CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY
CHAPTER - 2

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2.1 Methodology

Methodology may be described as the study of theories and methods in language pedagogy and the principles and beliefs that underlie them. It includes the study of the nature of language skills and the procedures for teaching them as well as the preparation of lesson plans, materials, and textbook for teaching these skills and the evaluation and comparison of language teaching methods.

Methodology is obviously the most important tool in any kind of research activity, whether subjective or data based. The term 'research' has been given a number of definitions by various academicians. Cohen and Manion assert that research is best conceived as the process of arriving at dependable solutions to problems through the planned and systematic collection, analysis and interpretation of data. It is the most important tool for advancing knowledge, for promoting progress and for enabling man to relate more effectively to his environment, to accomplish his purposes, and to resolve his conflicts (Cohen and Manion, 1994: 40).

The Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English offers the most succinct, generic description of the term, as

“......... a careful investigation or inquiry, especially through search for new facts in any branch of knowledge” (p. 1069).

This continual search for the unknown, which governs research, is regarded by many as a “voyage of discovery” (Kothari, 1995: 1). In academics however, research takes on a technical meaning in some subjects, where it comprises of various steps-formulating a hypothesis, collecting, organizing and evaluating data, analyzing it in order to arrive at a conclusion and finally carefully testing the conclusions to see if they fit the formulating hypothesis. These various steps can be depicted through the following flow chart:
Brown (1988) categorizes research into two kinds: Secondary research and Primary research. Secondary research may be defined as “research based on sources that are one step removed from the original information”, Brown (1988: 1). It is mainly derived from published studies, articles and books. This type of research is familiar to language teachers and students in getting insights from different researches. On the other hand, in primary research, the data is mainly derived directly from the subjects of study. It can be further categorized into two sub dimensions, Case studies or longitudinal studies and Statistical studies or cross-sectional studies.

“A case study is what you call a case, in case you don’t have anything else to call it” (unidentified student cited in Jaeger 1988). Methodologically, a case study is a ‘hybrid’, in that it generally utilizes a range of methods for collecting and analyzing data, rather than being restricted to a single procedure.

Adelman et al (1976) suggest that there are five principal advantages of adopting the case study as a method of research. In the first place, as compared to other research methods, it is “strong in reality” and therefore likely to appeal to
practitioners, who will be able to identify with the issues and concerns raised. Secondly, one can generalize from a case, either about an instance or from an instance to a class. Thirdly, it can represent a multiplicity of viewpoints, and can offer support to alternative interpretations. Properly presented, case studies can also provide a database of materials that may be reinterpreted by future researchers. Fourth, the insights yielded by case studies can be put to immediate use for a variety of purposes, such as institution feedback, formative evaluation, and educational policy making. Finally, case study data is more accessible than conventional research reports and therefore capable of serving multiple audiences. It reduces the dependence of the reader upon unstated implicit assumptions and makes the research process itself accessible. Case studies, therefore may contribute towards the "democratization" of decision-making and knowledge itself (Adelman et al. 1976: 149).

The case study has a great deal of potential, as a research method in Linguistics and applied linguistics and it is particularly suited to process-oriented research. The process of language learning by adults and the process of speech and language development over a period of time may be compared. This is known as longitudinal studies.

On the other hand, statistical studies or cross-sectional studies are often cross-sectional, i.e. "they consider a group of people as a cross section of possible behavior at a particular point or at several distinct points in time" (Ibid: 3). Brown (1988) goes on to classify statistical studies into two subcategories: surveys and experimental studies. Surveys seek to find out a group’s attitudes, opinion and characteristics on a particular phenomenon. According to Cohen and Manion (1994: 83) "surveys gather data at a particular point of time with the intention of describing the nature of existing conditions, or identifying standards against which existing conditions can be compared, or determining the relationships that exist between specific events". Further, surveys may vary in levels of complexity and scope. This type of study usually takes the form of a questionnaire. The advantage of this type of research is that substantial amounts of information can be collected in a relatively short period of time. However, people often avoid answering
questionnaires, or even doing so truthfully, so if this method is adopted, the
questionnaire has to be as compact and condensed as possible.

Experimental studies, on the other hand, are normally defined as a whole range of
possible studies, which investigate a particular phenomenon under controlled
conditions.

Throughout the ages, as stated in the beginning, methodology has been a topic of
serious debate amongst academicians. In linguistics and language studies, three
clear phases may be distinguished:

(i) pre-structuralist or traditional, referring to the period before Saussure.

(ii) the structuralist trend emerging from the late nineteenth and early twentieth
century onwards, and

(iii) the cognitive or post-structuralist phase, which became prevalent from the mid
1950's, especially with Noam Chomsky’s ideas of transformational generative
grammar.

For the traditionalists, language as a discipline was inferior to the twin topics of
logic and philosophy. Focusing on the written, rather than the spoken form,
linguistic description lacked scientificity, objectivity and precision. During the
nineteenth century, the study of language came to be known as “philology” and
was mainly a comparative exercise, i.e. “the analysis of similarities and differences
within a family of related languages” (Abrams, 1993: 103). At the same time,
language was also studied as a chronological history-an analysis of the evolution of
language families and changes within particular languages over a period of time –
this is known as the diachronic method of language study. These methods initiated
the first steps towards a more scientific study of language. By the end of the
nineteenth and the beginning of twentieth century however, another new trend was
beginning to emerge, concentrating on the systematic interrelations between the
components of a single language at a particular time, rather than over a period of
time. This synchronic study gained its major impetus from the structuralist system of the study of language.

