CHAPTER I

ESP : THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.1 Introductory

1.1.1 Recent years have witnessed a massive global expansion of the use of English. It is commonly accepted that the English language is vastly more used nowadays than it was in the past and the expansion of its use continues apace. It is estimated that the number of those who use English now exceeds 600 million of whom about 300 million are native speakers (Bowen, 1976). Thus English is used by an enormous speech community with the biggest number of non-native users of any of the world's languages. English like any other language serves the native speakers with a wide range of uses but it is striking to note that it serves the non-native users with an equally wide range of uses in most of the countries where it is used.

1.1.2 Linked with this phenomenal expansion is the changing status of English. English has assumed the status of a valuable instrument of local, national, intranational and international communication. Today the ability to use English effectively is treated as an asset in every walk of life. An increasing awareness of the value of this asset in educational vocational and professional fields has made English assume a wide range of functions. The reasons for this expansion of demand and the consequent evolution of its nature are undoubtedly complex but we can isolate
the most dominating factor as the range of socio-linguistic pressures linked with the urgent needs for economic development. Within the general context of the expansion of the use of English it is significant to observe that the demand is less and less generalised in nature and more and more related to the learners' needs and purposes.

1.1.3 The large and the growing field of English Language Teaching (ELT) recognising this change has modified its procedures in order to meet this demand by providing instruction in direct response to the learners' needs. Given this, the aims of language teaching have become more practical. The older concern with an all-purpose mastery of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is declining and giving way to a timely desire to teach a working knowledge of English for clearly definable purposes. Traditional EFL activity, characterised as it has been, by an attempt to teach as much as possible of the system and components of English as a language for general purposes, is gradually adapting itself to the teaching of English for specific communicative needs. In the event, the field of ELT has been swayed by tremendous new developments for the last several decades, the most significant being those brought about by the increasing specialisation of content in the English language teaching curricula. This development has the sanction of a world-wide trend towards 'learner-centred education' and has strongly been shaped by certain lines of intellectual enquiry and commitment in the field of language learning and teaching.
1.1.4 A growing concern for the specification of the particular needs of the learners, supported by the understandable criteria of 'relevance', has brought to focus specialised forms of English strongly associated with those needs. In other words, vast increase in the range and quantity of the use of English has caused a proliferation of its forms. Consequently professional attention has focussed so clearly on the language needs of the 'specialist' as opposed to those of the 'generalist' that the extent of teaching for limited purposes is steadily growing. Thus within the total envelope of English we can witness several different kinds of 'Englishes'. An impressive illustration of current developments is English for Specific Purposes (ESP), one of the most prestigious fashions of recent years in language teaching.

1.1.5 The diversity of purpose-oriented forms is naturally accompanied by new teaching strategies and techniques. ESP has, therefore, proved a dynamic field in the way it has stimulated innovation in approach and methodology. ELT experts and an increasing professional body of teachers all over the world are busy updating their theoretical proficiency and methodological devices. In the absence of a clearly established body of previous research the field presents a new challenge to the classical scholar, the applied linguist, the traditional teacher and the modern learner. Therefore, the concept 'ESP' needs to be understood in its historical perspective and
interpreted in terms of its growth apropos the illuminating insights provided by different schools and scholars.

1.2 The Emergence of ESP

1.2.1 The emergence of ESP is directly linked with changes in social needs and the resulting objectives of foreign language teaching. What society now demands is a predominance of practical command given to a more diverse population of language learners. In other words, literary, aesthetic and intellectual demands are now giving way to more practical and functional ones. This shift of emphasis has rightly caused a change in expectations and attitudes on the part of the learner. To keep pace with the situation professional responses have manifested themselves in the form of changes in approach and methodology providing a link thereby between the classroom and the world outside.

1.2.2 The emergence of ESP is also indebted to the revival of interest in the study of language in social contexts, as witnessed in the 1960s, associated mainly with the anthropological and ethnographic work of Labov, Hymes and Gumperz. The valuable intellectual contributions of these sociolinguists aided by applied linguistic researches substantially modified the character of ELT programmes. What is more, the emergence of ESP can thus be attributed to a multidisciplinary approach to the solution of language-based problems. A remarkable feature of this development is
the close relation between theory (especially in applied linguistics) on the one hand and the practical classroom needs on the other. It has narrowed the gap between the 'practical' and the 'academic' (Strevens, 1980: 43) and paved the way for a meaningful compromise over the long standing argument about the relation between linguistics and language teaching. ESP undoubtedly owes a great deal to both the academic and practical considerations in language teaching.

