ represent the gap between the target proficiency and the existing proficiency of learners and ‘wants’ refer to what the learners feel they need. Hutchinson and Waters’s (1987) concept of needs was then revisited and reemphasized in Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) with another revised version which are termed as three analytical categories: Target Situation Analysis, Present Situation Analysis and Learning Situation Analysis which actually represent the ideas of necessities, lacks and wants respectively (Faiz, 2005).

Although the main concern of this study was the analysis of the learners’ target needs of learning English at tertiary level but an attempt was also made to investigate their ‘learning needs’. This is to understand the learners’ preferred ways of learning the English language. A language needs analysis could be considered as incomplete if students’ learning needs are not addressed. Ridzi (2005) has the same opinion on this issue where he mentioned that ‘a very important, rather the most important, element in the process of teaching any language course is the learner and his/her learning needs’. This is also agreed

by Hutchinson and Waters (1987) and Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) that a valid approach to EAP must be based on an understanding of the processes of students' language learning. As for the present study, two research questions (research questions 1 and 2) were constructed based on the components of target needs and one question (research question 3) concerned the learners' learning needs.

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) postulate a Target Situation Analysis (TSA) framework which comprises a series of questions to be considered by researchers when analysing learners' target needs. This information is considered necessary and it has been high-lighted by Faiz (2005) to be easily incorporated into a target needs survey questionnaire to be completed by learners and the sponsors (e.g. educational institutions). Similarly, in looking at learners' learning needs, Hutchinson and Waters also suggest several questions in the Learning Needs Analysis (LNA) Framework. The questions that a researcher should pay attention to while carrying out a needs analysis to find out learners' target language needs and language learning needs are outlined in the analytical frameworks (refer to figure 3.1, p.52).

With the input pertaining to students' perceived target needs and learning needs of English language learning, the researcher hopes that it would be helpful in revising the current PE1 and PE2 syllabi.

TSA Framework
Why is the language needed? How will the language be used? What will the content area be? Who will the learner use the language with? Where will the language be used?

LNA Framework
Why are the learners taking the course? How do the learners learn? What sources are available? Who are the learners? Where will the ESP course take place? When will the ESP course take place?

Figure 3.1: Target Situation Analysis (TSA) Framework and Learning Needs Analysis (LNA) Framework (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).

3.3 Instrumentation

The investigation of this study involved the collection of quantitative data using questionnaire survey. Questionnaire was selected as the instrument for the study because it can be used to collect data with large numbers of people. In addition, it is easy to administer and analyze if possible response are structured (Faiz, 2005). The use of questionnaires would allow for informant input, a process that is the most common method of needs analysis (West, 1994 cited in Cowling, 2007). Questionnaires are also thought to be the least consuming ways of collecting information, and this is why learners' needs are usually specified through questionnaires which enable researchers to determine long-term aims and short-term objectives (Kavaliauskiene & Uzpaliene, 2003). Surveys based on questionnaires have been widely used by researchers to conduct needs analysis and thus it has been established as the most common method which can help researcher to draw an

understanding of the learners' needs, lacks, learning styles etc. and also helping respondents to be aware of those areas at the same time.

In developing the questionnaires, several related studies on needs analysis were referred to, including Hutchinson and Waters, 1987; Dudley-Evans and St. John, 1998; Deutch, 2003; Saraswathy, 2003; Muhammad Nadzri, 2004; Banerjee and Wall, 2006; Evans and Green, 2007 and Cowling, 2007. Besides that, the researcher's own experience in teaching EAP courses in the university also contributed to the construction of the questionnaires. Although a number of questionnaires from previous works were used as reference, it had to be modified in a way where it can fulfil the objectives of this study especially after considering the focus of the study, institutional setting and more importantly the respondents of this study. A few shortcomings were detected in those questionnaires. For instance, 'Learning Needs', which is claimed by many researchers as being important in conducting needs analysis especially in the context of EAP, were left out in some of the questionnaires referred to. Those researchers were mainly focussed only on the learners' target needs of learning a language. Another shortcoming which was realised by the researcher in those questionnaires (e.g. Banerjee & Wall 2006; Evans & Green, 2007) was the choice of language and terminologies used in the questions which were considered inappropriate and hardly understood by students who are not from language education or linguistics background, e.g. 'organise texts on the macro-level', 'synthesising information', 'proof-reading written assignment', 'recognising main ideas and supporting details', etc.