The emergence of structuralism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, in particular, through the contribution of Ferdinand de Saussure, therefore marked a tremendous advancement in the scientific study of language. For the structuralists, any kind of linguistic analyses is conducted as empirical studies based on data, leaving little room for selectivity. It is therefore a data based objective, inductive and empirical study of language (Kovacs: 9) and grammar is here derived from a process of inductive generalization. The aim of such an approach is to provide a framework for the acquisition of reliable knowledge about language, rather than a systemization or explanation of things that are already known or are assumed to be known (Garvin: 9). Further structuralists feel that any kind of language and data analysis has to begin from the sound system of the language, which allows scientific statements to be made. They construct models in order to learn about various objects. Models may be defined as constructed representation of concepts to describe and explain their structure and function. They are of three types:

1. Models which have the objective of undertaking studies of the concrete process and phenomena in languages. This kind of study was first attempted by the Prague structuralists.

2. Research models, first made by the American descriptionists, which aim to lead linguists to the discovery of research phenomena.

3. Models, the object of which are linguistic descriptions rather than processes and phenomena in languages or research procedures (Apresgan, 1973:112).

The second type of model, i.e. research models can be further sub-divided into three groups based on the nature of the primary material:

i) Whether it is only text, i.e. all the facts about the language are drawn from the text. These are known as classical decipherment models.
ii) Whether it is a mixture of text as well as grammatical sentences. In this case, the linguist takes the help of an informant to decide whether the sentences are grammatical or not.

iii) Whether it is a study, not only of the above two components but in addition, contains semantic invariants, i.e. in addition to the above, the informant in this case also determines whether any two sentences have the same meaning (Ibid: 112)

Against the background of the structuralists emphasis on form and surface structure a new revolution came into action in the field of linguistic theory, i.e. Chomskyan linguistics. Chomsky succeeded in replacing many of the assumptions that were popular in structuralism. According to him, the structuralists merely described, but did not explain linguistic facts. His contribution to linguistics is thus two-fold. First, he questioned the goal towards which structuralist linguistic theory was oriented, and redefined the aims and function of grammar and secondly, he defined the form that this new grammar ought to take. Chomsky formalized the properties of his alternative system of grammatical description – transformational-generative grammar – with mathematical rigor and precision (Ballen, 1971: 392-393). The entire concept of grammar was redefined and new currents of thoughts were generated. Earlier structuralist theories, as discussed above, aimed to "discover" or extract a grammar from data collected from informants, and the ultimate goal of linguistics was to find rules to make up a perfect, objective language. Chomsky rejected these notions outright. For him, the grammar of a particular language is, in effect, a hypothesis on the principles of sentence formation in that language and represent a factual claim concerning the rules underlying the data that has been collected. Truth or falsity of the hypothesis is decided according to how well the grammar succeeds in organizing data, how satisfactory an explanation it provides for the empirical observation, how far reaching the generalizations are and how successfully it can accommodate new data (Ibid). In all, Chomsky therefore replaced "discovery" with "evaluation" and "inductive" with "deductive" emphasizing all the while on ideas of rationality.
2.2 Methodology and Procedural Steps followed in this study

This study is an empirical, cross-sectional, rational and analytical study. It has three major components and will require three different sets of procedures. The first procedure is Needs Analysis and Error Analysis, which will be an empirical study; the second is Register Analysis of English in higher education for humanities and science and technology students. In this stage the descriptive texts, reports and news items related to various aspects of these two sections are analyzed to find out the nature of vocabulary, the semantic range as well as the structure and the specific use in this register. The third stage is the assessment of materials and methods currently in use in the university. The syllabus and the texts are assessed and analyzed in terms of forms and structures, semantic range and pragmatics of use in order to determine the extent to which these texts serve the specific needs and requirements of the Remedial English course. And finally, based on the above three steps, a development of a model syllabus for the students of the Remedial English course in JNU will be undertaken.

The three components of the methodology mentioned above in relation to the current study will now be discussed in greater detail.

2.2.1 Needs Analysis

1. Needs Analysis: The purpose of this part is to find out the needs of the students of Remedial English course in JNU, New Delhi. The attempt is to know the exact requirements of the students in this course. It is also an attempt to specify the language skills as well as the linguistic knowledge that the students need in order to enable them to learn English better. For this purpose, a carefully structured questionnaire was designed to determine needs in terms of micro to macro level. The response of the questionnaires submitted was analyzed. This enables us to design a course based on students needs. As we know, Needs Analysis is a set of procedures used for specifying the parameters of a course of study. Such parameters include the selection and sequencing of course content, methodology, course length, extensity and duration for the course.
The most comprehensive and widely known work on Needs Analysis in John Munby’s *Communicative Syllabus Design* (1978). He devised a highly detailed set of procedures for discovering target situation needs (the details are discussed in the next chapter). The analysis of target situation needs is in fact a matter of asking questions about the target situation and the attitude towards that situation of the various participants in the learning process. There are of course, a number of ways in which information can be gathered about needs. The most frequently used are questionnaires, interviews, observations, data collection, and informal consultations with learners. However, the present study mainly makes use of questionnaires as a means of obtaining data with some informal consultations.

