Chapter 2
Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The question is whether developing a course based on the Thai nurses' needs will help them to communicate effectively in English with the foreign patients and whether making use of the program would provide better quality health care services.

In this section the researcher will review the literature in some of the main areas of the research, ESP, curriculum development and syllabus design. Needs analysis and situational analysis are closely linked to ESP, and reviewing those areas will provide an overview of the research and question some of the key assumptions to an ESP curriculum development. Learner-centered will be the main focus to develop the curriculum. In addition, previous studies on how ESP relates to nursing will be examined.

To gain a more comprehensive view of the design for language learning, it is important to distinguish between several similar terms. First of all, the terms *curriculum* and *program*, are used interchangeably: they describe the broadest contexts about language learning, learning purpose and experience, evaluation and the role relationship between teachers and learners. A *syllabus* or a *course outline*, on the other hand, is more circumscribed, which is concerned with the specification of what units will be taught, dealing usually with units prepared for a particular group of

learners, in this case, nurses (Allen, 1984 as cited in C. J. Brumfit 1984; Yalden 1987; Nunan 1988a).

2.2 English for Specific Purposes - ESP

ESP has a long history in the field of English teaching. It started in the 1960s when general English courses did not meet learners' needs. There are three reasons common to the emergence of all ESP courses: the demands of a Brave New World, a revolution in a linguistics, and focus on the learner (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). There are two key historical periods of life into ESP. First, the end of the Second World War in 1945 brought with it an "...age of enormous and unprecedented expansion in scientific, technical and economic activity on an international scale for various reasons, most notably the economic power of the United States in the post-war world, the role of international language fell to English" (ibid, :6). English became the accepted international language; it created a new generation of learners who knew specifically why they were learning a language. Second, the oil crisis of the early 1970s resulted in Western money and knowledge flowing into the oil-rich countries. By business and commercial pressures, English suddenly began to apply an influence (ibid).

The second key cited as having tremendous impact on the emergence of ESP was a revolution in linguistics. Whereas traditional linguistics set out to describe the features of language, revolutionary pioneers in linguistics began to focus on the ways in which language is used in real communication. Hutchinson & Waters (1987) pointed out that one significant discovery was in the ways that spoken and written English vary. In other words, given the particular context in which English is used,

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the variant of English will change. This idea was taken one step further. If language in different situations varies, then tailoring language instruction to meet the needs of learners in specific contexts is also possible.

The final reason Hutchinson & Waters (1987) cited as having influence on the emergence of ESP has less to do with linguistics and everything to do with psychology. Rather than simply focus on the method of language delivery, more attention was given to the ways in which learners acquire language and the differences in the ways language is acquired. Learners were seen to employ different learning strategies, use different skills, enter with different learning schemata, and be motivated by different needs and interests. The main concerns of ESP have always been, and remain, with needs analysis, texts analysis, and preparing learners to communicate effectively in the tasks prescribed by their study or work situation (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998).

ESP is a movement based on the proposition that all language teaching should be tailored to the specific learning and language use needs for identified groups of learners as well as sensitive to the socio-cultural contexts in which these learners will be using English (Celce-Murcia, 2001). ESP is known as a learner-centered approach, since it meets the needs of (mostly) adult learners who need to learn a foreign language for use in their specific fields, such as science, technology, medicine, leisure, and academic learning. ESP programs are developed because there is a demand, because there is a need for language courses in which certain content, skills, motivations, processes, and values are identified and integrated into specialized, often short-term, courses. In order to discover the needs and wants of the participants in this current research, needs and situational analyses were conducted.

2.2.1 Needs Analysis and Situational Analysis

Needs analysis is the basis of training programs and aid development programs. It is the cornerstone of ESP and leads to a focused course. The main purpose of conducting a needs analysis is, according to Gardner and Winslow (1983: 76), "to produce information which when acted upon makes courses better adapted to learners' needs and part of the object of formal needs identification is to back up one's proposals with quantitative evidence of their importance". Furthermore, they added, "in many cases, concrete evidence of particular needs, such as these surveys produced, could be directly used as part of the course validation / approval procedure".

Teachers and trainers setting out nowadays to determine learners' needs begin from a different and broader base. Before they approach clients and learners, they can turn to the literature for previous needs analysis, available materials, and research findings. The information obtained from clients and learners will only be as good as the questions asked and the analysis of the answers. ESP practitioners need to know exactly what they are trying to find out and what they will do with the answers before they start (Berwick, 1989: 62 cited by Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998).