Three different questionnaires were used to collect the data for the study, one for the students, one for the ESL lecturers and a parallel one for the subject lecturers (please

refer Appendices 3, 4 and 5). The questionnaires used in the survey elicited information about students' strengths and weaknesses in the various academic language aspects or the four language macro-skills (listening, reading, speaking and writing), opinions on the degree of importance of various academic language skills, preferable learning styles, expectations of language course content and the assessment of PE1 and PE2.

These survey questionnaires consist of close-ended questions (e.g. in Part 2, question 1 of all three questionnaires and Part 5, question 2a and 2b of the students' questionnaires), one open-ended question (in Part 5, question 3 of the student's questionnaire) and semi close-ended questions for the remaining questions of the three questionnaires.

The close-ended questions in the survey were used as Creswell (2008) claims that this type of question is practical as all individuals will answer the question using the response options provided and enables the researcher to conveniently compare the responses. For instance, the respondents are asked to rank the students' proficiency level in various English language skills with the preset options like 'Excellent', 'Good', 'Average', 'Weak' and 'Very weak' (in Part 2, question 1 of all the three questionnaires).

One open-ended question was posed in the student's questionnaire to provide suggestions or recommendations to improve PE1 and PE2. Open-ended question was used here because an open-ended humanistic needs analysis approach will allow target students express their views in their own words (Mackey & Bosquet, 1981 cited in Cowling, 2007) and it is to probe a little deeper and explore the many possibilities that individuals might create for a question (Creswell, 2008).

In the remaining questions of the three questionnaires, semi close-ended questions were used (e.g. Part 2: question 2, 3, 4, 5; Part 3: question 1, 2, 3 & 4 in the student's questionnaire). As Creswell (2008) states that semi close-ended question has all the advantages of close and open ended questions and while it also provides limited open-ended information to encourage responses, it does not overburden the researcher with information that needs to be coded. For example, below each question, space is provided for the respondents to specify other ideas or opinions which are not listed in the question.

For the close-ended questions, some items were adopted and some were adapted from the different sources. For instance, in Part 4 of the questionnaires where the respondents were required to respond to students' language learning preferences, many of the items asked in Muhammad Nadzri's (2004) questionnaire (under Part IV Course Design) were adopted as these two studies have the same focus that is to identify students' preferable learning materials or handouts, teaching aids, assessment techniques, learning modes and classroom activities. However, the researcher also added a few items that suit the learning environment of the university such as conducting oral test as a technique of evaluation and giving homework as part of learning activity. Nonetheless, a few were removed from the original work such as "using literature component as learning material" and "students producing their own handouts" because they are irrelevant to the EAP context and also the practice of the university.

Besides that, some questions asked in Saraswathy's (2003) questionnaire were also adopted and adapted in Part 2 (English Language Ability and Difficulties Encountered) and Part 3 (English Language Needs). Some items were adapted because they were too technical for the respondents of this research especially the students because of the use of jargon and linguistic terms in the original work. The researcher had to either paraphrase or

look for some other words to replace the original ones but the meaning was still retained such as for “understanding the subject matter of the lecture”, the researcher changed it to “understanding the content of the lecture” which sound more comprehensible to the students. The same thing was applied to questions which were adapted from Evans and Green (2007). For instance, the original words “identifying supporting details” were changed to “identifying extra information”.