1.2.3 Our language needs usually grow with our language resources. The more we can say the more we want to say. We are more specific now about the relationship between linguistic form and communicative function. More so, we are more aware than we were in the past, of the variety and range of communicative devices employed by the speakers, as also of the constraints which the situation, the setting and the background of the speaker-hearer impose on the utterances produced. Developments in sociolinguistic theory and practice over the last fifteen years or so have caused major changes in the foreign language scene quickening the process of the rise of ESP. Recent developments, one must admit, have systematised our insights and spread a general awareness of the issues far into the profession.

1.2.4 The emergence of ESP can also be seen as a collective professional response to the changed social environment and the role of English therein. An international meeting of specialists held in London in December, 1960 on second language learning as a factor
in national development in Asia, Africa and Latin America focussed on three basic needs: (1) internal communication (2) transmission of science and technology and (3) international communication. This 'needs-profile' is significant in so far as it implies a specification of purpose for the learning of languages. Such a need for specification was in itself novel to ELT course planning and materials designing at the time as the textbooks of the era exemplify. It also implies a suggestion that the teaching of English could be bound up with the teaching of other subjects in the school or postschool curriculum. It offered a particular role for English as a vehicle for transmitting knowledge as a means rather than an end in itself. This development is naturally linked with innovations in methodology.

1.2.5 Another angle to trace a point of departure from the traditional EFL activity can be a growth of specialised content in English teaching programmes, a corollary to new developments. This can be visualised in what Ronald Mackay wrote in 1975 ..."for the last ten years or so, the term language for special purposes has begun to appear more and more frequently in language teaching literature".¹ And again Mackay and

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Mountford (1978) refer to "over the last ten years or so"¹ as the period in which the concept of languages for special purposes has become current. The first conference on 'languages for special purposes' was, however, convened in 1959 (Perren, 1969) which provides yet another starting point for consideration.

1.3 ESP ... A Definition

1.3.1. A definition of ESP is not easy to produce. In the process of speedy evolution ESP has come to be identified with several concepts. We can only attempt to produce a working definition by probing such questions as what ESP is, what it seeks to do, and the areas with which it is concerned. And such questions can best be handled in the general context of the changed status of English and the emergence of the unexpected roles it has to play.

1.3.2 English has emerged not only as the main language of international communication but it is now established as the principal international language of science. UNESCO reported in 1957 that nearly two thirds of Engineering literature appears in English but more than two thirds of the world's professional engineers can not read English. Undergraduates and would be professionals are thus obliged to raise a reasonable fund of proficiency in English. Stressing

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this urgency Ewer and Latorre (1967) rightly remark:

Success in graduate work is becoming more and more related to the ability to read the appropriate literature in English and to take part in international conferences where the greater part of the contracts take place through the medium of English.

In other words the role of English is intimately linked with particular uses of English in different fields of specialised knowledge.

1.3.3 The teacher of EFL is faced increasingly with requests from his students for specialist courses to meet their specific requirements. EFL courses with their non-specific goals appear to be of little use in this situation. ESP, therefore, caters to the widespread demand of foreign learners pursuing their education/vocation in English. It is naturally concerned with the specific requirements of the specialist disciplines. ESP learner demands English as a means to the pursuit of his academic or vocational goals and not English as an end in itself. In Selinker and Trimble's (1976) terms ...."our students are learning a foreign language primarily in order to manipulate difficult intellectual material in it".


1.3.4 The basic element in a definition of ESP is obviously the requirement or the purpose of the learner for learning English. The main requirements of an ESP learner are essentially centred around professional performance, "a clearly utilitarian purpose" (Mackay, 1975). It is not easy, however, to characterise this clearly utilitarian purpose or purposes for which learners need ESP. Mackay and Mountford (1978) suggest three kinds of purposes: (a) occupational requirement, e.g. for international telephone operators, civil airlines pilots, etc., (b) vocational training programmes, e.g. for hotel and catering staff, technical trades etc., and (c) academic or professional study, e.g., engineering, medicine, law etc. Thus purpose being an important consideration in ESP or what White (1974) calls 'a crucial determinant of language form'\(^1\) we can realise that English assumes an important auxiliary role in furthering specialist education or as a means of performing a social or working role (i.e., as a scientist, a technologist etc.) effectively.

