

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

NEEDS ANALYSIS AND SYLLABUS DESIGN

Nunan (1988) points out interesting ideas about syllabus design that accommodate needs analysis as following. In the past, most syllabus design dealt largely with what the contents should be, i.e., what grammar, phonological items, and vocabulary should be put into the syllabus. Recently, there has been more concern about the aspect of language teaching such as learners' needs and wants. A syllabus comes to involve not only grammatical elements that learners are expected to master but also the functional skills learners need in order to communicate successfully. The shape of the syllabus has been markedly influenced by learners' purpose in taking a language course, as well as the designers' beliefs about language and the nature of learning. Such notions shed light on the importance of collecting needs information to be used in syllabus design, propelling the practice referred to as needs analysis. The information from needs analysis can serve many purposes such as guiding content selection or assigning learners to class groupings (p. 3).

ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES

According to Hutchinson and Waters (1995), English for Specific Purposes, ESP, is not different from other approaches of language teaching in a sense that its primary concern is learning. ESP is an approach for language teaching, not a product. The fundamental notion of ESP starts from the learners' reasons to learn English. Following that will stream other significant concerns about the nature of language that learners engage in, the learners themselves, and the learning factors. ESP, then, is an approach to language teaching in which most decisions as to content and method are based on the learner's reason for learning (p.19).

To elaborate on the above comments, Hutchinson and Waters (1995) also point out the following characteristics of ESP. First of all, even though ESP specifies the specific purposes of language, it doesn't mean that forms are special and different

from other forms of language. Some features of language can be typical in particular contexts and learners will engage such features more frequently. However, learners should not be confined only by limited forms and isolated from the larger area of language. Thus, ESP is not a matter of teaching specific features of English. Secondly, the content of an ESP course should not be limited to the requirements of particular fields of study, such as words and grammar for science, tourism, or business. What people actually perform with the language does not resemble the range of knowledge and abilities that enable them to perform. The authors suggest that we should distinguish between learners' performance and competence. Lastly, ESP is not a unique kind that is different from other types of language teaching. Though the ESP contents may vary, the learning process is not different from general English. The authors conclude that there's no such thing as a separate ESP methodology (pp. 18-19).

Meanwhile, Robinson (1991) mentions that there are many approaches to ESP that are concurrently practiced around the world. As a result, it would be impossible to create a solid and generally applicable definition of ESP. Education, training, and practice is involved in ESP working upon three major realms of knowledge: language, pedagogy and learners' areas of interest. ESP is responsive to developments in all three realms of knowledge. If the relationships between these three realms vary, interpretations of ESP will be changed (p. 1).

Robinson (1991) also presents features that are commonly thought of as criteria to ESP courses as followings; firstly, learners of ESP need English for some reasons, such as, working or studying not because of the interest in the language itself. ESP is a goal-directed kind. Next, needs analysis is a basis of an ESP course. The purpose of the analysis is to conclude what learners do through the medium of English. Previous work on needs analysis concerned only target requirements, whereas recent work has shown the inclination towards students' issues including learning needs (pp. 2-4).

NEEDS ANALYSIS

According to Nunan (1988), the prominent application of needs analysis to language syllabus design is presented in the work of John Munby. In order to gather relevant information for designing a syllabus, nine essential elements of needs analysis are proposed as followings (pp. 19-20);

1. Participant: in this component, learners' identity and language skills are defined, such as, age, gender, nationality, mother tongue, command of target language, etc.
2. Purposive domain: this term refers to the purposes for which the target language is required.
3. Setting: syllabus designers must take into account the environments in which the target language will be employed.
4. Interaction: it is relevant to get an idea of with whom the learners will be interacting.
5. Instrumentality: this parameter refers to the medium, mode and the channel in which the language is used. Medium means whether it is a spoken or written, receptive or productive skills are used. Mode concerns whether it is monologue or dialogue are important. Lastly, the channel indicates whether the communication is face-to-face or indirect.
6. Dialect: This means defining language variety or dialect involved.
7. Target level: To mark the proficiency level the learners expect to meet.
8. Communicative event: To define the productive and receptive skills learners will need to master.
9. Communicative key: This includes the interpersonal attitudes and tones necessary to learners.

Hutchinson and Waters (1995) state that, practically, the irreducible minimum of an ESP course design is needs analysis. Needs always exist. What actually distinguishes ESP from general English is an awareness of the need. Such awareness will shape the reasonable and acceptable content of the language course and give a clear view of what potential can be exploited (p. 53).

According to Hutchinson and Waters (1995), needs can be classified into two types, target needs (i.e. what learners perform in the target situation) and learning needs (i.e. what learners need to do in order to learn). The explanation of two kinds of need can be explained as following.

