CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW ON NEEDS ANALYSIS

2.0 Introduction to Needs Analysis (NA)

Needs analysis has been generally understood as the identification of priorities and problems and difficulties faced by the language learner in a target learning situation. The term ‘needs’ is often seen as an umbrella term (West, 1994). Richards et al. (1992:242) broadly defined needs analysis as 'the process of determining the needs for which a learner or group of learners requires a language and arranging the needs according to the priorities'. The overall aim of the NA is not only the identification of elements but to establish relative importance to find out what is desirable for training (Gillet 1973; Chancerell 1987 cited in Basturkmen, 1998: 2). West (1994) states that NA is primarily a pragmatic activity whereas Hutchinson & Waters (1987) maintain that the term NA is used to mean lacks rather than needs that shapes curriculum.

West (1994:1) defined needs analysis broadly as two separate concepts: first, ‘what learners will be required to do with foreign language in the target situation and second, how learners might best master the target language during the period of training’. The primary concern is to address the gap between the target proficiency and the present proficiency of the learners. Needs analysis is described as ‘the gap between current and desired
results or the gap in results between ‘what is’ and ‘what should be’ (Triner et al. 1998) in terms of necessities or learner’s needs. Brindley (1989) lists some concepts of needs:

a) Necessities or demands of the programmes (objective, product oriented or perceived needs);

b) Learners’ wants (subjective, or felt needs); and

c) The methods of filling the gaps between these two (process oriented needs).

Nunan (1988a:42-43) too adds certain factors that are necessary to determine the needs of the learner. They are:

a) Objective information: It gives current proficiency level, educational background, age, previous language courses, nationality etc of the learner and

b) Subjective information: It gives information about learning goals, preferences of methodology, learning strategies about the learner.

Thus, to correlate the above mentioned points, needs analysis serves as an important tool to obtain information on:

a) the situation in which a language will be used, who it will be used with

b) The objectives and purposes for which the language is needed

c) The types of communication that will be used (e.g. written, spoken, formal and informal)

d) The level of proficiency that will be required (Richards et al. 1992:243).
2.1 Needs Analysis: Theoretical Framework

Needs Analysis attained prominence in the literature of language teaching during the last two decades of the twentieth century. The term 'analysis of need' first appeared in India in 1920s (Howatt, 1984; White, 1988 cited in West, Op.cit.). Before 1970s NA was generally informal and little research was done in its area (Cowling, 2007). The concept of needs was formally introduced by Council of Europe Modern Language Projects group during 1970s in the field of ESP (Richterich, 1983 cited in Cowling, 2007:427). It replaced the informal or intuitive analysis of the students' needs (West, 1994). A detailed formal concept was introduced by Munby's *Communicative Syllabus Design* (1978) and later this concept has been redefined by task-based Needs Analysis (Long, 2005). Research and studies conducted by the Council of Europe team resulted in the emergence of the communicative approach to language learning which replaced the situational approach dominant in language teaching and learning at that time. A great deal of work has been done in the field of Needs Analysis in the last decade having implications for the practice of ESL/EFL teaching.

Needs Analysis has developed through various stages, each of which shifted and broadened the scope of analysis (West, 1994, 1997). The stages, concerns and scope of Needs analysis are shown in the table given below:
Table 2.1

Various Stages of Needs Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>period</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Scope of analysis</th>
<th>Examples</th>
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<td>ELTDU, 1970</td>
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<td>Stuart &amp; Lee, 1972/85</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>later 1970s</td>
<td>EAP</td>
<td>Target situation analysis</td>
<td>Jordan &amp; Mackay, 1973</td>
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<td>Mackay, 1978</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>1980s</td>
<td>ESP &amp; general</td>
<td>target situation analysis</td>
<td>Tarole &amp; Yule, 1989</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>language teaching</td>
<td>analysis</td>
<td>Allwright &amp; Allwright, 1977</td>
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<td>deficiency analysis</td>
<td>Allwright, 1982</td>
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<td>strategy analysis</td>
<td>Holliday &amp; Crooke, 1982</td>
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<td>means analysis</td>
<td>Pilbcam, 1979</td>
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<td>language audits</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>early 1990s</td>
<td>ESP</td>
<td>integrated/computer based analysis</td>
<td>Jones, 1991</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>material selection</td>
<td>Nelson, 1993</td>
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Adapted from West (Op.cit.:2)