Analyzing the specific needs of a particular learner group serves as the prelude to an ESP course design, because it determines the 'what' and 'how' of an ESP course. The information will help to select and prioritize as closely as possible what learners will need to do. Given that, the purpose of an ESP course is to enable learners to function adequately in a target situation, that is, the situation in which the learners will use the language they are learning. The ESP course design process should

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proceed by first identifying the target situation and then carrying out a rigorous analysis of the linguistic features of that situation. Chambers (1980) calls this process *target situation analysis* (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).

John Munby (1978) presented a needs analysis model that points out some validity in ESP. Munby's most thorough explanation of target situation analysis is in *Communicative Syllabus Design*. He presented a highly detailed set of procedures for discovering target situation needs which he calls Communication Needs Processor (CNP). CNP consists of a range of questions about communication variables and can be used to identify the target language needs of any group of learners (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).

. ESP course designers should also explore and identify the learners' potential needs in the first place. The current concept of needs analysis in ESP, according to Dudley-Evans & St. John (1998: 125), includes consideration of the following aspects: professional information about the learners (*target situation analysis* and *objective needs*), personal information (*wants, means, subjective needs*), English language information, the learners' lacks, and language learning information. Professional communication information should also be considered, which is the knowledge of how language and skills are used in the target situations (linguistic analysis, discourse analysis and genre analysis). Finally, it is important to know what the learners want from the course and the environmental situation (means analysis).

What is an undisputed fact is that any ESP course should be needs driven (Wright, 1992) and should have an emphasis on practical outcomes (ibid,: 1). Therefore, needs analysis is and always will be an important and fundamental part of ESP (Gatehouse, 2001; Graves, 2000; Scrivener, 2005). Richards (2001, : 36), who

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certainly thought ESP was a driving force behind needs analysis, says, "The emergence of ESP with its emphasis on needs analysis as a starting point in language program design was an important factor in the development of current approaches to language curriculum development".

In this review, it can be seen that ESP and needs analysis go hand in hand. It becomes clear that courses designed with needs analysis conducted will benefit learners, stakeholders, and the teachers. Conducting needs analysis will help course designers to develop a syllabus relevant to the learners' needs which can also increase their motivation, who see the obvious relevance of what they are learning (Basturkmen, 2006). Motivation, therefore, is strongly linked with needs analysis and learner-centeredness (Dornyei, 2001).

Mostly ESP courses are designed for adult learners who have a superior cognitive ability that can render them more successful in certain classroom endeavors. Their need of sensory input can rely a little on their imaginations. Adults usually have acquired self-confidence, are more able to handle abstract rules and concepts, and have longer attention spans for material (Brown, 2001).

The instruments used to collect data from the needs and situational analyses provided the researcher with a clear idea of the content, activities, and materials to include in the learner-centered specialized English curriculum for Thai nurses.

2.3 Curriculum Development

A curriculum is the nexus of educational decisions, activities, and outcomes in a particular setting. Designing a curriculum for a general language course has outstanding steps which a course designer must work through to develop the subject

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matter courses. Yalden (1987) writes that "setting up a new course implies a skillful blending of what is already known about language teaching and learning with the new elements that a group of learners inevitably bring to the classroom: their own needs, wants, attitudes, knowledge of the world, and so on."

The literature demonstrates that there are a few guidelines for conceptualizing an entire course. According to Taba (1962), the curriculum process includes the following seven steps: diagnosis of the needs, formulation of objectives, selection of content, organization of content, selection of learning experiences, organization of learning experiences, and determination of what and how to evaluate. Richards (1984) began his survey of the field by pointing to the narrow conception of curriculum development that exists within language teaching. The focus has been almost exclusively on language syllabuses; that is, on the specification of content and input, to the exclusion of other crucially important aspects of the curriculum development process such as needs analysis, methodology and evaluation. However, Dubin and Olhstain (1986) revealed a broader perspective on curriculum design and the many facets to be considered in the process, such as language setting, patterns of language in society, the political and national context, and group and individual attitudes.

In the second language curriculum development literature there are several key frameworks. Now, designing a curriculum reflected on a more cyclical process. It became known as a work-in-process as a whole, a continuous process of research and development, implementation, evaluation, and more research and development (Stern, 1992; Graves, 2000).

