

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents a review of related literature with respect to needs analysis in the field of English for specific purposes. The review served as a basis for conducting the study, analyzing, and discussing the result. This literature review is separated into: English for specific purposes; needs analysis; academic writing; and a review of related research.

#### English for Specific Purposes (ESP)

##### The Origin and Development of ESP

From the early 1960s, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has grown to become one of the most prominent areas of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching today (McDonough, 1984; and West, 1994). There are two reasons common to the emergence of all ESP: economic and educational (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).

*Economic reason:* The first reason for the development of ESP was the rise in the 'currency' of the English language. This was brought about by the economic dominance of the United States after the Second World War. The vast influx of US dollars into many countries around the world created with it as a by-product the need to communicate in English, mainly in the world of science and technology. As a result, a large percentage of journals and scientific data were to be found only in the English language. In addition to this were both an influx of foreign aid workers into developing countries and an increased need of English in former colonial countries (Corbluth, 1975). In 1962, the Commonwealth Conference on the Teaching of English as a Second Language, held at Makerere College, Uganda, noted the increased need for English.

More significantly, it noted the need for the teaching of ‘English for Special Purposes’ (Conference Report 1961:19-20). A third factor accounting for the rise of ESP was the influx of Western experts into the oil rich countries of the Middle-East, creating an additional need for a *lingua franca*. This *lingua franca* was English.

*Educational reason:* The second movement leading towards the rise of ESP was education, where the learner was starting to be considered as more central to the educational process. Strevens (1977: 152) notes:

... the existence of a major ‘tide’ in educational thought, in all countries and affecting all subjects. The movement referred to is the global trend towards ‘learner-centred education’.

As both the world and concepts of education radically changed, the methodology of teaching the English language changed with it. The way in which it changed has been seen in the literature as a series of distinct but overlapping stages. It is important to examine these stages, as later discussions on the nature of ESP are viewed in direct relation to the evolution of how language and teaching have been viewed during this period. It is also important to realize that these ‘stages’ in the development of ESP were, and continue to be, fluid and overlapping in nature. Approaches to ESP have evolved and improved with time. This, too, must be taken into account later when discussing how ESP has been viewed during this period of development. Table 1 gives an overview of the trends as viewed by major writers in the field over the last twenty years.

**Table 2.1** The Development of ESP as Found in the Literature

Author	ROBINSON (1980)	COFFEY (1984)	HUTCHINSON & WATERS (1987)	JOHNS (1991)	WEST (1994)	DUDLEY- EVANS & ST JOHN (1998)
<b>Stage</b>						
<b>1</b>	Register Analysis	Register Analysis	Register Analysis	Register Analysis	Authenticity: a) skills based b) skills and strategies	Register Analysis
<b>2</b>	Discourse Analysis and the Communicative Approach	a) Discourse Analysis b) Notional/ Functional/ Communi- cative Approach	Rhetorical/Discourse Analysis	Functional /Discourse Approach	Research: a) Register Analysis b) Newspeak	Rhetorical/ Discourse Analysis
<b>3</b>	Student motivation and analysis of needs	Needs Analysis	Target Situational Analysis	Target Situational Analysis	Text: a) Discourse Analysis b) Genre Analysis	Analysis of Study Skills
<b>4</b>			Skills and Strategies	Learning- Centred Approach	Need: a) Target Situational Analysis b) Pedagogic Needs Analysis: deficiency, strategy and means analysis	Analysis of learning Needs
<b>5</b>			Learning-Centred Approach		Learning: The Learning- Centred Approaches	No real dominating approach

## **Definitions of ESP**

Today, as ESP comes of age, it has decidedly established a name and place for itself within the field of ELT (English Language Teaching). And yet, one is unmistakably struck by the lack of any precise definition that will clearly characterize the various contexts in their entirety, in which ESP has come to be practiced. Thus, definitions of ESP are numerous, with the concept being fluid enough to support the number of interpretations. Many researchers have endeavored to define the term “ESP”.

Mackay and Mountford (1978:2) refer to the practical aspect of ESP, ‘generally used to refer to the teaching of English for a clearly utilitarian purpose’. Strevens (1977) gives four main criteria for Special-Purpose Language Teaching (SP-LT):

*Restriction:* only basic skills needed for the learners’ purpose.

*Selection:* only the vocabulary and grammar needed by the learners.

*Themes and topics:* only those required by the learners.

*Communicative needs:* only those needed by students in their given situations.

Munby (1978: 2) states that “ESP courses are those where the syllabi and are materials and determined in all essentials by the prior analysis of communication needs of the learner, rather than by non-learner-centered criteria such as the teacher’s or institution’s predetermined preference for General English, or for treating English as part of a general education.” He also claims that ESP should focus on the learners and the purposes for which learners require the target language, and the whole language program should follow.

Mackey (1978 cited in Robinson, 1980: 6) explains that “it [ESP] is generally used to refer to the teaching/learning of a foreign language for a clearly utilitarian purpose of which there is no doubt. This utilitarian purpose is generally conceived of as

successful performance in work; i.e., work in which the English language plays an auxiliary role. Thus, ESP means the teaching of English not as an end in itself, but as an essential means to a clearly identifiable goal.”

