

Article submitted on 2009. 01. 24.  
Examination completed on 2009. 12. 07.  
Publication accepted on 2009. 12. 18.

## A Study on Needs Analysis and Syllabus Design for Trade English

Park, Eun Ok\*

- 
- I. Introduction
  - II. Needs Analysis
  - III. Syllabus Design
  - IV. Conclusion
- 

### I. Introduction

When business people do international business transactions across frontiers, the very first thing to do is to find a common language which two or more business people can use for their business communication. There is no doubt that English is the most commonly and widely used language for this purpose over the world and in Korea this kinds of English is named and called as 'Trade English'<sup>1)</sup> at a tertiary education level. 'Trade English' is different from

---

\* Phd in Business Administration at Sungkyunkwan University.

1) 'Trade English' generally includes English for international business negotiation, international business correspondence, international business laws or treaties between countries or agreements between contracting parties as to international business transactions. For this reason Trade English is far different from general business English and it should be considered as one part of ESP(English for Specific Purpose).

general business English in terms of the scope and the contents, and also it is studied and taught as one of subjects in the discipline of 'International Trade'<sup>2)</sup> by scholars who have a major in this area.

Although English is the most basic element in international business transactions and many scholars laid stress on its importance, there is not much work done for it. It is true that there is a certain limitation for teachers (scholars, precisely) to deliver the right contents with right teaching methods because of the duplicity of 'Trade English'-technical knowledge about 'International Trade' and language competence in English as a second or foreign language. Namely, 'Trade English' is a very special ESP area, especially in Korea. For this reason, Trade English is one of the subjects which most teachers seem reluctant to teach at a tertiary education level.

The purpose of this paper is to review theoretical background research about needs analysis and syllabus design in English language teaching and learning as a second/foreign language. Based on the rationals under theoretical researches, application to the real classroom will be suggested in order to give some ideas and guideline to teachers and material designers(scholars).

## II. Needs Analysis

### 1. The Definition of Needs Analysis

Needs analysis is an essential procedure for the syllabus design. It can be defined as "procedure for identifying and validating needs, and establishing priorities among them".<sup>3)</sup> So, simply speaking, the purpose of needs analysis is firstly, finding out what learners want to learn, secondly, putting the language items which are selected according to learners' needs in a certain order, and

---

2) In Korean, it is called as 'Muyouk Sangmu'.

3) Pratt, D., *Curriculum design and development*, New York:Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980, p.79.

thirdly, delivering these selected language items to learners in order to maximize learners' expectation or requirement. When the syllabus is based on learners' needs, learners are more likely to get motivated because, knowing what they need to learn, they can see the obvious relevance of what they are learning.

Needs analysis tends to be more emphasized in ESP areas even though some scholars claim that all language courses have their own specific purposes and there is no general English or basic variety-less English.<sup>4)</sup> It seems somehow true, but if the meaning of ESP area gets narrowed, there is definite technical difference in English for Specific Purpose which can be distinguished from general English. In this sense, ESP is included in or a part of general English and language items for ESP courses are much more specific than those in general English courses. Therefore, it is not easy for native general English teachers to teach 'Trade English' at a tertiary education level because 'Trade English' contains lots of technical terminology which are used in a quite different way from general meanings. So, 'Trade English' has to be treated as a quite serious area of ESP. Moreover, usually learners in ESP courses have the limited time for their learning, so that their limited time should be effectively utilized. Considering time constraint, needs analysis takes a more important role in the syllabus design of ESL<sup>5)</sup> and the syllabus designers for ESP course should pay more attention to needs analysis. In Korea, the subject, 'Trade English' is taught during one term, which is 16 weeks (approximately 48 hours), and it is a definitely short time to learn a language. Accordingly, learners' needs should be analysed more precisely, and by doing so, learners can get what they need in a short limited time.

## 2. Methods of Needs Analysis

There are many different methods to find out learners' needs and analyse it.

---

4) Bloor, M. & Bloor, T., *Language for specific purposes: Practice and theory* (occasional paper no. 19), Dublin: Trinity College, 1986, p.54.

5) West, R., *Needs analysis in language teaching*, Language Teaching Abstracts, 1994, p.5.