**Questionnaire**

Three sets of questionnaires were circulated among the students. In the first questionnaire the students were asked to complete the statement: "I would like to learn English in order to..." There were eighteen possible reasons suggested and they were asked to rank their choices. They were also asked, “Which of the above purposes are fulfilled by the English course you are taking at the moment?” The questionnaire is given below:

Please rank the reason in order of your priority:
'I would like to learn English in order to...”
Face interview for Scholarship
Take notes from lectures
Present a paper in seminar
Pass competitive exams IAS and IPS etc.
Make better use of Library
Fare interview for jobs.
See English movie
Improve my status
To communicate with people from other states
Converse with tourists and foreigners
Listen to English songs
Read English newspaper and magazines
Pass competitive examination for MBA & Banking
Converse with other in social situations
Find suitable marriage partner
Read books and journals in English
Write a term paper, dissertation, thesis
Listen and participate in lectures /seminars

QUESTIONNAIRE 1

The second questionnaire asked the students on the help needed from teachers in order of priority to the four skills. The students were asked to arrange the following in order of the priority:

Listening
Speaking
Writing
Reading

QUESTIONNAIRE 2

Questionnaire No. 3 was also distributed to all 60 students. It contained 10 questions about Remedial English classes, teaching materials, methods, and the general atmosphere and attitudes of the students in their classes. The questions were proposed in English based on a five-point scale ranging from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree” ranging from 1 to 5 respectively. The students were asked to put a number for the answer. The table below shows the five-point scale with the questionnaires.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>English is essential for a better future</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Time Devoted to learning Remedial English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The present syllabus, if any, is satisfying</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Use of regional language is helpful in R.E. classes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Selection of material is more important than teaching method</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>RE Syllabus should be designed to enhance all four skills i.e. Speaking, Reading, listening, writing</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Language laboratories should be used</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>The RE course should be of 2 semesters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Certificate or grade should be awarded for the course.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Focus should be on speaking skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

QUESTIONNAIRE 3

2.2.1.1 Error Analysis

2. Error Analysis: Error Analysis follows Needs Analysis. This is an extremely useful in second language learning because it reveals the problematic areas to the teachers, syllabus designers and textbook writers. As a result the course can be designed to focus more attention on the trouble spots. The following procedure was adopted in the current study to analyze Error Analysis:
A diagnostic test was given to all students who registered for the Remedial English course. In this test the registered students were asked to write about 400 words on "Why do I need a course in Remedial English?" The purpose of the test was not only to study learners' errors but also categorize students into various groups according to their level of competence and their subject background. However, this test could only give an idea about the writing skills about the learners and their errors, but nonetheless, it was useful in knowing their level of competence in the language.

A total of 60 students were selected for the above course on the basis of the diagnostic test. 20 were undergraduate students enrolled in different language courses of the university. Another 20 were from various humanities courses like Political Science, Economics, International Relations, Sociology etc. who were either in post graduation or MPhil/Ph.D. Another 20 were from science and technology courses like Life Sciences, Biotechnology, Environmental Science or MCA, either in post-graduation or M.Phil/Ph.D. So broadly three categories of students were listed on the basis of their competence and their needs. The data collected were analyzed for these three different categories. The details of Error Analysis can be seen in the following chapter, where the data is analyzed.

2.2.2 Register Analysis

3. Register Analysis: This step was mainly done for two-distinct groups i.e. for humanities and science and technology students. The idea was based on the fact that these two fields have different registers to be used in their writings. The special English requirements of students following higher education courses in science and technology have been recognized and a good deal of research has been done on these requirements. However, the language in which scientific and technical facts are expressed is certainly not a different language from that of everyday life, but it presents certain special problems. The most obvious of these problems is the vocabulary, which includes semi-scientific and semi-technical words (Herbert 1965). Although many of these words are fairly international, they usually have a whole range of specialized meanings not found in other areas of science and technology. There are frequently used idiomatic words, such as work,
plant, load, force, feed and so on. Wilkins (1972: 138) holds that people need various registers and grammar of scientific writing depending on their situation. One group might consist of students being taught science in their mother tongue, but needing access to work in one of the major languages used for scientific writing. A second group might consist of students having to acquire their knowledge of science through the medium of foreign language, since material published in their mother tongue is either inadequate or non-existent and hence their major source of importation would be textbooks. A third group might be fully qualified scientists, needing to add their source of information.

The purpose of this part is to analyze the features of scientific writing. It deals with the belief that English for air traffic control for example, constitutes a specific register different from that of medicine or agriculture. The analysis is linguistic and includes the identification of the grammatical points, structure and technical terms. It is hoped that the analysis of the registers, structures, sentence patterns, syntax etc will identify the utility of the language teaching and underline some of the features of English for science and technology students, so that syllabus designers can concentrate on the most frequently used features.

In this study some extracts consisting a few paragraphs related to science and technology were randomly selected and analyzed in order to identify the linguistic and syntactic features of science and technology. These are included in the Appendices.

2.2.3 Assessment of Materials and Methods

3. Assessment of Materials and Methods: The third step was the assessment of materials and methods. No curriculum model would be complete without an evaluation component and it is universally recognized as an essential part of any education. It is necessary to mention at the outset that materials and methods in language pedagogy cannot be separated, as each is an integral part of the other. It is also important to mention here that no text book or set of materials is likely to be perfect as the evaluation is fundamentally a subjective activity with no clear
formulae. Hence a model is needed that will be appropriate, practical and yet comprehensive in its coverage of criteria.

For evaluation of material one looks at two criteria, external evaluation and internal evaluation. Following Mc Donough and Shaw (1993), while the former refers to examining the materials from outside such as cover, introduction, table of contents etc, the latter deals with appropriacy of material content. For external evaluation, one includes criteria that will provide a comprehensive, external overview of how the materials have been organized. The aim is basically to examine the organization of the materials, as stated explicitly by the author / publisher by looking at the 'blurb' or the claims made on the cover of the book as well as the introduction and table of contents. For example, the blurb and introduction can expect to contain the following information:

- The audience or the target group: The topics that will motivate one set of audience will probably not be suitable for another.

