AN ANALYSIS OF THE LINGUISTIC NEEDS OF AFRIKAANS-SPEAKING LECTURERS AT AN ENGLISH-MEDIUM UNIVERSITY

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A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree
MAGISTER ARTIUM
in the Faculty of Arts
at the
Potchefstroomse Universiteit vir Christelike Hoër Onderwys.

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May, 1996

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to :

* my husband, Paul Fouchè, for his encouragement, patience, advice, and assistance.

* my supervisor, Prof. J.L. van der Walt, for his patience and for his friendly and thorough guidance.

* my parents and brothers for their love and encouragement.

Financial assistance by the Centre for Scientific Development (HSRC, South Africa) is hereby acknowledged. Opinions expressed and conclusions drawn are those of the author, and should not necessarily be attributed to the Centre for Scientific Development.

ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the linguistic needs of Afrikaans-speaking lecturers at an English-medium, Historically Black University. The concept of learner needs is briefly discussed, and the various aspects of a needs analysis are examined. The importance of a needs analysis as part of the planning of a remedial language course (or any other language course) is emphasised, and the limitations of needs analysis are pointed out.

The usefulness of Error Analysis as a tool within an analysis of needs is pointed out. It is shown how an error analysis may be used to help establish the learners' present needs and 'lacks' with regard to the target language. The Error Analysis hypothesis is briefly presented, and the notion of error is discussed.

Research on course design and remediation for adult learners is reviewed. Here, the importance of needs analysis as an important preliminary step in course design, is emphasised.

A needs analysis is conducted using a questionnaire and follow-up interview with a group of Afrikaans-speaking lecturers at an English-medium university. This is done in order to establish their perceived linguistic needs English. An Error Analysis of the lectures presented (in English) by these lecturers is undertaken to obtain more information about the substantive linguistic needs (or 'lacks') of these lecturers. Errors of a linguistic nature (morphology, syntax, sentence structure, and lexis), are identified and classified.

The dissertation considers the implications of these perceived and substantive needs for a remediation course for Afrikaans-speaking lecturers at an English Medium University. The dissertation concludes by making recommendations with reference to possible techniques which may be employed in a remediation course, and a concise outline of a possible remediation course for Afrikaans-speaking lecturers at an English-medium university, is given.

OPSOMMING

Hierdie verhandeling ondersoek die linguistiese behoeftes van Afrikaanssprekende dosente aan 'n Engels-medium, Histories-Swart Universiteit. Die konsep `leerder behoeftes' word kortliks bespreek en die verskeie aspekte van 'n behoeftebepaling word ondersoek. Die belangrikheid van 'n behoeftebepaling as deel van die beplanning van 'n remediërende taalkursus (of enige ander taalkursus) word benadruk en die beperkinge van 'n behoeftebepaling word uitgewys.

Die waarde van 'n foute-analise as werktuig binne 'n behoeftebepaling word aangetoon. Daar word aangedui hoe 'n foute-analise gebruik kan word om te help om die leerder se huidige behoeftes, sowel as `tekorte' (met betrekking tot die doeltaal), te identifiseer. Die Foute-analise hipotese word kortliks uiteengesit, en die konsep `taalfout' word bespreek.

'n Oorsig van die navorsing oor kursusontwerp en remediëring vir volwasse leerders word gegee. Hier word die belangrikheid van 'n behoeftebepaling as 'n belangrike voorafgaande stap in kursusontwerp, benadruk.

'n Behoeftebepaling, wat gebruik maak van 'n vraelys en opvolg-onderhoud met 'n groep Afrikaanssprekende dosente aan 'n Engels-medium universiteit, is gedoen. Sodoende is gepoog om hulle self-beoordeelde linguistiese behoeftes met betrekking tot Engels, te bepaal. 'n Foute-analise van die lesings wat in Engels aangebied is deur hierdie dosente, is gedoen, om sodoende meer inligting oor die substantiewe linguistiese behoeftes (of `tekorte) van dié dosente te verkry. Foute van 'n linguistiese aard (morfologie, sintaksis, sinstruktuur, en leksis) word geïdentifiseer en geklassifiseer.

Die verhandeling wys op die implikasies van hierdie self-beoordeelde en substantiewe behoeftes vir 'n remediëringskursus vir Afrikaanssprekende dosente aan 'n Engels-medium universiteit. Die verhandeling eindig deur aanbevelings te maak met verwysing na moontlike tegnieke wat in 'n remediëringskursus gebruik kan word. 'n Beknopte skema van 'n moontlike remediëringskursus vir Afrikaanssprekende dosente aan 'n Engels-medium universiteit, word gegee.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The difficulties experienced by students who study at an institution where the medium of instruction is a language other than their first language, have received a great deal of attention throughout the world for many years. So too in South Africa, where language issues are becoming increasingly prominent, and where the country is being forced to deal with a situation where a large number of English Second- or Third-language speakers receive their instruction (at primary, secondary, and tertiary level) in English. Although a number of programmes have been designed to assist such students to improve their English, very little attention has been paid to the difficulties experienced by lecturers who are English Second-Language speakers and who work for, and present lectures at, universities where the medium of instruction is English.

This researcher was made acutely aware of this fact after she received numerous requests from colleagues (at the institution where she works - a Historically Black University at which the medium of instruction is English) to assist these colleagues in improving their command of English. When this researcher then attempted to obtain information from other universities as to how they assist their second language lecturers in this regard, she was suprised to find that in most cases the universities had considered, but never developed, courses/programmes to assist these lecturers. Furthermore, in the case of those universities which had, at one time, made attempts to assist their lecturers, such courses/programmes had only survived for a few weeks, as a result of dwindling interest on the part of the lecturers who had originally been interested in attending such a course.

This researcher then consulted a number of the lecturers who had attended such a course in an attempt to discover what the cause of this loss of interest in the course, was. From these consultations it became clear that the loss of interest was primarily a result of the fact that the lecturers felt that the course did not address their specific needs and desires with regard to improving their English. They felt that the course was inappropriate in terms of their needs and desires and therefore a waste of time.

The researcher then realised that the best way in which the lecturers' needs and desires with regards to the improvement of their English can be met is by undertaking and extensive analysis of the substantive and perceived needs of the lecturers. This study was then undertaken to establish (as comprehensively and accurately as possible) what the lecturers' believe they need to learn, or what they wish to learn (perceived needs), as well as the substantive linguistic needs which these lecturers possess.

1.2 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Recent surveys have shown that the continued use of English as medium of instruction at Historically Black Universities has been entrusted to largely non-native speakers. A large number of the academic as well as administrative staff at these institutions are drawn from Afrikaans-medium universities like RAU, Pretoria, Stellenbosch, and Potchefstroom and are Afrikaans mother-tongue speakers (Makhudu, 1992 : 201; Ngwenya & Hossfeld, 1991 : 207).

These lecturers are expected to present lectures, write departmental study manuals, research and write articles, and deliver papers at conferences in English - their second language. According to Kilfoil (1990 : 1), the abilities of these lecturers are "often inadequate to cope with English as teaching-learning medium". In an informal study conducted at one such Historically Black University, many of the Afrikaans-speaking lecturers

admitted that their proficiency in English left much to be desired, and that they were feeling an increasing pressure to improve their English. A number of these lecturers expressed the need for some form of assistance to help them address this problem. Very little has been done to assist these lecturers.

However, before any attempt is made to address this problem by means of a remedial course or some other means, it is imperative that an effective needs assessment be undertaken (West, 1994 : 2-3). According to Carrier (1983 : 1), "in every language training situation the analysis and definition of learners' language needs is of central importance both in formulating the objectives a course should consist of, and in ensuring that those objectives are achieved efficiently, effectively, and with a minimum of wastage of precious time and resources".

1.3 AIMS OF THIS STUDY

The first of the aims of this study is to identify the perceived needs and desires of Afrikaans-speaking lecturers at an English-Medium university with regards to the improvement of their linguistic proficiency in English, and to identify and describe errors which occurred in the lectures presented by these lecturers (in an attempt to establish the substantive needs of these lecturers with regards to the improvement of their linguistic proficiency in English). The second aim of this study is to make some suggestions for how to best address these perceived and substantive needs.

1.4 METHOD OF RESEARCH

This study reviews research on Needs Analysis, Error Analysis (as a tool which can be used to help determine the substantive needs of learners), and course design and remediation for adult learners. This is a descriptive study which makes use of a needs

analysis to identify the perceived needs and desires of Afrikaans-speaking lecturers as regards their linguistic proficiency in English, and an error analysis of the lecturers' linguistic errors to identify the substantive linguistic needs of the lecturers in English.

1.5 OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

In the second chapter of this study, literature on Needs Analysis is reviewed and certain vital concepts/aspects linked to needs analysis are explored. This chapter also considers a number of limitations of a needs analysis. Chapter three explores the Error Analysis Hypothesis, the notion of error, the methodology of an error analysis, and the shortcomings of Error Analysis. Chapter four reviews literature on Course Design and remediation for adult learners and emphasises the importance of Needs Analysis and Error Analysis within course design. This chapter also discusses matters such as the role of motivation and age in second language learning, age and teaching methods, and explicit grammar teaching.

Chapter five focuses on the method of research used in both the Needs Analysis and Error Analysis employed in this study.

The sixth chapter of this study focuses on an analysis of the needs (related to improving linguistic proficiency in English), expressed by a group of Afrikaans-speaking lecturers at an English-medium university. The identified needs are discussed in terms of various categories of needs, including present needs, future needs, the subjects' preferred learning strategies, and subjects' attitudes to and levels of motivation, with regards to English and the learning of English. Chapter seven focuses on the identification and analysis of linguistic errors which occurred in the lectures presented by the subjects. An error frequency count is done and comparative figures (comparing the various forms of linguistic errors) are given.

In chapter eight, the implications of the findings of the needs analysis and error analysis for a possible remedial course, are discussed. Suggestions for remedial treatment are made, and a brief outline of a possible remedial course for Afrikaans-speaking lecturers at an English-medium university, is given.

Chapter nine will conclude this study with a summary of the most important findings of the literature study and empirical research, as well as of the implications for remediation. Finally, some topics for future research related to this study, are suggested.

1.6 CLARIFICATION OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

The terms `mother tongue´, and `first language´ will be used interchangeably in this dissertation, to refer to the language which a person has acquired "in infancy and childhood ... and generally within the family" (Stern, 1991 : 10).

The term `proficiency´ used in this study refers to an individual´s ability to use a given language, and may be contrasted with the term `competence´. Whilst `competence´ refers to "the knowledge of a [second language] which a learner has internalized", `proficiency ´ refers to "the learner´s ability to **use** this knowledge in different tasks" [***own emphasis***] (Ellis, 1994 : 720).

Abbreviations which are regularly used in studies on second language teaching and learning are used in this dissertation. These abbreviations, and the concepts to which they refer are listed below.

CA = Contrastive Analysis
EA = Error Analysis
EAP = English for Academic Purposes
EOP = English for Occupational Purposes

ESL = English (as a) Second Language
ESP = English for Special/Specific Purposes
L1 = First Language
L2 = Second Language
SLA = Second Language Acquisition
TL = Target Language

CHAPTER 2

NEEDS ANALYSIS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The analysis of the needs of students in the context of language teaching is not a new phenomenon. Often language teachers base their teaching on a type of intuitive and informal analysis of their students needs (Tarone & Yule, 1989 : 21). However, theories of the nature and extent of needs analysis and the concept of 'needs' itself have changed rather dramatically over the past two or three decades, and even today consensus has yet to be reached. The aims of this chapter are to provide a description of the different forms of learner needs, as well as of the phenomenon of Needs Analysis; and to show the importance of needs analysis within course design for second language learning.

2.2 NEEDS ANALYSIS AND THE SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNER

A common complaint amongst second language learners or those involved in remedial learning of a second language, is that the second language or remedial course does not meet their specific needs with regard to learning or improving their use of that second language.

An important reason for this is that, as Schutz and Derwing (1981 : 30) comment, "it would seem that most language planners in the past have bypassed a logically necessary first step : they have presumed to set about going somewhere without first determining whether or not their planned destination was reasonable or proper".