In this part, seven methods will be discussed. The first method is 'sampling', using a sample group. The most frequently used type of sampling is using a 'convenience sample'. The 'convenience sample' means the group of informants who are available and willing to participate in the study.<sup>6)</sup> For this reason, these informants can be or cannot be representative of the target population. On the contrary, a 'purposive sample' is a group which is selected on purpose by the analyst as supposedly typical for the study.<sup>7)</sup> In this case, the sample could be representative of the target population. The other type of sampling is using a 'random sample'.<sup>8)</sup> In order to use the 'random sample', analysts select anyone in random, and in this case, each member of the population gets an equal chance of being selected. For example, every nth person (every nth name on an alphabetized list of all members, for example) from the sampling frame can be selected. This sampling method can be costly in time and money if the population is large.

The second method is using 'expert and non-expert intuitions'. In this method, material designers anticipate language items which they believe the learners would use a lot, and put these items into the materials. The problem of this method is that the language items which are used in a real target situation could be quite different from those which are presented in materials. Moreover, since material designers are not the ones who are working in a real target situation, the language items which are presented in materials are often oversimplified as well as inauthentic in terms of communicative structure, and also it has an unrealistic situational content.<sup>9)</sup> This method is the most frequently used one in Korea when material designers develop 'Trade English' materials. Most material designers are scholars who have studied 'International

---

6) Long, M. H., "Methodological issues in learner needs analysis", p.34, in Long, M. H. (editor), *Second Language Needs Analysis*, Cambridge Applied Linguistics, Cambridge University Press, 2005.

7) Ibid., p.34.

8) Ibid., p.34.

9) Auerbach, E. R. & Burgess, D., "The hidden curriculum of survival ESL", *TESOL Quarterly* 19, 3, 1985, p.481.

Trade', and teach students at the tertiary education level, rather than those who have work experience in this field. As a result, some language items which are presented in materials are too old-fashioned expressions or too-complicated structures. This kinds of materials make learners demotivated and they finally believe that 'Trade English' is a boring and far way difficult subject to learn. In ESP area, it seems ideal that practitioners who work in the field collaborate with material designers in selecting the contents for materials.

The third method is an interview by asking learners about what they think they need to learn. Although the interview is time-consuming, unstructured, and open-ended, it is quite often used as one of the direct ways of finding out the learners' needs. The big advantage of this method is that the interviewer can get in-depth coverage issues and also he/she can have an opportunity of identifying some valuable information about interviewees'(learners') needs such as cross-cultural differences, for example. On the other hand, the interview has a potential problem. The interviewer can influence interviewees' responses; telling interviewees what they want to hear, asking different questions or asking the same questions in different ways, and unintentionally distorting data by filtering the way they report or interpret responses through their own perceptions.<sup>10)</sup> This problem can be surely avoided as long as the interviewer is aware of this potential drawback. In reality, when material designers interview learners about their needs, interviewees' answers are quite subjective. Every individual learners have different requirements and they want to learn what they are not very good at. The problem is that what they want to learn because they are not good at them could be quite different from what they actually need to learn for their future use. For example, most Korean students who take the 'Trade English' say that they need to learn and improve a speaking skill, but in practice, it is not often required for them to use a speaking skill at their work.

The fourth one is a questionnaire survey. The questionnaire survey can

---

10) Long, M. H., op. cit., p.36.

acquire sizable amounts of focused, standardized, organized data from a large sample of respondents. There is less chance of interviewer bias, because the questions are already made and fixed with a careful planning. However, the data from the questionnaire survey can be poor, especially when it is conducted by mail, and anonymously. In addition, the response rates can be low, and the type of information and range of responses which have been obtained are likely to be limited due to the use of pre-determined questions and response options and formats.<sup>11)</sup> In this sense, the advantages and disadvantages of questionnaire surveys are the mirror image of those of unstructured interviews. As a combination of these two methods, an open question can be used. It can elicit a wider range of information as well as more details, and may be more suitable for complex issues, but again, it results in loss of standardization and it could be more difficult and time-consuming for interviewers(needs analysts) to code and interpret the answers from respondents. In spite of some disadvantages, in practice, a well-organized open question can be used, and it can somehow cover the drawback of interview; analysts can lessen the various possibilities of respondents' answers, and eliminate their too-subjective answers.

'Participant and non-participant observation' is the other type of needs analysis.<sup>12)</sup> This method is conducted by being involved into the real work place where learners are at present or will be in the future. The difference between participant and non-participant is whether or not needs analysts actually become or behave as a member of the work place in order to find out what is happening there(what kinds of language items are being used there). Participant observation as a part of needs analysis is rarer than non-participant observation. Both of these have the advantage of allowing direct, in-depth, contextualized study of what participants actually do, or of the activities of interest in their natural environment.<sup>13)</sup> This method is not

---

11) *Ibid.*, p.38.