The dominant focus of early Needs Analysis was English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) but later it tilted towards English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and General English. The study of languages for specific purposes (LSP) has a long and a varied history (John & Dudley-Evan, 1991). Hutchinson and Waters (1987)
identified the emergence of ESP as the demand for English to suit the particular needs. This led to the natural extension of 'learner-centred' or 'learning-centred' perspectives on ESP (Alhumaidi, 2009). The end of the second world war and the oil crisis in 1970's led to the era of scientific, technical and economic expansion and thus, this in turn, shifted the focus on English as International Language and on the communicative needs of the learner.

Needs Analysis became significant with the appearance of ESP in the 1960's at the Makerene conference (West, 1994; Shin, 2008). The ESP movement in the 1970's focused on Needs Analysis as its fundamental considerations (Robinson, 1991:7) in categorizing learners' needs for applying them to course design. Needs Analysis was a watershed in the development of ESP in general and in particular (Braine, 2005). Halliday, McIntosh and Strevens (1961:19 cited in West, Op. cit.:2) refer to 'English for Specific needs'. Hutchinson & Waters (1987) propose that NA is one of the 3 factors (the other 2 being language description and learning theories) affecting an ESP course design. The general background of the development of NA is explained by Tudor (2001) as mostly due to the increased need for language learning to relate to communication in international milieus. From the early 1960s ESP has grown to become the most prominent area in SL / FL teaching. Strevens (1980) outlined 5 analytical stages for determining a particular ESP requirement and designing a suitable course to meet that requirement. The stages are; Needs analysis, (based information provided by the ESP stakeholders such as learners,
clients etc) second stage involves content analysis (based on field or discipline in question) the third involves, Categories of ESP include various academic Englishes, e.g., English for science and technology, followed by English for graduate teaching assistants, and finally "general" English for academic purposes, in addition to a number of occupational Englishes, e.g., English for Nursing, Tourism etc.

2.1.1 Models of Needs Analysis

2.1.1.1 The Threshold Level (Van Ek 1975)

The Threshold Level stemmed from the Council of Europe in facilitating the overall cause of the project as to enable exchange of ideas in the European situation by making language learning more effective. The focus of the attention was on ‘to maintain themselves in most everyday situations, including situations for which they have not been specifically trained’ (Van Ek 1975 cited in Cunningsworth 1983:151). The Threshold Level is considered as the statement of minimum level of ability expressed in minimal language-learning objectives for the use of English in everyday situations. The claimed feature of this level was that it was capable of defining all language-learning objectives and these objectives were specified in terms of behavior. Thus the behavioral objectives were stemmed from an analysis of the learner’s needs. The steps involved are defining the target group and then the objective is to realize as exactly as possible what the learners will need to do with a foreign language. The next step is to determine in which the target group will need to be able to use English.
The following components contribute to the building up situations and provide the learner’s needs profile. These are:

1. The social roles which the learner will be able to play;
2. The psychological roles which the learner will be able to play;
3. The settings in which the learners will be able to use the foreign language;
4. The topics which the learner will be able to deal with in the foreign language

(Van Ek 1975:10 cited in Ibid: 152)

2.1.1.2 Munby’s Communicative Syllabus Design (1978)

Munby designed what is known as Communicative Needs Processor (CNP). Munby in his Communicative Syllabus Design developed a ‘(CNP)’ highlighting the variables affecting communication needs in terms of behavior and meaning specifications.