3.3.1 The Student’s Questionnaire

The Student’s Questionnaire focused on five areas which were organized in five parts: Part 1 (Personal particulars), Part 2 (English language ability and difficulties encountered), Part 3 (English language needs), Part 4 (Language learning preferences) and Part 5 (Course evaluation). The questions asked in parts 2, 3 and 4 were semi close-ended which used a four-point (1- 4) Likert scale such as ‘a lot of difficulty’ to ‘no difficulty’, ‘very important’ to ‘not important’ and ‘strongly agree’ to ‘strongly disagree’. Whereas for the questions asked in Part 5 it was a combination of both semi-closed-ended and open-ended questions. Four-point scale or response categories were used instead of five-point scales in the semi-closed-ended questions. The middle category “undecided” was omitted in all the questions as it is not always clear what it means. For instance, when respondents respond “undecided”, it could mean a balance between positive and negative feelings on the issue or it could mean a lack of interest or knowledge on the topic (Johnson & Christensen, 2000). Due to the “uncertainty” factor, the researcher decided to omit the neutral category to enable respondents to take a stand. Each part of the questionnaire contained a few sub-parts and each served a purpose in the study as illustrated below.

Part 1: Personal Particulars

This part was to gather students' background information such as their matriculation number and the foundation programmes they signed up in the previous semesters. With the matriculation number, the researcher would be able to search for the students if certain clarification is needed from them concerning their responses given especially in the open-ended questions.

Part 2: English Language Ability and Difficulties Encountered

This part was to find out students' perceptions about their ability and difficulties encountered when using English for the various academic purposes in the learning process. There were five major questions: the first one dealt with the students' self evaluation of their proficiency level in the four macro-skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) using the rating scales ranging from excellent, good, average, weak to very weak. For questions 2, 3, 4 and 5 in Part 2 of the questionnaire, the students were required to indicate how much difficulty they had when performing various sub-skills under the four macro-skills. Question 2 was about difficulties encountered in listening tasks; Question 3 was on the difficulties encountered when using English to speak and communicate; Question 4 was on reading difficulties and Question 5 was about difficulties in writing in English. The students responded to these four questions on a four-point (1- 4) Likert scale as "a lot of difficulty", "some difficulty", "little difficulty" and "no difficulty".

Part 3: English Language Needs

This part was designed to obtain information on the types of English tasks under the four macro skills that students perceived as important in helping them to learn at the tertiary level. There were four questions in this section and each focused on one macro skill. The stem for the questions read as, “How important are the following tasks in helping you to perform well in studies?” covering listening, speaking, reading and writing in the respective questions. Students were asked to rate the importance of tasks under each macro skill as “very important”, “important”, “not important” and “not important”.

Part 4: Language Learning Preferences

The responses collected in this section gave insights about students’ learning needs (research question 3) pertaining to their opinions on teaching and learning materials, assessment, preferable learning modes and classroom activities. These aspects were covered under five parts which seek to investigate the extent to which students agree to the various statements under each aspect. The responses were measured on a four-point (1-4) Likert scale as “strongly agree”, “agree”, “disagree” and “strongly disagree”. The first part was designed to find out the students’ opinions on how the teaching and learning materials such as handouts and lecture notes should be produced or designed. Parts 2, 3, 4 and 5 focused on the students’ preferred teaching aids, types of assessment, learning modes and classroom activities in the English courses. The section was also to obtain ideas to improve the present PE1 and PE2.

Part 5: Course Evaluation

This particular part of the questionnaire required the students to evaluate both the English courses, PE1 and PE2. There were three questions in this part: the first one was a semi close-ended question which asked the students to self-reflect and judge the content of PE1 and PE2 by stating ‘YES’ or ‘NO’ of the various statements asked; the second question asked the students to rate PE1 and PE2 based on the preset grades such as ‘excellent’, ‘good’, ‘moderate’, ‘poor’ and ‘very poor’; and question three was an open-ended question which asked the students to provide suggestions or recommendations to improve the two English courses.