Strevens (1980: 90) states that “ESP courses are those in which the aims and the content are determined, principally or wholly, not by criteria of general education (as when English as a foreign language is a subject in school) but by functional and practical English language requirements of the learners.”

Coffey (1984:3-4), largely reiterating Strevens, states that, “There is no special language; only a principle of selection from the language to meet the purposes defined.” and that

Before a course can be designed, in any of its parameters, the process that Strevens calls ‘restriction’ must take place: the selection of items and features from the corpus of the language that are relevant to the designer’s intention and the student’s needs.

Learners’ needs are highlighted by many writers in ESP. Kennedy and Bolitho (1984:3) state that “In short, ESP has as its basis in an investigation of the purposes of the learner and the set of communicative needs arising from those needs”.

Hutchinson and Waters (1987: 19) state that ESP should be seen as an approach, not as a product. It is an approach to language learning based on learners’ needs. Thus, 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.

Robinson (1991: 2-5) identifies a number of features that are often deemed a criteria to ESP. These include the following:

1) ESP is **normally goal directed**; that is, most of the students study English because they need English for study or work purposes. Thus, they wish to have goal-directed practice in English skills.

2) ESP is **based on needs analysis**. An ESP course is designed according to students' needs.

3) Students of an **ESP course are likely to be adults rather than children**. ESP students typically have completed a study of English for general purposes.

4) **ESP courses may be written as though classes consist of identical students**; that is, all the students in a class are involved in the same kind of work or specialist studies.

### Characteristics of ESP

Strevens (1980) defines ESP by identifying its absolute and variable characteristics, and makes a distinction between four absolute and two variable characteristics. *Absolute characteristics* are: 1) designed to meet specified needs of the learner; 2) related in content (i.e. in its themes and topics) to particular disciplines, occupations and activities; 3) centered on the language appropriate to those activities in syntax, lexis, discourse, semantics, etc., and analysis of this discourse; and 4) in contrast with General English. *Variable characteristics* may contain restrictions as to the language skills to be learned (e.g. reading only) and are not taught according to any pre-ordained methodology.

Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) revised Strevens' original definition of ESP in terms of *absolute* and *variable characteristics*. These are summarized in Table 2 below (Dudley-Evans & St John 1998:4-5):

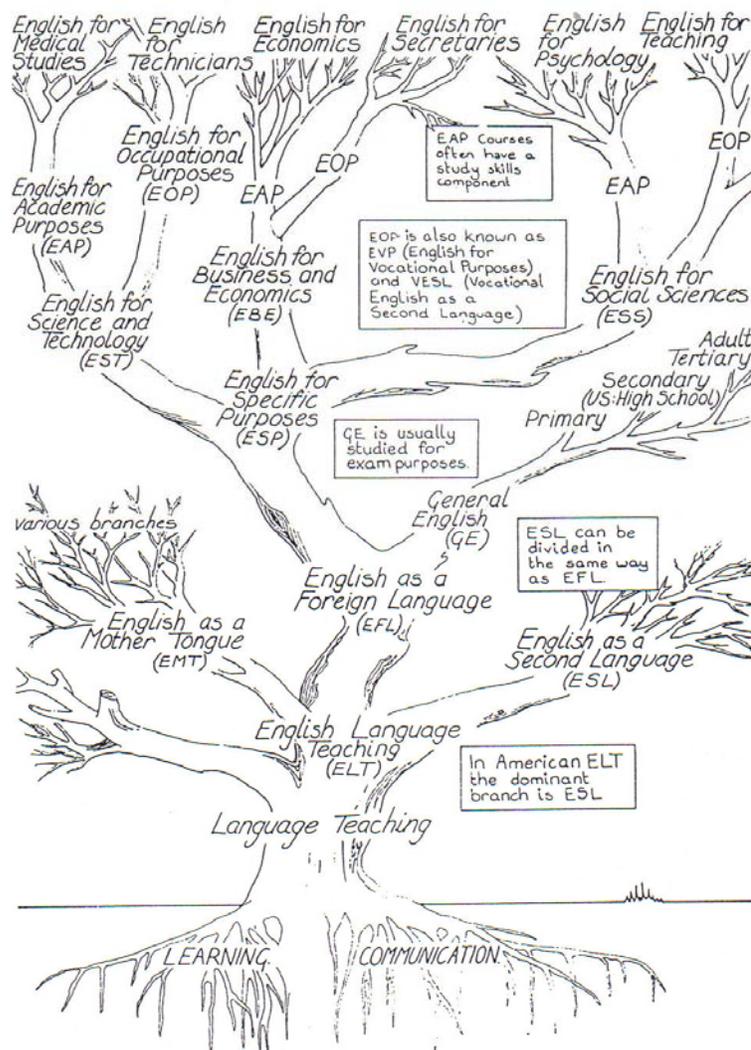
**Table 2.2** A Definition of ESP: Absolute and Variable Factors