Despite the fact that the term `analysis of needs´ made its first appearance in India as far back as the 1920´s with Michael West´s introduction of the concept (West, 1994 : 1), it was only in the 1970´s with the advent of English for Special/Specific Purposes (ESP) that needs analysis gained central prominence. The definition of the term `English for Special Purposes´ itself is inextricably linked to the concept of needs. According to Blundell (1979 : 63), English for Special Purposes may be defined as "that area of the English language suited to a particular student or group of students´ ***specific needs***" [***my emphasis***]. In her definitive work on English for Special Purposes, Pauline Robinson clearly points out the centrality of needs analysis within the field of English for Special Purposes : "an ESP course is based on a needs analysis" (Robinson, 1991 : 3).

Today it is widely accepted that a needs analysis forms an inextricable and essential part in the teaching and/or remediation of a language. As Carrier (1983 : 1) puts it :

> "In every language training situation the analysis and definition of learners´ language needs is of central importance both in formulating the objectives a course should consist of, and in ensuring that those objectives are achieved efficiently, effectively and with a minimum of wastage of precious time and resources".

When considering language teaching or remediation from a `business´ point of view, it makes sense first to determine what is needed by the person to whom you wish to provide a service/product before attempting to set up a programme which may otherwise be totally `out-of-touch´ with what the individual requires or desires.

2.3 NEEDS ANALYSIS - A THEORETICAL BASIS

Despite the fact that needs analysis is a pragmatic activity based on highly localised situations, it does have its basis in theory or principle that was largely established by the Council of Europe and Munby (West, 1994 : 2). According to Littlewood (1992 : 13) this broad underlying theoretical basis is curriculum development, and curriculum development in turn makes use of categories of language derived from a theory of the nature of language (Tarone & Yule, 1989 : 12-20).

In Coffey's (1984 : 7-8) six-step model of course design, needs analysis is the second step, and it is based on the first step which he says should describe "the nature of language" and "principles of restriction eg. communicative functions" :

i) **Selection of Theory**
ii) **Needs Analysis** - the matching of vocational needs with the categories established in the previous step.
iii) **Language Realisation** - the transforming of the skills and functions identified in the previous step into language items.
iv) **Course Design** - the ordering of language items in keeping with their relative importance and sequencing.
v) **Course Construction** - the devising of techniques and strategies.
vi) **Classroom teaching** - putting all of the above into practice within the classroom setting.

Mackay and Bosquet (1981 : 3) provide the following hierarchy of stages and phases involved in the total curriculum development operation :

- **Pre-Programme Development Stage** : Theory/policy decisions.

- **Programme Development Stage** : This stage can be further divided into a number of sub-stages :

- ***Basic Information Gathering Phase*** (the needs analysis)
- ***Goal Specification Phase*** (translation of the needs which have been established in the previous phase into pedagogically attainable objectives).
- ***Production Phase***
- ***Teacher Training Phase***
- ***Trial Phase***

- **Programme Maintenance and Quality Control Stage**

It is therefore clear that the theoretical assumptions regarding the nature of language will eventually influence the form of and approach to the Needs Analysis.

The present study is restricted to the first two phases of the **Programme Development Stage**, namely the ***Basic Information Gathering Phase*** (needs analysis), and the ***Goal Specification Phase*** (by way of a conclusion to the study).

2.4 QUESTIONS RELATED TO NEEDS ANALYSIS

Researchers have raised a number of questions surrounding the practice of needs analysis (cf. West, 1994; Richterich, 1983 : 1-2; Hutchinson & Waters, 1992; Mackay & Bosquet, 1981; Robinson, 1991; etc.). These questions are related to the **nature** of 'needs'; **why** a needs analysis is necessary; at **what point** a needs analysis should be carried out and **for whom** it should be carried out; **who** should determine what the needs are; **how** the needs analysis should be conducted; and what **length of time** should be used to conduct the analysis.

2.4.1 WHAT ARE LEARNER NEEDS?

It is difficult to define needs and the nature of needs remains ambiguous. As Robinson (1991 : 7) points out :

> " ... the needs that are established for a particular group of students will be an outcome of a needs analysis project and will be influenced by the ideological preconceptions of the analysis. A different group of analysts working with the same group of students, but with different views on teaching and learning would be highly likely to produce a different set of needs".

This ambiguity is largely the result of contradicting ideas as to the nature of needs which are often grouped together as polarised opposites. Some of these polarised opposites include :

a) the contrasting views of **learners** and **teachers** - where these groups may have very different ideas as to what is important in terms of the content or method of learning/teaching.

b) **objective** (substantive needs) versus **subjective** (felt/perceived needs) - where objective needs are the necessities or demands for a learner and subjective needs are learners´ wants or desires.

c) **target** (goal-oriented) needs versus **learning** (process-oriented) needs.

West (1994 : 3) points out that today the term `needs´ is "often seen as an umbrella term covering several interpretations".

Robinson (1991 : 7-8) offers a useful classification of needs which may be seen to reflect differing viewpoints and to give rise to different forms of needs analysis. These include :
a) Goal-oriented needs; b) lacks; c) process-oriented needs; d) learners´ wants; and e) socially determined needs.

2.4.1.1 Goal-Oriented Needs

Needs can refer to students' study (academic) or job (occupational) requirements, i.e. what they have to be able to do by the end of their language course. This classification ties in with what Hutchinson & Waters (1992 : 55) refer to as "**necessities**" and Mackay & Bosquet (1981 : 6) refer to as "**real, current needs**".

These 'needs' are commonly described as being **objective** needs (Richterich, 1980 : 32; Robinson, 1991 : 7) and any needs analysis approach focusing on necessities is frequently referred to as a ***Target Situation Analysis*** (Chambers, 1980 : 27; West, 1994 : 4), or what Richards (1992 : 2) terms "**communicative needs analysis**". West (1994 : 4) distinguishes four levels of Target Needs Analysis :

1) Identification of which language/s are needed.
2) Skills priorities (spoken English, written Afrikaans, etc).
3) Functional priorities (listening to lectures, speaking to students, presenting a paper, etc).
4) Identification of what grammatical or lexical language components are necessary in order to realise a particular function.

This type of analysis is possibly the most common form of needs analysis and almost all needs analyses incorporate a Target Situation Analysis. Possibly the most well-known models for Target Situation analyses are those of the English Language Teaching Development Unit (ELTDU, 1970) and Munby's ***Communicative Syllabus Design*** (1978), which were developed for the British Council.

The ELTDU procedure is one of the most widely used for "providing detailed data about the precise use of the target language by different groups of personnel" (West, 1994 : 9). The procedure

divides the four traditional language skills (speaking, reading, writing, listening) into 20 activities which cover all business and commercial situations.

One criticism of this model is that although it was conducted on a large scale, the language learners themselves were not actively involved in the identification of their own needs.

The most well-known approach to Target-Situation analysis is that devised by Munby (1978), which is also referred to as a `Communicative Needs Analysis´. Munby (1978 : 3) describes his model as "A dynamic processing model that starts with the learner and ends with his target communicative competence". Munby uses what he refers to as a `Communication Needs Processor´ (CNP) which consists of eight variables "that affect communication needs by organising them as parameters in a dynamic relation to each other" (1978 : 32). He divides these parameters into ***a posteriori*** parameters (those that process non-linguistic data, namely : dialect, target level, communicative event, and communicative key), and ***a priori*** parameters (those that provide the data and on which the ***a posteriori*** parameters depend, namely : purposive domain, setting, interaction and instrumentality).

The ***a priori*** parameters provide a profile of :

1) the type of ESP involved and the purpose for which the target language (TL) is required (referred to as ***purposive domain***);

2) the physical and psychosocial setting in which the target language is required for use (referred to as ***setting***);

3) the role of the social relationships within which the TL is required (referred to as ***interaction***);

4) the medium, mode and channel of communication (referred to as ***instrumentality***).

The ***a posteriori*** parameters are dependant upon the ***priori*** input and provide a profile of :

5) the dialect which is more appropriate for the participant to produce or understand (referred to as ***dialect***);

6) the participant's required proficiency in the TL (referred to as ***target level***);

7) what the participant is required to do in the TL - both productively and receptively (referred to as ***communicative event***);

8) in what manner the participant should perform the communicative event (referred to as ***communicative key***).

Although the usefulness of this model is frequently attested to (Dickinson, 1987 : 90; Riddell, 1991 : 73, Hutchinson & Waters, 1992 : 54), criticism of the model is equally abundant. These shortcomings can be summarised as follows :

- **Complexity** : The fact that Munby's attempt to produce a model which is systematic and comprehensive had the unfortunate but expected result of making it too mechanistic, complex and time-consuming. Coffey (1984 : 7), for example, describes the model as "over-complicated and static" and Davies (1981b : 472) expresses the opinion that the Munby model "has too much structure".

- **Learner-Centredness** : Although Munby claims that his model is learner-centred, it has widely been asserted that this is in fact not the case. Nunan (1989 : 20) criticises the model as "paying too little attention to the perceptions of the learner" and West (1994 : 9) points out that although "the starting point may be the learner ... the model collects data <u>about</u> the learner rather than <u>from</u> the learner" and thus the learners themselves are not actively involved in the identification of their own needs.

- **Constraints** : Munby makes it clear that a means analysis (the analysis of the practicalities and constraints in implementing needs-based language courses) is "irrelevant to the specification of what the learner needs the target language for, which is what comprises his needs" (1978 : 40).

  Many feel that it is important to take account of such practical constraints at the beginning of a needs analysis as well as considering learning-strategies (Frankel, 1983 : 119, Hawkey, 1983 : 84).

  Davies says it is unfortunate that Munby's model fails to take cognizance of `demands' as he believes that "language teachers are equally concerned with demands (which are public) as needs (which are private) (1981a : 332)".

- **Language** : Davies (1981a : 333) criticises the fact that Munby fails to provide a procedure for converting the learner profile into a language syllabus and West points out that despite the fact that the Munby model was "intended to assist in the designing of courses with ESP" (cf. Munby, 1978 : 1), he adopts "classifications of language in his skills selection process that were derived from social English" (1994 : 10).

- **Restrictiveness/Specificity** : In reaction to what Cunningworth terms "Munby's meticulously detailed work" (1983 : 150), Brumfit suggests that the potential of a language system for communicative purposes "goes beyond the specifics of a particular needs analysis" and that "a needs profile can only be a guideline, a way of measuring the syllabus against the necessary demands of the real world" (1979 : 186). Davies also expresses the opinion that Munby's model "represents a sterile reductionist trend in applied linguistics which promotes a belief in blueprints in simple all-embracing answers to the real and difficult, and probably intractable problems of language learning and teaching. That trend needs to be discouraged" (1981a : 332).

A further shortcoming of the model which is linked to the criticism of its restrictive and overly-specific nature, is its tendency to idealize the learner. Coleman indicates that Munby's model seems to imply that "groups of learners are static, homogenous units" and that ideally "each member of the group, ... has the same needs, the same motivations, the same initial competence" (1988 : 156). He emphasises that this view is problematic as it "is impractical in a large organisation" (p. 156) and "does not take into account changes which may occur over time as learners become more or less motivated and as they develop or fail to develop effective learning strategies" (p. 157).

- **Application** : Another commonly expressed criticism of the Munby model is that it cannot be automatically applied to generate a syllabus content from a needs input (Cunningworth, 1983 : 152; Davies, 1981a : 332; Davies 1981b : 473). As Davies puts it : " It isn't a dynamic processing model that we are being given at all, but a checklist of things to take into account in determining language communication needs" (1981a : 333).

However, despite its shortcomings the importance of Munby's work for the field of Needs Analysis cannot be denied or overlooked. As West puts it, "the size and scope of Munby's work have meant that needs analysis is now crucial to any consideration of ESP course design and almost every modern survey of ESP" (1994 : 2).

2.4.1.2 Lacks :

'Lacks' refers to the interpretation of needs in terms of what the student does not know or cannot do in the target language. According to Hutchinson and Waters, it is not enough to only identify 'necessities', "You also need to know what the learner knows already, so that you can then decide which of the necessities the learner lacks ... The target proficiency in other words, needs to be matched against the existing proficiency of

the learners. The gap between the two can be referred to as the learner's ***lacks*** " (1992 : 55-56, ***my emphasis***).