12) Horowitz, D. M. "What professors actually require: Academic tasks for the ESL classroom", *TESOL Quarterly* 20, 3, 1986, p.450.

easy to use in reality because in order to be a member of work place, a needs analyst has to get a permission from the work place, and actually behaves like a worker without being noticed by other co-workers; he/she has to do a real work with other co-workers as well as pay attention to what is happening at the work place and analysing them at the same time.

The next method to discuss is 'journals and logs'<sup>14)</sup>. Needs analysts ask learners to submit entries about their experiences inside and/or outside the classroom, and ask teachers to write regular responses, usually to content rather than form. This method has been found to serve more valuable source of information for developing learner-centered curriculum, and to play a great role especially for writing courses.<sup>15)</sup> Being time-consuming to write and analyze them could be disadvantage of this method.

The last, but not the least, method is 'tests'.<sup>16)</sup> Most people think that usually a test in a language course is for the placement purpose before a program begins or for the check-up purpose after a program finishes. The test in needs analysis is task-based tests, and the case for task-based tests in needs analysis is the same as that for task-based language teaching and assessment in general.<sup>17)</sup> As a task-based test in needs analysis, for example, learners can be asked to write down the result of negotiation from the recording of two business people talking for a deal, or to make a business proposal after seeing an advertisement. By analyzing the learners' work, needs analysts are able to realize what the learners need to learn or which skills need to be improved. For a writing course, the task-based test can be a great use. Once learners get a writing task as a test and submit their work, it gives a lot of information to

---

13) Long, M. H., op. cit., p.42.

14) Ibid., p.44.

15) Spack, R., & Sadow, C., "Student-teacher working journals in ESL freshman composition", *TESOL Quarterly* 17, 4, 1993, p.582.

16) Long, M. H., op. cit., p.46

17) Long, M. H. & Norris, J., "Task-based language teaching and assessment", p.601, in Byram, M. (editor.), *Encyclopedia of language teaching and learning*, London: Routledge, 2000.

teachers as well as course designers(needs analysts); by looking into learners' work, needs analysts can find out which aspects have to be focused during the course like whether they have a difficulties in grammar or technical terminology or general linguistic expression. In addition, they can examine the general aspects of learners' work, for instance, whether the work has a proper layout, whether the work includes all necessary contents to be covered, whether the learners use an appropriate voice. Moreover, if needs analysts observe the procedure of learners' writing, they can get extra crucial information—whether they follow writing steps like planning, writing, revision steps. Even though these general writing steps are really important, they are easily neglected.

### 3. Considering points in Needs Analysis

There are some criticisms and issues in needs analysis. It would be valuable to point out some issues raised, so that syllabus designers can take these issues into consideration when they develop the syllabus. The first issue is that the information in needs analysis tends to come from the institutions themselves rather than learners.<sup>18)</sup> In reality, mostly needs analysts contact the institution before they actually involve with the learners or sometimes they only get information from the institutions without consulting the learners. When the institutions already have definite expectations about what the learners should be able to do, the outcome of needs analysis try to serve the interests of the institutions. In this case, if there is a big difference between the institutions' needs or interests and learners', learning cannot be motivating or interesting to learners at all, and as a result, learning will be so inefficient at last.

Secondly, in needs analysis of ESP, learners are usually asked for their perceptions of needs.<sup>19)</sup> However, these target learners cannot be always

---

18) Auerbach, E. R., "The politics of the ESL classroom: Issues of power in pedagogical choices", p.15, in Tollefson, R. (editor.), *Power and inequality in language education*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

19) Long, M. H. "The role of the linguistic environment in second language acquisition",



reliable sources of information about their own needs, especially when they are not familiar with the jobs which they are going to perform or with the subjects which they are going to study. As a matter of fact, needs from students who take 'Trade English' at the university are quite different from those that practitioners actually require.

Thirdly, the needs have two distinguishable meanings and these two different concepts have to be recognized in a separate way. Needs can be divided into objective needs and subjective needs.<sup>20)</sup> Objective needs are diagnosed by teachers on the basis of the analysis which comes from personal data about learners along with information about their personal background such as their language proficiency, the patterns of language use, and so on.<sup>21)</sup> On the contrary, subjective needs mean learners' wants or desires or expectations or other physical manifestations, so that it cannot be easily diagnosed.<sup>22)</sup> Sometime, even learners cannot state their subjective needs. The issue raised here is that objective needs are not necessarily the same as subjective needs or wants.<sup>23)</sup> There could be a big gap between what learners need to learn for their work or study and what they actually want to learn. When there is a gap between objective needs and subjective needs, and the syllabus is designed based on the objective needs, learning a language(English) could be really demotivating for learners.