Furthermore, Brown's (1995) approach includes the component of needs analysis, objectives, testing, materials, and teaching, with evaluation occurring as a

continuous process at every stage. Graves (2000) lists similar processes such as assessing needs, formulating goals and objectives, developing materials, designing an assessment plan, organizing the course, and conceptualizing content. Her framework is not a linear list but a flowchart; as a result, course developers can begin anywhere depending on how they predict their situation. Additionally, Richards (2001) refers to a range of processes in developing and renewing a curriculum. These include analyzing needs and situations, planning learning outcomes, organizing the course, selecting and preparing teaching materials, providing for effective teaching, and evaluating. However, he says that these elements are viewed as forming a network of interacting systems: change in one part has effects on other parts of the systems.

As Graves (2000: 9) notes, "designing a language course is a work in progress in its whole, in its parts, and in its implementation." In the preceding research, the course designer's task will begin with adopting aspects of these dynamic approaches starting with the most fundamental feature, the needs analysis and situational analysis. Then the course designer must work through curriculum and syllabus construction, prepare the materials and finally, modify the course according to the feedback.

Through the process of developing courses, teachers instantiate their professional knowledge. Underpinning all curriculum design is the teacher's beliefs about language learning. In describing method, the role of teachers' beliefs or accounts of how language is learned and how successful language learning is defined (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). Graves (2000) suggests that articulating beliefs serves as the foundation of all the processes of curriculum design. A curriculum thus necessarily reflects the course developers' viewpoints. For this research, there are

several beliefs that will run prominently through the course: one is the learner-centered approach together with the communicative language teaching approach.

2.3.1 Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

CLT is an approach to the teaching of second and foreign languages that emphasizes interaction as both the means and the ultimate goal of learning a language. It is also referred to as "communicative approach to the teaching of foreign languages" or simply the "communicative approach" (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Communicative language teaching can be understood as a set of principles about the goals of language teaching, how learners learn a language, the kinds of classroom activities that best facilitate learning, such as pair work activities, role plays, group work activities and project work and the roles of teachers and learners in the classroom.

CLT also recognized that many learners needed English in order to use it in specific occupational or educational settings. For them it would be more efficient to teach them the specific kinds of language and communicative skills needed for particular roles rather than just to concentrate on more general English. This led to the discipline of needs analysis – the use of observation, surveys, interviews, situation analysis, and analysis of language samples collected in different settings – in order to determine the kinds of communication learners would need to master if they were in specific occupational or educational roles and the language features of particular settings (Richards, 2006).

One of the goals of CLT is to develop fluency in language use. Fluency is natural language use occurring when speakers engages in meaningful interaction and

maintain comprehensible and ongoing communication despite limitations in their communicative competence. Fluency is developed by creating classroom activities in which learners must negotiate meaning, use communication strategies, correct misunderstandings, and work to avoid communication breakdowns.

The learner-centered specialized English curriculum for Thai nurses focused on communicative tasks that were based on meaningful practice which refers to an activity where language control is still provided but where learners are required to make meaningful choices when carrying out practice. For example, in order to practice the use of prepositions to describe locations of places around the hospital, learners had to give the directions to a patient in different locations. They were given a list of prepositions such as *across from, on the corner of, near, on, next to*. They then had to answer questions such as "Where is the surgery room?" The practice is now meaningful because they had to respond according to the location of places. Communicative practice refers to activities where practice in using language within a real communicative context is the focus, where real information is exchanged, and where the language used is not totally predictable. For example, learners had to think of questions and answers for a specific situation in which the patient was diagnosed with diabetes and create a plan on educating the patient for diabetes care.

Most of the activities in CLT and in learner-centered approach are designed to be carried out in pairs or small groups. Through completing activities in this way, it is argued that learners will obtain several benefits: they can learn from hearing the language used by other members of the group, they will produce a greater amount of language than they would use in teacher-fronted activities, their motivational level is likely to increase, and they will have the chance to develop fluency.

2.3.2 Learner-Centered Approach

A curriculum based on the learner-centered approach contains similar elements to those contained in a traditional curriculum. However, the key difference between them is that, in the former, the curriculum is a collaborative effort between teachers and learners, since the learners are closely involved in the decision-making process regarding the content of the curriculum and how it is taught. Nunan (1988b) says that one of the major assumptions underlying the learner-centered approach is that, given the constraints that exists in most learning contexts, it is impossible to teach learners everything they need to know in class. Therefore, teachers must use class time as effectively as possible and teach the aspects which the learners themselves deem to be most urgently required.