Robinson (1991 : 89) refers to an analysis of the learner's present lacks as the ***Present Situation Analysis*** (PSA) [Richards (1992 : 2) simply uses the term `Situation Analysis´].

A Present Situation Analysis addresses questions pertaining to the identity of the learners; their aims or expectations regarding the course; their preferred learning styles; the constraints placed on the course (time, financial, resources, materials, etc.); etc.

On the other hand, a Target Situation Analysis focuses on questions related to the setting and role relationships in which the learners are likely to have to make use of the target language; which language modalities, communicative events and speech acts will be involved; and what level of proficiency is required. Often students are asked to indicate the potential target needs as well as how relatively important they consider each of these target needs to be.

Robinson (1991 : 89) considers the Present Situation Analysis to be complimentary to the Target Situation Analysis and believes that "in practice, one is likely to seek and find information relating to both the TSA and PSA simultaneously" - unlike Munby who feels that the Present Situation Analysis is restrictive towards the Target Situation Analysis and that it should only be considered after the Target Situation Analysis has been completed.

This writer supports Robinson's opinion that " ... a needs analysis may be seen as a combination of Target Situation Analysis and a Present Situation Analysis" (1991 : 9), which can both be investigated simultaneously.

However, since a Target Situation Analysis (TSA) and a Present Situation Analysis (PSA) are essentially concerned with establishing which language items should be taught, it means that needs analysis is, by and large, restricted to only the first four stages of Coffey's course design (cf. Section 2.3). If, however, one takes a third component of needs analysis into account, namely learning styles, then Coffey's fifth stage of course design falls within the scope of needs analysis.

A needs analysis which has been developed to take account of both the learner's present lacks as well as the requirements of the Target Situation may be referred to as a ***Deficiency Analysis*** (West, 1994 : 4).

The aim of a Deficiency Analysis would thus be to establish the nature of the gap between what the learner knows or does not know (with regard to the target language), and what he/she is required to know by the end of the training programme.

Another aspect of a Deficiency Analysis, which is less frequently considered, is to establish whether students are required to do something in the target-language which they are unable to do in their mother-tongue. As Alderson (1980 : 135) points out, "Teaching a student to do something in English which he or she can already do in Spanish is a very different problem from teaching him or her to do something in English which he or she cannot do in Spanish".

2.4.1.3 Process-Oriented Needs

This type of need refers to what the language learner needs to do to acquire a language. It is also referred to as **`learning strategies'**. Hutchinson & Waters (1992 : 60) distinguish between two types of learning needs, namely :

- learner's preferred learning strategies for moving from where they are (present-situation) to where they want to be (target-situation).

- the teacher's preferred strategies to help student to learn.

A needs analysis which concerns itself with the establishment of learning needs may be referred to as a ***Strategy Analysis*** (West, 1994 : 4).

Richards (1992) does not distinguish a strategy analysis as such, but incorporates questions related to learning strategies in his 'situational analysis'. Munby (1978), on the other hand, totally excludes any consideration of learning strategies, choosing to focus on the 'what' rather than the 'how'.

It has become increasingly recognised that it is not sufficient for a needs analysis to simply establish what needs to be taught in a course, but also how this should be done. It is important that both learners' and teachers' ideas regarding 'how to learn' be taken into consideration in a needs analysis. Often learners' and teachers' needs as to learning strategies can differ greatly, leaving open the potential for conflict. It is therefore important that the needs as to learning strategies be determined, and if any major differences exist, attempts should be made to overcome these differences.

Such a strategy analysis also has implications for learner training and the development of learner autonomy and motivation. According to Hoadley-Maidment (1983 : 40), by taking into account learners' learning strategies, a method is provided of "increasing student autonomy by means of repeated measurements of the way students perceive their needs ... this activity will in itself help to heighten students' awareness of themselves as learners, and consequently improve motivation". Over and above this obvious focus on methodology, a strategy analysis also looks at related areas of relevance such as preferences in terms of group size, extent of homework, correction preferences, preferences as to the use of media (e.g. audio/visual sources), methods of assessment, etc.

2.4.1.4 Learners' Wants :

'Learners' wants' refers to what the students themselves would like to gain from a course, independent of the specific requirements of the situation or job for which the needs analysis is being carried out.

Often these 'wants' or 'desires' may differ or even be in conflict with the identified necessities of the course and lacks of the student's language use. As a result, the danger is that the personal wants or desires of the learner may be devalued. However, this should not be the case, as the wants or desires of a language learner are inextricably linked to the motivation (or lack thereof) of the learner. As motivation plays an essential role in remediation or the learning of a second language, and the lack of motivation can lead to a lack of learning, it is clear that learners' wants should be considered as important in any needs analysis.

2.4.1.5 Socially-Determined Needs :

'Needs' can refer to what the society (or institution, company, employer, etc.) at large regards as important to be learnt from a language programme. Such 'needs' are referred to as socially-determined needs and data relevant to such needs can be gathered through consultation with all parties involved.

A number of classifications of needs similar to those of Robinson's have been posited by - amongst others - Hutchinson and Waters (1992 : 61) who, in addition to the categories of 'necessities', 'lacks', 'learning strategies', and 'wants', add the category '**Constraints**' and Lynch et al. (1993) who add the category of the '**Language Audit**'.

'**Constraints**' refers to the potential and constraints of the learning situation. Examples of such constraints may include the number of trained teachers available, time and financial restraints, materials available, etc.

Munby (1978) deliberately ignores this aspect of needs in his Communicative Syllabus Design and claims that "such variables, although important in the modification of syllabus specifications and the production/selection of materials, belong to the subsequent stage of course design and should not be considered before the syllabus specification has been obtained" (Munby, 1978 : 4).

This view has of late been hotly contested by - amongst others - Frankel (1983 : 119), Hawkey (1983 : 84) and West (1994 : 5). Today constraints are seen as central to the process of course design and have come to be known as `**Means Analysis**´ (West, 1994 : 5).

Frankel (1983 : 120) comments that "in the real world of ELT, there has to be a creative synthesis of theoretical principles and practical constraints, and where these conflict, as they sometimes do, the latter must take precedence".

Holliday and Cooke (1982 : 123) see means analysis (or the `ecological approach´ as they term it) as considering how plans can be implemented in the local situation, instead of thinking about restraints. The course designer will then be required to identify all relevant features of the learning situation (or "ecosystem") and devise ways in which the positive features of that ecosystem can be used advantageously to accommodate those aspects considered to be constraints.

Holliday (1984 : 45) identifies four principal steps in such a means analysis :

- Observe lessons and take random notes on all significant features.

- Use notes to construct a report on the lesson to form the bases of a discussion with the teacher.

- Review all the original notes and draw out significant features common to all observations.

- Construct a communicative device (chart, diagram. etc) which expresses these finding.

This will then form the basis of realistic discussion and negotiation between all people involved in the course - keeping in mind the available resources and options.

Means analysis has become an integral aspect of course design as it "is an attempt to reduce the hit-and-miss nature of many projects ... and this kind of approach, which is normally discussed in EAP [English for Academic Purposes] contexts, has parallels with more systematic approaches to EOP [English for Occupational Purposes] and general language course design" (West, 1994 : 11-12).

The **Language Audit** is defined by West (1994 : 5) as "a large-scale survey undertaken by a company, organisation, or even a country to determine what language ought to be learnt, for what reasons, by how many people, to what level, in what institution, by what methods, at what cost, and so on". Munby (1978) also felt that these sorts of questions belonged outside of the realm of a needs analysis. However, language audits are starting to play an important role as a response to changing economic and political circumstances and in the establishment of language policy on a company, governmental and group level.

Robinson (1991 : 10) identifies three steps in a language audit :

- Determine the exact language skills needed to carry out specific jobs and thereby establish a target profile of language skills as part of a job description which will also facilitate the selection of personnel for new positions (i.e. a **Target Situation Analysis**). In order to achieve this the analyst needs to determine what types of activities

or tasks these people have to perform as part of their jobs as well as what level of language performance is required for these activities.

- Establish a profile of present ability showing how well or poorly the personnel presently meet their job requirements regarding language (i.e. a **Present Situation Analysis**).

- The analyst needs to determine the extent and nature of the language training needed to bridge the gap (if any) between the company's target profile (**Target Situation**) and the employees present ability (**Present Situation**).

The use of a language audit can be particularly useful for a company, institution or even government to determine whether language training is necessary, as well as the likely extent (duration, financial implication, etc) of such training.

2.4.2 WHY IS A NEEDS ANALYSIS NECESSARY?

The reasons as to why it is necessary to undertake a needs analysis are many and underscore the fact that a needs analysis is an integral, and indeed essential, element in the process of course design.

Riley states that "If a learning programme is to be effective it must be based on an analysis of the learners' linguistic needs" (1991 : 353). Trim (1980 : 53) also points out that if a course is to address the needs of a learner, then the content, context, and associated tests and examinations linked to a course should not be arbitrarily chosen but selected as appropriate to the candidate concerned : "The problem is not *whether* to do so, but only how *best* to do it. That is a question that can be answered only by a proper analysis of the nature and needs of learners".

This is particularly the case when one looks at an English for Special Purposes course. As Mackay and Palmer (1981 : 3) describe it:

> " Many well-intentioned language programs purporting to be `English for Businessmen´, `French for Engineers´, `German for Scientists´, have floundered because either no consideration was given to the actual use the learner intended to make of the language or because the list of use drawn up by the course designer was based on imagination rather than an objective assessment of the learner´s situation, and proved to be inaccurate and in many cases entirely inappropriate to his real needs".

Furthermore, even though the greatest impact of needs analysis has been in the area of special-purposes course design, needs analysis is also fundamental in the planning of general language courses (Richards, 1992 : 2).

2.4.3 WHEN SHOULD A NEEDS ANALYSIS BE CONDUCTED?

There are a number of possible answers to the question of **when** a needs analysis should be carried out.

Hoadley-Maidment (1983 : 43) identifies three different points at which a needs analysis should be conducted :

- **Pre-Course** [What Chambers (1980 : 28) refers to as "off-line" analysis] :

  This involves analysis before a course so that the course designer has sufficient time to "prepare a syllabus and select or develop appropriate training materials" (West, 1994 : 5). Generally such an analysis would attempt to determine what the nature of the target situation is through questions addressed to learners or other interested parties.

Unfortunately, learners' perceptions of their own needs are often subjective, inaccurate and at times ill-founded. Furthermore, the perceptions of their needs are likely to change with time and therefore a course "devised by off-line analyses ... may frequently have to be reviewed ... " (West, 1994 : 5).

Both the ELTDU and Munby models are good examples of off-line analyses.

- **Mid-Course :**

According to Hoadley-Maidment (1983 : 43) the data established during the course has both an evaluative and diagnostic function for both the individual students as well as the instructor. It gives the student (and to a large extent the instructor) an opportunity to evaluate his/her progress with regard to the needs he/she expressed before the course, his/her personal progress as related to other students, and his/her feelings towards the teaching method employed up to that point in the course.

West (1994 : 5) furthermore points out that during a course students' perceptions of the demands of the target situation as well as the nature of their own shortcomings (lacks) are likely to become clearer.

Richterich (1983 : 3) and Nunan (1988 : 6) indicate that particularly in the initial stages of a course learners often find it difficult to articulate their needs and preferences and so an on-going re-analysis of these needs and preferences is essential.

Richterich & Chancerel (1980 : 9), Coleman (1988 : 157) and Robinson (1991 : 15-16) - amongst others - suggest that a needs analysis needs to be repeated during the life of each course as "parameters do no remain constant throughout an extended learning programme" and accordingly "they must be

continuously monitored and a well-designed programme must have the flexibility to respond to changes in the learners, the teachers, and the circumstances in which they are working" (Trim, 1980 : vii).

Robinson (1991 : 65-66) suggests that this repeated/on-going needs analysis could, alternatively, be built into the formative evaluation. The formative evaluation is conducted during the course and the results of the evaluation can be used to modify the course where necessary.