Fourthly, language needs could not be the same as learning needs. Although learners will need to use certain language structures or features in their target environments, it does not mean that they are ready to acquire

---

p.425, in Richie, W. C. & Bhatia, T. K. (editor.), *Handbook of second language acquisition*, San Diego: Academic Press, 1996.

20) Brindley, G., "The role of needs analysis in adult ESL programme design, p.31, in Johnson, R. K., (editor), *The second language curriculum*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

21) *Ibid.*, p.32.

22) *Ibid.*, p.32.

23) Basturkmen, H., *Ideas and Options in English for Specific Purposes*, ESL & Applied Linguistics Professional Series, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers, 2006, p.19.

them.<sup>24)</sup> Syllabus designers should provide learners with what they are able to acquire considering not only what they need to learn for their work or study but also their level of language competence. When the class consists of the learners who have different level of language competence, it gets harder for syllabus designers to design the course or materials. In ESP courses, most classes are mixed-level ones.

Fifthly, asking learners about their language needs can be inappropriate because learners might not be sure about what they need to learn or they cannot be able to describe their needs in any meaningful way.<sup>25)</sup> It is improbable that learners who do not have sophisticated knowledge about language would make sound decisions about their own needs.<sup>26)</sup>

Sixthly, perspectives of needs from individual learners vary and the needs analysts have to decide whose perspectives they are going to take into account when they design ESP courses.<sup>27)</sup> If they design the syllabus based on one person's needs, that syllabus will satisfy only one person at the others' expenses, even though it is true that one thing cannot make everybody happy.

Seventhly, the syllabus which is designed based on needs analysis could lead to language training rather than language education. Learners can be trained to perform a restricted repertoire of the language rather than develop underlying linguistic competence of the language.<sup>28)</sup> As a result, learners can only do things for which they have been specifically prepared, even though they should be able to do things for which they have not been specifically prepared after they finish their language course.

---

24) Hutchinson, T. & Waters, A., *English for Specific Purposes: A learning-centred approach*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987, p.135.

25) Basturkmen, H., op. cit. p.20.

26) Chamber, F. "A re-evaluation of needs analysis in ESP", *English for Specific Purposes Journal*, 1(1), 1980, p.30.

27) Jasso-Aguilar, R., "Sources, methods and triangulation in needs analysis: A critical perspective in a case study of Waikiki Hotel maids", *English for Specific Purposes Journal*, 18(1), 1999, p.38.

28) Widdowson, H. G., *Learning purpose and language use*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983, p.82.

Lastly, needs analyses are not always neutral.<sup>29)</sup> One needs analyst want to aim to identify the language functions which could be used in a particular environment while another analyst tries to identify high frequency syntactic feature or lexical items which are used in the same environment. Because of that, 'Trade English' materials in Korea have quite different and various contents in them; some materials focus on the functional aspects while some make a great emphasis on the expressions as well as grammatical aspects.

### III. Syllabus Design

#### 1. The Definition of Syllabus

Since syllabus design is a part of curriculum development, it is better to start with curriculum development in order to define the meaning of syllabus design. Four fundamental questions should be asked for curriculum development<sup>30)</sup>; first, what educational purposes should a school seek to attain? Second, what educational experiences can be provided that are likely to attain those purposes? Third, how can the educational experiences be effectively organized? And fourth, how can we determine whether these purposes have been attained? In other ways, these four questions can be identified like first, what can be expected to be achieved, second, which language items are going to be delivered by the teacher, third, how teachers are going to work with learners, and finally, how outcomes from the learning is assessed.<sup>31)</sup> The first point is about aim, the second is about contents, the third is about methods, and the last one is about evaluation. As far as the context of language teaching is concerned, the

---

29) West, R., op. cit., p.14.

30) Nunan, D., "Syllabus Design", p.55, in Celce-Murcia, M. (editor), *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language*, 3rd Edition, Heinle & Heinle, 2001.

31) Breen, M. P., "Syllabus design", p.151, in Carter, R. & Nunan, D. (editors), *The Cambridge Guide to Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages*, Cambridge University Press, 2001.

first two points or questions, namely aim and contents, have to do with syllabus design. Specifically, syllabus design is the selection, sequencing, and justification of the content of the curriculum.