1.3.5 Attention to the purpose of the learner is certainly a key element in any definition of ESP. Strevens (1977b) emphasises this element when he remarks..."in SP-LT the language using purposes of the learners are paramount".\(^2\) It implies that ESP

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courses should be learner centred. Munby (1978) in his definition of ESP makes learner-centredness the basic criteria. The crucial element is inevitably the 'purpose'. Although there has always been a purpose behind all good teaching one of the most valuable aspects of ESP is that it has concentrated our minds on the ends we seek to achieve. If we teach English for a certain predetermined purpose we have to consider the appropriate ways in which we hope to achieve that purpose. In other words, we have to design a syllabus that will meet the needs of the learners, and adapt our methodology to it in order to facilitate the acquisition of necessary skills and achieve the objectives specified therein.

1.3.5 The second element in a definition of ESP is 'special' or 'specific'. The 'S' of ESP formerlysignifying 'special' has undergone a significant change and is now commonly taken to stand for 'specific'. English for special purposes is liable to be confused as it is thought to suggest special languages whereas 'specific' focusses our attention on the purpose of the learner and at the same time it refers to the whole range of language resources. It is an important distinction and it must always be maintained. We must not confuse the idea of a special language (or segment of a language) with that of a specialised aim. Special language like the language of air traffic control, of a dining room waiter etc. is
strictly limited. It could be satisfactory in a few well defined and situationally determined contexts, tasks or vocations but it does not allow the speaker to communicate effectively in novel situations or in contexts outside the vocational environment.

1.3.7 The term 'special' or 'specific' of ESP implies a special or limited aim which will determine the precise language content required, skills needed and the range of functions to which language will be put. The student of ESP is learning English en route to the acquisition of some quite different body of knowledge or set of skills. We have to distinguish the specific purpose (as contrasted with the general) for which a particular student or group of students require English. The emphasis of the word 'special' or 'specific' should be firmly placed upon the purpose not on the language.

1.3.8 In the light of the above analysis we can offer a working definition of ESP focussing upon the vital elements. ESP aims at providing instruction in consonance with the learners' particular needs as related to their designated areas of study, occupation or vocation with an appropriate selection of language content and skills needed.

1.4 ESP and General ELT

1.4.1 ESP contrasts with General ELT not just in nomenclature but more deeply in principle and perspective. ESP is based on a close analysis of the
learners' needs — this is the fundamental principle. Every ESP learner or group of learners has its own identifying profile of needs and, therefore, requires its own appropriate syllabus, materials and methodology. It can be seen that this is a very different position from that of General ELT where syllabuses differ little from each other, remain usually unchanged over the years and do not vary according to the learners' needs. Among the several reasons for the rapidly growing demand for ESP courses the most convincing reason evidently is the increasing irrelevance of General English courses. It appears to be fruitful to examine the aims of General ELT as contrasted with ESP in order to arrive at a conclusion pertaining to the utility of specialised programmes.

1.4.2 General ELT has general aims, that is, broad educational aims. It is usually regarded as part of a broad education. It is a general, educational, culture and literature-oriented language instruction in which language itself is the subject matter and the purpose of the course. General ELT classified into its finer categories as EFL/ESL entails a wide range of technicalities and varying degrees of sophistication in approach, objectives and methodology. Still it has a general aim. The terms EFL/ESL have been used for long almost interchangeably but they have gradually acquired distinct meanings. EFL (English as a Foreign Language) means English taught as a school subject or at an adult level solely for the
purpose of giving the learner a foreign language competence which he may use in several ways, e.g., to read literature, to listen to the radio, to communicate with the foreigners etc. ESL (English as a Second Language) is concerned with a situation when English becomes a language of instruction in the schools or a lingua franca between speakers of widely diverse languages. ESL is often more fundamental to the life and functioning of a country than EFL. Again, EFL is subsidiary to the main interest with a pressure to achieve the required level of competence in the target language in the minimum of time.