- The proficiency level: Most materials claim to aim at a particular level. This will obviously require investigation as it could vary widely depending on the educational content.

- The content on which the materials are to be used: One needs to establish whether the materials are for teaching general learners or perhaps for teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP).

- Presentation and Organization: Number of units / lessons and respective lengths need to be borne in mind while deciding how a given material will fit into given educational program.

Thus, the following questions need to be examined in evaluation of materials:

- Whether the materials are to be used as the main core course or as a supplementary.

- Whether a teacher’s guide is available.
• Whether a vocabulary list / index is included.

• What kind of visual materials does the book contain (photographs, charts, diagram) and whether it is for cosmetic value only or actually integrated into the text.

• Whether the layout and presentation is clear.

• Whether the material culturally based or specific.

• Whether the material needs Audio / Video facilities.

The next stage of the evaluation procedure involves an in-depth investigation into the materials. The essential issue at this stage is to analyze the extent to which the above mentioned factors in the external evaluation stage actually match up with the internal consistency and organization of the material:

• The presentation of skills in the materials: Are all the language skills covered? What is the proportion allocated to each skill? Is this proportion is appropriate to the content in which we are working. Are the skills treated separately or in an integrated manner?

• The grading and sequencing of the materials: This is important. The principle behind grading and sequencing is not always clear. Some materials are steeply graded while others have no grading at all. Sometimes the grading of the materials will be within the unit, while others will be graded across the unit, allowing a progression of difficulty in linear fashion.

In cases where there is virtually no grading at all, most units need not be taught in a particular order. One needs to investigate the extent to which this is true, and how such a material will suit learners.
2.3 Definitions of syllabus

After the completion of these three steps, one will be in a position to develop a model syllabus for the students of Remedial English course in J.N.U. But before going into the actual syllabus design, it is imperative to look at the various models and approaches of syllabus design that have been formulated through the years. Language syllabus design is an area of applied linguistics that has come into prominence in the last three decades. Thus, before proceeding further, it is important to define the term “syllabus”. A syllabus is primarily concerned with what is to be learned but as Corder (1975) points out, it is more than just an inventory of items. In addition to specifying the content of learning, a syllabus provides a rationale for how that content should be related and ordered (McKay, 1980). In Wilkins’ (1981) words, “Syllabus are specification of the content of language teaching which have been submitted to some degree of structuring or ordering with the aim of making teaching and learning a more effective process. Further, a syllabus can be defined as a plan for action or a written document that includes strategies for achieving desired goals or ends.” Ralph Tyler and Hilda Taba popularized this and they exemplify a linear view of syllabus. The steps of planning are sequenced in advance. The plan has a beginning and end, as well as a process so that the beginning can progress to logical conclusion. Most behavioral as well as some managerial and system people today agree with this definition.

One noticeable fact is that the terms curriculum and syllabus are often used synonymously. However, in its normal use curriculum has a wider reach, e.g. the widely used term “curriculum development” refers to the research work in developing many courses of study. The term syllabus development is not so commonly used, and if used, is more likely to refer to the work within one subject only (Mc Arthur 1966:251). The term curriculum development, if used for a single subject, refers to the subject in question to all the classes of an institute. For example, the school’s English curriculum refers to part of the school’s curriculum that deals with English language education in all the classes of the school. The concept of syllabus design brings into focus the way in which syllabus is created, especially the actual arrangements and the parts of the syllabus plan. Syllabus
design refers to the arrangement of the elements of a syllabus into substantive entity. The design that is selected by someone, is influenced by his or her approach towards the curriculum and philosophical orientation.

The parts, sometimes called components or elements that are arranged in a syllabus design are as follows:

- Aims, Goal and Objective.
- Subject Matter
- Learning Experience
- Evaluation Approach

The nature of these components and the manner in which they are organized in the syllabus plan comprise what is meant by syllabus design. Although most syllabus, have within design, these four essential elements, often they are not given equal weightage. Frequently, content or subject matter receives the primary focus. As mentioned above, syllabus design is concerned with the nature and arrangements of four basic circular parts. Harry Crates used the term “components” to show the relationship and included learning experience under “method and organization”. The relationship is shown in the figure below:
2.3.1 Approaches to syllabus design

Syllabus design does not happen in isolation. It is influenced by and also influences different parts involved in language program design, such as pedagogical and methodological choices, evaluation and assessments. Theories about language teaching and language learning have largely determined the different approaches to syllabus design. As Long (1990: 650) points out:
“The unit selected is crucial for two reasons: first, because it closely reflects the program designer’s and teacher’s theories, implicit or explicit...about second language learning, the process programs are designed to facilitate, and second because the choice made affects decisions the designer takes in all the other five domains.”