There are several things that an ideal syllabus should provide. In order to make these requirements clear, four questions can be asked.<sup>32)</sup> Firstly, syllabus designers should think about what knowledge or capabilities will be focused on; for example, whether linguistic knowledge will be more focused than communicative knowledge, or whether one skill like speaking will be more emphasized than others (listening, writing, and reading), and so on. Secondly, they should consider what kinds of contents will be selected as appropriate language items; particular structure or expression, vocabulary, grammar, etc. These could be closely related to the first question. Thirdly, they should think over how these selected contents would be subdivided and organized in a meaningful and manageable way. This may play an important role in a real teaching. A well organized syllabus makes teaching easy as well as learning more meaningful and efficient. Lastly, the sequence of the contents which are chosen should be taken into consideration in order to be a step-by-step syllabus. A good step-by-step syllabus shows more complex knowledge and capabilities as it goes on. Moreover, it is cyclic where earlier knowledge and capabilities are revisited and refined at later points.

## 2. Types of syllabus

Syllabus can be divided into four types in general; the grammatical syllabus, the functional syllabus, the content-based syllabus, and the task-based syllabus. Although each syllabus has been developed in order to cover the weakness of preexisting syllabus, there are pros and cons for all types of syllabuses. It is meaningless to say one syllabus is better than others because individual syllabus would fit in better depending upon various factors, for example, learners' needs, learning contexts, learners' level of language

---

32) *Ibid.*, pp.151-152.

competence, teaching skills and so on. Syllabus designers have to assess and analyse learners' needs, and then develop the syllabus which can serve learners' needs best. Therefore, types of syllabus can differ depending upon the learners' needs, and different teaching methods may be applied more efficiently to each types of syllabuses. Good syllabus is the one that can fulfill learners' needs along with a proper teaching method.

#### (1) The Grammatical Syllabus

The grammatical syllabus was widely used through 1960's before the advent of communicative language teaching. Although it is the oldest one among four kinds of syllabus, it is still used commonly by syllabus designers. Generally speaking, the grammatical syllabus focuses on linguistic knowledge and each skill of listening, reading, speaking and writing, usually in that order.<sup>33)</sup> In other words, it puts more emphasis on the form of language rather than language use. Therefore, the grammatical syllabus presents a finite set of rules which can be applied and combined in various ways in order to make different meanings in different contexts.<sup>34)</sup> It selects lists of grammatical items which are considered to be essential to know and sequences them in a certain way where learners can review what they already learn and then move on to the next language items. In the grammatical syllabus, inputs to the learners are strictly controlled, and only one item is presented at a time. The learners are expected to produce perfectly correct language items and the accuracy of language use is mostly concerned.

During the 1970's, with the advent of communicative language teaching, many researches raised two main issues against grammatical syllabus. The first one is that the linear sequencing entailed in grammatical syllabus do not represent the complexity of language.<sup>35)</sup> Even though syllabus designers make an effort putting language items in the most ideal sequence considering

---

33) Ibid., p.152.

34) Nunan, D., op. cit., p.56.

35) Ibid., p.56.

language acquisition of learners, it is true that a language is not simple enough to be covered by linearly presented language items. The second issue is that according to the study of second language acquisition, learners do not acquire language in the order expected and specified by the grammatical syllabus.<sup>36)</sup> So, the main attack against the grammatical syllabus is that it focuses the form of language for an accurate language use in a fixed order, and it implies that all learners are supposed to learn a language in the same sequence. In order to cover these two issues, a "natural approach" to the syllabus structure is introduced instead of grammatically structured syllabus.<sup>37)</sup> The natural approach means that learners acquire language items which are extracted naturally during communicative activities rather than conscious learning based on classroom instruction. Moreover, the order in which learners acquire a particular item is determined, not by the grammatical complexity of the item, but by its speech processing complexity.<sup>38)</sup> It means that one language item which is expected to be acquired at the earlier stage of learning in the grammatical syllabus can be actually acquired at the later stage of learners' speaking in reality according to the 'natural approach'.

## (2) The Functional Syllabus

Along with these criticisms mentioned above, linguists advocated a focus upon language use rather than the formal aspects of language. It is called as a functional syllabus. It emphasizes the function of language; particular purposes of language and how these purposes could be expressed linguistically. This view has been developed with the study of ESP area. In the functional syllabus, needs analysis becomes an essential part in developing the syllabus; special syllabus and teaching materials for a specific group should be

---

36) Ibid., p.56.