<b>Absolute</b>	<b>Variable</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ designed to meet specific needs</li> <li>▪ makes use of the underlying methodology and activities of the discipline it serves</li> <li>▪ is centered on the language, skills discourse and genre appropriate to the activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ may be related to or designed for specific disciplines</li> <li>▪ may use in specific teaching situations a different methodology than general English</li> <li>▪ most likely to be for adult learners</li> <li>▪ most often designed for intermediate or advanced learners</li> </ul>

The division of ESP into absolute and variable characteristics, in particular, is very helpful in resolving arguments about what is and is not ESP. Based on this definition, we can see that ESP can be applied to (but is not necessarily restricted to) a specific discipline, and it is not limited in its application to a certain range in age or aptitude. ESP should be seen simply as an 'approach' to teaching, or what Dudley-Evans describes as an 'attitude of mind'. This is a similar conclusion to that made by Hutchinson and Waters (1987:19) who state, "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".

### **Types of ESP**

In the 'Tree of ELT' (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987) (See Figure 2.1), ESP is subdivided into three branches: 1) English for Science and Technology (EST); 2) English for Business and Economics (EBE); and 3) English for Social Studies (ESS). Each of these subject areas is further divided into two branches: English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP). An example of EOP for the EST branch is 'English for Technicians', whereas an example of EAP for the EST branch is 'English for Medical Studies'.



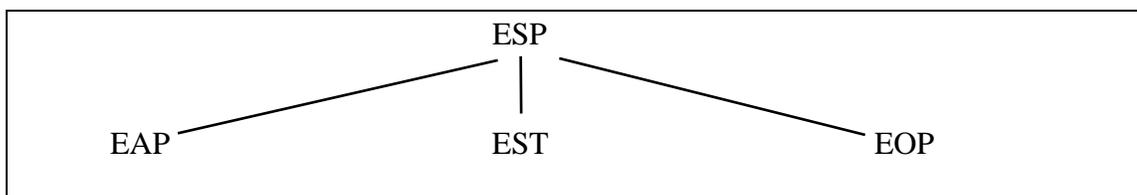
**Figure 2.1** The Tree of ELT

Source: Hutchinson and Water (1989:150)

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) note that a clear-cut distinction does not exist between EAP and EOP: "people can work and study simultaneously; it is also likely that in many cases the language learnt for immediate use in a study environment will be used later when the student takes up, or returns to, a job" (p. 16). This may explain the rationale for categorizing EAP and EOP under the same type of ESP, implying that the end purpose of both EAP and EOP are one in the same: employment.

Peter Strevens (1977) maintains that in terms of function we can distinguish between two types of needs: occupational and academic. Based on these, he suggests a more detailed classification of ESP. Consequently, a distinction may exist between English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) -- also denominated English for Vocational Purposes (EVP) -- and English for Academic Purposes (EAP). The EOP would be of service to those who use English as a tool to carry out their daily tasks, or exercise their profession; for example, to communicate in public, speak with clients, etc. On the other hand, the EAP would be for those who need to read and understand textbooks or exchange scientific thoughts with other colleagues within the academic world. This is the basis for its currently being taught in educational institutions, with its place within the University curriculum.

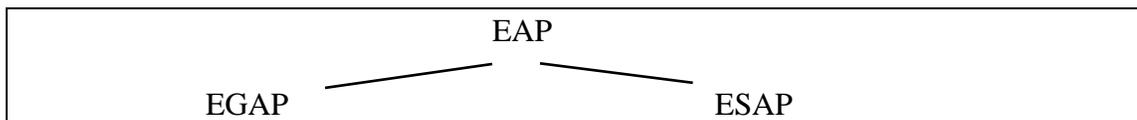
Jordan (1989), in an article on English for Academic Purposes (EAP), reproduces the now commonly-held views on the structure of ESP (see Figure 2.2):



**Figure 2.2** The division of ESP

Source: Jordan (1989:150)

Jordan interprets EAP as an off-shoot of ESP in general, but separate from EST and EOP. Jordan then divides his particular area of interest, EAP, into two distinct categories: general academic English and specific academic English (see Figure 2.3):



**Figure 2.3** The division of EAP

Source: Jordan (1989:150)

By implication, one may thus present a simplified picture of the division noted by the writers above in terms of Business English; i.e., general Business English and more specific Business English.

### **Needs Analysis (NA)**

#### **The Origin and Development of Needs Analysis**

Within the field of language teaching and learning, needs analysis made its first appearance in the 1960s (Nunan, 1988). Large scale analysis of students' needs was begun largely with Richterich's (1971) pioneering work for the Council of Europe. However, the phrase 'analysis of needs' was used as early as the 1920s by Michael West when teaching Indian civil servants. Approaches to needs analysis have changed as views on language and communicative competence have changed. Thus, the first main movement, Target Situation Analysis (TSA), developed alongside the functional/notional work of Wilkins (1976). His work, widely regarded as heralding in the age of 'communicative' language teaching, argued that language was composed of functions (the purposes to which language is expressed) and notions (concepts expressed by language). This resulted in a search to find those situations where students would need language, and subsequently an attempt to define the language needed in those situations.