- **End-Of-Course** :

An analysis at this point in the course has an evaluative function in which the student can assess his/her progress throughout the course (Hoadley-Maidment, 1983 : 43).

West (1994 : 5) adds a fifth category to those given by Hoadley-Maidment - the `**On-line**´ or `**First-day**´ analysis which is carried out when the trainees arrive for the start of their course. He points out that the advantage of carrying out the needs analysis at this point is that it is possible to ensure that "the information obtained is full, relevant and accurate", but he also admits that the disadvantage is that the trainer (analyst/course designer) has little time to prepare a detailed course outline and that the "fullness, relevance and accuracy" of the information obtained by the analysis may be short-lived.

2.4.4 FOR WHOM IS A NEEDS ANALYSIS CONDUCTED?

Although it is generally assumed that a needs analysis is carried out for the benefit of the learner/student or user, it is often the case that it is more likely to "be carried out from the viewpoint of the *requirer* - institutions or even countries needing the services of trained personnel with identifiable second language knowledge" (West, 1994 : 6).

However, the trainee/student and the requirer are not the only parties likely to benefit from a needs analysis - the course designer will also benefit substantially as the needs analysis will assist him/her in designing a course with maximum relevancy, efficiency and interest, and the minimum wastage of time and money.

2.4.5 WHO SHOULD DETERMINE LEARNERS' NEEDS?

In looking at the question as to who should decide what the language needs are, there is no single or straightforward answer. However, it is generally accepted that there are three major groups of persons who play a role in the identification of needs.

Hoadley-Maidment (1983 : 40) identifies three categories of needs which have to be determined :

- Students' individual needs
- Teacher perceived needs
- Company perceived needs

Robinson (1991 : 10-11) also includes past/former students as a source of information. Mackay & Bosquet (1981 : 7) include the community where the learners live, or will eventually be operating in, as another important source of information. They point out that :

> "whether the community is the ethnic or socio-economic group to which the learners belong, or an institution such as a university research centre or a professional organization, or the work-force the learners will be required to join, it will have a more or less clearly defined set of expectations for the learners as fellow workers and language users".
>
> (1981 : 7)

Porcher (1983 : 18) stresses the fact that in order for the needs analysis to be reliable, the maximum number of sources of information is essential.

A basic problem in using all these different sources of information is that it is inevitable that different groups will have different ideas as to what the needs of a language learner are. These views may even be in conflict.

To further complicate this problem, there has of late been an increasing tendency to focus on **individual** learners' needs rather than the needs of a group (Schutz & Derwing, 1981 : 30) and this raises the question of how to deal with different students' different perceptions of their needs, in order to create a course which will address all of the students' needs. [For a further discussion of this problem see Section 2.5.1]

Owing to the distinction between students' individual language needs and teacher-perceived needs, different models have placed either the teacher in the central role (teacher-centred courses) or the learner (learner-centred courses). The learner-centred analysis has also been referred to as a "participatory needs analysis" (Robinson, 1991 : 14) and has several advantages which Nunan (1988 : 5) lists in his ***The Learner-Centred Curriculum*** :

- Learners eventually have more realistic ideas as to what is possible to achieve in a specific course.

- Learners begin seeing learning as a gradual accumulation of achievable goals.

- Students become more sensitive to their roles as learners and their perceptions of what a learner is becomes clearer.

- Students feel that classroom activities are more directed on their real-life, everyday needs.

- The students come to see skills development as a gradual process, rather than an "all-or-nothing" process.

On the other hand, employers and governments often make use of a needs analysis (or a language audit) to formulate or re-evaluate their language training policies. One outcome of such an analysis might be a reconsideration of who these learners actually are : "... identifying the most appropriate group on whom to target language learning-opportunities is not necessarily a straightforward task. In other words, we cannot take it for granted that the `learners´ in a large organization will necessarily be recognizable as such" (Coleman, 1988 : 167).

Another aspect of the question `who?´ relates to who should be responsible for undertaking the needs analysis. Robinson (1991 : 10-11) suggests that this depends on the type of course or courses concerned, and she distinguishes between two main types of analysts:

- The **Outsider** - a large institution or company may call in an outside expert, for example, from a language teaching consultancy.

- The **Insider** - members of the institution involved which will run the ensuing course.

There are potential advantages and disadvantages linked to both of these types of analysts. Whilst the `expert´ outsider may be given special status and therefore be able to access sources of information closed to insiders, the `insider´ will already be largely familiar with the Present Situation (and perhaps even the Target Situation) and would therefore be in a position to act quickly and accurately.

However, Robinson (1991 : 11) points out that there are different degrees of `insideness´ and that whilst "lecturers in a university centre, for example, may be familiar with the cultural norms and educational traditions of the country, they are still

outsiders as regards the disciplinary cultures of the various university departments, being trained (most usually) in literature or applied linguistics, not in the natural sciences".

Furthermore, whilst the 'outsider' can also help to bring a fresh pair of eyes to a situation and may be more objective and impartial when making an assessment of what is required, he/she may also bring with him/her foreign cultural perceptions, and may hold views on how teaching and learning should occur that differ from the ideas of the institutions whose members' needs are being analyzed.

2.4.6 HOW SHOULD A NEEDS ANALYSIS BE CONDUCTED?

A needs analysis follows a number of steps. Schutz & Derwing (1981 : 34-44) identify eight discrete phases "which would seem to constitute an absolute minimum for any needs analysis worthy of the name". These are :

2.4.6.1 *Defining the Purpose*

The analyst needs to determine the objectives of the analysis as precisely as possible.

2.4.6.2 **Delimiting the Target Population**

It is necessary to decide which persons will form part of the study population and this will often be determined by monetary and time considerations.

2.4.6.3 **Delimiting the Parameters of the Investigation**

Obviously an extensive range of information can be sought in such an analysis, but once again, because of the obvious restraints, it is necessary to limit the extent of an investigation. However, there are some basic categories of information which are generally considered to be essential to establish. Schutz and

Derwing (1981 : 37) distinguish the following nine categories of information :

- General background
- Occupational speciality or academic field
- English language background
- Attitudinal and motivational factors
- Relevance of English to use in occupational or professional field.
- Basic English language skills
- Functional registers and job tasks
- Course content and methods of instruction
- Reaction to project.

2.4.6.4. **Selecting the Information-Gathering Instrument**

The selection of the information-gathering instrument is the step identified by West as being "the crucial one" (1994 : 7). Numerous different types of information-gathering instruments can be used in a needs analysis. One may distinguish between inductive and deductive information-gathering instruments.

Inductive information-gathering instruments include observations and case studies from which courses can be generalised, whilst deductive methods include questionnaires, surveys or other information-gathering instruments which provide various forms of information as the bases of course design.

Jordan (1977 : 13-16) lists six methods of collecting information for a needs analysis :

a) ***Pre-course placement tests or diagnostic tests*** : A test is conducted before the student is accepted by a university and this test will be used to approximate the language level of the student as well as to provide information as to the student's language difficulties.

b) ***Entry tests on arrival*** : This is a test conducted on entry of the student to the university/course. West (1994 : 7) suggests that these tests have "a potentially greater diagnostic value than the pre-course placement test" and are more precise in identifying learners' language weaknesses and lacks.

c) ***Self-placement/assessment tests*** : In this test students are asked to assess themselves. West (1994 : 7) points out that although there are certain problems linked to self assessment - such as over- or under-estimation - "self-assessment has been used with success to enable learners to identify their own level of language proficiency and area of special priority".

d) ***Questionnaires*** : The questionnaire is probably the most common method of needs analysis. Questionnaires can be used to provide much-needed information with regards to how learners' themselves perceive their needs, language learning, language problems, etc. If such surveys based on questionnaires are conducted on a sufficiently large scale, the analyst will be provided with a general picture of the students' needs and difficulties as seen from their perspective.

An important consideration when compiling such a questionnaire is that it should be comprehensible to the respondents, and this would mean using terminology which is familiar to both the analyst and the respondent.

It is likely that a questionnaire will cover topics related to both the Target Situation Analysis as well as the Present Situation Analysis.

Although questionnaires are widely used in needs analyses, they do have their deficiencies. These may be summarised as follows :

i) It is possible to influence the respondents' answers by questions that are poorly worded or subject to interpretation.

ii) Often anomalous responses are given or questionnaires are only partially completed by the respondents.

iii) It is not possible to check whether the respondents understand the questions or not.

iv) Not many people bother to fill the questionnaire in and to return it.

v) Responses to open-ended questions may be difficult to analyse, compare and categorise.

(Mackay & Bosquet, 1981 : 8)

There are, however, equally numerous advantages of questionnaires, including :

i) The fact that questionnaires are largely objective (Gardner & Winslow, 1983 : 74-75).

ii) Questionnaires appear to involve the researcher in less work (Mackay & Bosquet, 1981 : 9).

iii) Questionnaires permit open-ended questions to be included (Mackay & Bosquet, 1981 : 9).

iv) Questionnaires can be sent fairly easily to a large number of people (Robinson, 1991 : 12).

e) ***Observation*** : The fourth method which may be used to identify language needs is to observe the learners' difficulties within the class setting. Robinson (1991 : 13)

points out that whilst questionnaires deal primarily with the respondents' opinions, direct observation (observation of both successful target-level behaviour and of students' present, presumably defective, performance) is necessary to supplement the information obtained from this source. Observation is also important as it can - and should - take cognizance of non-linguistic communication - something which a test is unable to do, and which can have a profound effect on the meaning of an utterance.

A useful supplement to observation is what Robinson (1991 : 14) refers to as "***Authentic Data Collection***". This refers to the making of audio or video recordings (e.g. of lectures presented by Afrikaans-speaking lecturers lecturing in English), and the collection of printed material (e.g. samples of lecturer hand-outs), etc. Yet again it is absolutely essential - particularly in the case of an audio recording - to make notes of the actions and gestures which accompany the speech. In this regard an Error Analysis may be used effectively to obtain information related to the substantive linguistic needs of the subjects (cf. Section 4.8).

f) ***Previous research*** : Considerable research has been conducted regarding the needs and lacks of certain categories of learners, and this information can be drawn on and adapted and/or used in a new needs analysis.

According to West (1994 : 7-8), in a work still forthcoming, Johnson revises his previous list of information-gathering instruments and adds four new categories to the original list of six . These include structured interviews, learner diaries, case studies and final evaluation/feedback.

g) ***Structured interviews*** : There are many critics who consider interviews to be the superior information-gathering instrument for needs analyses. The advantages of an interview include, the fact that :

i) They provide deeper, richer, more detailed information about individuals.

ii) They are widely used and are therefore a familiar technique for both the interviewers and interviewees.

iii) The level of co-operation in an interview may be greater as most people prefer interviews whilst often disliking having to complete questionnaires.

iv) It is possible to establish immediately from the subject's reply or facial expression whether or not they have properly understood a question. The interviewer then has the chance to rephrase the question which he/she does not have the opportunity to do in the case of a questionnaire.

(Gardner & Winslow, 1983 : 74).

Mackay and Bosquet (1981 : 9) add to this the fact that the interviewer can ensure that all the questions are answered by all of the members of the sample population and that it not only allows for open-ended questions to be included, but that these responses may also be recorded in a more easily analyzed manner. Furthermore, the interviewer is able to pursue any interesting new line of enquiry which develops whilst still adhering to a planned agenda.

Hoadley-Maidment (1983 : 41) points out that, in certain circumstances, it is advantageous to use a **semi**-structured interview rather than a structured interview. Some of the reasons forwarded for this are :

i) Many people are suspicious of interviews or tests. By using a less formal method of interviewing the interviewee can be put at ease and consider the interview to be like a conversation rather than something by which he/she may be judged.

ii) If the interviewer manages to establish rapport with the interviewee, the interviewee is more likely to respond more openly and without reserve or fear of being judged. A semi-structured interview is of such a nature that it is informal enough for such rapport to be established.

iii) A semi-structured interview may be used as a follow-up to a questionnaire in order to obtain supplementary information to the questionnaire. Questions related to feelings and attitudes are often difficult to formulate for a questionnaire, and are not easily quantifiable. The semi-structured interview provides a means to obtain information related to feelings and attitudes, and may obtain more `in-depth´ information than a questionnaire.

h) ***Learner-diaries*** : West (1994 : 8) purports that learner-diaries can be important sources of information pertaining to aspects such as the course input, tutor performance, and learner performance (related to what problems the learners experience as well as what they feel they have learnt, or progress they feel they have made).