3.3.2 The ESL Lecturer’s Questionnaire

The questionnaires for the English language lecturers focused on four areas: Part 1 (personal particulars), Part 2 (English language ability and difficulties encountered), Part 3 (English language needs) and Part 4 (language learning preferences). The questionnaires contained the same categories as the student’s questionnaires except for Part 5. The stems used were modified. For example, instead of saying ‘indicate how much difficulty that you face in the following...’ the stem was changed to “indicate how much of difficulty that your students face in the following...”. Similar to the Student’s questionnaire also, the questions asked in Parts 2, 3 and 4 are also close-ended which use a four-point (1- 4) Likert scale such as ‘a lot of difficulty’ to ‘no difficulty’, ‘very important’ to ‘not important’ and ‘strongly agree’ to ‘strongly disagree’, and each part of this questionnaire was also subdivided into a few questions. The details of the four questions are explained in next section.

Part 1: Personal Particulars

In this part, the lecturers were asked to indicate their names and number of years teaching in UNISEL. This is important for the researcher to go back to them whenever there is a need for further clarification or explanation.

Part 2: English Language Ability and Difficulties Encountered

Part 2 was designed is to find out the ESL lecturers' perceptions towards their students' ability and difficulties when using different English sub-skills. Similar to the student's questionnaire, there were five questions here. The first one was about the students' proficiency level in the four macro-skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and the remaining questions 2, 3, 4 and 5 were pertaining to the difficulty that their students faced when performing various sub-skills.

Part 3: English Language Needs

This part gained information on the types of English tasks under the four macro skills that the ESL lecturers perceived as important for the students to learn at tertiary level. There were four questions in this part which covering listening, speaking, reading and writing in respective question. They were asked to rate the importance of tasks under each skill as "very important", "important", "not important" and "not important".

Part 4: Language Learning Preferences

This part was to find out from the lecturers about the students' learning needs pertaining to teaching and learning materials, assessment, preferable learning modes and classrooms activities. This was based on their observation and experience of teaching the students. The responses were measured on a four-point (1-4) Likert scale as “strongly agree”, “agree”, “disagree” and “strongly disagree”.

3.3.3 The Subject Lecturer's Questionnaire

The questionnaire for the content lecturers was the modified or simplified version of the ESL lecturer's questionnaire. The questionnaires were carefully designed so that it was comprehensible to the respondents and thus the responses given are reliable. This was done by omitting or replacing the language pedagogical terms e.g. skimming and scanning, supporting details, etc which were not familiar to the content lecturers. Besides that, some questions or statements asked in the ESL Lecturer's questionnaire cannot be used on the subject lecturers as they did not possess English language teaching background to make precise judgement. For instance, ‘the difficulty that the students have when using varieties of sentence patterns’, ‘linking sentences coherently and cohesively in paragraphs’ and ‘the types of teaching aids, evaluation techniques and learning activities which are suitable for English courses such as PE1 and PE2’. This questionnaire consists of three parts: Part 1 (Personal particulars), Part 2 (English language ability and difficulties encountered) and Part 3 (English language needs).

Part 1: Personal Particulars

The lecturers were asked to indicate their names, years of teaching experience in UNISEL and also the faculty they are attached to. With this information, the researcher would be able to contact them if certain clarification is needed from them concerning their responses given.

Part 2: English Language Ability and Difficulties Encountered

This part was to investigate the subject lecturer's perceptions about their students' ability and difficulties when listening, speaking, reading and writing in English. There were five major questions under this part with each focused on one language skill and the remaining one was about students' general language proficiency. Every major question was further subdivided into a few questions pertaining to different sub-skills under each language skill.

Part 3: English Language Needs

This part elicited information on the types of English tasks that the lecturers perceived as important for the students to study at tertiary level. The lecturers were required to rate the importance of each task under the four macro skills on a 4-point Likert scale as "very important", "important", "not very important" and "not important". The information gathered is illustrated in the following table.