Interest in research on occupational needs was followed by a focus on EAP and analysis of students' needs in an academic setting (Mackay & Jordan 1973). As can be

seen from the dates, these movements were not chronologically separate; rather, they continuously overlapping and evolving from the same thought in different areas. The process of TSA culminated in Munby's (1978) *Communicative Syllabus Design*, in which it was taken to extremes. Munby compiled a taxonomy of target situations that students would potentially need to operate; however, the list, while of great theoretical value, was so long and wieldy that it could not easily be applied in practice.

There followed a backlash against TSA in the purest sense, as other more pragmatic factors came to the fore of academic discussion. The problem had been that Munby's work could in many ways be seen as an 'ivory tower' approach, with little practical application in the real world. McDonough (1984:33) states emphatically that the post-Munby period is an 'intrusion of reality'. Additionally, there were other, more theoretical problems with Munby's work. Although Munby listed constraints (Munby, 1978:217), no action was taken to accommodate them in his model. Moreover, the students were seen in an idealized vacuum, in a totally objective manner and away from the subjectivity of real life. They were not involved in the process of their own needs analysis; the first consultation with them was also the last. Partly as a result of this, many later writers have stressed the importance of on-going needs analysis (McDonough, 1984; Riddell, 1991). These interpretations further cast doubt regarding the credibility of Munby's model.

### **Later Developments in Needs Analysis**

TSA as an approach still exists. It has simply become one of many approaches, rather than being the only one. Its basis, though of extreme practical use (most later models incorporate it in one form or another), unfortunately lies only in the intuition of its creators.

Towards the end of the 1970s and early 1980s, as views of language changed, so, too, did approaches to needs analysis. Canale and Swain's (1980) additional *sociolinguistic* definition of communicative competence, allied with points of dissatisfaction with Munby's work, led to a flurry of activity. Needs were no longer defined simply in terms of terminal situation language functions, but in turn in terms of *means, lacks* and *learning strategies*.

*Means analysis* - analysis of the practical constraints on learning - grew out of the backlash to Munby (mentioned above). McDonough (1984) looked at constraints on the teaching situation and viewed them as being at the core of the course design process; thus, *options* and not constraints. Mountford (1988), Räsänen (1991) and Swales (1985), among several others, have also written in this area, and its influence has continued to the present.

*Deficiency analysis* was started by Allwright and Allwright (1977), who based their approach - that of looking at the difference between the current state of a student's ability and a targeted objective - on their experiences with medical students. It is interesting to note with regard to this study that this approach was entirely based on their intuition. Nelson (1994 a,b) includes a large scale computerized deficiency analysis to analyze business language needs. This, too, is based on intuition. Preferred ways of learning (strategy analysis) also became widespread at this time. Since the 1960s, research on learning strategies had been done in other areas of education, notably in Canada and the United States. By the 1980s, it had also taken root in EFL with Allwright, for example, holding sessions with his students on *how* to learn rather than *what* to learn.

The *language audit* (Pilbeam, 1979) was also introduced about this time. This broadened the spectrum of needs analysis by looking into company training needs and setting targets for learning based on an analysis of staff needs. This approach has

proved popular and has developed over the years (Lynch, Stevens & Sands, 1993). However, while extensive research in application of this work has been conducted in this area, most of it has not been applied in the real world, largely due to companies' concern for property rights and the desire of language schools to maintain confidentiality concerning the competitive edge they may have over other academic institutions.

The 1990s saw a further broadening of the concept of need as computers were used to analyze students' requirements. Jones (1991) and then Nelson (1992, 1994 a,b) used computers to analyze the needs of students, the latter being Business English students. According to Nelson, the concept of need is extended to the finding of suitable teaching materials. This is carried out by the use of a computer database of Business English teaching materials contained in the program.

### **Definitions of Needs Analysis**

The term 'needs analysis' first appeared in India in the 1920s (West, 1994:1). However, a definition of 'needs analysis' has remained unclear. Many researchers defined 'needs analysis' in various ways and from different viewpoints. The following are some examples:

Striven (1980:109) defines 'needs analysis' as "a procedure starting from the standpoint that it is not 'general English' and that the learner (or his sponsor) can apply comprehensive information about the aim, purposes, needs, wants, roles, and functions for which English is required in his or her circumstances."

Richards (1985:6) states that 'needs analysis' is "the requirement for fact-finding or the collection of data from various sources, for example, the data about the learners, the materials, and so on. The goals of the needs-analysis phase of curriculum

planning are to determine what a particular group of learners expect to use English for and what their present level of competence is.”

Richards and Rogers (1986: 156) point out that ‘needs analysis’ can mean “the identifying of general and specific language needs that can be addressed in developing goals, objectives, and content in a language programme. It may focus either on the general parameters of a language programme or on the specific needs.”