1.4.3 General ELT could be a part of the primary or the secondary level of education but the typical 'General English' course is usually given at the secondary and post-secondary level. The specific/general contrast substantiates the time factor and the age of the learner. Moreover, General ELT has no immediate or specific requirements. The courses are generally conceived to have been designed on pre-conceived preferences having no immediate purpose to serve. The use or the application of the knowledge gained is deferred till the higher stage of education, only to serve as a general kind of help in academic studies. What is taught is usually a knowledge of syntactic and lexical rules based on habit formation, theory of learning and a structuralist description of language. For adults, at the tertiary level, it is a mere repetition of the content and techniques already employed at the secondary stage. The results are unlikely to be any more effective than they were before.
1.4.4 The teaching of English in our schools has been a matter of grave concern for educationists as well as the enlightened public. Seminars and conferences have been organised and campaigns of all sorts have been run with varying degree of success. It is ironical that with the growth of sufficient training facilities in the field of teacher's education the achievement of our pupils should be steadily falling. A near chaotic condition prevailing at the school stage extends itself to the degree level with not much of improvement. That the instruction has been inadequate at the secondary level and that the 'deferred' purpose difficult to achieve when the stage arrives can be felt by the provision of courses like Remedial English, Technical English, Bridge Courses etc. Such courses are obviously aimed at repairing the deficiencies of school teaching but they too hardly produce the desired result. The emphasis still remains on English as a subject in its own right.

1.4.5 In General ELT aims are defined internally by reference to examination requirements. It is often cynically referred to as 'English for the exam.' The course appears to be an externally imposed syllabus neither cognisant of the learners' maturity nor relevant to their social role. Examinations aims are fulfilled somehow but the social aims remain poorly achieved. The learners too become disillusioned with the value of such instruction and sceptical of their capacity to acquire the required proficiency in the language at
all. The best criteria of relevance being 'use' is very often felt to be missing and the entire instruction turns out to be merely a teacher based activity.

1.4.6 What strikes our attention as a matter of urgent need is a focus on well defined objectives at each stage of learning. In EFL/ESL setting school ELT programmes must recognise as their basis a sound knowledge of the working of English adapted to real life situations. The learners must be equipped with tools efficient enough to apply the knowledge of English gained at school to the instruction in his specialist discipline at higher stages of education or vocation, and thus perform his respective role competently. For specialised aims he can opt for specific purpose instruction in English viz., ESP for which he would have already acquired a sound basis. It is indisputable that ESP has emerged as a distinct field to cater to the requirements of the latter kind but it must be realised that the success of ESP instruction will depend to a great extent on school ELT achievements.

1.5 Sub-divisions of ESP

1.5.1 A difference in approach is needed when English ceases to be an examination subject and assumes the role of an instrument of communication. Mainly to meet this situation the concept of ESP has emerged. Originating perhaps from LSP (Language(s) for Special Purposes) which is an international term, a host of new terms have taken wider currency in the ESP field.
Perren (1974) in his foreword suggests that "language teaching for special purposes is not a very satisfactory blanket term to cover a variety of vocational and professional reasons for learning or teaching languages". The term ESP has changed its signification during the last decade. Formerly denoting 'English for Special Purposes', the term now used by an increasing number of scholars, practitioners and institutions is English for Specific Purposes. As a result of a deeper investigation and a finer analysis of the 'purpose' of the learner ESP has been sub-divided. United Kingdom Ministry of Overseas Development, British Council, in its Report of Working Group on English for Specific Purposes, 1977 devised the following diagram indicating the sub-divisions:
Strevens (1977b) modifies this when he suggests that 'all SP-LT (special purpose language teaching) courses are either educational or occupational in nature'. He proposes a further three way distinction according to the timing of the courses and produces the following diagram:

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     Pre-experience
    /           \
Occupational   Simultaneous
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Pre-study     In-study
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Post-study    Post-experience
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English for Science and Technology (EST), a most prestigious development has surfaced as a major sub-division of ESP. Where would this fit in either of these figures? It seems to belong to both the educational and the occupational uses of English. Again, Strevens (1977c)\(^1\) proposes a taxonomy of ESP courses, classifying the different types of ESP and incorporating, of course,

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the new development, i.e., EST:

Esp

-others

Educational

pre-experience

teacher's conversion

Discipline based

Pre-study

In-study/Post-study

Independent

Integrated

Examples for EOP are English for air traffic controllers, hotel employees, international banking, civil engineering, doctors in general practice etc.; for EEP or EAP ... English for medicine, engineering, economics, general science etc. An Indonesian learning English for working in an oilfield at the same time that he is being instructed in the job itself is an example of Pre-experience ESP, whereas a Pakistani doctor learning English in order to communicate with his patients in surgery is an example of post-experience
ESP. A Turkish student in the preparatory department of the Middle East Technical University who is learning English is an example of pre-study discipline based ESP. A Mexican student in the faculty of Veterinary Science learning English to read books, articles on his subject is an example of in-study discipline based ESP. Independent school subject ESP is English serving the study of one or more of the subjects in the school curriculum. Integrated ESP is learning of English parallel to the study of, e.g., Maths/Science.