Further, it can be said that syllabus design refers to the way we conceptualize the syllabus and arrange its major components. Most syllabus writers do not have a single or pure design for the syllabus; they tend to be influenced by many designs. Nevertheless, the way someone designs a syllabus is partially rooted in his or her approach to and definition of the syllabus. Wites and Bondi present six different syllabus designs:

1. Conservative-liberal act designs, which emphasize knowledge and intellectual pursuits.

2. Educational Technology designs, which focus on goals and ends, objectivity and efficiency.

3. Humanistic designs, which propose student centered curricula.

4. Vocational designs, which are concerned with vocational and economic aspects of schooling.

5. Socio-reconstruction designs, which are aimed at social improvement of society.

6. Deschooling designs, which emphasizes the de-emphasis of formal schooling.

In general, a syllabus design should provide a basic framework of reference for planning or more precisely, for developing syllabus. A syllabus design is influenced to some extent, by the writer’s syllabus approach, but more importantly, by his or her method of teaching, learning and instruction.
Before going into the details of different types and approaches to syllabus, it is important to discuss the relation of curriculum, syllabus and methodology. Different voices have been heard about the nature of “the syllabus” and “the curriculum” and also about the “methodology”. Language teachers and specialists on the subject possess conflicting views on what is it that distinguishes one from the other. Nunan (1988 and 1989) distinguishes a broad approach and a narrow approach to the subject. The narrow approach draws a clear distinction amid the area of these three subjects. Those who adopt a broader viewpoint, agree that with the advent of communicative language teaching, this distinction is difficult to sustain. The diversity of opinion regarding curriculum development, syllabus design and teaching methodology can be found in Brumfit (1984), Candlin (1984), Breen (1984) and Allen (1984). A thorough survey on different opinions reveals that some language specialists believe that the syllabus and methodology should be kept separate (for example Stern 1984). Others think differently. But selection and grading of contents are not the only tasks in language teaching. One of the crucial tasks in a language program is to specify, design and grade learning tasks and activities; and when we talk of procedural syllabuses, we include these aspects within the reach of syllabus design. It then becomes difficult to sustain the difference between syllabus and methodology, which is concerned with learning tasks and activities. Van Ek’s *Threshold Level English* (1975) gives a detailed account of various syllabus components, which need to be considered in developing a language course. He mentions the following as necessary components of a language syllabus:

- The situation in which the foreign language will be used, including the topics which will be dealt with
- The language activities in which the learner will engage
- The language functions which the learner will fulfill
- What the learner will be able to do with respect to each topic
- The general notions which the learner will be able to handle
• The specific (topic-related) notion which that learner will be able to handle

• The language forms which the learner will be able to use

• The degree of skill, which the learner is able to perform (Van Ek 1975:8-9 quoted in Nunan 1988).

Van Ek’s view can be said to be the broader view of syllabus design, and these are the basic components of curriculum development. Bell (1983) relates syllabus design with the other components of curriculum development and says that teachers are the main consumers of other people’s syllabuses. Their role is to implement the plans of applied linguistics, government agencies and so on. Nunan (1988) says that curriculum has at least three phases:

1. Planning phase, which includes a through Needs Analysis, policy-making, setting goals and objectives and syllabus content specification.

2. Implementation phase, which includes among others, materials, production, development of the infrastructure and appropriate teaching arrangements, teacher development program and everyday happenings in the classroom.

3. Evaluation phase, which includes the developing of the appropriate assessment and evaluation tools to measure student’s progress and attainment.

However, evaluation should also be an integral part of each and every level. For example, in the planning phase, it should look back at whether the intention of the phase matches language policy and the learner’s need and whether the goals set out are realistic and attainable. In the implementation phase, it should address learning outcomes as set out in the syllabus specification and measure how far teaching and learning are taking place and whether the concerned parties can translate the intention of the planners into action. In the evaluation phase, it should review the evaluation tools and policy itself. Finally, the planners should take insights from evaluation of each stage of development and make necessary changes.
Nowadays much importance is given to Needs Analysis, i.e., the analysts not only collect information about why learners want to learn the language but also collect information about factors such as social expectation, teaching/learning constraints and the resources available for implementing the program.

2.3.2 Syllabus design and various types of syllabus

In developing a syllabus for any language program, the designer starts with an analysis of beliefs about the nature of language and learning process, information about and from the learners, the infrastructure of the institutions and resources available. The key questions that come forward are:

- From a language perspective, what linguistic elements will be learned/taught?
- From a learner’s perspective, what will the learner do with the language while learning?
- From a learning/teaching perspective, what activities will simulate or promote language acquisitions?

A syllabus designer incorporates insights from all these perspectives. But there still remains a possibility of shifting focus from one perspective to another. This suggests a conceptual distinction between product oriented and process-oriented models. However, there is not a single syllabus that can be a sheer product syllabus or a sheer process one. We rather see the two views in a continuation-the more a syllabus is product oriented the lesser it is process oriented.

Product Syllabus

Process Syllabus

FIGURE 2.3
Product Oriented Syllabus:

In this approach to syllabus design, the focus is on language skills or knowledge and sometimes its functions. Here grammar rules or structures and sometimes language functions or notions are listed in an order in which they are to be taught. There are a number of such syllabus:

1. Structural/Grammatical Syllabus: It is the oldest of form of product syllabus. In this model, grammar rules or structures listed in a syllabus are often out of context and it is believed that learning grammar rules will enable students to write correct sentences. Speaking and listening skills are not considered important. It lists grammatical forms and little attention is paid to usage. One form is related to one meaning. In grammatical syllabuses, structures are ordered in terms of grammatical complexities. However, during the 1970's, the use of grammatical syllabuses came under criticism due to some problems. A learner's ability to understand a particular grammar point is not equal. What is difficult for one learner may be simpler for another. Second, in real life communication, we need more than just one structure to express one meaning. Therefore, introduction and teaching of one structure at a time slows down the learning process. Also, it is neither possible nor necessary to learn all the structures of a language (Huq et al: 1987: 161).