Nunan (1988: 45) states that ‘needs analysis’ is “a set of procedures for specifying the parameters of a course of study. Such parameters include the criteria and rationale for grouping learners, the selection and sequencing of course content, methodology, course length, intensity, and duration.”

Brindley (1989: 63) states that ‘needs analysis’ is “a process of finding out as much as possible before learning begins about the learners’ current and future language use.”

Ellis and Johnson (1994: 222) state that ‘needs analysis’ is “a method of obtaining description of a learner’s needs (or group of learner’s needs). It will take into account the specific purpose for which the learner will use the language, the kind of language to be used, the starting level, and the target level, which is to be achieved. The information could be obtained from a range of different people: company staff, trainers, and the learners themselves. It will have implications for the approach to training that will be taken.”

Stout (1995) states that needs assessment is a systematic exploration of the way things are and the way they should be.

Graves (2000: 98) states that needs assessment is “a systematic and ongoing process of gathering information about students’ needs and preferences, interpreting the information, and then making course decision based on the interpretation in order to meet the needs.”

In the present study, the researcher considers needs to be what individuals require in order to fulfill their deficiency. Learner needs refer to what ESP students want to know in academic English writing. Needs analysis serves as a method of gathering data on learners needs. The result of needs analysis studies are important contributions to curriculum design, as they provide appropriate contents for a particular course.

### **The Necessity for Conducting Needs Analyses**

As the research to date holds, the learners and teachers may have different needs. Robinson (1991) believes that needs analysts should be cautious in collecting information from various sources due to the multiplicity and diversity of the views on prerequisites for an ESP course.

Three sources of pre-course needs indicators are identified by Richterich and Chancerel (1987): students (their needs and proficiencies), students’ employers, and academic organization. West (1992: 12) maintains that “Needs as interpreted by the sponsors may indeed conflict with the needs felt by the learner.” Hutchinson and Waters (1993) hold that the relationship between necessities as perceived by a sponsor or an ESP teacher, and what the learners want or feel can be at extreme poles. However, he suggests that learners’ perceived wants and wishes should be considered carefully; and, due to objective and subjective reality of needs, each learning situation should be considered uniquely and systematically.

Bearing in mind a wide range of needs due to the influence of different social and cultural factors on student's learning (Peck, 1991), a needs analysis is considered as a prerequisite in any course design (Richterich and Chancerel, 1987). According to Knox (1987: 56), a needs assessment enables researchers to justify their assumptions whether or not potential educational needs are sound, to design a program in terms of topics, materials so as to be responsive to the needs of participants. This can maximize the likelihood of students' participation. Finally, such focus on satisfying learner needs will help the learners to comprehend and apply concepts learned in the classroom. Richards (1990) addresses this issue from the point of curriculum development. He states that the data to be collected (from learners, teachers, administrators and employers) in the planning process will help to identify general and specific language needs, and content of a language program. In addition, it will provide data to review and evaluate the existing program.

The research to date emphasizes the significance of a needs analysis for devising a course, writing textbooks or course books, and the kind of teaching and learning that takes place (Robinson, 1991; Jordan, 1997). Yet, it is recommended that a needs analysis be conducted throughout each course (Richterich and Chancerel, 1987), because "as students become more involved with the course, their attitudes and approach may change" (Robinson, 1991: 15). Therefore, identification and analysis of needs should be a continuous process (Richterich and Chancerel, 1987; Knox, 1987). This can help both administrators and teachers to introduce necessary changes, if deemed necessary, so as to promote learners in their progress throughout the program (White, 1988).

In summary, needs analysis is a very important tool to provide an effective and efficient validation for an ESP course. The information obtained from needs analysis will enable the course designer to design a suitable course for students.

## **Types of Needs Analysis**

There are different types of needs analysis which should be taken into consideration. Many academics (Widdowson, 1981; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Berwick, 1989; Nunan, 1990; West, 1994) consider types of needs analysis in different ways. This present study will focus on two main types of needs analysis: target situation analysis and present situation analysis.

### **Target Situation Analysis (TSA)**

The type of needs analysis that focuses on students' needs at the end of a course is termed 'target situation analysis' (Robinson, 1991:8). This is introduced and discussed by Chambers (1980). The best known framework for a TSA type of needs analysis is formulated by Munby (1978), who presents a communicative needs processor, comprising a set of parameters within which information on the students' target situation can be plotted. The Munby model has been widely studied and discussed. Among its useful features are comprehensive data banks (for example of micro-skills and attitudes) which can be used as checklists for the resultant syllabus. A helpful insight, codified by Munby, relates to target level performance; for certain jobs, students may require only a low level of accuracy of native-speaker-like ability. The TSA may thus pinpoint the stage at which a 'good enough' level of competence for the workplace is achieved (Robinson, 1991).

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) divide TSA into three terms: necessities, lacks, and wants. The description of each is as follows:

*Necessities* are the types of need determined by what the learners have to know in order to function effectively in the target situation.

*Lacks* are the needs which are the proficiency gap between the existing and target language proficiency of the learners.

*Wants* are the needs of the learners related to course designers, sponsors, and/or teacher. In other words, wants are the perceptions of the learners as seen by other interested parties.