1.5.2 In this age of specialisation ESP with all its sub-divisions is often felt to be not specific enough. Even such categories as EAP, EOP, EEP, EST are found to be too general now. We have begun to talk in terms of 'English in Workshop Practice', 'English in the Medical Laboratory', 'English in Agriculture', 'Nursing English', etc. depending of course, on the nature of the purpose involved. ESP, therefore, appears to be a banner which flies over a host of varying types of courses, some of which are a great deal more specific than others. The latest perhaps is the concept of One-to-One courses or in other words SSP (Student Specific English) which must be really special. The particular attraction of One-to-One courses is their true individuality, designed as they are for individual requirements in the manner best suited to the learner personally. A large number of textbooks representing a wide range of approaches towards specific requirements have been produced but
before going into a consideration of different theoretical propositions supporting these materials we would consider the divergence of opinion regarding the basic concept of ESP.

1.6 ESP ... Some Critical Viewpoints

1.6.1 Robin Davis (1977) makes a frontal attack on the concept in general and the pedagogical procedures in particular..."English for Specific Purposes - Yes, this is the functional seventies. Logic and reason have arrived in EFL at last." In an ironical contrast between ESP and general ELT he observes..."we feed our students on 'pure steak' and in so doing omit ingredients that will be conducive to general language learning vitality." ¹

1.6.2 Lewis Kerr (1977) doubts the use of 'special' with reference to ESP and holds that the so called General English has a number of very specific purposes in mind viz. to enable a foreigner to carry out his daily life in English. He is of the view that a foreigner spending six months learning English before joining a course in Chemical Engineering in England needs (a) social English for shopping, conversation, transport etc. and (b) English for his subject, of course. Similarly a businessman conducting business in England will need Social English + English for Business. What can

be inferred from this viewpoint is the fact that ESP can neither replace nor substantiate the objective of General ELT although it can be treated as an added dimension to our language competence.

1.6.3 John Munby (1978) seems to refute the foregoing idea when he observes that "in dealing with ESP one is not centrally concerned with non-specialised or broadly socio-cultural purposes such as travelling or performing everyday routines ... the main interest here focusses on the basic division of ESP into the occupational and educational dimensions."¹

1.6.4 Christopher Brumfit (1977) while pointing out the deficiencies of ESP warns that new emphases require to be dressed up in order to achieve academic respectability or to attract students to new style courses. Treating ESP well within the tradition of EFL/ESL he observes that "it would be a pity if ESP...were felt to exist in some way as an independent aspect of language teaching...perhaps language teaching is indivisible".²

1.7 ESP : An Appraisal

1.7.1 Summing up the foregoing discussion and opinions we can observe that an ESP course is aimed at a particular purpose i.e., successful performance of educational or occupational roles. It is based on a

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rigorous analysis of the learners' needs and thus it is essentially learner-centred. Rather than studying for an open ended period for a general examination the ESP learner usually learns English to perform a role thereby. This attention to successful performance in English rather than a passive knowledge of the rules of English is part of a contemporary approach to language teaching and therefore ESP can be placed within the tradition of ELT:EFL/ESL with a renewed emphasis on purpose and as a consequence on corresponding methodology. A growing awareness of the many different variables -- academic, occupational, geographical, personal, linguistic, pedagogic -- the term ESP has led to finer distinctions and experimentations in the ELT field. An ESP course, depending upon the purpose, may differ from another in the selection of skills, topics, situations, functions and content. It is likely to be of a limited duration. ESP learners are more often adults but not necessarily so, and may be at any level of competence in the language, i.e., beginner, post-beginner, intermediate etc. Learners may opt for the course before embarking on their occupational or educational role or they may combine their study of English with their specialist role. ESP courses are suitable both for the foreigner and the native learner as the native learner too when learning a new trade or profession has a certain amount of work to do on the language of his job. To conclude, there are rugged ends around any definition of ESP but it is generally agreed that it is a pragmatic response to a developing
situation allied to the learners' specific needs in education, vocation and society. This shift of emphasis leads to more meaningful insights into the way language resources are put to different uses and hence to more efficient learning.