One disadvantage of such a method of information-gathering is that a diary is, by nature, retrospective, and therefore some of the information is likely to be outdated by the time it is used in the planning of another course.

i) ***Case Studies*** : A case study is one particular form of observation in which an individual is `shadowed´ over a period of time. This provides an in-depth investigation into the learning needs and difficulties of that individual or group of individuals.

One of the advantages of such a method is that it gives :

> "the possibility of an in-depth study over a period of time, the opportunity to appeal to the student's intuitions about his or her difficulties and needs in more detail than in the oral interview or questionnaire, and the occasion for the curriculum developer to do direct observation of the student in the classroom and study situation to gain insight into the student's own methods of learning".
>
> (Robinson, 1991 : 13-14)

The limitations of such a method of needs analysis are clear. Such a method is obviously extremely time-consuming and can only cover a small sample population, the result being that the results are not easily generalizable.

j) ***Final Evaluation/Feedback*** : Hoadley-Maidment (1983 : 43) suggests that an interview should be conducted at the end of a course to enable the student to review his or her progress throughout the course and this information can be used as the basis for future self-improvements.

For the teacher it provides a means to establish the accuracy of the initial needs analysis as well as the potential ways in which future courses can be improved.

2.4.6.5. **Collection of the Data**

This is the phase of the needs analysis in which decisions which have been previously arrived at are actually put into practice - in other words, the questionnaires are printed, distributed and retrieved, interviews are set up and conducted, etc., and the raw data are then tabulated (Schutz & Derwing, 1981 : 38).

2.4.6.6. **Analysis of Results**

The analysis of results can be simplified and performed more rapidly with the help of computers (particularly if there is a large survey population and/or questionnaires and/or interviews which consist of a large number of questions). Carrier (1983) gives an account of how such a computer-assisted needs analysis can be conducted and he submits that "The computerisation, at low cost, of such studies allows the needs analyst to get much more information from the standard questionnaire than is normally feasible given the time and manpower available ... and could ... lead to greater precision in the processing of needs analysis data" (1983 : 3).

2.4.6.7. **Interpretation of Results**

Once the numbers and figures have been established, one sets about interpreting the results and one unavoidable fact related to this stage of a needs analysis is that any interpretation is bound to be subjective in nature : "in the final analysis it is always the human observer who must draw the conclusions" (Robinson, 1991 : 39). However, despite the fact that absolute objectivity is not possible, the analyst should of course strive to interpret the result of the analysis as objectively as possible.

2.4.6.8. **Critique of the Project**

The critique of the project is very important if the needs analysis is to be of any benefit for future courses or other investigators involved in similar projects.

2.4.7 HOW LONG SHOULD THE NEEDS ANALYSIS TAKE?

Although the length of time taken to carry out a needs analysis will necessarily vary with the scale of the project and the methods employed, it is best that the analysis not take too long as one then runs the risk that data gathered may become irrelevant and out-dated as the variables - such as circumstances, perceptions and restraints - change.

2.5 THE LIMITATIONS OF NEEDS ANALYSIS

In the discussion up to this point the importance - and indeed necessity - of needs analysis, specifically within the context of course design, has become clear, but the discussion also alludes to some possible difficulties and limitations of needs analysis. These potential difficulties and limitations are discussed in greater detail below.

2.5.1 HETEROGENEOUS POPULATION

One of the most commonly mentioned difficulties facing any analysis of needs is that of a heterogeneous population (Cunningworth, 1983 : 153; Schutz & Derwing, 1981 : 30; Gremmo & Abe, 1991, 235; Carrier, 1983 : 1). It is extremely unlikely that all the members of a specific group will share the same needs, wants and lacks and as Carrier (1983 : 1) indicates :

> "Many forms of needs analysis are inadequate to deal with heterogeneous groups of learners, from different departments or occupations within one company, who may have to be taught together. And it is a fact that a large number of company language training courses feature this heterogeneity, though many would wish to disguise it".

Schutz & Derwing (1981 : 33) suggest that the best way to deal with this problem is to identify "large overlapping categories of needs which are found to be shared by substantial numbers of such students - instead of focusing on the micro-needs of each individual learner".

2.5.2 THE SUBJECTIVITY OF NEEDS ANALYSIS

As was mentioned in Section 2.4.6.7, a further shortcoming of needs analysis is the fact that it may be subjective in nature. As Cunningworth points out "There is no foolproof method of analysing needs. Much depends on individual subjective judgement" (1984 : 154). Richards indicates that, "Determining needs is not an exact science, ... since it involves both quantitative and qualitative approaches, requires the use of a variety of formal and informal data-gathering procedures, and seeks to identify or quantify needs that may by nature be imprecise" (1992 : 3). Trim considers this "rejection of a `scientific approach´" in a positive light, and indicates that it allows the needs analysis to become "much more flexible, dynamic and sensitive to context as well as function" (1980 : 62).

2.5.3. DIFFICULTIES IN PREDICTING LEARNERS´ FUTURE NEEDS

Cunningworth, in discussing the limitations of needs analysis, indicates that "In many circumstances, it is difficult to predict with any degree of accuracy just what learners´ needs will be in future" (1983 " 153). It is for this reason that a needs analysis cannot be conducted on a `once-off´ basis, but should be carried out on an on-going basis, so as to take account of changing perspectives, needs and desires of the learners, teachers and other interested parties.

2.5.4. DIFFICULTIES IN CONVERTING NEEDS INTO GOALS

Needs Analysis has been accused by critics of being both too limiting and not limiting enough.

Richterich (1972, cited by Trim, 1980 : 62) suggests that syllabuses which specify precise needs or ends result in restricted competence :

> "A fundamental contradiction may be seen ... between the desire to define precise needs and aims and the fact that, on the other hand, the use of a language as a means of communication and action in controlling social situations requires a capacity to react appropriately to things which cannot be accurately foreseen or defined".

Dubin and Olshtain (1986 : 102), on the other hand, complain that "an assessment of individual needs could result in multiple course objectives".

Holec suggests autonomous learning as one possible solution to both of these problems. In response to the second, he indicates that, by making use of autonomous learning, "every learner can base his objectives on his own needs ..., moreover, he can reassess them whenever he likes during the learning process, since any change of objective will only effect his own learning and not that of other learners" (1985 : 266). He points out that although it is difficult to integrate anything but the most generalized set of objectives into a teaching system, with its structures (classes with teachers, timetables, room, syllabuses, etc) and its teaching materials (identical books for all learners), this problem is considerably reduced if each learner (or group) is free to pursue his (or its) own objectives independently without committing other learners or groups to the same objectives. The wide variety of objectives will result in a corresponding flexibility in terms of times, places, syllabuses, methodologies and learning techniques, simply because "self-directed learning allows a multiplicity of approaches which is

prevented by the very nature of other pedagogical strategies" (Holec, 1985 : 266-267).

Other problems related to needs analysis are the fact that it is "a very time-consuming activity" (Carrier, 1983 : 1) - for which Carrier suggests the use of computers to assist and speed up the processing of needs analysis data; and the fact that - as with any study - "some information necessary for carrying out the analysis may be inaccurate or missing" (Cunningworth, 1983 : 154).

2.6 CONCLUSION

It has been established that needs analysis is a complex process which involves much more than simply determining what learners will be required to do in a specific target situation. Moreover, it has become clear that the exact nature and 'boundaries' of needs analysis are by no means agreed-upon facts, and that the debate as to the nature of needs analysis is far from closed. Finally, it is clear that despite its very real limitations and difficulties, needs analysis is a useful and essential aspect of any second language course design - particularly English for Special Purposes courses.

CHAPTER 3

ERROR ANALYSIS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter it was pointed out that information regarding the Target Situation of the learners (from the Target Situation Analysis) needs to be supplemented by information regarding the existing proficiency of learners (Present Situation Analysis). The aim of this chapter is to show how an Error Analysis may be used to obtain such information.

3.2 THE CONCEPT OF LANGUAGE ERROR

There has been little agreement on both what a language error is, as well as how these errors should be regarded and treated by the language teacher and the learner. Norrish (1983 : 91) points out that "Since language constantly changes and develops, what is considered `incorrect' today may be acceptable tomorrow" and Gorosch (1973 : 151) goes further to indicate that because different groups of people look for different things when attempting to identify error, "no two evaluations [of error] are absolutely identical".

An important source of conflict as to what an error is lies between the language teacher and the language learner. Birdsong & Kassen (1988 : 1) point out that :

> "an idealized consensus [between teachers and students] would appear somewhat unrealistic, given the idiosyncrasies of individual teachers and students, along with well-documented response variability

> inherent in metalinguistic tasks in general, and in error judgements in particular ... add to this the disagreements in error evaluation among native and nonnative teachers ... and it would appear unreasonable to expect uniformity of judgement, whether within groups or between groups of students and teachers".

It is also important to distinguish between **non-systematic** and **systematic** errors (or `***mistakes***´). A `***mistake***´, on the one hand, is defined as being a "non-systematic deviation from the language code indicating incomplete learning" (Norrish, 1983 : 128) and is a breach of the normal patterns of "*parole* or of performance" (Enkvist, 1973 : 19). It is important to distinguish between deviant language forms that are the result of processing limitations - which may occur due to a lapse of memory, tiredness or psychological conditions rather than a lack of competence - and those errors which are due to a lack of competence (Ellis, 1994 : 51).

`***Errors***´, on the other hand, are considered to be systematic deviations from the accepted code (Norrish, 1983 : 127), and are seen as breaches against " linguistic structure proper, against *langue* or competence" (Enkvist, 1973 : 19).

Furthermore, if one considers the implication of viewing Second Language Acquisition from the perspective of the Interlanguage theory [See Section 3.3.3] , then it becomes questionable to use the term `error´ at all when referring to the language-learner language. Corder (1978 : 73) also emphasizes that he feels that

> "if we are considering interlanguage as a form of language to be studied in its own right, it is as illogical to refer to the differences between utterances in an interlanguage and some related target language as errors as it is to describe the utterances of a dialect speaker as erroneous by comparison with those in standard language, or to regard the utterances of the infant as deviant forms of the target language."

This would imply that a learner's language can be referred to as erroneous or incorrect only in the sense that it is "not fully describable in terms of his mother tongue or the target language" (Roos, 1990 : 8). However, for practical purposes, the term 'error' shall be used in this study to refer to utterances that are systematically deviant from or inappropriate in terms of the target language grammar.

3.3 CHANGING VIEWS OF ERRORS

For many years errors were regarded as one of the greatest of the learners' and teachers' enemies in the quest to learn or teach a language. Brooks, for example, even goes so far as to proclaim that "like sin, error is to be avoided and its influence overcome" (1964 : 58). Error was seen as failure and in many traditional language classes, errors were regarded as a blight on both the teacher and the student, to be avoided at any cost. However, the results of such a view of errors are perhaps even more harmful to the learning of a language than the errors themselves. As Norrish (1983 : 1) points out :

> "Many people will agree that one of the most inhibiting factors in any formal learning situation is the fear of making mistakes ... This leads to the characteristic hesitancy among learners to say anything in a foreign language for fear of appearing a fool".

More recently, however, a more tolerant and even positive view of errors has emerged. Instead of seeing errors as something to be avoided, errors are considered to be evidence of the learner's strategies of learning (Ellis, 1994 : 19). Norrish emphasises that he sees errors as positive aids to learning "in that [they aid] the learner and [provide] him with feedback in the process of concept formation" (1983 : 113) and that errors are both inevitable and part of language creativity (1983 : 34).