Figure 1 shows the flow of input of raw information about the target group while making an important distinction between units of behavior and units of meaning to achieve the desired objectives.

| Table 2.2 |
| Distinction between Units of Behavior and Units of Meaning |

| Input                           | Learner’s present command of English |
|                                | Purpose, setting, social roles, psychological roles. Topic |
| Behavioural Objectives         | Communicative Activities             |
| Units of Meaning               | Functions Concepts                    |
Munby's CNP approach to participants' profile works at two levels—priori and posteriori. At the priori level Munby's includes certain variables such as participant, purposive domain, settings, interactions and instrumentality. The information about the participant should concern the identity and language needs: Munby specifies the occupational or educational purpose for which the target language is needed; whereas the setting variable specifies both physical and psychosocial.

Interaction variable identifies the participant's interaction with the interlocutor. The instrumentality variable is concerned with identifying constraints on the input in terms of medium, mode, and channel of communication. At the posteriori level, Munby presented variables such as dialect (in terms of British, American or any regional dialect), participant's target level of command, communicative event (productive or receptive skills of the participant) and communicative key (participant's performance relating to an event). The theoretical basis of Munby's model was based on the nature of communicative competence derived basically from Hymes (1971 cited in see West, 1994:2). Munby's model is fundamentally performance related where the categories of communicative activity and communicative event are categories of real-world language use rather than features of communicative competence (West, 1994).
Munby's model was considered as an effective approach to Target Situation Analysis (TSA). Although Munby model is considered as a well developed application of needs analysis, it has been criticised for being too mechanistic, and for paying less attention to the perception of the learner. Munby's model was considered as
complex, impractical, inflexible, also, the needs analysis procedure had procedural constraints. Nonetheless, it had implications for syllabus design such as “English of Motor Mechanics’ and ‘English for Biological Science’. The rationale for such syllabus design is that there are certain aspects of language which are specific to the contexts and it is assumed that there are certain structures, functions, topics, vocabulary items, conceptual meanings, specific to the world of the motor mechanic and which are not found in ‘General English’. Nunan (1988b) notes that different areas of use will require different communication skills from the learner, and that these need to be prioritized for teaching purposes.

2.2 Significance of Needs Analysis

Needs analysis is eventually a highly pragmatic activity based on highly contextualized situations (Tarone& Yule, 1989). Cunningsworth (1983) reviews needs analysis as the basis of designing appropriate syllabuses and adopting effective teaching techniques. Ideally speaking, it helps in defining accurately as far as possible the present an the future needs of the learners. Therefore, it is difficult to imagine how certain decisions concerning curriculum planning, instructional design, student streaming, learning objectives, course specification, teaching methods and techniques and assessment or testing can be taken without proper needs analysis of the learners (Boswood,1992). Initially it was used as a tool for planning industrial training in a target situation analysis (Boydell, 1970 cited in Ibid.:58) and later it was used for language
curriculum design through the work done by Council of Europe Modern Language Projects (Van Ek, 1977; Richterich, 1983). As such it not only includes objective information but subjective views of the learner concerning their learning and life goals, learning styles and methodological preferences and views of others stakeholders. The rationale for needs analysis is primarily to identify elements of learner's target learning situations using them as basis of ESL/ESP/EAP instruction so that the curriculum designers or teachers will be able to provide students with the specific language they need to succeed in their courses and future careers (Johns, 1991 cited in Benesch, 1996:723). Thus the aim of Needs analysis is:

To know learners as people, as language users and as language learners; to know how language learning and skills learning can be maximized for a given learner group (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998:126).


1. **Selection of theory** = nature of language: principles of restriction e.g. communicative functions

2. **Needs Analysis** = a matching of vocational needs with the categories established.

3. **Language realization** = the transforming of the functions, skills previously identified into language items

4. **Course design** = the ordering of the language items, by their relative importance and their sequencing
5. **Course construction** = the devising of strategies and techniques.

6. **Classroom teaching**

Needs Analysis is viewed as an integral part of language curriculum planning (Boswood, 1992) and curriculum development (Balint, 2005; Richards et al. 1992; Watkins et al. 1998) programme. This is best illustrated by curriculum model (figure 2) proposed by Brown (1995 cited in Balint, 2005). It places needs analysis as the logical first step in curriculum approach followed by "goals and objectives", "language testing", "material development", "language teaching" and "program evaluation.