1.7.3 The foregoing conclusions can be diagrammatically represented as under:

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1.8 Origins of ESP

1.8.1 A review of the theoretical framework under which ESP has grown to its present shape can be made with a brief consideration of the 'history' of ESP.
According to a section of opinion the origins of ESP are older than we generally recognize. In his article 'English or Special English' Corbluth (1975) suggests that special purpose teaching in the sense of omitting items irrelevant to a particular group of students' needs, dates back to the work of Harold Palmer and Michael West. Strevens (1977b) suggests that LSP has a much longer history, offering 1576 as the date of the first phrase book for foreign tourists. He decides, however, that language courses of the type 'German for Science Students' can more properly be regarded as the earliest form of SP-LT without giving any dates.

1.8.2 Both these opinions seem to stem from a recognition of a specially selected vocabulary as the basis for the purpose-oriented teaching. Selection of vocabulary, as for example done by Palmer and West is a major contribution in the ELT field but this can never be seen to constitute the whole of ELT, or for that matter of ESP. Phrase books for tourists similarly, provide an extremely limited help in handling a few social situations and that too in an awkwardly mechanical manner. They can hardly be effective in providing a basis for communication in even a superficial way.

1.8.3 Tickoo (1976) and Lee Kok Cheong (1976) look at the development of ESP from the point of view of the trends in linguistic analysis and in the selection of materials. Both suggest without giving
any dates that the first stage in the development of ESP was eclectic and pre-linguistic, that is, not influenced by any particular theories of language or even of language teaching. Scientific English was looked at from the viewpoint of literature and seen to be needlessly complicated, not really in kind, except perhaps in vocabulary, from ordinary language but different in degree (of elegance). These opinions seem to ignore the fact that language teachers have always been experimenting within the framework of broadly defined social and educational objectives and enriching their devices in the context of practical teaching situations. Scientific texts selected and adapted with a view to giving the learner a feel of language variety have usually been a part of ELT programmes. These broad objectives were definitely not those claimed by ESP where needs and purposes are rigorously analysed. The first stage in the development of ESP, therefore, can be one where this shift from 'general' to 'specific' embracing a host of exciting new developments takes place. With the development of linguistic procedures the profession has no doubt benefitted immensely but it must also be admitted that amidst a host of linguistic approaches, often conflicting and unstable, it is the teacher who delivers the goods by his experiment, intuition and practical response to a given situation. Eclecticism is still the order of the day and it is seen it pays.
1.9 ESP . . . The Registral Approach

1.9.1 The origins of ESP are also traceable to the concept of 'register'. Tickoo (1976) suggests that subsequent to the study of register there was an interest in skill-based materials but that not much was produced. Brumfit (1977) holds the view that ESP is indebted to 'the tradition of the analysis of functional style or register'. Candlin (1978:3) remarks that in the 1960s a growing concern in the study of language in social contexts and the specification of particular needs was satisfied by appropriate courses and materials designed mostly on the basis of applied linguistic research. He observes . . .

. . .the then popular term 'register' filled in nicely and gradually empirical research into the structures and vocabulary of scientific and technical specialisms led to materials which displayed in a most useful way the lexical and structural identity of a variety of such branches of science and technology. Although the differences in structure that were isolated were fewer . . .

1.9.2 The concept of register and the production of materials based on register analysis is not the most recent but it is still in some quarters a source

of discussion and research. Moreover, since the origins of ESP are traceable to the concept of register it is nonetheless relevant to consider what is involved in register analysis and the application of the regis­
tral approach to ESP. Language has formal meaning and situational meaning. All language is part of a wide non-language situations. One of the interests of linguistics especially in the last two three decades has been the description of how the language of an utterance links with the meaning of the situation. Certain formal features characterise our language when we become conscious of our specialised performance in particular situations. This leads to some kind of variation from the language of ordinary use. The idea of register is based on such variation. Registers can thus be distin­
guished on the basis of certain features like the choice of words, collocations and structures in certain situations. Perhaps the word 'register' was used for the first time by Reid in 1956 and later Hill (1958) elaborated upon the idea of registral variations along the dimension of style, genre and mode. Firth (1956:106) referred to the same as 'restricted language' but later in 1959 he observes: "there are vocational, technical and scientific languages set in a matrix of closely determined sections of what may be called the general language." He calls such variations 'satellite languages' which are governed by personality in social life and the general language of the commu­
nity. Firth proposed a description of register from
a semantic viewpoint, that is, language variety related to language use.

