

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this chapter, the review of the related literature on theories of needs analysis is going to be presented based on the relevant different perspectives, research findings and studies that are used as the basis for conducting this comparative study between the two groups' language needs.

#### 2.1 THEORIES OF NEEDS ANALYSIS

##### 2.1.1 Definitions of Needs and Needs Analysis

The basic aim of a needs analysis is to collect, and critically examine information about the *current situation*, in other words, where the learners are before teaching begins, and the *target situation*, which is where they will finish (the *training gap*) comparing these two situations lead to the course design (syllabus, methods, constraints, learning strategies, and so on) (Frendo, 2005, p.15).

**Needs Analysis** is the process of gathering and interpreting information on the uses language learners w place on the target language (TL) following instruction, and what the learners will need to do in the learning situation in order to learn the target language. The results of needs analysis are used in language program planning to make decision about appropriate learning objectives, syllabus content, teaching and assessment methods, learning materials and resources (Brindley, 2002).

Brindley further states that curriculum development processes in language teaching consist of needs analysis, goal setting, syllabus design, methodology, and testing and evaluation. After a needs analysis is conducted, language goals should be outlined based on the resulting needs of learners. Then, course objectives should be specified for class instruction, which then could lead to a specific method of instruction. Finally, testing and evaluation should be done for further improvement of the curriculum. *Needs analysis* involves the collection (before and during instruction) of both *objective* information (relating to the learner's biographical data, learning processes and language proficiency) and *subjective* information (relating to the learner's attitudes, preferences, wants, exceptions).

Additionally, Richards and Rodgers (1986, p. 156).state that needs analysis is used to identify general and specific language needs that can be addressed in developing goals, objectives, and content in a language program. Needs analysis may focus either on the general parameters of a language program, such as, obtaining data on who the learners are, their present level of language proficiency, teacher and learner's goals and expectations, the teacher's teaching skills and level of proficiency in the target language, constraints of time and budget, available instructional resources, as well as societal expectations, or on a specific needs, that is, the kind of listening comprehension training needs for foreign students attending graduate seminars in biology. Needs analysis focuses on what the learner's present level of proficiency is and on what the learner will be required to use the language for on completion of the program. Its aim is to identify the type of language skills and level of language proficiency the program should aim to deliver.

Hutchinson and Waters (1987, pp. 39-51) also define that theory indicates how learners learn and relates learning styles to the needs of the ESP learners and teachers. They are, Behaviorism - learning as habit formation, Mentalism - thinking as a rule-governed activity, Cognitive code - learners as thinking beings, affective - learner as emotional beings, and Learning and acquisition - learning as conscious and unconscious process.

Brindley (1989, p. 70) also says an objective needs refers to needs which are derivable from different kinds of factual information about learners, their use of language in real-life communication situations as well as their current language proficiency and language difficulties. Subjective needs refers to the cognitive needs of the learner in the learning situation, derivable from information about affective and cognitive factors such as personality, confidence, attitudes, learners' wants and expectations with regard to the learning of English and individual cognitive style and learning strategies.

### **2.1.2 Types of Needs and Needs Analysis**

Interestingly, "needs" has been interpreted through many different types depending on the research findings. Robinson (1991, p. 7) quoted Berwick, Brindley, Mountford and Widdowson's types of needs as follows: -

1. **Needs** can refer to students' study or job requirements, that is, what they have to be able to do at the end of their language course. This is a goal-oriented definition of needs. Needs in this sense is perhaps more appropriately described as "*objectives*".

2. **Needs** can mean what the user-institution or society at large regards as necessary or desirable to be learnt from a program of language instruction.

3. We can consider what the learner needs to do to actually acquire the language. This is a process-oriented definition of needs and relates to transitional behavior, the means of learning.

4. We can consider what the students' themselves would like to gain from the language course. This view of needs implies that students may have personal aims in addition to (or even in opposition to) the requirements of their studies or jobs.