37) Krashen, S. D., *Principles and practice in the second language acquisition*, Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1982, p.96.

38) Pienemann, M., and Johnston, M., "Factors influencing the development of language proficiency", p.54, in Nunan, D. (editor), *Applying second language acquisition research*, Adelaide: National Curriculum Resource Center, 1987.

developed focusing upon language knowledge and skills which are needed by learners.<sup>39)</sup> The aim of functional syllabus is making learners to achieve the communicative purposes through a language such as apologizing, advising, asking, expressing, and so on. So, in the functional syllabus, various situations are listed and different language items(vocabulary, grammar, etc) which could be used in those situations are presented.

Although the functional syllabus does not present language items in a linear sequence, some scholars claim that there is not much difference between the grammatical syllabus and the functional syllabus.<sup>40)</sup> As a simple example, language items which are presented for apologizing about the past behavior in the functional syllabus would be the same as those presented in the unit entitled "simple past tense" in the grammatical syllabus. Furthermore, selection and grading(sequencing) could be more problematic in the functional syllabus; there are many different ways of expressing for one situation(function) like apologizing about the past behavior, and the levels of complexity are quite varied. It is not easy for material designers to decide which expression, among many different expressions, should be selected for materials and in what orders they should be presented. Moreover, there are no objective means for deciding that one functional item is more complex than another.<sup>41)</sup> Another criticism against the functional syllabus is that the functional syllabus is believed to limit the learners' potential to certain fixed communicative situations or fixed social and occupational roles. From this point of view, the grammatical syllabus is much better than the functional syllabus because a focus upon formal aspects of language at least allows learners to generalized from one situation or communicative demand to another on the basis of the system of rules and the range of vocabulary that they have learned.<sup>42)</sup>

---

39) Breen, M. P., op cit., p.152.

40) Widdowson, H. G., op. cit., p.85.

41) Nunan, D., op. cit., p.60.

42) Brumfit, C. J., *Language variation and the death of language teaching*, British Association for Applied Linguistics Newsletter No.13, 1981, p.27.

### (3) The Content-based Syllabus

Since the word, 'content' in language teaching has been interpreted in various ways,<sup>43)</sup> the content-based syllabus also has some different meanings. However, 'content' in the content-based syllabus has the meaning of 'the use of subject matter for second/foreign language teaching purposes' and all various uses share one characteristic; in the content-based syllabus, language is not presented directly, but introduced through the content of other subjects.<sup>44)</sup> So, according to the content-based syllabus, language learners acquire the target language while they are doing other subjects.<sup>45)</sup> The theoretical foundations for content-based instruction can be drawn from second language acquisition research and cognitive psychology. It is claimed that second language acquisition can occur when the learner gets comprehensible input, rather than when the learner memorizes vocabulary or does grammar exercises.<sup>46)</sup> Language is acquired when learners comprehend what is provided by teachers and try to reproduce them in order to develop communicative competence; in other words, by receiving comprehensible input, they should produce comprehensible output by themselves.<sup>47)</sup>

The content-based syllabus seems quite appropriately applicable to the teaching of 'Trade English'. At tertiary education level, if 'Trade English' is taught at the last year of school, it will be much more effective. For three years before the last year, students learn all basic technical knowledge about

---

43) The word, 'content' has the meaning of 'the grammatical structures of the target language' in the grammar-translation method, and 'grammatical structures, vocabulary, or sound patterns in the audiolingual method. In the communicative approaches, all of these are included in the meaning of 'content'.

44) Snow, M. A., Content-based and Immersion Models for Second and Foreign Language Teaching, p.303, in Celce-Murcia, M. (editor), *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language*, 3rd Edition, Heinle & Heinle, 2001.

45) Nunan, D., op. cit., p.61.

46) Krashen, S. D., Immersion: Why it works and what it has taught us, *Language and Society* 12: pp.61-67. 1984, p.62.

47) Swain, M., Communicative competence: Some roles of comprehensible input and comprehensible output in its development, p.239, In S. M. Gass and C. G. Madden (Editor), *Input in second language acquisition*, New York:Newbury House. 1983.



essential areas of international trade like international marketing, contracts of goods for sale, carriage of goods, international payment, marine insurance, international disputes, and so on. Therefore, if 'Trade English' requires these subjects as the prerequisite, students can add linguistic aspects to these and produce communicative output without much difficulty. Furthermore, they get much more motivated because they can see how they can apply what they have learnt to the practice. For this, all teachers of other subjects and 'Trade English' should work collaboratively, especially for sequencing.