**Figure 2.2**

The systematic curriculum development model proposed by Brown (1995)
2.3 Approaches to Needs Analysis

2.3.1. Target Situation Analysis (TSA):

The target situational analysis aims to establishing the learners' language requirements in the occupational or academic situation (Chambers 1980). This is different from the earliest TSA procedures (Mackay, 1978) which did not 'give a clear picture of what the language was used for' (West, 1994: 9). The English Language Teaching Development Unit (ELTDU, 1970) provided a detailed data about the exact target language use by different clients. The procedure outlined the four language skills and classified 20 activities to cover all business and commercial situations.

Munby's (1978) CNP aimed to be systematic and detailed version of needs analysis and was well known for 'the most comprehensive' approach to needs analysis but later came in for criticism (Swales, 1980; Davies, 1981b; Hawkey, 1983: 84; Coffey, 1984; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Colemann, 1988, White, 1988, Nunan, 1988a). As discussed earlier in section 2.1.1.2 CNP had certain shortcomings. A brief discussion of these shortcomings is attempted in the following section 2.3.1.1

2.3.1.1 Criticism of Munby's CNP

Munby's CNP was getting inflexible, complex and time consuming for large-scale needs analysis rather than becoming simple to use (See Coffey, 1984; Frankel, 1983; McDonough, 1984; Carrier, 1983). Another important factor was the lack of learner-centered since CNP model collects data about the learner rather than from the
learner. Thus it had shown a limited participant whereas recent needs analysis procedures starts with the value of the teacher’s judgement or involving the learner (See Tarone & Yule, 1989, Allwright & Allwright, 1977). Coleman (1988) observes that Munby idealised the factor of individual learner and as such the application of this model to the needs of heterogeneous groups were problematic. Moreover Munby visualized and classified constraints as socio-political, logistical, administrative, psycho-pedagogic and methodological after the needs analysis procedures had been applied. It was felt that these constraints should be considered at the start of the needs-analysis process (Frankel, 1983; Hawkey, 1983). Later Munby revised his view in the sense that ‘political factors affecting the target language and the homogeneity of the learner should be applied at the needs analysis stage’ (1984:64). Another criticism is that Munby doesn’t mention any procedure to convert the learner profile into a language syllabus (Richards, 1984).

2.3.2 Pedagogical Needs Analysis
To counter the shortcomings of Target situation needs analysis, various forms of pedagogic needs have been identified to give more information about learner and educational environment (Al Humaidi, 2009). It is an umbrella term proposed by West (1998 cited in Songhori, 2008) to cover three elements of NA i.e. deficiency analysis, strategy analysis and means analysis.
2.3.3 Deficiency Analysis

It estimates the 'learning gap' between present needs and target needs' (West, 1997) and provides the present state of the learners language proficiency (ibid.). It analyses the data about the gap between present and target extra linguistic knowledge, mastery of General English, language skills and learning strategies (Jordan, 1997; Songhori, 2008). Other aspect of deficiency analysis investigates whether students are required to do something in the target language that they cannot do in their native language. Such needs have been termed lacks, deficiencies as defined by Hutchinson & Waters (1987) or subjective needs (West, 1997).

Deficiency analysis includes two central components:

a. an inventory of potential target needs expressed in terms of activities

b. developing scale for assigning priority to be given to each activity.

For example, Allwright and Allwright (1977) listed 12 activities for determining potential needs for doctors visiting Britain-reading medical textbooks, writing medical papers, giving papers/lectures at medical conferences on a 3 point attainment scale. Richards (1990) developed a questionnaire where learners are asked to indicate how frequently each task should be taught. Bheiss (1988) refines Allwright and develops 3 components in establishing syllabus priorities:

a. a list of potential target-situation skills
b. a needs questionnaire using ‘0= unnecessary to 4= essential’ scale to establish target situation need for each of the sub-skills;
c. a lacks questionnaire using a ‘0=no difficulty to 4=very difficult’ scale to establish the present-situation deficiency of each of the sub-skills.

Each questionnaire is rated by specialist tutors or students so as to calculate the overall needs and lacks of the group. The learning priorities are then ascertained by multiplying the two scores together.