According to Richards (1985, p. 5), there are three purposes for conducting a needs analysis as follows: -

1. To provide a mechanism for obtaining a wider range of input into the content, design, and implementation of a language program through involving people, such as learners, teachers, administrators, and employers in the planning process.

2. To identify general or specific language needs that could be addressed in developing goals, objectives, and content for a language program.

3. To provide data that could serve as the basis for reviewing and evaluating and exiting program.

Moreover, Berwick<sup>1</sup> (1989, pp. 55-57) notes that such personal needs may be (and often are) devalued by being viewed as "*wants* or *desires*". He also interprets *needs* as *lacks*, that is, what the students do not know or cannot do in English, and *needs* in this sense may be described as '*objective needs*'.

Hutchison and Waters (1995, pp. 54-63) believe needs analysis that this factor emphasizes the awareness of a target situation where a definable needs is to communicate in English, which will have an influence on what the content should be in the language course. They divide needs into '*target needs*' (i.e. what learners need to do in the target situation), and '*learning needs*' such as what the learners need to do

in order to learn, and what knowledge and abilities will the learners require in order to be able to perform to the required degree of competence in the target situation.

They view *target needs* as something of an umbrella term in which a number of important distinctions are hidden and it is divided into '*necessities, lacks, and wants*' as follows: -

1. *Necessities* or *objective needs* are what the learner has to know in order to function effectively in the target situation.

2. *Lacks* are the gaps between the target proficiency and the existing proficiency of the learner.

3. *Wants* or *subjective needs* refer to what the learners want or feel they need.

Besides, according to Allwright (1982, cited in Jordan, 1997, p. 27), the 'needs' are the skills which a student sees as being relevant to him, 'wants' are the needs, which are put on a high priority in the available (often limited) time, and 'lacks' are the differences between the present competence and the desired competence. Munby (1978, p. 32) proposes the most widely known model for this type of analysis that focuses on fulfilling the students' needs upon condition of the language course and establishing targets for performance. The core of his model is the "*Communication Needs Processor*" (CNP), which consists of a range of questions about communication variables that are used to identify the language needs of the learners.

Moreover, Nunan (1988, pp. 14-19) defines needs analysis as a set of procedures for specifying the parameters of a course study. Such parameters include the criteria and rationale for grouping learners, the selection and sequencing of course content, methodology, and course length, intensity and duration. Nunan also divides needs analysis into two types – learner analysis and task analysis defined as follows: -

1. Learner analysis is based on information about the learner and the central question of concern to the syllabus designer is: 'for what purpose or purposes are the learners learning the language?'

2. Task analysis is used to specify and categorize the language skills required to carry out real-world communicative tasks, and often follow the learner analysis, which establishes the communicative purposes for which the learner wishes to learn the language. The central question here is: 'what are the subordinate skills and

knowledge required by the learner in order to carry out real-world communicative tasks?’

Frendo (2005, pp. 15-16) also states that there is often a difference between a learner’s perceived needs and felt needs. The former represents the view of the other stakeholders in the equation, such as the teacher, the sponsor, and the co-workers. In a sense, these are the ‘*experts*’, who can identify needs based on their own experience and knowledge. The felt needs are those needs which represent the learner’s perspective.

There are several possible ways of looking at needs analysis, but what is important is to appreciate what a needs analysis does. Actually, it does produce a specifically defined list of language needs to design syllabus, but, indeed, the more we find out about our learners’ needs, as inevitably happens as course progresses, the more difficult it appears to meet their needs. However, before we can start teaching a course there is a certain amount of information, which we have to gather the form of a needs analysis, in order to help teachers understand the difference between where the learners are in terms of communicative competence, and where they need to be to meet their language needs.

In conclusion, practically, though most needs analysis will be determined by time, means, situations, specific purposes of particular course or learners’ language needs, a needs analysis if possible should be done systematically for achieving the objectives and goals of the syllabus designs and learners’ language needs. Therefore, the above-mentioned reviews of the literature have been quoted to define why this needs analysis is necessarily conducted for the benefit of the institution, teacher and learners to achieve the specific purposes in language learning and teaching.