2. Notional Functional Syllabus: This syllabus became popular in the 1970's. It represents a shift in focus from the formal to the communicative properties of language and its proponents acknowledge the need to teach a language structure and to take into account relevant situational factors in syllabus. The central concern is with the teaching of meaning and the communicative use of patterns. The notional functional syllabus emphasizes what speakers communicate through language and derives its context from an analysis of the learner's need to express certain meaning (Wilkins, 1976). This type of syllabus is motivated partly by the need to remedy the shortcomings of more structural approaches to language teaching. In developing notional-functional syllabuses, inventories of notion like object, entity, time, quantity, one and many, part and whole, probability, possibility etc. and functions like requesting, complaining, apologizing, asking and giving information etc. are listed as contents. Notional-Functional syllabuses have been
criticized in the same way as grammatical syllabuses have been, since the inventories of notion and functions do not necessarily present the way languages are learned any more than inventories of grammatical points or lexical items.

3. Situational Syllabus: This has emerged from attempts to make language learning content more relevant to student needs. It looks at non-linguistic categories as the fundamental unit of organization of instruction. The designers of the situational syllabus attempt to produce situations in which the learner will find himself and use these situations, for example, a restaurant, an airplane or the post office, as a basis for selecting and present language context.

**Process Oriented Syllabus:**

Process syllabuses focus on the process of learning itself rather than the end product of this process. Such non-linguistic approaches as procedural, task-based and content-based approaches are adopted in process syllabuses. In a process syllabus, the activities of the students are listed in the course content. In fact, procedural and task-based syllabuses share a concern with classroom processes, which promote learning. Nunan suggests that despite some differences in practice, the principles underlying the two models are very similar. Both focus on the role of learner in the learning process. Tasks are so designed so as to create conditions for copying with meanings in the classroom to the exclusion of any deliberate regulation of the development of grammatical competence or a mere simulation of linguistic behavior (Prabhu, 1987: 1-2). While carrying out any types of tasks, the conscious mind works out some of the meaning-content, a subconscious part of the mind perceives or acquires or recreates it as a cognitive structure. Some of the linguistic structurings are embodied in those entities, as a step in the development of an internal system of grammatical rules. It has been argued that process-oriented syllabuses seem to be inadequate or ineffective in situations where there is no or little opportunity to use English. The following may be considered as process-oriented syllabus:

1. Communicative Syllabus: The principles of communicative syllabus design lie in the fact that learners learn a language by using it for a purpose. These purposes
may be real purposes in everyday life or perhaps created in classroom. The communicative syllabuses needs of the learner in different situations are considered. And appropriate language for these purposes or situations are learnt or taught. For example, one needs to buy some postal stamps. He/She goes to the post office and asks the postmaster for some stamps. For this, he/she needs to know the language at the setting i.e. at the post office; in other words, he/she needs the language to perform a communicative function. Here one or more grammar items or structures, which can be used for requesting or in this situation, can be listed. Sometimes, concepts or notions like place, time, amount, or space etc. are also listed in this type of syllabus.

2. A Collaborative-Balanced Syllabus: This approach combines different focuses on a single syllabus. For example, the notion of time can be taught with the function of asking and giving time, the topic being travel in a setting of railway station. It is further possible to make a shift from one syllabus type to another for the same group of students over a period of time. For instance, it may be that the learners who are following a thematic or topic-based syllabus may require some grammatical knowledge. In such cases, they can use a structural syllabus until they have improved their grammatical knowledge. Now they can use a functional syllabus, leading finally to a task-based or process-based syllabus. While making a shift from one syllabus type to another, it is always important to address the student’s need and reaction. Thus information by and from the learners is very important. We call this approach an eclectic and collaborative approach (Hasan, 2004).

Different Approaches to Syllabus Design: Approaches towards syllabus design can be viewed from a technical and non-technical or scientific and non-scientific perspective. Technical-scientific approaches coincide with traditional theories and models of education and reflect established and formal methods of schooling. Non-technical and non-scientific approaches have evolved as part of avant-grade and experimental philosophies and politics of education; they tend to challenge established and formalized practices of education.
Five syllabus approaches are discussed below, the first three may be classified as technical or scientific and the latter two as non-technical or non-scientific.

Behavioral Approach: This remains the oldest and the major approach to syllabus. As a means-end approach, it is logical and perspective. It relies on technical and scientific principles and includes paradigms, models and step-by-step strategies for formulating syllabus. It started with the idea of efficiency influenced by business and industry and the scientific management theories of Frederick Taylor, who analyzed factory efficiency in terms of time and motion studies and concluded that each worker should be paid on the basis of his or her individual output. Ralph Tyler used the philosophy of the school in making decisions about objectives. Thus he provided greater latitude and value judgment for those responsible for planning the syllabus.

Managerial Approach: This approach is an offshoot of the behavioral approach; it considers the school as a social system, where organizational teachers, syllabus specialists and administrators interact according to certain norms and behaviors. Educators, who rely on this approach, plan the syllabus in terms of programs, schedules, space, resources, equipment and personnel. Managerial approach advocates among other things, the need for selecting, organizing, communicating with and supervising people involved in syllabus decisions. It relies on a plan of rational principle and logical steps but not necessarily behavioral approaches. Further, it tends to focus on the supervisory and administrative aspects of syllabus, especially the organizational and implementation process and is less concerned about subject matter, methods and materials.