These changing views of errors tie in with changing hypotheses as to how to deal with the concept of error. The negative view of errors ties in with the *CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS HYPOTHESIS* whilst the more favourable view of errors emerged along with the *ERROR ANALYSIS HYPOTHESIS* in the early 1970's. These differing views of errors are discussed in greater detail below :

3.3.1 CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS

In accordance with the behaviourist theories of learning, which dominated ideas on learning until the late 1960's, it was believed that the learning of a second language is strongly influenced by the learner's first language. Skinner's definitive statement of the behaviourist theory of language learning claimed that "if language is essentially a set of habits, then when we try to learn new habits the old ones will interfere with the new ones" (cited in Norrish, 1983 : 22). In agreement with the behaviourist theory of language learning, it was therefore ***INTERFERENCE*** from the native language of a learner in the form of the transfer of a set of language habits from the learner's first language to a second language, which was considered to be the source of language errors. It was considered that in cases where the first language and the second language of a learner were similar, the transfer would be "positive and would not need a lot of drilling/teaching for it to be acquired", whereas, in cases where the first and second languages were very different, "The transfer would be negative and would need a great deal of drilling before the new set of habits could be automatised " (Towell & Hawkins, 1994 : 18).

In accordance with this idea of interference as the major cause of error in second language learning, proponents of the Contrastive Analysis hypothesis have claimed that by comparing the native language of learners and the target language, linguists will be able to predict most of the errors which a learner will make while learning a second language or at least

account for a great number of errors which have already been made (Towell & Hawkins, 1994 : 17-18).

However, although interference is undoubtedly a source of error and is often considered to be one of the most frequent causes of error (Norrish, 1983 : 10), it is by no means the only cause of errors (Towell & Hawkins, 1994 : 19; Ellis, 1994 : 54; Dulay & Burt, 1974 : 93 & 118). In fact, researchers who tested the hypothesis that first language interference could account for the majority of errors found that a mean percentage of only 25% of errors can in fact be attributed to transfer (Towell & Hawkins, 1994 : 19). A number of other important sources of error have subsequently been identified : ***overgeneralization*** of target language rules (Ellis, 1994 : 59; Selinker, 1974 : 213-216; Jain, 1974 : 192); ***psychological*** causes (Towell & Hawkins, 1994 : 2; Stern, 1991 : 312; Ellis, 1994 : 57); ***false hypotheses*** (Corder, 1981 : 25; Ellis, 1994 : 59); ***teaching-induced*** errors (Allen & Corder, 1975 : 130; Selinker, 1974 : 213; Norrish, 1983 : 12-14); ***incomplete applications of language rules*** (Ellis, 1991 : 53; Norrish, 1983 : 175); ***carelessness*** (Norrish, 1983 : 21); etc.

The fact that Contrastive Analysis does not account for all or even the majority of language errors is one of the major criticisms of this hypothesis. Ellis (1991 : 27) identifies a further three major areas of criticism against Contrastive Analysis which gained momentum in the early 1970's - criticisms concerning the ability of Contrastive Analysis to predict errors, theoretical criticisms as to the feasibility of comparing languages, and questions as to the relevancy of Contrastive Analysis for language learning.

Norrish indicates that even though parts of languages may or may not differ, "this does not tell us much about how a learner will go about the learning task" (1983 : 28) and therefore in this regard the relevancy of Contrastive analysis for language teaching is limited.

Norrish (1983 : 29) adds that Contrastive Analysis falls short in the explanation of "the well-attested fact that the same errors are made by first language speakers from very differing language backgrounds" and that on a practical level the task of writing a Contrastive Analysis of two languages would be no easy task because of the sheer magnitude of such a project.

Despite these very real criticisms of Contrastive Analysis, it does have its advantages - even though these are limited. Norrish (1983 : 29) shows that Contrastive Analysis can be useful to teachers of English as the majority of teachers will have sufficiently good knowledge of the student's mother tongue and the target language to become familiar with the characteristic errors that students make and to determine if there are any parallel forms in the mother tongue. He indicates that then the teacher would be able to treat error at an intermediate or advanced level by pointing out that while in the mother tongue it is possible to say something in a particular way, nevertheless in the target language it is not.

It has been suggested that the Contrastive Analysis hypothesis is most effective when combined with another hypothesis - the **ERROR ANALYSIS** hypothesis (Ellis, 1991 : 24).

3.3.2 ERROR ANALYSIS

Error Analysis has much in common with the type of Contrastive Analysis which is based on the study of language data obtained from Second Language or Foreign Language speakers. However, whereas Contrastive Analysis only takes account of interlingual transfer (interference), Error Analysis is not limited in this way. It allows for the joint description of all types of linguistic errors whether they arise from interference or not. Error analysis is a procedure used by both researchers and teachers to identify, classify and evaluate errors made by language learners (Ellis, 1991 : 296). Error Analysis is important in that it provides useful information on both a practical and theoretical level. On a practical level, the

analysis of errors helps provide an understanding of the nature of error, thus indicating to "teachers and curriculum developers which part of the target language students have most difficulty producing correctly and which error types detract most from a learner's ability to communicate effectively" (Dulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982 : 138). It provides the teacher with information regarding the type of difficulty which learners are experiencing at a particular point in a course, and if such an analysis is carried out on a sufficiently large scale it can provide helpful information for the drawing up of a course curriculum (Norrish, 1983 : 80). It is in this sense that Error Analysis provides important information, not only for teachers, but also for the learners themselves. Towell and Hawkins (1994 : 159, 174-175) point out that errors are of great importance to the learners of a second language, as the making of errors may be regarded as a strategy which the learner uses to learn, and a way that the learner has to test his or her hypotheses about the nature of the language he or she is learning.

On a theoretical level, an Error Analysis provides information about what and how a learner learns when he or she studies a second language, and through an Error Analysis it is possible to draw certain conclusions about the learning strategies adopted by the learner. In this sense, "error analysis is part of the methodology of psycholinguistic investigation of language learning" (Norrish, 1983 : 35). It is on this level that Error Analysis is of great importance for language researchers.

For the purposes of this study Error Analysis is of particular significance within the context of a needs analysis [See Section 2.4.6.4]. Within an analysis of needs, an Error Analysis may be used effectively to help identify the present level of proficiency (lacks) of individuals learning a second language so that remedial measures can be designed which are tailored to the specific needs of the language learners (West, 1994 : 2). Corder believes that through paying attention to learners' errors we might come to a better understanding of the learners' needs and stop assuming that we know exactly how language learning courses should be structured (1981 : 13).

It is within the framework of the Error Analysis hypothesis that most errors are considered to be characteristic of certain stages of the language-learning process. The term used to describe this interim series of stages of language learning between the first and second language (through which all second language learners must pass on their way to attaining fluency in the target language) is **INTERLANGUAGE** (Towell & Hawkins, 1994 : 23).

3.3.3 INTERLANGUAGE

An interlanguage can be seen as a linguistic system which is separate from the mother tongue as well as the target language, governed by its own rules, and in a state of continuous flux. The concept of interlanguage has also been referred to as transitional competence, idiosyncratic dialects, and approximative systems (cf. Ellis, 1994 : 409). Richards points out that of all these terms he favours the Nemser term - approximative systems - as it implies the " developmental nature of language learning, since the learner´s system is continually being modified as new elements are incorporated throughout the learning process" (1974 : 30).

Brown (1987 : 175) discerns four stages of interlanguage development. The first of these stages is the **pre-systematic stage** where learners make errors in a random fashion.

The second stage is the **emergent stage** and at this point learners start to discern a system and internalise some of the rules of that system.

During the third stage, the errors become more **systematic** because the learner´s interlanguage rules become more consistent and approximate the target language more closely. It is during this stage that the danger of FOSSILIZATION (Selinker, 1974) or INCOMPLETENESS (Schachter, 1990) frequently arises. Towell and Hawkins (1994 : 2) describe fossilization as a "stopping short"

of native proficiency language where

> "Even after many years of exposure to an L2, in a situation where the speaker might use that L2 every day for normal communicative purposes, even to the extent of 'losing' the native language, it is not uncommon to find that the speaker still has a strong 'foreign' accent, uses non-native grammatical constructions, and has non-native intuitions about the interpretation of certain types of sentence".

The causes of such fossilization could be of both an internal and external nature. On a psychological level, the learner could decide that he or she can communicate effectively enough in the target language and therefore feels it is not necessary to develop his or her interlanguage any further. An external cause of fossilization could be that the learner is no longer in contact with adequate second language input, and on a neurological level, it is possible that fossilization may take place when, because of the neural changes associated with age, the process of hypothesis testing becomes limited [cf. Section 4.5].

The fourth and final stage of interlanguage development is the stage of **stabilisation** when the learners make relatively few errors and do not have many problems with either the intended meaning or fluency.

3.4 THE METHODOLOGY OF AN ERROR ANALYSIS

A number of steps in an error analysis can be identified : the selection of a language corpus; the identification of error; the description of errors; the explanation of errors; the evaluation of errors; and the therapy of errors.

3.4.1 SELECTION OF THE LANGUAGE CORPUS

The selection of the language corpus involves deciding on factors such as the size of the sample, the medium to be sampled and the homogeneity of the sample. Most error analyses use regular tests or examination papers for material, but Svartvik points out that it is important to supplement these textual data with data drawn from various other elicitation procedures, such as interviews or observation of the student actually using the language in a given setting (1973 : 12-13).

3.4.2 IDENTIFICATION/RECOGNITION OF ERRORS

Corder suggests that one should consider all sentences to be idiosyncratic until they are shown to be otherwise (1981 : 21).

When attempting to identify error, there are a number of important points which should be considered :

a) If one is unable to decide whether a specific utterance should be considered erroneous or not, one should give the benefit of the doubt and consider the utterance to be `correct´. It is after all unreasonable to expect a language learner to be aware of errors which the language teacher is not even able to conclusively identify.

b) Errors may be both **overtly** (i.e. superficially ill-formed in terms of the rules of the target language) or **covertly** (i.e. superficially `well-formed´ in terms of the target language but nevertheless cannot be interpreted `normally´) erroneous (Ellis, 1994 : 177).

c) When attempting to identify errors, it is essential to take cognizance of the **context** or situation in which the utterance took place as "The generation of language is, in all normal situations, affected by context; therefore there is every reason for error analysis to

reckon with context and situation" (Enkvist, 1973 : 22). This is especially true if the medium of language production used in the error analysis is spoken language where non-verbal language or gestures and intonation and stress play an important role in the meaning attached to the utterances (Norrish, 1983 : 54).

3.4.3 DESCRIPTION OF THE ERRORS

This stage involves assigning a grammatical description to each error (Ellis, 1994 : 54). However, before one sets about the task of describing the errors which have been identified, it is necessary to delineate **which** errors should be considered in the particular analysis. It stands to reason that if one is to describe and analyse every instance of error in a language corpus, the amount of data is likely to be overwhelming. It is for this reason that it is important to address the question as to which errors should be focused on in an error analysis :

In the first place, it is pointless to concentrate on `slips´ and hesitations, as even native speakers are guilty of such `errors´. Norrish asks : "Is it fair that we demand standards of our students that even native speakers cannot maintain?". Instead, the analyst should limit his or her study to those errors which are recurrent and systematic (Roos, 1990 : 23). Furthermore, it has been suggested that the analyst should not concern himself or herself with `errors´ on the level of pronunciation (Norrish, 1983 : 18) unless they are of such a magnitude that they interfere with the intended `message´ or `meaning´ of the utterance (Norrish, 1983 : 54).

Secondly, if one agrees that the goal of a second language learner is communicative competence, then there are four categories of errors which can be focused on in keeping with the four aspects of communicative competence (as identified by Brumfit, 1984 : 138), namely : (1) errors in **grammatical** competence - knowledge of the grammar and lexical items of a

language; (2) errors in **sociolinguistic** competence - knowledge of the sociocultural rules and social context of language and discourse; (3) errors in **discourse** competence - the ability to link sentences in stretches of discourse to form a meaningful whole out of a series of utterances; and (4) errors in **strategic** competence - the erroneous use of communication strategies. All of these categories are important, but for the purposes of this study this writer wishes to focus on the first of these categories - errors in **grammatical** competence.