2.3.4 Strategy Analysis

Allwright was a pioneer in the field of strategy analysis (Songhori, 2008; Jordan, 1997; West, 1994). His starting point was the students' perceptions of their needs in their own terms and his concerns were to help students to identify skill areas and their preferred strategies of achieving the skills (Jordan, 1997). The main concern was to extend the process of needs analysis from what(syllabus content) into how (strategies of learning) (West, 1994). It mainly identifies the learners and establishes learners' preferred learning styles, classroom teaching procedures and techniques selected by teachers but with student feedback. This tries to establish how the learners wish to learn rather than what they need to learn (Songhori, 2008; West, 1994) as it has to do with the strategies that learners employ in order to learn (Songhori, 2008). These may include ‘preferences in terms of
grouping size, extent of homework, learning in/out of class, learning styles, correction preference, use of audio/visual sources, and methods of assessment' (Brindley, 1984 cited in West, 1994:10). In this context Oxford (1990) developed a detailed strategy inventory for language learning' (SILL) followed by diagnostic profile. West (1994) suggests that there are range of learning/teaching styles selected have implications for teacher-learner relationships and learner-autonomy.

2.3.5 Means Analysis

An important strand in the development of Needs Analysis is to adapt language courses to local situations and this approach is called as means analysis Jordan (1997). This approach tries to investigate the considerations that were excluded by Munby (1978) model i.e. practicalities and constraints in implementing needs-based language courses, involves a study of the local situation i.e. the teachers, teaching methods, students, faculties etc. to see how these language course can be implemented and is mainly concerned with the logistics, practicalities and constraints of needs-based language courses (West, 1994:11; Songhori, 2008). West (1994) points out that some analysts believe that instead of focusing on constraints, it might be better if course designers think about how to implement plans in the local situation (Holliday, 1984; Cooke, 1982 cited in West, 1994:11).

Holliday (1984:45) outlines 4 step means analysis:
1. Observe lessons, taking random notes on all significant features
2. Use the notes to construct a report on the lesson to form the basis of discussion with the teacher;
3. Review all the original notes and draw out significant features common to all observations;
4. Construct a communicative device (chart, diagram, etc.) which expresses the findings.

The above procedure forms the basis of realistic negotiations of the course which allows sensitivity to the situations and is directly opposite to the traditional canons of needs analysis usually carried out, where the categories and models are defined before the observation and are based on linguistic descriptions and not the situation being observed.

2.3.6 Language Audits

West (1994) indicates that language audits may simply be used to identify and describe the current state of language teaching. They have become important as a response to the changing scenario of European market, Middle East and south-east Asia. Nevertheless, they are larger scale operations may also be used to help a certain country or organization to formulate a new strategy based on the clients' needs that may take months or even years to implement (West, 1994; Jordan, 1997).

The early literature on language audit defined
a) Analysis of needs based on the job tasks
b) Assessment of current staff capabilities by means of a sophisticated placement test

c) Training specification drawn to bridge the gap between present performance and required performance in the target language.

The scope and analysis of language audits has now been broadened to include large scale data about the current state of language carried out by or for

1. Individual companies
2. Professional companies
3. Countries

2.4 Needs Analysis and General English

Most of the work on needs analysis originally came from the field of ESP, but needs analysis procedures have increasingly come to be viewed as fundamental to the planning of general language courses too. What distinguishes ESP from General English are not the existence of need as such but rather an awareness of the need (Yishan, n.d).