### **Present Situation Analysis (PSA)**

As a complement to TSA, Robinson (1991) developed the concept of present situation analysis (PSA), which Hutchinson and Waters (1987) call 'Learning Situation Analysis'. Learning needs are the needs of the learners to process their learning; i.e., the knowledge or skills they have and use to synthesize the flow of new information. A PSA seeks to establish the character and aptitude of the students at the start of their language course, investigating their strengths and weaknesses. Richterich and Chancerel (1980) present the most extensive range of devices for establishing the PSA. They suggest that there are three basic sources of information: the student themselves, the language-teaching establishment, and the user-institution (for example the students' place of work). For each of these, we shall seek information regarding their respective levels of ability: their resources, and their views on language teaching and learning. We might also study the surrounding society and culture; e.g., the attitudes held toward English, learning and use of a foreign language.

An important issue is the relationship between the PSA and the TSA. For some people, including Munby (1978), the PSA represents constraints on the TSA, which will have been previously conducted. Munby (1978) states that political factors should be considered at the initial phase of needs analysis, but suggesting that factors relating to time, resources, and styles and traditions of learning should not be considered until the syllabus specification stage. For McDonough (1984), the PSA involves fundamental

variables that must be clearly considered before the TSA. In practice, Robinson (1991) suggests that one is likely to seek and find information relating to both TSA and PSA immediately. Thus, needs analysis may be seen as a combination of TSA and PSA.

Furthermore, Robinson states that the combination of TSA and PSA is provided by a language audit. It is used to plot the role played by a foreign language in a commercial or industrial enterprise. First, the precise language skills needed to carry out specific jobs are determined, thereby establishing a target profile of language skills as part of a job description and facilitating in selection personnel for new positions. In order to draw up this profile, the auditor/analyst must determine what tasks or activities people perform in their jobs, and must then decide what level of language performance is required for these tasks.

Hutchinson and Waters (1987:63) conclude that needs analysis is a complex process because it involves target situation needs and learning needs. Analysis of target situation needs is concerned with language use, while analysis of learning needs is concerned with language learning -- how people learn and what they do with language. In other words, we need a learning-centered approach to needs analysis.

### **Academic Writing**

There is no standard format of academic writing that can be applied to all topics across all disciplines. Established standards for academic writing within a specific subject or discipline are rooted in the kinds of practices and conventions that have developed historically. However, the written style of the paper is important. Style refers both to conventions of arrangement and layout, and to conventions of written language. For ESP students, the standard format of academic writing that they need is related to the knowledge of the specific terminology adopted in the field. Academic writing suitable for ESP students include use of: 1) formal language; 2) impersonal (objective)

style; 3) precise and concise language; and 4) correct grammar, punctuation and syntax. Since the ESP students have different educational backgrounds and different fields of employment, the format of academic writing should be appropriate with everyone in the course. Moreover, the academic writing should be able to adapt to specific purposes.

Academic writing is one style of writing used primarily for preparation of lectures. There is some disagreement over details regarding what is accepted as academic style. If the writer is also studying courses in the Faculty of Humanities, Faculty of Engineering or Faculty of Business, he may find that there are some differences regarding what is considered academic style. The writer may even find that lecturers differ from each other. Some lecturers may ask for greater use of the passive voice and some require greater use of the active voice. In spite of this variability, there are generally accepted standards applicable to most contexts. The qualities of good academic writing may consist of use of formal language, impersonal (objective) style, precise and concise language, and accuracy. (Gebremedhin & Tweeten, 1994)

### **Use of Formal Language**

Use of formal language is generally required in the preparation of essays and other assignments, unless otherwise stipulated by the lecturer. The writer should generally avoid contracted forms such as "won't, shouldn't, there's, it's" and so on. Similarly, the writer should avoid casual phrases such as 'sort of', and vague references to 'they' or other phrases which might be acceptable in spoken language but which are unclear or too casual in written language.

### **Impersonal (Objective) Style**

Impersonal (objective) style is required in most essays or assignments. This means that the writer would avoid use of the personal pronouns “I” or “we” and try to write almost as if the writer is an outsider or observer.

### **Precise and Concise Language**

Precise and concise language should be used as much as possible. This means using specialized terms, which are often more concise. Also, the writer should avoid use of extraneous words that may cloud the meaning of thought or idea being conveyed. It also means editing the work to ensure clarity.

### **Accuracy**

Accuracy in grammar, punctuation and syntax is expected in all writing at the tertiary level. Students sometimes make errors by putting things into long, convoluted sentences that are unclear and difficult to read. A good rule is to aim for simplicity and clarity. Moreover, academic writers must provide information that is accurate. This means checking all statements to ensure they are not obscuring the data or jumping to false conclusions. Accuracy in essay writing demands that students chose their words carefully, with the understanding that they may be challenged where statements are not properly verified.