3.4.3.1 Errors in Grammatical Competence

Even though the other three categories of communicative competence play important roles in communication, grammatical competence is often a prerequisite for effective communication. Although the relative importance of the grammaticality (or form) of an utterance and its function may vary from situation to situation, form remains an integral part of function and if the form of an utterance is distorted, then the function is likely to change and some of the meaning (function) can be lost. According to Major (1988 : 84), "Distorted form is a type of noise which interferes with the message". This implies that grammatical competence determines semantic options to a certain extent, that is, "the meanings that a speaker is able to express in a language are restricted by the grammatical means of expression that has been mastered" (Roos, 1990 : 76). Morrow asserts that effective communication involves "using appropriate forms in appropriate ways, and the use of inaccurate forms militates against communication even when it does not totally prevent it" (1981 : 65).

Another reason why formal accuracy is so important is linked to the native speakers' reactions to grammatical errors. Although comprehensibility may be the main aim of a second language learner, as far as interpersonal communication is concerned, it is important that their language does not lead to a negative reaction on the part of native speakers with whom they attempt to communicate. Whilst certain errors may lead to a breakdown in

communication, others may lead to irritation on the part of the listener - a consequence which, in terms of social relations - is equally undesirable (Norrish, 1983 : 98).

Furthermore, formal accuracy is of particular importance in academic, professional and sophisticated circles (Roos, 1992 : 60). In such settings it is unsatisfactory simply to be understood; it is necessary for the individual to approximate the standard form of the particular language as closely as possible because a standard language "has to do with passing exams, getting on in the world, respectability, prestige and success" (Roos, 1991 : 9). Indeed, language learners are often aware of the potential negative consequences of a lack of formal accuracy in their use of a particular language, and this leads to the well-known reluctance of the language learner to use the target language at all (`inhibition´) or feelings of inferiority with regards to his or her language production.

In the case of lecturers required to lecture in a language which is not their mother language, to a group of students for whom the language of instruction is also a second (or even third) language, grammatical errors which they produce whilst presenting a lecture can have even greater, far-reaching consequences for communication in the class setting. Norrish shows that whilst native speakers who hear the erroneous use of a language are often able to `make sense´ of the utterances despite their lack of formal accuracy, the listener that is not a native speaker will experience greater difficulty in the interpretation of such utterances because of the fact that "he may simply not understand some of the words said to him; he cannot then afford to miss any other carriers of meaning (as the native speaker can) if he is to understand the gist of what is said to him" (1983 : 58).

It is for these reasons that grammatical competence and accuracy may be considered as of great importance in the process of communication and thus, a worthwhile area of study for an error analysis.

3.4.4 EXPLANATION OF ERRORS

At this point in an error analysis an attempt is made to identify the psycholinguistic cause of the errors. In other words, one attempts to establish whether the error/s are as a result of language transfer (first language interference), overgeneralization of target language rules, transfer of training, strategies of second language learning, second language communication strategies, etc. Although there are some considerable difficulties involved in the explanation of errors [See Section 3.5], it can provide important information regarding the kinds of strategies which learners use to simplify their task of learning a second language. In this sense, the explanation of errors can be used to "investigate the various processes that contribute to interlanguage development" (Ellis, 1991 : 53).

3.4.5 EVALUATION OR GRADING

Evaluation or grading involves the assessment of the relative `seriousness´ of each of the studied errors in order to take decisions as to type, scope and method of remediation required. According to Rifkin and Roberts (1995 : 513), over the past twenty years, more than twenty-five studies investigating native speakers´ reactions to second language learner error in speech or writing, have been published. The goal of establishing such hierarchies of second language errors is to help second language teachers to focus on areas of language production which have been judged by native speakers to be most disruptive to communication. These hierarchies of errors are determined through error evaluation studies. An early example of such an error evaluation study was performed by Johannson (1973) who suggests that in order to establish the relative seriousness of errors, one should take four factors into consideration : **generality** (infringements of general rules are regarded as more serious than lexical rules); **frequency** (errors involving common words and constructions are regarded as more serious than others); **comprehensibility** (lexical errors may be considered to affect comprehensibility to a greater extent than grammatical errors);

and degree of **irritation** (grammatical errors are more likely to cause irritation than lexical errors). Thus, if an error causes an utterance to be incomprehensible and irritating to a listener, as well as being an infringement of a general rule and an error involving a common word or construction, it may be regarded as being a more serious error than one which, for example, merely causes an utterance to be irritating to a listener. Johansson (1973 : 110-111) suggests the use of judgement and comprehension tests to determine native speakers' reactions to learners' errors. The judgement test involves the submission of examples of learners' production to native speakers. The native speakers are then required to grade the utterances with reference to a scale of irritation. The degree of irritation of utterances containing different types of errors is then calculated. In the case of the comprehension test, utterances containing different types of errors are selected and submitted in comprehension tests to a group of native speakers who are then required to correct the utterances. On the basis of this, the degree of comprehensibility of the utterance is then calculated (Johansson, 1973 : 111).

More recently, Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982 : 191) made the distinction between `**global**' and `**local**' errors. They say that errors that "affect ***overall sentence organization*** significantly hinder communication" and because of the wide syntactic scope of these errors they are referred to as `global' (1982 : 191). Examples of global errors include : the wrong order of major constituents; missing, wrong, or misplaced sentence connectors; missing cues to signal obligatory exceptions to pervasive syntactic rules; regularization of pervasive syntactic rules to exceptions; and direct transfer of a language item/s from the first language to the second language. On the other hand, local errors are errors that "affect ***single elements (constituents) in a sentence***" and are unlikely to hinder communication significantly (Dulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982 : 191). Local errors include errors in "noun and verb inflections, articles, auxiliaries and the formation of quantifiers" (Dulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982 : 191-192).

It is therefore clear from this distinction between global and local errors that, whilst it is essential that language learners should avoid global error in order to be easily understood, it is possible for the learner to communicate effectively despite the occurrence of local errors. On the other hand, in order for the learner to achieve near-native fluency, it is essential that he/she avoid local errors as well as global errors.

3.4.6 THERAPY/REMEDIATION OF ERRORS

The `therapy´ stage of error analysis deals with the specification of how best to address learners´ errors in terms of learning tasks (Roos, 1990 : 29).

As far as making decisions regarding the remediation of errors is concerned, it is important to establish whether remedial action is necessary and, if so, what the nature of such treatment should be. This can be achieved through determining the level of `mismatch´ between the knowledge possessed by an individual and the demands of his or her situation. Corder (1981 : 46-47) distinguishes three levels of mismatch : an ***acceptable*** degree of mismatch, which does not require remediation (i.e. the individual can `get by´ in the situation with the amount of knowledge which he or she possesses); a ***remediable*** degree of mismatch - where the individual in not in possession of sufficient knowledge to cope adequately with a given situation, but does possess the necessary traits for him or her to be able to learn what is demanded by the situation with, or without, specific treatment; an ***irremediable*** degree of mismatch - where the degree of mismatch between knowledge and the demands of the situation is too great to be remedied economically.

This stage of error analysis ties in very effectively with needs analysis as it can provide information necessary in the Present Situation Analysis, namely the `lacks´ of the individual (cf. Section 2.4.6.4).

3.5 THE SHORTCOMINGS OF ERROR ANALYSIS

It is important that teachers and researchers should be aware of both the merits and shortcomings of error analysis as any one single view of language cannot account for the diverse phenomena that exist (Roos, 1990 : 22).

One of the major criticisms levelled against Error Analysis is the fact that it only takes account of error and not of the 'correct' words or structures used by the learner (Roos, 1990 : 23; Hammarberg, 1973 : 29). According to Schachter and Celce-Murcia (1971 : 276), "To consider only what the learner produces in error and to exclude from consideration the learner's non-errors is tantamount to describing a code of manners on the basis of the observed breaches of the code".

Furthermore, an error analysis not only focuses on error to the exclusion of non-error, but also tends to focus only on specific, limited categories of error. The result is that too much attention is given to blotting out certain characteristic errors, to the exclusion of other, perhaps equally useful, parts of the language. For example, if a comprehensive error analysis were to show a tendency for learners to use the present progressive tense instead of the simple present tense, most of the class time (for remediation) may be spent on eradicating this error whilst other important aspects of the language are not touched on due to a lack of time. Norrish (1983 : 88) comments that "If we remember that any language is a system, which is itself comprised of many different systems ... then we are better placed to realise that simply eradicating one error or set of errors is not in itself likely to help learners to actually improve their capacity to use the language for communicative purposes".

As has been mentioned earlier in this chapter, a further difficulty facing error analysis is the identification of errors, as different people, at different times, have widely varied ideas as to what is erroneous. Furthermore, similar difficulties arise in the classification (description) and explanation of errors.

Certain errors resist classification. For example, when a learner writes 'chose' for 'choose', is this to be considered as a spelling error or an incorrect tense? Often the only tools which an analyst has at his or her disposal in attempting to arrive at some interpretation, is the context and his or her intuition. However, if it is at all possible, one solution to such difficulties of interpretation is to consult the learner to find out what he or she wanted to express.

In the case of trying to establish the causes of errors, the analyst can face similar difficulties as ambiguity exists with the classification of many errors as either interlingual or developmental. In fact, many errors can be interpreted in more than one way and Jain points out that "errors do not seem to submit themselves to any precise systematic analysis; the division between errors traceable to L1 interference and those that are independent of L1 interference is not invariably clearcut; the phenomenon of errors caused by the cross-association of both L1 and L2 also seem to exist ..." (1974 : 190).

It can also be mentioned that error analysis is unable to account for the strategy of avoidance, and tends to focus on productive skills at the cost of receptive skills (Roos, 1992 : 58).

It is therefore clear that if an error analysis is to be of lasting value, it must "be carried out with all possible rigor (sic) and its results interpreted with due caution " (Robinett & Schachter, 1983 : 147).

3.6 CONCLUSION

Despite the shortcomings and difficulties involved in conducting and Error Analysis, the usefulness of Error Analysis - in terms of course planning and determining the 'Present Situation' (as

part of a Needs Analysis) - is clear. In the next chapter, the place of both Error Analysis and Needs Analysis within course design (and more specifically the design of a remediation course for adults) will be discussed in greater detail.

CHAPTER 4

COURSE DESIGN AND REMEDIATION FOR ADULT LEARNERS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Although a great deal of attention has been paid to syllabus design for beginners learning a second or foreign language for the first time, very little has been written on developing remediation courses for advanced learners who are already relatively fluent in the target language but who wish to further improve their command of the language. However, much of what has been written regarding syllabus design for second language learning may be adapted to serve the purposes of a remediation course. The aims of this chapter are to illustrate the importance of Needs Analysis and Error Analysis within the process of course design, as well as to describe the factors which play a role in the choice of syllabus type and methodology for a remediation course for adults.

4.2 TERMINOLOGY

In order to avoid confusion it is important to distinguish between various terms linked to course design. It is important to distinguish between the terms `curriculum´, `syllabus´ and `course design´. Some confusion exists as to the distinction between the terms `curriculum´ and `syllabus´ as American and British writers use the terms differently. In Britain a distinction is commonly drawn between `curriculum´ - which refers to "the totality of content to be taught and aims to be realized within one school or educational system" and `syllabus´ - to refer to "the content or subject matter of an individual subject" (White, 1993 : 4). In the U.S.A., though, `curriculum´ tends to be synonymous with `syllabus´ in the British sense.

Dubin and Olshtain (1987 : 34-35) make a further distinction between curriculum and syllabus - they describe a curriculum as containing "a broad description of general goals by indicating an overall educational-cultural philosophy which applies across subjects together with a theoretical orientation to language and language learning with respect to the subject matter at hand", whereas a syllabus is "a more detailed and operational statement of teaching and learning elements which translates the philosophy of the curriculum into a series of planned steps leading towards more narrowly defined objectives at each level".

Dubin and Olshtain point out that this distinction between `curriculum´ and `syllabus´ is an important one as it stresses the fact that "a single curriculum can be the basis for developing a variety of specific syllabuses which are concerned with locally defined audiences, particular needs, and intermediate objectives" (1987 : 35). It is for this reason that this writer will maintaining this distinction between `curriculum´ and `syllabus´ (in the British sense).

Certain authors use the terms `curriculum´ and `programme´ interchangeably and in some places, the terms `syllabus´ and `course outline´ mean the same thing (Dubin and Olshtain, 1987 : 3).