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) also strongly argued against the misconception that the needs of the general English learners are not specifiable. They believed that although needs analysis started mainly in the field of ESP, there should not be any differences between ESP and English for General Purposes (EGP) as far as needs analysis is concerned. ESP differs from GE in its selection of skills, themes, topics, situations, functions, language and methodology (ESP Module). Researches shown that there is often a
lack of awareness of the existence of needs analysis specially in GE courses where the specific needs of students are difficult to determine (Cowling, 2007). Although learners’ needs are theoretically of prime importance today, with the learner centered approaches in focus, needs analysis is rarely carried out in the general English classrooms because it was believed that it was not possible to specify the needs of general English learners and secondly, because of the lack of literature on the practicalities of analyzing needs data in the context of general English. NA plays a vital role in the process of designing any language programme whether it be an ESP course or general English course, and its centrality is appreciated by various scholars and authors (Berwick, 1989; Brindley, 1989; Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998; Jordan, 1997; Hamp-Lyons, 2001; Iwai et al. 1999; Seedhouse, 1995; Songhori, 2008; West, 1994). As Seedhouse (1995) said 'Council of Europe came up with the idea of "Common core" which suggests that language learners share certain interests despite their different goals in learning foreign languages (Al shumaimeri, 2001) and provides a basis for conducting Needs Analysis in GE classroom. But it is argued and Needs Analysis has been neglected in GE classroom and was associated with ESP as suggested by Hutchinson & Waters (1987). ESP/ EAP begins with the learner and the situation whereas General English begins with the language, place more focus on speaking and listening. General English courses tend to teach learners conversational and social genres of the language (Hamp-Lyons, 2001).
Hutchinson and Waters (Op.cit.) say that there should not be any difference between ESP and GE and stated that: It is often argued that needs of the general English learner, for example the schoolchild, are not specifiable..... In fact, this is the weakest of all arguments, because it is always possible to specify needs, even if it is only the need to pass the exam at the end of the year. There is always an identifiable need of some sort. What distinguishes ESP from General English is not the existence of a need as such but rather an awareness of the need (cited in Seedhouse, 1995:59). Also Richards (1990) believes that "most of the literature on needs analysis originally came from realm of TESP (Teaching English for Specific Purposes) but needs analysis procedures have increasingly come to seen as fundamental to the planning of general English courses". Supporting this idea Seedhouse (1995) presented how Needs Analysis procedures can be implemented in General English classroom.

One of the earliest challenges that ESP had to face was the distinction between ESP and English for General Purposes (EGP). ESP differs from EGP in the sense that the content of ESP courses (i.e., words, sentences, and subject matter) relates to a particular field or discipline; English for General Purposes (EGP) is, however, essentially the English language education in junior and senior high schools. In EGP courses, students are introduced to the sounds and symbols of English, as well as to the lexical, grammatical, and rhetorical elements that compose spoken and written discourse. In addition, EGP focuses on applications of English in general
situations. Supplementary information about appropriate gestures, cultural conventions, and cultural taboos can also be included in EGP curricula. EGP conducted in English-speaking countries is typically called English as a Second Language (ESL), and EGP conducted in non-English-speaking countries is normally called English as a Foreign Language (EFL). English for Specific Purposes (ESP), however, is research and instruction that builds on EGP; ESP is designed to prepare students or working adults for the English used in specific disciplines, vocations, or professions to accomplish specific purposes. Pedagogically, a solid understanding of basic EGP should precede higher-level instruction in ESP if ESP programs are to yield satisfactory results (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987). According to Hutchinson and Waters ‘ESP is an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner’s reason for learning’ (Ibid.:17). Dudley-Evans (1998), however, claims that ESP may not always focus on the language of one specific discipline or occupation. He argues that university instruction that introduces students to common features of academic discourse in the sciences or humanities, frequently called English for Academic Purposes (EAP), is equally ESP.

The necessity and impact of NA in language teaching and learning has been advocated not only for ESP students but also for SL and FL students in general. The following summarizes the importance of NA for General language courses from various perspectives such as learner centered curriculum, task based curriculum, performance assessment, proficiency oriented curriculum and motivation:
1. In a learner centered curriculum, teachers reconciliation in content selection through extensive consultation with students about their learning needs and interests is critical (Brindley, 1989). NA helps teachers create in class activities in which the students can utilized learned skills and knowledge as tools to meet their real life needs in meaningful ways (Nunan, 1988a).

2. Needs analysis helps teachers understand ‘local needs’ of students or the needs of a particular group of students and make practical decisions in pedagogy and assessment for improvement (Iwai, et al. 1999).

3. NA has been given considerable attention in making a particular course serve a particular group interests which serve the learner interests and needs. (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Sysoyev, 2000).