Considering target needs, a more meaningful idea can be realized if such needs are classified into three parts: necessities, lacks, and wants. First of all, necessities can be determined by the knowledge that learners need in order to function effectively in the target situation. Examples of target needs are that a business man or woman must be able to communicate effectively in a sales conference. He or she is assumed to know some linguistic features, such as, discoursal, lexical, and functional needed for the situation. Lacks concern the gap between proficiency learners already have and the target situation needs. Lastly, wants mean the viewpoint of learners regarding what they felt necessary. Such viewpoints can not be ignored when learners motivation is crucial and must be taken into account .

Needs analysis concerns the information about the target situation and the attitudes towards that situation. The framework information of a target situation analysis is outlined as followings (pp. 58-60).

A target situation analysis framework

Why is the language needed?

- For study
- For work
- For training
- For a combination of these
- For some other purpose, e.g. status, examination, promotion.

How will the language be used?

- 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.

What will the content areas be?

- Subjects: e.g. medicine, biology, architecture, shipping, commerce, engineering

- Level: e.g. technician, craftsman, postgraduate, secondary school

Who will the learner use the language with?

- Native speakers or non-native
- Level of knowledge of receiver: e.g. expert, layman, student
- Relationship: e.g. colleague, teacher, customer, superior, subordinate

Where will the language be used?

- 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

When will the language be used?

- Concurrently with the ESP course or subsequently
- Frequently, seldom, in small amounts, in large chunks

DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

In order to gather information about target needs, Hutchinson and Waters (1995) proposed some common practices used, such as, questionnaires, interviews, observation, consultation with sponsors, learners, and others (p. 58).

Regarding data collection, Brown (2001) proposed interesting concerns about designing research instruments. On the view of survey questions, categories of question are exhibited as following;

A survey can use six types of questions. The first type is behavior or experience that tries to get at what respondents do, or how they behave, under certain circumstances. Next, opinion or value questions which tries to explore respondents' thoughts, impression, attitudes, and outlook on various aspects of language or learning. Then, feelings questions that seek to investigate the respondents' emotions or emotional reactions about a particular topic. The fourth type is knowledge questions which try to get the facts, knowledge, and information related to the language teaching and learning process. Then, sensory questions try to explore the

visual, tactile, auditory, and olfactory aspects of language teaching and learning. Last of all, demographic or background questions elicit biographical or historical information.

Another viewpoint of the type of question can be illustrated as following; firstly, problem questions are meant to define problems perceived by respondents in a certain context, e.g., what problems respondents are having learning English. Secondly, priorities questions are mentioned in order to find out which topics, functions, skills, activities, grammar points, etc., respondents believe to be most important, second most important, and so forth. The third type depicts abilities questions which intend to determine learners' abilities, such as, proficiency, strengths, weaknesses, and etc. The fourth type is attitudes questions used to obtain participants' feelings, wishes, and attitudes towards various elements of learning and teaching, such as, a curriculum, content, etc. Lastly, solutions questions try to seek solutions to problems unresolved in previous types of question (pp. 30-32).

RELATED STUDIES

Wannarat Morakul (2003) explored the needs, problems, and wants in legal English training of lawyers working with PTT PLC. The study aimed to find out learners' needs, problems, and wants regarding using English in daily work. The instrument used in the study was a questionnaire applying a five-point Likert scale to measure the subjects' attitudes towards needs, problems, and wants. The questionnaire was administered to 30 lawyers of PTT PLC. The findings revealed that reading skill was of greatest need to the respondents followed by speaking, listening, translating and writing. Regarding the problems of using English, speaking activities stood at the top priority. Considering learners' wants, the finding indicated that speaking skill was what they wanted to improve the most, followed by listening, reading, writing, and the last, translating skill.

Respondents in this study appeared to recognize the importance of English communication to their career. Reasons for learning English were to gain their knowledge in order to work effectively and to be promoted.

Kusalin Pattanakittipong (2006) conducted a study investigating needs of 3rd year students in English major at Thammasat University. A questionnaire was also

used as an instrument to collect data. The study's results showed that speaking was perceived as the most needed skill, followed by listening, reading, writing and translating. Among reading subskills, reading for main ideas and critical reading were the top two most required reading activities. Meanwhile, listening-activity needs priority was placed on listening to daily conversation followed by listening to TV/VDO news. Considering speaking skill, most students, as well, paid attention to speaking in daily conversation. Writing skill activities were needed dramatically. The most required topic was reviewing grammar structure followed by writing essays, writing official letters, writing project proposals and writing academic reports. In the last area, translating skill, students' most needed activity was translating an article followed by translating film scripts, news and novels respectively.