## **A Review of Related Research**

Needs analysis is extremely important for course design and material development in specific contexts. The literature review conducted in conjunction with this thesis found numerous studies on needs analysis concerning ESP courses on

English (for both occupational purposes and academic purposes) which were conducted in Thailand and other countries. This part of the study contain three topics: needs analysis in occupational purposes, needs analysis in academic purposes, and needs analysis in academic writing.

### **Needs Analysis in Occupational Purposes**

Poon (1992) conducted an analysis in Hong Kong of language needs among professional accountants and company administrators. Data were obtained using a questionnaire and face-to-face interviews. The study concluded that English remained the major language for written communication within the workplace. The participants perceived their English writing skills to be the most important, followed by spoken English, written Chinese and Putonghua. The consensus language skills in order of importance were spoken English, written English, written and spoken Putonghua, written Chinese, and spoken Cantonese.

Jiranapakul (1996) studied the language needs of Thai engineers. Interviews were conducted with both operational and managerial engineers. The study concluded that English is an important tool for communication, and an important factor in the level of job performance and career advancement. Engineers perceived their reading skills to be better than any other language skill. Nevertheless, the greatest need for training for operational engineers were in English speaking and comprehension, while the greatest needs for managerial engineers were in writing and speaking.

Suwaroporn (1998) conducted a survey of professional needs and problems in English language use by the nursing staff at King Chulalongkorn Memorial Hospital. The study was conducted using a questionnaire. Study results indicated that all nursing staff believe their English language skills were insufficient for the proper performance of their duties. Their greatest needs were in reading comprehension and writing. They

were required to read technical documents and journals related to medicine and nursing. Written skills were required for laboratory investigations regarding individual nursing care plans and reports associated with patients' physical examinations. However, lack of adequate speaking ability was also an impediment to the proper performance of the nursing staff.

Li and Mead (2000) investigated the English language needs of textile and clothing merchandisers in the international marketplace. The goal of the study was development of teaching and educational materials that matched the needs of the workplace. Data were obtained on the type of communication required in the industry. Study results indicated that merchandisers within the study group required English language skills to communicate with their customers, with facsimile being the primary channel of communication.

Chew (2005) conducted an investigation in Hong Kong of the English language skills required by new bank employees. This study comprised four banks. English language skills were assessed in the performance of duties as required in various departments. Data were gathered using interviews and questionnaires. The study showed preliminary conclusions about the language divide between spoken and written discourse in banks in Hong Kong. Cantonese used in spoken discourse and English used in written discourse, and the need for larger numbers of bank employees who were fluent in both languages so as to achieve maximum productivity.

Aunruen (2005) conducted a study of needs analysis of English for travel agents in Chiang Mai. The purpose of the study was to investigate the present needs of travel agents in use of the English language, and identify problems encountered in using English in the daily performance of their jobs. Data were acquired through the use of a questionnaire. The study results indicated that English language competency is vital to

travel agents, with speaking skills the most needed, following by listening, writing, and reading.

### **Needs Analysis in Academic Purposes**

Frankel and Dunlop (1980) conducted a survey of English language needs at the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT). Data were obtained using questionnaires and follow-up interviews. Study results indicate that reading comprehension is an important skill but were not identified as a major problem; i.e., students generally have sufficient skills to complete assignments. There were more urgent needs for instruction in listening comprehension, conversation and writing.

Schutz and Derwing (1981) conducted a survey of English language needs of people who completed a Bachelors Degree from a university in Taiwan. More than half of the study group reported that English was useful in their academic studies and professions. Particularly interesting is the interpretation of the results. Since the survey group worked or studied in the areas of science and technology, they rated speaking ability the least important of the language skills in terms of professional needs. Conversely, they desired speaking skills the most. In other words, there was a conflict between objective needs and personal wants.

Siriwong (1984) conducted a survey of nursing students at Mahidol University regarding their needs, wants, expectations and problems in the use of English. Data were collected from four independent groups: nursing students, nurses, teachers and coordinators. Study results indicated that reading comprehension was the most important skill. With reference to need, nursing students and nurses ranked speaking and listening as the greatest, while teachers specified writing and coordinators specified all areas. In academic instruction, the English courses for nursing students were identified as insufficient for the requirements of their profession.

Wanasiree (1985) conducted a survey of medical graduate students in Clinical Science at Ramathibodi Hospital, Mahidol University. The survey identified current needs and problems in English usage, and identified the type of language course applicable to the use of English within their profession. The study concluded that students' greatest needs professionally were improvement in reading and writing skills, while their greatest deficiencies were in listening and speaking. The most serious communication problem occurs when attending special lectures by foreign experts and when watching medical films prepared in English. Recommendations were made for development of a language course with a syllabus containing both general English and application to the field of medicine.

Zughoul and Hussein (1985) investigated the needs for English at Yarmouk University in Jordan. The tools used for data acquisition in this study were two sets of questionnaires. The questionnaires were distributed to students and faculty selected for the study group. The study has three major objectives: 1) determination of the extent of English language usage at the university; 2) documentation of overall perceptions of students' language abilities and 3) determination of perceived English language needs. Study results indicate widespread use of English in most educational settings, except for class discussions and questions raised by students during lectures. Both students and instructors agreed on the primary importance of listening skills.