## **2.2 THE PRINCIPLES OF SYLLABUS DESIGN**

### **2.2.1 Methods of Data Collection**

In order to design a new language course, the first stage is to gather information that can be successfully collected in a number of ways. Mackay and Mountford (1987: 21-22) believe that there are two basic formal ways of gathering the necessary information, by ‘questionnaire and by structured interviews. In a questionnaire, the specific goals must be determined first.

Then all of the questions must be asked on the first full run. A pilot run should be completed to check for any ambiguities. They also state that firstly, since the gatherer is asking the questions, none of them will be left unanswered as frequently happens in questionnaires. Secondly, the gatherer can clarify any misunderstanding, which may crop up in the interpretation of the questions. Thirdly, the gatherer can follow up any avenue of interest, which arises during the question and answer session.

Interestingly, Hutchinson and Waters (1995, p. 58), specify the potential methods for gathering information about target needs as follows: -

1. Questionnaires
2. Interviews
3. Observation
4. Data collection, that is, gathering texts, and
5. Informational consultations with sponsors, learners, and others.

Additionally, Jordan (1997, pp. 30-38) summarizes there 14 methods for gathering data about the learners as follows: -

1. Advanced documentation: Information should be requested about educational background, previous courses taken, language ability, and other relevant aspects.

2. Language test at home: This method can be carried out in the learners' home country, or before they join the course. The test should indicate the learners' strengths and weaknesses and indicate the length and type of language course needed before starting their main subject course.

3. Language test on entry: This can be conducted on entry to the target institution and should provide diagnostic information as well as indicate the learners' language learning priorities for short courses or part-time classes.

4. Self-assessment: The learners can be asked to evaluate themselves through the use of questionnaires, forms, checklists or interviews, which address their language skill abilities and language areas they need to practice.

5. Observation and monitoring: The learners' difficulties can be directly observed in calls and in written homework assignments. Similarly, monitoring in a language laboratory can help to identify oral/aural difficulties.

6. Class progress tests: These tests provide information not only on the learners' progress but also can provide additional feedback on learning difficulties.

7. Surveys: The survey method can be undertaken through custom-made questionnaires. The information can be used to construct a profile of a typical learner.

8. Structured interview: This refers to an interview with prepared questions. It is comprehensively favored because of certain advantages.

9. Learner diaries: This technique helps to gain insight into learners' learning experiences. The reasons students give for their experiences can be used in lesson planning.

10. Case studies: This approach is used for obtaining in-depth information and insights. The drawback however, is that it is time-consuming.

11. Final test: The test administered at the end of a course provides information on learning difficulties apart from other aspects of language, not only for the course director but also for the students. They can use it as a basis for self-improvement.

12. Evaluation feedback: This method is often employed in the form of a questionnaire. Suggestions can be used to make improvements for the next course.

13. Follow-up investigations: These investigations are usually implemented after a course has finished, in the form of questionnaires, letters or interviews.

14. Previous research: This method makes use of earlier studies, which have contents relevant to the learners or to the type of course under consideration.

In conclusion, the effective methods for data collection come in a variety of types and definitions, but these are some of them that are most often used in practice for conducting a needs analysis. They can be used in order to gather valid and reliable information or data that must be analyzed for designing the appropriate syllabus design that will specifically meet the learners' language needs and achieve its goals and objectives successfully.

### **2.2.2 Types of Syllabus Design**

There are many different aspects that have been defined and applied to syllabus and course design. Robinson (1991, p. 33) cited Brumfit (1984) and White's (1988) works that the term 'syllabus' is used in the British sense, referring to a plan of

work to be taught in a particular course, while in many American publications, we can find curriculum used with approximately the same meaning.

Nunan (1988, p. 159) defines that a syllabus is a specification of what is to be taught in a language program and the order in which it is to be taught. Indeed, a syllabus might contain all or any of the following: philosophy, grammar, functions, notions, topics, themes, and tasks. In addition, Graves (2000, p. 3) cited White's (1988) definition that "A syllabus can be defined narrowly as the specification and ordering of content of a course or courses". Then depending on the demand for a course, for a specific group of learners over a specific length of time, a syllabus is designed for it.