3.4 Data collection procedures

The student questionnaires were administered and completed by the students while they were attending lectures in the classroom. Permission was obtained from the lecturers in advance before collecting the data. The researcher gave an explanation of the objective of administering the questionnaires and the way to answer the questions. The researcher was present throughout the session to help the students if they were facing any problems in answering the questionnaires and this was also to ensure the return of all questionnaires distributed. They were given about an hour to answer the questionnaires.

For the lecturers' questionnaires, it was sent to the lecturers by the researcher. They were briefed on the objective of the study personally and the importance of their involvement in the study. They were given a week to complete and the researcher collected the questionnaires back from them personally as well.

3.5 Data Analysis

The analysis of the study was largely based on the students and lecturers' feedback via questionnaires. Descriptive statistics were used to report the analysis. The close-ended responses of the students and lecturers' questionnaires were tabulated in the form of frequency counts, percentages and mean scores by using SPSS software. On the other hand, for the open-ended response, the data was coded and emerging themes were noted. This was done by picking out the relevant key responses and grouping them according to categories in a coding frame followed by interpretation. For instance, as the students were asked to provide suggestions or recommendations to improve PE1 and PE2, the themes

which derived from the students' responses include teaching aids & learning tasks, language skills, learning duration, level of language input and classroom size. The responses were discussed based on the themes or categories and matched with the data from the questionnaires to see if there was any new issue or information. This validated the responses obtained from questionnaires and provided further clarification or deeper insights into the academic English language needs of the learners. In order to ensure accuracy in the coding, a second coder was also involved. The reliability of the coding was high as both the researcher and the second coder's coding were relatively matched and the similarity was up to 80 percent.

3.6 Pilot Study

The student questionnaire was piloted on 34 Bachelor of Industrial Management students who were in their third semester during the 2/2008/2009 session and the lecturer questionnaire was piloted on 4 ESL lecturers and 2 subject lecturers from the Faculty of Industrial management. The students were chosen for the pilot study because they had undergone the same course as the respondents of this study in an earlier semester. On the other hand, the lecturers were selected because they have the experience of teaching the students. They were invited to comment on the questionnaire layout, content, item wording, instruction and the constructions of questions in the survey. This was to test the comprehension of the items in the questionnaires and to eliminate misunderstanding and ambiguities when answering the questions.

From the pilot study, it was found that the students faced some problems especially in understanding some technical terms such as "subject matter", "organization of texts",

“abbreviations”, “supporting details” and “scanning”. Besides that, they had problems in distinguishing the meaning conveyed by some of the questionnaire items such as “understanding the meaning of many words” and “understanding key vocabulary”. With the feedback, the researcher had to remove some of the difficult or technical terms and replaced them with simpler words. The researcher also combined similar items similar rephrased them.

On the other hand, the lecturers highlighted a few major problems in the questionnaires during the pilot study. The first one was about the number of questions asked. They commented that the questionnaire was too lengthy and would cause boredom to the lecturers. This might in turn affect their responses and consequently the accuracy of the data. In addition to the first problem, the lecturers added that some of the items in the questionnaires especially in Section 2, were redundant and the researcher was asked to combine them. They also commented on the wording which were too difficult to the students and also the sequence of items which were not well organised. The pilot questionnaires took about an hour for the students and about 40 minutes for the lecturers to complete. The final version of the questionnaires was distributed to students and lecturers in September 2009.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter presents the methodology used in investigating the academic English language needs of foundation students in UNISEL. The description of the subjects and the research instruments are presented. The use of different types of questions like close-ended, open-ended and semi close-ended in the design of the questionnaires allows the researcher to obtain various responses pertaining to the students' EAP needs via the different perspectives of the students, ESL lecturers and subject lecturers. The obtained data is analyzed using the SPSS statistical analysis.