Uraisakul (1988) conducted a study of English language requirements of undergraduate computer science students at the University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce. The objectives of the study were to identify their problems, wants and needs. The study group consisted of students and department staff. Data were collected using questionnaires and interviews. Study results indicated that the majority of students perceived the need for speaking skills to be greater than other language skills. However, in regard to their professional needs, they ranked, in order of importance, reading,

writing and listening/speaking. However, the consensus among computer instructors was that students required reading skills more than other language skills.

Sangnark (1993) investigated the use of English by army cadets. The objective was to determine their requirements for academic study. The methodology used consisted of examining groups of people who were directly and indirectly involved in the cadets' lives. The study results indicated that: 1) the level of competency of all language skills were between high and highest.; 2) listening and reading comprehension were the most desired skills; and 3) application in social interactions was greatest and the most common. Additionally, there were more similarities in the needs of English functions in each skill. Differences that occurred varied depending on individual differences. The most significant need of English for managing their lives concerned social interactions.

Soranastaporn (1993) conducted a survey of students at nursing colleges under the administration of the Nursing College Division, Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Public Health, Thailand. The objectives of the study were to determine the needs, problems and wants in English language instruction. The study concluded that both students and teachers required improvement in reading skills. Furthermore, students placed greater importance on listening and speaking skills, while teachers placed greater importance on reading and writing skills.

Sudthichai (1994) conducted a study of cadets at the Naval Academy. The objective of the study was to quantify their need for English language skills. The methodology consisted of interviews with the cadets, their English language teachers, and high-ranking officers responsible for application of English language skills by cadets. Study results indicated that 46.85% of the cadets and 71.43% of the teachers believed that English language skills of cadets should be improved, while 47.50% of the officers believe that graduates had insufficient English language skills.

Khemateerakul (1996) used needs analysis as a methodology to recommend improvements in intensive English language study within an international program at Bangkok University. The study concluded that students urgently required improvement in listening skills, while improvements (in order of importance) were also required in reading, writing and speaking. Instructors identified deficiencies in students' writing and speaking skills. Moreover, both students and instructors requested that listening skills be emphasized in intensive language courses.

Sucompa (1998) conducted a study at Rajamangala Institute of Technology (RIT) in current needs and problems in English language use applicable to the tourist industry in Thailand. The objective of the study was, in part, to obtain information for design of a syllabus for a course entitled "Technical English for Tourism", to be offered to students seeking a Higher Certificate. The study findings indicated that RIT tourism students considered translation as the most important language skill, followed by reading, listening, speaking, and writing. Furthermore, they recommended the employment of native English-speaking teachers for language instruction.

Deutch (2003) conducted a survey of academic institutions in Israel to determine the need for courses in legal English. The study displayed the multifaceted factors involved in determining the needs of Israeli law students studying English as a foreign language. Study results indicated that Israeli law students had two types of needs: global needs and individual needs. Global needs originated from both the historical indebtedness to English law and the present influence of common law legal systems, notably American law. Individual needs were both short-term and long-term oriented; i.e., short-term in response to academic requirements, and long-term in response to the demands of the Israeli legal profession.

### **Needs Analysis in Academic Writing**

Negretti (2001) conducted a study of the needs of international graduate students in academic writing. The research focused on the academic writing skills that international graduate students required when entering the U.S. academic system, specifically University of Hawaii at Manoa. A triangulation methodology was used in data collection. Study results indicated that the views of material designers did not include many of the tasks that learners face in their courses. At the same time, the learners' perspective was in some cases limited or not specific; that is, they were not aware of their needs. Moreover, foreign students' lack of awareness of style and academic writing standards in the U.S. was often attributed to differences in cultural and ethnic background.

Vifansi (2002) examined an exploratory study of the writing needs of ESL students. The objective of this study was to determine the academic writing needs of students for whom English was a second language and to delineate between target and learning needs. Focus group interviews were used as the sole method of data collection in order to ensure that the needs established were from the participants' perspective. Study results indicated that the participants articulated both target needs and learning needs. The target needs comprised the skills expected at the end of the course and were usually stated in course objectives, while the learning needs expressed difficulties students faced in achieving these objectives. The study concluded that besides target needs there were learning needs. The latter constituted the difficulties ESL learners encountered as a result of their previous experiences and language background.

Wang and Bakken (2002) studied the academic writing needs of ESL clinical investigators. The purpose of this study was to assess the learning needs for academic writing in conjunction with preparation of research studies for publication in professional journals. Study results indicated that ESL clinical investigators typically did not understand that their writing skills were insufficient for preparation of academic

studies. They had insufficient knowledge of established standards for academic writing. Furthermore, their understanding was strongly influenced by the historical context of language study in their respective countries and cultures. Typically, this resulted in passive attitudes toward seeking appropriate writing resources.

This chapter has presented definitions of key terms, theories related to needs analysis studies, and a comprehensive review of needs analyses in both occupational and academic purposes. A research method and design of the present study will be presented in the next chapter.