

## Chapter I

### Introduction

The aim of this study is to survey the needs and problems of second and third year nursing students at Payap University, and nurses at McCormick Hospital concerning the use of English in the field of nursing. Three different sets of questionnaires given to the three groups of subjects served as the research instruments. The questionnaire responses were processed, analyzed, and categorized systematically. Finally, the findings were summarized and commented on accordingly.

The presentation of this study is divided into five chapters. Chapter one presents the rationale behind and the significance of the problem, as well as the objectives, the scope of the study, definitions, and significance of the study, along with the abbreviations. Chapter two reviews the related literature on needs analysis and problems in teaching and studying ESP, as well as previous research done on ESP needs analysis and ESP teaching and studying problems. Chapter three explains the research design including the preparation of the study, the identification of subjects, instruments employed, the data gathering procedures, and the data analysis. Chapter four clarifies the data interpretation through statistical procedures. Finally, chapter five presents a summary of the study, discussion of results, implications for course design, and recommendations for further research.

### 1.1 Rationale and Significance of the Problem

In Thailand, many fields of study, and nursing in particular, increasingly demand a high level of English competency. English in the field of nursing is usually considered English for Specific Purposes (ESP) because the language structures and vocabulary are specific to the subject matter involved. In establishing an ESP syllabus, a needs analysis is essential because an ESP syllabus is student-based. This has been noted by Noisaengsri (1981) who also states that "the most important thing in the ESP syllabus is to keep on the learner-centered approach to syllabus design" (1981, p.12). Therefore, a well-designed ESP syllabus emphasizes specific language skills, topics, and functions to suit the targeted learners.

Mackay (1978) mentions that the teaching of ESP is not an end in itself, but an essential means to meet an identifiable goal, established by means of a needs analysis. Mackay also emphasizes that:

In order to design and teach effective courses, the teacher and planner must investigate the uses to which the language will be put. Informal approaches to learners or their instructors in whatever professional field of study or vocational field they belong to will invariably lead to vague, confused and even erroneous results. (1978, p.21)

Needs analysis is a tool which is used widely both in re-evaluating existing course content, teaching methods, and materials, and in developing new courses. Pleansaisurb (1985) points out that students' needs regarding course content and educational materials can be identified by doing a systematic survey of student needs. Wanasiree (1985) cited in Ungwattanakul (1992) mentions that medical students pursuing a Medical Certificate at Mahidol University want to study both general English and Medical English with an emphasis on listening and speaking

skills. They also want the English teacher to use the self-access learning approach in addition to lectures.

Doing a needs analysis can help point out many learning and teaching problems which may arise in the process of learning and teaching English. Robinson (1991) mentions that such problems involve large classes, grouping students with different linguistic levels, student unwillingness to study, heavy teaching loads, and time limitations for learning and teaching. In fact, course content, teaching methodology, and student class participation lead to the problems in teaching nursing students at Kuakarun Nursing College according to Chaikitkosi (1986). Furthermore, Yongwanit (1985) disseminates findings from a survey which indicates learning and teaching in both the fields of ESP and general English is rarely accomplished without some problems, such as those mentioned above.

Recognizing student needs and problems in order to deal with them effectively is necessary when it comes to revising syllabuses, establishing course content, and selecting suitable teaching methods. Therefore, to solve ESP teaching and learning problems, it is necessary to do a needs analysis. According to Mackay (1978), Nunan (1994), and Jordan (1997), the needs analysis should be the starting point for devising syllabuses, courses, materials, and establishing the types of teaching and learning which are to take place.

At Payap University's Faculty of Nursing, English has been taught for 33 years. Initially, there were three English courses offered for the first and second year nursing students. Each semester, the first year students were required to take one English course which was general English with some nursing related content. Then, the second year students in their first semester took the third English course which was totally ESP. In 1998, the English curriculum for nursing students was revised: presently, four English courses over four semesters are offered for the first and second year nursing students. The first, second, and third courses' content for

nursing students contain general English, along with some Nursing English, while the content of the fourth course is totally nursing related. It is significant to note that the fundamental English program for nursing students is the only one which is considered an ESP at Payap University.

Nonetheless, no systematic survey of nursing students' needs and problems in studying nursing English at Payap University has ever been done. One purpose of this study is to do a survey of needs, the preliminary task in designing ESP courses. This survey, based on the results of scientific research, could then lead to the revision of the Nursing English syllabus.

As previously stated, English courses for nursing students at Payap University are presently taught without a formal needs analysis. It would be appropriate, then, at this time to conduct a survey of the needs and problems in studying Nursing English. The researcher hopes that this survey will be useful in reorganizing nursing English courses for the benefit of all nursing students, as well as nurses working at McCormick Hospital. Additionally, the research results will help the course designers decide where to put ESP content. Thus, research results can provide a helpful guideline for both course designers and nursing English teachers. The English syllabus can be developed and implemented accordingly, so that, in the future, those involved in the nursing field at Payap university, McCormick Hospital, and even in Thailand would be able to practice and use English efficiently in real-life situations.