#### (4) The Task-based Syllabus

The task-based syllabus seems realization of communicative language teaching. The primary purpose of communicative language teaching is to make learners to be able to communicate with others in reality. The task-based syllabus in the language teaching aims to make learners to be able to carry out their real tasks without any linguistic obstacle. Therefore, the first thing to do for syllabus designers is analyzing learners' needs and finding out what kinds of communicative tasks the learners will be facing or will be expected to perform in reality after they learn a language. It is believed that learners acquire language items by doing pre-designed tasks for language learning and then, they can practise or reproduce what they have learned for their real-life tasks.

In the task-based syllabus, two different tasks can be presented; one is a target task and the other is a pedagogical task.<sup>48)</sup> A target task means the one that the learner might conceivably face outside of the classroom; for instance, in international business, making an inquiry about products, negotiating the price or other conditions, proposing to do business, making an offer, and so on are target tasks. It is like that they do a simulation before they actually go through a real task. However, a pedagogical task is something that is unlikely to be deployed outside of the classroom. The main function of this task is to make learners to communicate with each other in

---

48) Nunan, D., op. cit., p.62.

the target language for the purpose of improving their language skills. These tasks are not realistic, but designed to help learners to practice certain language items repeatedly. It is assumed that the communication interaction in a pedagogical task will incite the learners' language acquisition.<sup>49)</sup>

In the task-based syllabus, syllabus designers should analyze the both tasks by identifying the knowledge and skills that learners must have in order to carry out the tasks, and how these knowledge and skills can be applied to a real task in the future.<sup>50)</sup> After doing that, they have to sequence and integrate the tasks along with various exercises which are designed to develop requisite knowledge and skills. The difference between tasks and exercises is that, while exercises are purely language-related, the outcomes of tasks are language-related as well as nonlanguage-related.

Irrespectively from the above, tasks in the task-based syllabus can also be divided into two kinds in a different way. One is a reproductive task and the other is a creative task.<sup>51)</sup> A reproductive task suggests learners to reproduce language items which have been presented by teachers or textbooks or other sources. It is more like drilling, so the learners use the language which is largely predetermined and predictable. Although a reproductive task is controlled, it does not mean noncommunicative. On the other hand, a creative task is less predictable. Open ended questions are one typical type of creative tasks, so learners should assemble the words and structures which they have acquired before in order to answer to the given task. Their answers are usually new and unpredictable. As a simple example in 'Trade English', a teacher can ask students to write a business letter by giving all contents which should be included; students are given all full sentences in Korean for a target business letter, and asked to make English sentences with those given sentences and then put them in order for a proper formal business letter. This kind of task can be a reproductive task. As a creative task, a teacher provides the students

---

49) Ibid., p.62.

50) Ibid., p.62.

51) Ibid., p.62.

with a sample business letter, and asks them to write a reply letter to it. In this case, students have to imagine all other circumstances by reading the given sample letter and try to write the most appropriate reply.

#### IV. Conclusion

'Trade English' is the one discipline which does not get much attention from scholars in Korea. Most linguists do not realize that there is a special ESP area like 'Trade English', and even the scholars who are teaching 'Trade English' at the tertiary education level tend to put it aside. Since 'Trade English' is a quite practical subject, learning a language as a foreign language after all, teaching and learning has to be systematic; it needs decent materials and effective teaching methods. It has to be dealt with in a different way from other subjects in International Trade areas.

For these reasons mentioned above, 'Trade English' needs a well-organized syllabus to be developed and in order to do so, the first thing to do is finding out the learners' needs and analysing them. By doing so, from the linguistic points of view, which language skills learners want to improve more and which language items need to be presented in order to fulfil their needs will be revealed. Moreover, if the learners are practitioners who are working in international business fields, the information from these learners will be more realistic and much worthier, because what they require would be exactly what they need in practice. It would be needless to say that materials which reflect learners needs can motivate learners more and learning itself is much more meaningful. As to the technical knowledge, especially technical terminology, scholars who have studied International Trade should be involved rather than learners for assessment of needs. They should discuss about the scope of the contents and their sequency as well as relevancy with other subjects. Solid and systematic background knowledge which they acquire from other subjects can be another trigger for enjoyable learning.