The Systems Approach: This approach tends to view various units and sub-units of the organization in relation to the whole and organizational diagrams. Systems theory, systems analysis and systems engineering influences the systems approach. The largest users of the systems approach are the military, business and industry; since it is critical that all learners master whatever tasks they perform. Syllabus specialists who value system approach take a macro or broad view of syllabus and are concerned with syllabus issues and questions that relate to the entire school system. They are mainly concerned with how the syllabus is related across
different programs and content areas; to what extent the syllabus reflects the hierarchy or organizational arrangements of the school, the needs and training of the participants and various methods for monitoring and evaluating results.

**Academic Approach:** This approach attempts to analyze and synthesize major portions, trends and concepts of syllabus. It tends to be historical or philosophical and to a lesser extent, social in nature. This approach is rooted in the philosophical and intellectual work of John Dewey, Henry Morrison and Boyd Bode. It became popular between 1930's and 1950's as the influx of new topic related to syllabus during this period expanded the boundaries of the field to include a good number of trends and issues and the integration of various instructional, teaching, learning, guidance, evaluation, supervision and administrative procedures.

**Humanistic Approach:** This view is rooted in the progressive philosophy and child-centered movement of the early 1900's. Humanists believe that the above approaches are too technocratic and rigid. They contend that in attempting to be scientific and rational, syllabus designers miss the personal and social aspects of syllabus and instruction and ignore the artistic, physical and cultural aspects of subject matter. They rarely consider the need for self-reflection ness and self-actualizations among learners; and finally overlook the socio-psychological dynamics of classrooms and schools. This approach tends to put faith in co-operative learning, independent learning, small-group learning and social activities as opposed to competitive, teacher-dominated, large-group learning and only cognitive extrusion.

**Reconceptualist Approach:** This approach lacks a model for developing and designing syllabus; rather it tends to focus on larger ideological and moral issues of education and economic and political institutions of the society. It views school as an extension of the society. This approach was rooted in the philosophy and social activism of early reconstructionists. They challenge the traditional, scientific and rational views of syllabus. Their approach is subjective, political and ideological and they do not rely on either the hard sciences or empirical methods for answers.
Finally, one needs to look at the evaluation of the course content as well as learning abilities.

2.3.3 Syllabus evaluation

Brown (1989) defines evaluation as “...the systematic collection and analysis of all relevant information necessary to promote the improvement of a curriculum, and assess its effectiveness and efficiency, as well as the participants’ attitudes within the context of the particular institutions involved.”

An important part of any language program is the evaluation procedure. In this regard, a distinction should be made right at the start, between testing, measurement and evaluation. Testing refers solely to procedures that are based on tests, whether criterion-referenced or norm-referenced in nature. Measurement is used more broadly to not only include testing but also other types of measurements. Evaluation, an even broader term, includes all the above as well as other types of information - some of which may be more quantitative in nature.

Narang (1996:90-94) points out that language learning/teaching is a continuous process, therefore, the teacher needs frequent assessment of the learner’s achievement and the proficiency that he has attained during the ‘lesson-process’, rather than after the completion of the lesson process. The continuity of teaching/learning process requires continuous evaluation, simultaneous with the lesson. The evaluation process consists of the presentation of the lesson as well as an assessment of the learner’s achievement by the teacher in the classroom.

Narang also talks about Discrete Point Test as opposed to tests on Integrative skills. A Discrete point test measures individual language items. It is based on the theory that language consists of different parts, e.g. grammar, sounds, vocabulary and different skills like listening, speaking, reading and writing and these are made up of elements that can be tested separately. An Integrative test, on the other hand, is one, which requires a learner to use several language skills at the same time, such as a dictation test, because it requires a learner to use knowledge of grammar, vocabulary and listening comprehension. Discrete point testing, Narang maintains,
"does not evaluate a learner’s communicative ability. For that one needs an evaluative technique which is integrative in approach and which also takes into account the socio-cultural matrix in which the language is being used.”(Narang, 1996: 94). She concludes that for communicative language teaching one needs an integrative test.

Any language-teaching course naturally has certain evaluation requirements. In ESP these requirements are brought sharply into focus by the fact that the ESP course normally has specified objectives, which demand for increased and better evaluation procedures. There are two main levels of evaluation: learner assessment and course assessment. There is a need to regularly assess student performance at strategic points in the course, for example, at the beginning and at the end. But this assessment takes on a greater importance in ESP, because ESP is concerned with the ability to perform particular communicative tasks. This facility to assess proficiency is, therefore, central to the whole concept of ESP. The results of this kind of evaluation enable both teachers and learners to decide whether and how much language tuition is required.

Course evaluation is also important for ESP courses and its main objective is to see whether the aims of the course are being fulfilled. The ESP course, like any other course, should regularly demonstrate that its continued existence in its present form is justified.

Testing Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) refers to that branch of language testing in which the content and methods of the test are derived from an analysis of a specific language use situation. It is important to note that no test is either general purpose or specific-purpose. All tests are developed with a purpose, but there is a continuum of specificity from very general to very specific and a given test may fall at any point on the continuum. LSP testing is a special case of communicative language testing, since both general and specific purpose language testing are based on theoretical construct of contextualized communicative language ability, and that LSP tests are no different in terms of the qualities of good testing practice from other types of language tests (Douglas 2000:1). It first requires an analysis of a target language use situation, from which characteristics of test content and text
method are derived, as well as an interaction between language knowledge and specific content knowledge.