4. Needs analysis should be a central component of performance assessments, whose purposes are to test students’ ability to perform task in real situations (Iwai et al. 1999).

5. Needs analysis is an integral component of task based syllabi; real-life target tasks should be identified by a needs analysis (Ibid.).

6. In proficiency oriented instruction/ curricula, needs analysis helps teachers understand the potential differences in learning expectations between themselves and their students (Ibid.).
7. Obtaining input from the students about a planned or existing program through a needs analysis is fundamental to the design, implementation, evaluation and revision of the program (Ibid.)

8. A program that attempts to meet students perceived needs will be more motivating and successful (Ibid.).

2.5 Purpose for conducting Needs Analysis

The purposes of needs analysis is to:

1. Determine the needs and to identify and investigate the causes of the learners needs.

2. Identify as much relevant information about the learners and English language learning programme as possible to guide the development of best practice programs and activities.

3. Identify the reasons for the problems like poor resources, inadequate facilities, faulty equipment, and cumbersome procedures in teaching or learning a language.

4. Provide a means of obtaining wider input into the content, design and implementation of the language programme (Richards, 1984 cited in Nunan, 1992:43) and to provide information, concepts and procedures on strategies of learning (Nunan, 1988).

5. Demand accountability to justify the material in terms of relevance for all parties concerned i.e. teacher, learner, administration, parents (Yeneoka 1987).

6. Account for diversity and differences in learners to learner needs and styles (Ibid.).
7. Create an effective syllabus which will meet the needs of the learners as fully possible within the context of the situation (Ibid.).

8. Ensure that programs are planned are as effective as possible and are most likely to achieve the goals and objectives goals and objectives and content, and to provide data for reviewing (Ibid.)


2.6 Other Approaches to Taxonomies of Needs Analysis:
Hutchinson and Waters (1987) while drawing the distinction between the learning centered and learner-centred approach, they make an analysis of target needs and learning needs given below:

Why is the language needed?
- How will the language be used?
- What will the content areas be?
- Who will the learner use the language with?
- Where will the language be used?
- When will the language be used?

The questions posed by Hutchinson and Waters (1987) concerning the learning needs are:

Why are the learners taking the course?
- How do the learners learn?
- What resources are available?
- Who are the learners?
Where will the ESP course take place?
When will the ESP course take place?

This analysis is subdivided into Necessities, lacks and Wants. It was Allwright (1982) who first made the distinction between needs, wants and lacks necessities also called as objective needs for catering to the demands of target learning situation. As discussed earlier Lacks refers to the gap between the target proficiency and what the learner knows already generally known as deficiency analysis. Wants refers to the subjective needs of the learner.

Generally the necessities that the learner lacks can form the basis of the language syllabus that is often referred to as deficiency analysis (Jordan, 1997).

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) claim that it is naive to base a course design simply on the target objectives, and that the learning situation must also be taken into account. Target situation alone is not a reliable indicator, and that the conditions of the learning situation, the learners’ knowledge, skills, strategies, and motivation for learning are of prime importance. The figure given below illustrates this distinction:

Figure 3.3
Dudley-Evans & Jo St John (1998:125) give a description of needs analysis in ESP which encompasses target situation analysis (TSA) and objective needs lacks, wants, means and subjective needs, present situation analysis learning needs, linguistic, discourse and genre analysis, means analysis.