Learner-centered curriculum applies specific techniques which will be included in this research such as focusing on or accounting for learners' needs, styles and goals; giving some control to the learners such as group work, jigsaw activities, information gap, role-play, and games (matching, strips of cards), with emphasis on pair work and group work; curricula that include the consultation and input of learners; techniques that allow for learner creativity; and innovation and techniques that enhance a learner's sense of competence and self-worth (Brown, 2001).

Learner-centered approach puts more responsibility on the learners for their own learning. It involves learners in more decision-making processes, and they learn by doing. Because learning becomes more active (rather than passively listening to the teacher), it becomes more memorable: because it is personalized, and relevant to

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the learners' own lives and experiences, it brings language 'alive,' and makes it relevant to the real world.

In the learner-centered class, learners do not depend on their teacher all the time. They value each other's contributions, cooperate with one another, learn from each other, and help each other. The emphasis is on working together in pairs, in groups, and as a whole class. The teacher helps them to develop their language skills.

A learner-centered classroom is a place where learners' needs are considered, as a group and as individuals, and they are encouraged to participate in the learning process all the time (Jones, 2007). In this method, the teacher is considered as a member of the team, as a participant in the learning process.

According to theorists, the ideal size for a learner-centered language class is probably twelve people. Teachers should be creative in arranging the seats to ensure learners can speak comfortably. To build learners' confidence, it is recommended to have learners working in pairs first and into groups later. Regarding different personalities, Jones (2007) says that every learner is an individual. Rearranging group regularly can help the learners to develop more confidence.

Along with the curriculum learner-centered language teaching is the communicative language teaching. Widdowson (1978) says that a basic principle underlying all communicative approaches is that learners must learn not only to make grammatically correct, propositional statements about the experimental world, but must also develop the ability to use language to carry out various real-world tasks.

2.4 Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)

One of the challenges that many course developers face involves identifying an organizational structure for their courses. This course plan was designed for an ESP program especially for nurses focusing mostly on task-based instruction. TBLT bases arguments for an analytic syllabus which offers the learner target language and is organized in terms of the purposes for which people are learning language and the kinds of language performance that are necessary to meet those purposes (Wilkins, 1976 cited in Long and Crookes, 1992). Since the communicative approach emerged in the late 1960s, being capable of using a language in real-world communication has become the main objective in the field of language teaching (Richards, 2001).

In task-based instruction, learners participate in communicative tasks in English. Tasks are defined as activities that can stand alone as fundamental units and that require comprehending, producing, manipulating, or interacting in authentic language while attention is principally paid to meaning rather than form (Nunan, 1989). Instead of beginning the design process with lists of grammatical, functional-notional, and other items, the designer conducts a needs analysis which yields a list of the target tasks that the targeted learners will need to carry out in the 'real-world' outside the classroom. One common issue of the syllabus design is whether a product or a process should be the main focus. Hutchinson and Waters (1983, as cited in Nunan, 1993: 49) suggest that the best work in the ESP area usually focuses on a process rather than a product. However, in real world situations, language often acts as a means in completing tasks. Therefore, ESP should pay attention to not only the process of learning, but also the product.

Teaching through tasks can create favorable learning conditions for learners who study ESP. Involving learners in performing tasks that are relevant to their profession increases learners' motivation and does not emphasize linguistic issues in the primary stages. Task- based learning in language teaching has become an important approach in the recent years because it promotes communication and social interaction, referring to learners doing authentic tasks (Ellis, 2003).

2.5 Performance Assessment

If a test is clearly relevant to the test takers' needs and background and reflects what they have been studying, it will be less stressful for them and more appropriate in the eyes of teachers. If adequate documentation is provided about test objectives, development, and measurement qualities, administrators will have a better understanding and appreciation of what the test is measuring and how to interpret performance on it. When language teaching and assessment professionals have an ethical responsibility to ensure that the tests we make and use are as fair, accurate, relevant, and transparent as possible for the test takers and score users (Van Duzer & Berdan, 1999).

Specific purpose language tests are also necessary from a pedagogical point of view. They are fairer than non-test evaluations since all test takers are given the same instructions, input, and scoring criteria. They are more relevant to the learners than general language tests because ESP tests are based on an analysis of the target language use situation and so reflect the actual communicative needs of people in that context, and they reflect the learning content and style in the ESP course. Finally, ESP tests are more accurate than non-test assessments in giving test takers numerous

opportunities to demonstrate what they can do in relevant situations. Thus, ESP test scores can be interpreted as evidence of communicative ability in a target language use situation.