One reason for devising an LSP test rather than using existing, general purpose language tests is that researchers are pretty much in agreement that language performances vary with both context and test task, and therefore interpretations of a test taker's ability must vary from performance to performance. It is not enough merely to give test takers topics relevant to the field of study. The material that the test is based on must engage test takers in a task in which both language ability and knowledge of the field interact with the test content in a way which is similar to the target language use situation. The test task, in other words, must be authentic for it to represent a specific purpose field in any measurable way. If one wishes to interpret a person's test performance as evidence of language ability in a specific language use situation, it is imperative to engage the test taker in tasks, which are authentically representative of that situation. This interaction between the test taker's language ability and specific purpose content knowledge and the test task is a necessary condition in LSP tests. Background knowledge too plays an important role. When test takers have prior knowledge of the topic of a reading passage, they have an advantage in responding to comprehension questions on that passage.

A second reason for preferring LSP tests to more general ones is precision. There are lexical, semantic and even phonological characteristics of language in any field, and these characteristics allow for people in that field to speak and write more precisely about aspects of the field that outsiders sometimes find impenetrable. Precision is a major focus of specific purpose language use and is a major focus arguing in favor of specific purpose language tests.

Communicative approaches to language originated in Widdowson's *Teaching Language as Communication*(1978), and in Canale and Swain's paper, 'Theoretical bases of Communicative Approaches to Second Language teaching and Testing', (1980). Since then the field of language pedagogy and language assessment has developed a different paradigm. Upshur (1971) also contributed to communicative testing by his 'productive communicative testing.' Specific purpose language tests are by definition communicative. Sajavaara holds that 'it is

“In testing communicative language ability we are evaluating samples of performance, in certain specific contexts of use, created under particular test constraints, for what they can tell us about a candidate’s communicative capability or language ability” (Weir, 1990:7).

Widdowson (1983) points out that although language courses and tests are purposeful, there is a difference in how purpose is defined. He suggests that in general purpose language courses, a distinction should be made between aims i.e., the eventual target behaviors of the learners, and objectives i.e., pedagogical constructs which will enable the learners to achieve the behavioral targets. The goal of general purpose language courses, according to Widdowson, is to provide learners with an ability to themselves solve the profusion of communication problems they will encounter when they leave the language learning classroom. On the other hand, designers of specific purpose courses, Widdowson suggests, often fail to identify the distinction between aims and objectives and this causes much of the confusion in second language pedagogy. Specific purpose language teaching suffers from a lack of theoretical motivation for course design, and becomes a very narrowly focused training exercise in which learners are taught specific behaviors but not strategies that will enable them to adapt to new unspecific situations.

Language tests should contain degrees of specificity, which can be described along two dimensions: the amount of content or background knowledge required for carrying out tasks, and the narrowness of interpretations which may be made on the basis of test performance about language use in real life contexts. For example, the test of English as a foreign language (TOEFL) is a test indeed to measure English proficiency, broadly interpreted, without the engagement of any special background knowledge or specific reference to use and would thus be considered a more general purpose language test. On the other hand, a test such as the proficiency test in English language for air traffic controllers (PEL.I) requires a large amount of specialized knowledge about air traffic control, and interpretations
of language use are specifically limited to the work of air traffic control officers. The PELA is therefore a prototypical example of highly specific purpose language test.

These are the two kinds of tests uses, which are relevant in LSP testing. These are Criterion-referenced (CR) and Norm-referenced (NR) language testing. CR testing differs from NR test both in design and in the interpretation. NR tests are designed to maximize distinction among test takers so as to rank them with respect to the ability being tested; CR tests on the other hand are designed to represent levels of ability or domains of content, and performance in them are interpreted with reference to the criterion level (Bachman, 1990). Both the tests are relevant for specific purpose language testing, however the development process associated with CR testing, which involves a detailed analysis of the target language use situation, has more direct relevance in LSP testing, particularly with regard to fundamental concept in specific purpose testing, i.e., authenticity (Douglas, 2000:15-16).

The last important concept in specific purpose language testing is authenticity. Kramsch (1993) points out that the term has been used to indicate a reaction against the artificial language of language textbooks and tests; it refers to the way language is used in non-pedagogic, non-test, and natural communication. Nunan (1985) states that “authentic” materials are usually those, which have been produced for purposes other than to teach language. They can be culled from many different sources: video-clips, recordings of authentic interactions, photographs and pictures, timetables and schedules. These are just a few of the sources, which have been tapped (Nunan 1985:38).

Since the publication of Widdowson (1979), many language teachers have come to view authenticity as a property not of spoken and written texts themselves, but of the uses people put them to:

“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
A key concept in Widdowson's above formulation is that of interaction between the language user and the text. A set of instructions, for example, for conducting a chemistry laboratory exercise may be a perfectly authentic piece of material, but when used in a multiple-choice language text as a vehicle for testing knowledge of vocabulary, it is not used for the purpose intended by the author of the chemistry lab manual, or in the manner that lab supervisors would use it. He notes that there is often a confusion between the use of 'authentic' to refer to examples of language actually produced by users in a communicative situation versus reference to the activities and procedures that language users engage in, in association with the forms of language produced. He suggests a distinction between the terms authentic and genuine: the former refers to activities or processes associate with instances of language use, and the latter to the actual spoken or written texts produced by the users.

To sum up therefore, the procedural steps followed in the thesis are the elicitation of the data for the three components; firstly Needs Analysis, which also includes Error Analysis. This is to be done through questionnaires and written compositions by the learners. This is to be followed by Register Analysis, which includes the specific study of registers used by students belonging to different fields of study. The third step is the critical review of the materials and methods currently used in the study of Remedial English courses. All of these will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter, under the guidelines of syllabus design and the various approaches to the same as discussed in the last section of this chapter.