Additionally, Yalden (1987, p. 29) defines that a curriculum includes the goals, objectives, content, processes, recourses, and means of evaluation of all the learning experiences planned for pupils. This distinguishes a curriculum from a syllabus because a syllabus is a statement of the plan for any part of the curriculum. Moreover, Munby (1987, p. 1) proposes that a language syllabus design has continuously revolved around circles of change in emphasis, from grammatical syllabus to situational syllabus, then to notional-functional or communicative syllabuses.

### **2.2.2.1 Structural or Grammatical Syllabus**

The traditional approach of language learning and teaching is still widely practiced due to many reasons. Some language syllabus designers criticize that a structural or grammatical syllabus focused too much on the forms of the language, so that students became skillful in analyzing a sentence structure, but to communicate their ideas either in written or in oral form. This is the effect of a too subject-centered approach to language teaching.

Kelliny (1988, p. 28) states that the grammatical approach entails an audio-lingual approach, which views language in terms of structural linguistics learned by a Skinnerian stimulus-response process. In addition, according to Stern (1993, p. 139), a grammatical syllabus was based on the sequential arrangement of grammatical topics of a language. This type of syllabus had been popularly used in the 1960s when language was focused on structure of the language, which was in contrast with the communicative type of syllabus that focused on the learner.

### **2.2.2.2 Situational Syllabus**

A situational-topical syllabus is based on the communication situations you need to operate in and the topics you need to discuss. It is similar to a functional-notional syllabus in that it will usually contain communication functions and notions, but in this syllabus the choice of functions and notions depends on the situational or topical context.

In Kelliny's view (1988, p. 30), the course designer predicts the situation the learner may meet and the target language he/she may need to cope with it and "...there are probably no situations where we typically express responsibility, probability, certainty, doubt or conviction and yet the need to do so is demonstrated by the frequency with they are expressed in speech". Actually, this approach is similar to a notional-functional syllabus that emphasizes language function and use.

### **2.2.2.3 Notional-Functional Syllabus**

Kelliny (1988, cited in Oliva, 1976, and Yalden, 1988) states that a syllabus is based on the principle of meaning, which is approached through the study of language in use and language in discourse, and described it in terms of the ability to organize language teaching in terms of language content rather than form of the language. With this approach in designing a course, the learner's goal in terms of his/her language ability would have to be identified from the beginning and would eventually lead to the communicative skills needed by the learner.

On the contrary, Widdowson (1988) criticized Kelliny's works (1988) by stating that the notional approach to syllabus did not replace a grammatical approach, but gave a way to developing it only. What linguists needed then was an approach that would focus on the learner and give the learner an active role from beginning to form the course syllabus design up to its actual implementation in the classroom.

### **2.2.2.4 Communicative Syllabus**

A communicative syllabus is an approach to syllabus design that developed in response to the growing changes in linguistics, psychology, and education. In addition, Stern (1993) suggests that a communicative syllabus was an experiential or activity approach to learning. Such activities might motivate learners to participate actively with one another to carry out various communications tasks.

Yalden (1987, p. 61) notes that communicative teaching was based on the idea that the learner was a communicator naturally endowed with the ability to learn language. Moreover, Freeman (2000, p. 111) says a communicative language teaching aims broadly to apply the theoretical perspectives of the communicative approach by making communicative competence the goal of language teaching and by acknowledging the interdependence of language and communication.

Elaborating, Kelliny (1988, pp.33-35) cited Hymes' works (1971) where a communicative competence is the speaker's ability to participate in a society as communicative member..... It involves knowledge of the possibility, feasibility and appropriateness of a statement as well as its factual validity .