Authenticity and knowledge make ESP tests what they are. Authenticity of task means that test tasks share features with target language use tasks: in this research, the work of nursing (Douglas, 2000). The interaction between language knowledge and specific purpose content knowledge means that both types of knowledge are necessary components of ESP tests. Authenticity refers to the degree to which a learning activity mirrors real-life language use, but as Widdowson (1978) put it, "It is probably better to consider authenticity not as a quality residing in instances of language but as a quality which is bestowed upon them, created by the response of the receiver. Authenticity in this view is a function of the interaction between the reader/hearer and the text which incorporates the intentions of the writer/speaker...Authenticity has to do with appropriate response" (66).

The performance test used in this current research included seven topics, such as patient admission, signs and symptoms, pain assessment, greeting the patient, directions around the hospital, general communication, administering medication, appointments and health care education – diabetes. During the test the learners had to perform a role-play (patient-nurse interaction). Decisions based on test performance were applicable to teaching and materials design as well as more accessible and interpretable because the results were clearly related to eventual job performance.

. To conclude this section, the researcher has adopted the following definition of a specific purpose language test:

"A specific purpose language test is one in which content and methods are derived from an analysis of a specific purpose target language use situation so that test tasks and content are authentically representative of tasks in the target situation, allowing for an interaction between the test taker's language ability and specific purpose content knowledge, on the one hand, and the test tasks on the other, and allowing us to make inferences about a test taker's capacity to use language in the specific purpose domain" (Douglas, 2000: 19).

The assessment on this research focused on competencies needed for the nurses' jobs. Speaking and listening skills were assessed through observation, and the learners' behavior was observed and assessed unobtrusively. The learners were asked to perform specific oral communication tasks. Their performance on the tasks was then evaluated following a rating indicating the presence or absence of the characteristics such as comprehensibility, fluency pronunciation, vocabulary, language control, and interaction. The tasks were carried out in a one-on-one setting.

2.6 Related Studies

Cameron (1998) did a research with nursing students from different countries with language needs. The research evaluated 16 incoming students from September 1991 to September 1992. The results showed the importance of carrying out a needs analysis and how useful it can be for course designers.

Bosher and Smalkoski (2002) found that students enrolled in the Associate of Science (A.S.) nursing degree program had trouble with following: (1) being assertive with clients, colleagues, and nursing instructors in clinical settings; (2) communicating clearly and effectively, using appropriate paralinguistic features of speech, particularly in a clinical setting; (3) using appropriate non-verbal communication skills, such as eye contact; (4) making small talk with clients and understanding when clients are engaging in small talk with them; and (5)

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understanding how cultural values influence their interactions with clients from cultural backgrounds different from their own.

Caffee and Pineiro (2005) identify the following needs for health professionals: comprehensible pronunciation and prosody of speech; active listening skills, asking for clarification; confidence in communication; assertiveness skills; politeness and pragmatics of oral communication; and bridging professional and lay language (as cited in Currier). Ichikawa and Carr (2006) developed a program to improve communication in ESL nursing students and other healthcare professionals. Since the nursing students came from various countries in Asia and Africa, they had trouble with academic and communication factors.

Another research conducted at Dalhouse Medical School in 1997, in which a needs assessment was undertaken, revealed learners' and faculty's appreciation of the importance of Communicative Skills Training (CST), learners' assessment of training weaknesses in the delivery of CST, learners' weaknesses in higher order patient-doctor communication skills, and faculty weaknesses in assessing learners' communication skills competency. Those findings were used to plan and implement a new communication skills curriculum (Laidlow; Mac Leod; Langille & Sargeant, 2002).

A research conducted by Coskun (2009) with tourism students in Turkey was aimed to develop a course based on the level and the learners' needs. Using two instruments, the learners' average level of English according to the Common European Framework (CEF) standards was discovered and listening and speaking skills were perceived as the most needed skills at work. One important aspect also

revealed that pair work in the classroom was considered as useful by most of the learners.

Kaur (2009) conducted a research with fifteen Malay administrative staff in two departments in Universiti Sains Malaysia in an ESP course. The course design was based on a thorough needs analysis, taking into account needs analysis concepts forwarded by Hutchinson and Waters (1987) and Dudley–Evans and St. John (1998). Findings from the needs analysis guided the course design for the six-week Conversational ESP course. Feedback from the ESP learners indicated that the course content was tailor made to suit their needs and wants and contributed to a positive learning experience for the learners who were adult, non-native English speaking background learners.