Having analysed learners' needs, material designers are able to develop the

materials which provide learners with what they want – not all of them, but material designers should sieve the information which they get from learners though needs analysis. Under a limited time, they cannot give everything, and it is really not necessary for them to give everything. In addition, materials designers should consider physical circumstances as well, for example, the layout of classroom at tertiary education institutes, available audiovisual aids, and size of one class. The size of class is the one circumstance which needs most attention because, in Korea, most 'Trade English' classes have more than 50 up to 100 students, which is obviously not great for a language class.

## REFERENCE

- Auerbach, E. R. & Burgess, D., "The hidden curriculum of survival ESL", TESOL Quarterly 19, 3, 1985, pp.475-95.
- Basturkmen, H., *Ideas and Options in English for Specific Purposes*, ESL & Applied Linguistics Professional Series, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers, 2006.
- Bloor, M. & Bloor, T., *Language for specific purposes: Practice and theory* (occasional paper no. 19), Dublin: Trinity College, 1986.
- Brumfit, C. J., "Language variation and the death of language teaching", British Association for Applied Linguistics Newsletter No.13, 1981.
- Byram, M. (editor.), *Encyclopedia of language teaching*, London: Routledge, 2000.
- Carter, R. & Nunan, D. (editors), *The Cambridge Guide to Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages*, Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Celce-Murcia, M. (editor), *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language*, 3rd Edition, Heinle & Heinle, 2001.
- Chamber, F. "A re-evaluation of needs analysis in ESP", English for Specific Purposes Journal, 1(1), 1980, pp.25-33.
- Donn, B. *Teaching Writing Skills*, Longman Handbooks for Language Teachers, Longman, 1991.
- Gass, S. M and Madden, C. G., (Editor), *Input in second language acquisition*, New York:Newbury House. 1983.
- Horowitz, D. M. "What professors actually require:Academic tasks for the ESL classroom", TESOL Quarterly 20, 3, 1986, pp.445-462.
- Hutchinson, T. & Waters, A., *English for Specific Purposes: A learning-centred approach*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.
- Jasso-Aguilar, R., "Sources, methods and triangulation in needs analysis: A critical perspective in a case study of Waikiki Hotel maids", English for Specific Purposes Journal, 18(1), 1999, pp.27-46.
- Johnson, R. K., (editor), *The second language curriculum*, Cambridge:

- Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- Krashen, S. D., *Principles and practice in the second language acquisition*, Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1982.
- ..... *Immersion: Why it works and what it has taught us*,  
Language and Society 12: 1984
- Long, M. H. (editor), *Second Language Needs Analysis*, Cambridge Applied Linguistics, Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Nunan, D. (editor), *Applying second language acquisition research*, Adelaide: National Curriculum Resource Center, 1987.
- Pratt, D., *Curriculum design and development*, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980.
- Richie, W. C. & Bhatia, T. K. (editor.), *Handbook of second language acquisition*, San Diego: Academic Press, 1996.
- Spack, R., & Sadow, C., "Student-teacher working journals in ESL freshman composition", *TESOL Quarterly* 17, 4, 1993, pp.575-593.
- Tollefson, R. (editor.), *Power and inequality in language education*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995, pp.9-33.
- West, R., *Needs analysis in language teaching*, *Language Teaching Abstracts*, 1994, pp.1-19.
- Widdowson, H. G., *Learning purpose and language use*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983.

## ABSTRACT

### A Study on Needs Analysis and Syllabus Design for Trade English

Park, Eun Ok

The underlying purpose of this paper is to interest scholars in 'Trade English'. 'Trade English' has to be recognized as one area of 'International Trade' disciplines and more studies have to be carried out with more attention from the scholars. Although there are many areas to be dealt with in 'Trade English', this paper discusses about the syllabus design of 'Trade English' from an educator's point of view. First of all, this paper reviews some theoretical background researches about needs analysis and syllabus design in 'Trade English' teaching and learning as ESP. With a systematic structure under the decent syllabus, selection and sequence of contents get clear and easier. Secondly, along with the rationals based on theoretical researches, how these theories are being or can be applied to the real classroom are discussed for further studies. A different syllabus would be designed according to needs analysis. In reality, the syllabus for practitioners who are doing their jobs in International Trade areas has to be definitely different from the one for pre-practitioners who are studying in International Trade areas at the tertiary education level. Namely, different learners present different needs and different needs make up the different syllabus. In order to provide these learners with the syllabus which can address their own needs, more researches or studies have to be done in the future. Since 'Trade English' is the discipline where two areas-International Trade and English as a second/foreign language-are mixed, the researches or studies also have to be carried out collaboratively by scholars from both areas.

Key Words : International Trade, Trade English, ESP, Syllabus design, Needs analysis
---