## **1.2 Objectives of the Thesis**

Specifically, the objectives of the thesis are :

1. to survey for the English needs of nursing students at the Faculty of Nursing at Payap University and graduated nurses employed by McCormick Hospital

2. to identify the problems of the nursing students concerning Nursing English studies and the problems in using English within the context of the nurses' daily work

### 1.3 Scope of the Study

The scope of this study is as follows:

1. This study is confined specifically to the 62 second year and 57 third year undergraduate nursing students at Payap University, and the 83 nurses graduated from the Faculty of Nursing at Payap University in the academic years of 1995 -1997 who still work at McCormick Hospital.
2. The study is aimed at surveying the needs and problems of the subjects through the use of three sets of questionnaires given to the second and third year students and the nurse group.
  - 2.1 The first questionnaire, given to the second year students, investigates their needs and problems in their current English studies.
  - 2.2 The second questionnaire, given to the third year students, concerns their needs and problems in their use of English in terms of applying their second year English study in their present third year Nursing courses.
  - 2.3 The third questionnaire, given to the nurse group, asks about their use of English learned in their first and second years of study, as it applies to their daily work.
3. The focus of this study is on student and nurse problems in using English skills to accomplish their English and nursing studies and to function daily work.
4. The focus of the study is on student and alumnae needs from their perspective. It is limited to the opinions of the subjects selected. Therefore, it is assumed that all participating subjects responded honestly to all questions on the questionnaires.

#### 1.4 Definitions

1. Nursing Students: The second year nursing students who are taking AE 204 in the former curriculum and third year nursing students who passed AE 204 at the undergraduate level in the academic year of 1998 at Payap University's Faculty of Nursing
2. Nurses: The nurses who graduated from the Faculty of Nursing at Payap University in the academic years of 1995-1997 and are presently working at McCormick Hospital
3. Needs: The objective and subjective needs of the second and third year nursing students concerning English studies, as well as the objective and subjective needs of the nurses in the use of English studied in the Payap University's Faculty of Nursing within the context of their daily work.
4. Objective Needs: The requirements of the second and third year nursing students and the nurses in using English skills in their studies and daily work
5. Subjective Needs: The wants of the second and third year nursing students and the nurses, including teaching methods, content of study, materials, time spent in studying English, English skills to be emphasized, and testing and evaluation
6. Target Situation Analysis:
  - An analysis of the second year nursing students' present needs and problems in studying Nursing English
  - An analysis of third year nursing students' needs and problems at the end of their English studies, as well as the application of their English knowledge gained in studying nursing courses
  - An analysis of the nurses' needs and problems as they apply their English studies in their daily work
7. Problems:
  - Second year nursing student problems in studying nursing English presently

- Third year nursing student problems in applying nursing English learned in studying nursing courses
  - McCormick nurses' problems in applying nursing English learned in daily work
8. English skills: Four main English skills which are listening, speaking, reading, and writing, as well as the English sub-skills of each main English skill
  9. Sub-skills: Different aspects of the four main English skills e.g. listening to nursing terms as a sub-skill of listening
  10. Applications: The ability of nursing students and nurses to put English language theories and knowledge to practice in the nursing field
  11. Survey: A survey of needs and problems of the second and third year students and nurses elicited by means of questionnaires
  12. AE 204: The third fundamental English course for nursing students

### 1.5 Significance of the Thesis Research

The researcher expects the following benefits from this research.

1. This research will inform the Nursing English teachers as to the needs of the students. They will then be able to utilize research findings in the design and formulation of an English curriculum and materials for the nursing students to meet the particular needs, and to solve the identified problems of the nursing students at the Payap University's Faculty of Nursing.
2. Nursing English teachers who presently teach nursing students can scrutinize the results of this research in terms of maximizing teaching and learning potentials.
3. Nursing English teachers and syllabus designers will understand the students' problems in studying English, and therefore will be more easily able to seek out solutions to each particular problem indicated by the results.
4. The findings from the nurse group will be beneficial for both nursing English teachers and course designers in terms of how nurses apply the English language knowledge gained to real-life situations.

5. The implications and recommendations of this research could activate a greater interest on the part of the administrators at Payap University's Faculty of Nursing in deciding if the curriculum presently used is relevant.

#### 1.6 Abbreviations

1. ESP: English for Specific Purposes
2. EAP: English for Academic Purposes
3. EST: English for Science and Technology
4. 2yNs: Second year nursing students
5. 3yNs: Third year nursing students
6. N: McCormick Nurses
7. PSA: Present Situation Analysis
8. TSA: Target Situation Analysis
9. SD: Standard Deviation
10. SPSS: Statistical Package for Social Sciences

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