1.9.3 Halliday et al (1964) define register as 'the name given to a variety of language distinguished according to use'. They stress that registers are defined by their formal properties, their differentia lie more in lexis than in grammar and that it is the collocation of two or more lexical items that is specific to one register. Another definition current in register studies reads..."Register is the general term used for the varieties of language or sets of language patterning obtained by relating situational and linguistic groupings".

1.9.4 Inspite of this general recognition of registers and their essential nature, that is, formal statistical analysis with an emphasis on lexicon and to some extent sentence patterns, frequency counts of linguistic items from a large corpus of text noting reliable markers etc., materials based on register studies suffer from many inadequacies. There are considerable theoretical difficulties in attempting to isolate the 'language of specialisms'. Parren (1974) observes in his introduction, "the notion ... that a distinctive 'special' register (appropriate to a specialist subject) can be identified by contrast

with a 'general' register is fraught with confusion." Evidence in the form of research carried on the lines of registral approach leads us to agree with Perren. The most commonly quoted source of information on the language of science is Barber (1962) but his data is too limited for his conclusions to be usefully generalised. Other much quoted research in this area is that of Huddleston et al (1968) of which Mackay and Mountford (1978) write that it is not of any great use to the language teacher.

1.9.5 Thakur (1969) and Porter (1976) cast doubt on the existence of a clearly definable 'English of Science'. They find, many, often very different sub-registers within science in English. The same point is made by Ewer and Latorre (1967). They have, however, produced a course in Basic Scientific English as the result of register analysis.

1.9.6 Any useful research tends to confine itself to very limited clearly defined areas, for example, 'Prepositions in Chemical Abstracts' (Sastri, 1968) or 'Noun Adjuncts in an Engineering Text' (Sears, 1971) or 'Latinate Names and Article Usage in Biology' (Swales, 1976). Even with this kind of research we cannot decide that one feature uniquely characterises one particular register. Perhaps we can be inclined to suggest that a unique constellation of features rather than any single characteristic could make one register distinctive in comparison with another. White (1975)¹ has sufficient confidence in the value

of register studies to suggest that with sufficient data it would be possible to devise a series of "register specifications in which typical constellations of features could be specified for each register."

1.9.6 Too often the term 'register' is used to refer just to vocabulary and collocation. Most of the studies carried on this pattern have concerned themselves with the characterisation of a lexical analysis, the choice of the lexical verb phrase, noun phrase, types of adjuncts etc. Garwood (1972) seems to identify register with lexis and suggests a way of obtaining lists of lexical items and later lists of structural items. In order to make up a syllabus, Cheong (1976) divides register studies into two stages: firstly, the analysis of the lexicon, considering in particular the frequency of occurrence of items and the presence or absence of items, and secondly the study of the syntax. Inclusion of syntactic patterns may be seen as a move beyond the lexis but the studies made on the basis of supposed characteristics of certain registers often yield conflicting results. Swales (1971) suggests that main verbs in scientific texts are generally in the present simple tense whereas Close (1965) emphasises the continuous form of the verb.

1.9.7 Studies based on the registral approach leave many conflicting issues -- what are the parameters of a register? Is it lexis or grammar or both? Do
registers have some common core or they are totally independent? Is it possible to ascertain specific characteristics of each important register in English? Is the linguistic range of a register fixed? How far can this kind of work be relevant in providing a framework for pedagogy? Can the recognition and analysis of formal properties in a sentence based approach justify the communicative function of language? It is evident that the study of lexis of the verb or noun phrase, even of sentence patterns in a cruel isolation from the living context is not enough. If we keep the communicative purpose in mind we will agree with Candlin et al (1978) when they suggest that the analyst must go "beyond the study of words and the structures they are found in, certainly beyond the sentence, if not outside the text".

1.9.9 Register analysis is now considered to be of not much direct use to a course design, especially when English has assumed a wide range of functions manifesting a variety of context determined forms. A study of lexis as part of the total communicative structure of a language of specialism can profitably replace the quantitative registral approach within the framework of the new 'qualitative' approach which upholds the communicative function and considers such things as communicative competence and role performance essential to both linguistic descriptions and pedagogical strategies.