Nunan (1988a:78) defines two types of needs analyses a learner analysis (“what background factors are the learners bringing to the classroom?”) and task analysis (“for what purposes is the learner learning the target language?”) in addition a means analysis, or analysis of learner styles based on subjective inquiry into how students like to learn best (Ibid.). This can aid in finding out how to approach the material which needs to be learned (cited in Yenoka, 1987:). Widdowson’s (1987) makes a distinction between goal-oriented (how the language will eventually need to be used) and process-oriented (how the language is best acquired). Benesch (1996) states that majority of needs analysis in the fields of ESP/EAP is mainly descriptive. She offers 'critical needs analysis as an alternative approach to examining target situations'. She distinguishes between descriptive needs analysis (DNA) and critical needs analysis (CNA). DNA is concerned with the description of the targets situation so as to function as a basis for curriculum design and / or curriculum development. Thus, no attempt is made in order to change the status quo, and the students are trained within the current state in order to fulfill the demands of target situation. CNA on the other hand, attempts to find ways that may modify the existing conditions and consequently, aspire to change the target
situation. She considers 'conflicting interests from various levels of the academic hierarchy and explores possibilities for modifying the target situation' in order to build critical analysis, then discusses how to develop EAP (English for Academic Purposes) curriculum based on this critical needs analysis by giving an example of what she actually did in a paired ESL/psychology course (Benesh, 1996:730). Sysoyev (2000) preferred to use the term students' analysis rather than needs analysis. He states that students analysis does not only provide information about students' current level in L2-ESP and field knowledge in L1 and L2 but it also acquaints with equally important factors such as motivation, learning styles, methodology of learning, field knowledge in the native and foreign language. Whereas according to him, needs analysis informs about the learners' ESP needs (Sysovey, 2000), which helps to attain goals and objectives of the learner in learning a second language programme.

2.7 Methodology and Factors in Conducting Needs Analysis

Needs analysis data is gathered through a large number of sources and methods that provides with the useful data for conducting needs analysis. Jordan (1997) discussed the various steps that are involved in NA. They are as follows:

1. Purpose of analysis

2. Selection of survey population /delimit student population.

3. To decide on the approaches
4. Acknowledge constraints / limitations

5. Selection of methods for data collection

6. Collection of data

7. Analyzing and interpreting data

8. Determine objectives

9. Implement decision (i.e. decide upon syllabus, content, materials, methods etc.

10. Evaluate procedure and results

Brown (1995:45 as cited in Hyland, 2006) lists 24 different procedures for collecting needs data, grouping them into six categories i.e. existing information, tests, observations, interviews, meetings and questionnaire. Other than the above mentioned procedures (Robinson, 1991 cited in Braine, 2005:196) described authentic data, which is now regarded as one of the most reliable and important method of data collection in NA. Berwick (1989) mentioned these procedures as inductive and deductive procedures. The former include the use of expert institutions, participant and non participant observation and unstructured interviews from which the categories of needs are derived and the later include use of devices and instruments such as structured interviews, questionnaire and criterion referenced performance test etc (Berwick, 1989; Long, 2005; West, 1994).

The most common methods of collecting data for various types of analysis (as discussed above) are as follows:

1. Questionnaire

   a) Open ended
b) Closed ended

2. Interviews
   Unstructured interview
   Structured interview
   Interview schedule

3. Observations
   Participant and Non-Participant observation
   Classroom observation

4. Language Audits

5. Tests

6. Learners dairies, Journals, Logs

7. Case studies

The information about the students' needs, the subjects to be studied, and the modification in the syllabus etc. are collected by different methods (discussed above) come from a variety of sources other than sampling, triangulation and multiple methods. Long (2005:24-30) considered sources as one of the important factor in performing Needs Analysis. Different sources for Needs Analysis in light of various researches are published and unpublished literature, learners, teachers, Applied Linguistics and Domain Experts.

2.8 Limitations of Needs Analysis

Needs analysis plays a crucial role in language teaching through meeting learners' needs, course design and evaluation. Yet it was
criticized in language teaching (West, 1994) and has certain limitations:

1. In many circumstances it is difficult to predict the future needs of the learners (Cunningsworth, 1983).

2. It is difficult to anticipate the needs in a homogeneous group of learners because the needs of the learner in a group may not be identical and in many cases may differ considerably from one another (Ibid.).

3. The lack of awareness of the existence of needs analysis as a tool in course design tends to occur due to problems of familiarity and expertise (West, 1994).

4. The lack of information on the validity or reliability of the instruments used and the results obtained (Cunningsworth, 1983; West, 1994,).

5. A needs analysis may come up with a range of functions and concepts which, when turned into language forms cannot be organized into a coherent teaching sequence (Cunningsworth, 1983).