In early curriculum designs, the course designer had to focus on the most interest of the learners by having used a needs analysis, such as Tyler (1949), another proponent of the early curriculum designer who had used and designed a deductive approach in designing curriculum. He considered the needs and interests as his source in gathering data before designing potential objectives in his curriculum.

Hilda Taba (1962), who designed a proponent of one of the first curriculum models in education, began her design with a needs analysis. She used an inductive approach to design a curriculum beginning with the creation of specific teaching - learning units that would eventually build up to a more general design. She followed a five-step sequence in her model by putting the important thinking in order. Her learning concept shared some of Piaget's ideas about the sequence of content and activities in learning. The first stage in her model that was a production of pilot units which had an initial phase of a diagnosis of needs.

Similarly, later on, Oliva (1976) followed early patterns for designing a curriculum beginning with a specification of needs of students. These studies show that the learner-centered syllabus and needs analysis were not something new in designing syllabus course. Hence, as long as the specific needs of students are there, there will be an appropriate place for a needs analysis that should be conducted all persons concerned.

In conclusion, a needs analysis is one of most effective methods to investigate the needs of language learners as well as to achieve the goals and objectives of the syllabus design. Therefore, a needs analysis is essentially necessary

and should be systematically conducted for the syllabus design of both English for Specific Purposes and English general courses.

### **2.3 RELATED RESEARCH STUDIES**

The existence of language needs for learners, sponsors, and teachers is already within themselves, but importantly, the awareness of language needs should be clearly realized. Otherwise, the objectives and goals of their particular courses could not be successfully achieved. There are many research studies of language needs that have been systematically and effectively conducted and their useful outcomes have been used to design new syllabus courses in order to meet specific purposes of the particular courses.

Munby's needs analysis (1978, pp. 191-204) for English for Specific Purposes, "Communicative Syllabus Design", is believed to be one of the earliest ones because there are many other language educators or researchers, program directors, and designers curriculum communities and writers refers to Munby's works as their cited references for further conducting a needs analysis to achieve the goals of their studies.

When planning a language syllabus, specific language competencies should be decided upon, and they should be synchronized with the learner's language needs. Otherwise, there might be a mismatch between what the program offers and the learners' language needs. This common problem in syllabus design and language teaching could be alleviated by using a dynamic processing model that starts with the learner and ends with the target communicative competence.

Munby suggested consideration of the participant, the location or setting where the language learning would take place, the learners' roles and social relationship, the instrumentality, which included medium, mode and channel, and the target language level or the purpose of communication.

Moreover, Kelliny's research study (1988) was conducted at the Bahraini University students to find a basis for developing guidelines for an ESP course for the Bahraini university students of science, mathematics and literature. He investigated two perspectives of the students' language needs and the perceptions of language teaching and academic staff. In his study, he concluded that the communicative

approach should take place of the existing course in order to meet the students' language learning needs.

Additionally, a needs analysis has been a major trend in language syllabus development which uses information from and about learners in curriculum decision-making (Nunan, Candlin & Widdowson, 1988, p. 13). Tarone and Yule (1989, p. 33) restated that Munby's works (1978) had presented a detailed method of data collection and analyzing the collected data in terms of both linguistic and social context.

There have been two studies on language needs in the same field, the first one has conducted on the nursing students by Brahmakasikara (1996); the second was surveyed on the perception of medical college students about the English needs of medical students. The results indicated that English was perceived as important for their academic studies and future professional career. The listening and speaking skills are most needed, followed the other skills.

Nopphawan Chimroylarp (1998) conducted a study of the English language needs of the Buddhist Missionary monks whose most needed skills were listening and speaking based on the situational needs for communication at immigration offices and in other situations, inevitable reasons, such as customs services, and to explaining Buddhism to the others.

In a recent research study on a needs assessment with selected university students going to work as health professionals after their graduation, the results highlighted three factors on two distinct aspects of language skills and course content. These were the written code and the oral code, the place of study, and the environment that placed them with native speakers. These results could also be used in syllabus design to meet the language needs of learners geographically and regionally and other areas (Lepetit and Wladyslaw, 2000, p. 384).