As far as the term `course design´ is concerned, it refers to that which deals with the "principles and procedures for the planning, delivery, management and assessment of teaching and learning" (Richards, 1992 : 1), and is frequently also referred to as `curriculum development´. According to Robinson (1991 : 41-44), course design involves putting the theoretical decisions about, and aims of, a syllabus into a context. The design of a remedial course for adults is the main focus of this chapter.

4.3 THE IMPORTANCE OF NEEDS ANALYSIS AND ERROR ANALYSIS IN COURSE DESIGN

There are six or seven steps which may be identified in the process of course design (cf. Richards, 1992 : 1, Taba, 1962 : 12; Van der Walt, 1984 : 64) :

1) Needs Analysis (Situation Analysis)
2) Goals (Aims/Objectives) specification.
3) Syllabus design : the a) selection and
   b) organization of content.
4) Methodology : the a) selection and
   b) organization of learning activities.
5) Selection of teaching and learning opportunities.
6) Evaluation.

From the above, the importance of Needs Analysis and Error Analysis within course design is clear. It is commonly accepted that before the goals (aims/objectives) of any language course can be specified, it is essential to establish the needs of the learner and the requirements of the situation in which they will eventually be making use of what they learn (Mackay and Palmer, 1981 : 29-30; Crystal, 1987 : 374; Holec, 1991 : 265-267; Ellis, 1991 : 10-11). The needs of the learner, the learner's purpose in undertaking a course, and the requirements of the situation will all have a marked influence on the shape of the syllabus on which the course is based (Nunan, 1989 : 12).

Yalden points out that before frameworks can be set up for designing a course, it is essential that a needs analysis be carried out (1987b : 131) and that in some cases, the description of purposes/goals of a course is entirely dictated by the needs assessment (1987a : 93). In fact, as Tarone and Yule point out, if one is to successfully teach a second or foreign language to adults at all, one must "constantly adjust [*one's*] methods and materials on the basis of their identification of *local needs of their students*" (1989 : 3).

Particularly when one think in terms of a remediation course, an Error Analysis works hand in hand with a Needs Analysis in helping to determine what both the goals (aims/objectives) of a course should be as well as the content (and its organization) of the course (See Sections 2.4.6.4, 3.3.2 and 4.8).

According to Sharma (1977 : 166) errors "can become a great part, if not the basis for, much of classroom instruction and/or remedial work" and the information collected in an Error Analysis can help in the devising of remedial measures which make teaching and learning more rapid and effective (Sharma, 1981 : 81).

Indeed, the processes of identifying what the students need to know (Needs/Situation Analysis) and investigating what they do and do not know already (Error Analysis), "are at the very heart of the successful classroom teacher's activities in second or foreign language instruction" (Tarone and Yule, 1989 : 4).

4.4 SYLLABUS TYPES

The major dilemma facing a course designer is to determine which of the multitude of syllabus types is best suited to the needs of the students, the demands of the target situation and the resulting goals of the course. There is an extremely large (and ever increasing) number of varied syllabi available, ranging from the traditional grammar syllabus, to the immersion syllabus, to the task-based syllabus.

However, these various syllabus types can roughly be divided into two basic types of syllabus or syllabus orientations - **synthetic syllabi** and **analytic syllabi**. Wilkins (1976) first drew attention to the distinction between synthetic and analytic syllabi. He describes the synthetic approach as being "one in which the different parts of language are taught separately and step by step so that acquisition is a process of gradual accumulation of parts until the whole structure of language has been built up" (1976 : 2), whereas the analytic syllabi are

"organized in terms of the purposes for which people are learning language and the kinds of language performance that are necessary to meet those purposes (1976 : 13). Thus instead of being taught the different `parts´ of language separately (as is the case with the synthetic syllabus), learners are presented with chunks of language which may include structures of varying degrees of difficulty (Nunan, 1989 : 28). Whilst, in the case of a synthetic syllabus the starting point for syllabus design is the grammatical system of language, for an analytic syllabus the point of departure is instead the communicative purposes for which the language is to be used. Examples of synthetic syllabus types include lexical, structural, notional and functional syllabi, and examples of analytic syllabus types include procedural, process and task syllabi.

These two categories of syllabus types link up with another distinction which is frequently made - that between **product syllabi** and **process syllabi** (Long and Crookes, 1992 : 27-29).

Product syllabi focus on what is to be learned and the end-product to be achieved, and tie in with the synthetic syllabus type, whilst process syllabi focus on how the language is to be learned and corresponds with the analytic syllabus type (Yalden, 1987b : 70; Roos, 1990 : 52; Nunan, 1989 : 12).

It is important to note that whilst in theory it is possible to conceive of language syllabi being solely synthetic or solely analytic, in practice it is more likely that the distinction between an analytic and synthetic syllabus type is in fact rather a continuum between the two with a syllabus being typified as more-or-less analytic or more-or-less synthetic depending on the prominence given to discrete elements in the selection and grading of input (Nunan, 1989 : 28).

4.5 REMEDIATION AND CHOICE OF SYLLABUS

"It is a sad fact that most students of English are remedial cases. They come to us with their language already formed and we often have to unmake modes of communication which have become habitual and indeed, fossilised" (Alexander, 1991 : 48).

Fossilized errors, which have a habit of persisting despite exposure to different correction techniques, is one of the major problems facing the Second Language teacher at the more advanced level. Selinker noted that perhaps as many as 95% of Second Language learners fail to reach target language competence and that they stop learning when their interlanguage still contains some rules which are different from those of the target language system. He referred to this phenomenon as fossilization. As was mentioned in Section 3.3.2., the causes of fossilization are two-fold - internal and external. Externally, fossilization may occur as a result of the fact that the learner believes that his or her language ability is of such a standard that it is no longer necessary to develop his or her interlanguage in order to be able to communicate effectively whenever needed (i.e. he or she lacks the external motivation to develop the second language any further). Internally, fossilization may occur because of changes in the neural structure of the student's brain (as a result of age), which restrict the operation of the hypothesis-testing mechanisms. It is for this reason that a number of authors believe that fossilized error cannot be remedied (cf. Ellis, 1991 : 48; Higgs & Clifford, 1982 : 67).

However, in order to obtain a more in-depth view of the problem of fossilization, it is necessary to take a closer look at **motivation** (as an external cause of fossilization) and the **influence of age** (as an internal cause of fossilization) :

4.5.1 MOTIVATION

Learner motivation has always had a central place in theories of second language acquisition. Motivation often works hand-in-hand

with learner needs. If, for example, a learner's needs are addressed through a particular language teaching programme, his or her level of motivation to learn that language is likely to be greater than when his or her needs are not taken into account (Ellis, 1991 : 11). Gardner and Lambert (1972) distinguish between two forms of motivation :

1) **Integrative** motivation - which occurs when the learner wishes to identify with the culture of the second language group and
2) **Instrumental** motivation - which occurs when learners' goals for learning the second language are functional (ie. for some practical purpose, such as to be able to study in the second language).

When the learner believes that he or she has either learnt enough of the second language to identify with the second language group or to perform the specific function for which he or she requires the second language, then the learner ceases to learn (i.e. fossilizes). Therefore, when attempting to deal with fossilization, one of the most important starting points is to 're-motivate' the learner so that he or she **wants** to learn more.

Sometimes learners are in fact aware of the errors in their language use but because of possible tolerance of errors on the part of, for example, native speakers, teachers, lecturers, etc, they do not feel motivated to put in an effort to eradicate these errors. The idea that tolerance of errors can indeed lead to fossilization of those errors is probably sharply opposed to those who advocate tolerance of all errors. However, it is important to bear in mind that in an academic and educational context, the impact and importance of errors is greater than in other situations. For example, a group of native speakers are more likely to tolerate their non-native friend's language errors whilst casually discussing the previous day's cricket match than a group of academics listening to a colleague's presentation which is riddled with language errors, at a national conference. "Adequate communication in day-to-day life is often just not good

enough for academic purposes and will not be adequate in a professional employment situation or at a more sophisticated social level" (Roos, 1990 : 50).

It is for these reasons that learners need to be made aware of the negative social, professional and academic consequences which their non-standard language use might have, in an attempt to get them to become 're-motivated' and to react positively to an error remediation programme.

4.5.2 AGE AND SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING

The researchers Penfield and Roberts (1959) argue that the optimum age for language acquisition falls within the first ten years of life (the Critical Period Hypothesis). They suggest that the reason for this is that during the first ten years of life the brain maintains placidity but that, with the onset of puberty, this placidity begins to diminish. According to Ellis (1991 : 107), Penfield and Roberts argue that this is caused by "the lateralization of the language function in the left hemisphere of the brain. That is, the neurological capacity for understanding and producing language, which initially involves both hemispheres of the brain, is slowly concentrated in the left hemisphere of most people". It is considered that the supposed increased difficulty which older learners experience is as a direct result of this neurological change (ie. internal/neurological motivation).

This theory of a 'critical period' has subsequently been called into question as a result of evidence that cortical lateralization occurs much earlier than Penfield and Roberts indicate, namely before the age of five (Krashen, 1973) and that lateralization does not - in any case - necessarily imply loss of any abilities (Krashen, 1981). This being the case, the distinction between the supposed language learning ease before adolescence and subsequent difficulty in language learning cannot be accounted for on the grounds of any neurological changes (Stern, 1991 : 363).

Others have in fact offered the view that the older learners' greater cognitive maturity and learning experiences are assets :

> Objective research evidence regarding the relative learning ability of children and adults is sparse but offers little comfort for those who maintain the child superiority thesis. Although children are probably superior to adults in acquiring an acceptable accent in a new language, E.L. Thorndike found many years ago that they make less rapid progress than adults in other aspects of ... language learning when learning time is held constant for the two age groups.
>
> (Ausubel, 1964 : 421)

Numerous studies (e.g. Fathman, 1975; Snow & Hoefnagel-Höhle, 1978; Oyama, 1976) have been conducted in an attempt to empirically settle this question regarding age and second language learning, but as yet, no acceptable consensus has been reached on the matter. However, it has been shown that in certain respects adults are better language learners than children. Stern (1991 : 366-367), for example, points out that "older learners can learn language more readily by means of cognitive and academic approaches" and Ellis (1991 : 108) argues that older learners can learn *about* language by consciously studying linguistic rules. They can also apply these rules when they use the language.

In their comparison between adult and child second language learners, Snow and Hoefnagel-Höhle (1978) found that older learners are better than learners at learning morphology and syntax and that older learners are also better than younger learners in the vocabulary progress.

Despite the lack of consensus on the question of age and language learning, it is clear that adults do have the capacity to learn a second language, and are, in some respects, better language learners than children. Perhaps what is more important to

consider (particularly for the purposes of this study), is the question as to whether teaching methods should vary according to the age of the students.

4.6 AGE AND TEACHING METHODS

In certain respects, students at different ages differ psychologically in their approach to second language learning. Teenagers, for example, tend to dislike techniques which involve role-play and simulation which expose them in public, so that such techniques may result in them feeling awkward and `stupid´. Adults may feel that they are not learning properly in play-like situations as such situations are not `serious´ and therefore they may prefer a more conventional formal style of teaching.

Spolsky (1989) describes three conditions for second language learning related to age :

1) `Formal´ classroom learning requires "skills of abstraction and analysis". Therefore, if a teaching method requires sophisticated understanding and reasoning on the part of the student (for example, in the case of a traditional grammar translation method), then an older student is likely to best benefit from such a method.

2) The child is more open to second language learning in informal setting and thus children are easier to teach by means of an informal approach.

3) The natural second language situation may favour children. The creation of language situations in the classroom is necessary for teaching adults in order to in some way compensate for this lack on the part of adults.

These psychological differences between learners of different ages can and should therefore be considered in the selection of the particular teaching syllabus or method to be employed. Whilst one teaching method may be ideal for a primary school learner, it may be completely unsuited to an adult learner. Let us consider, for example, the case of the communicative strategy of language teaching :

As the communicative strategy promotes learning via attempted communication in the second language and involves much risk-taking and trail-and-error, it is much better suited to the so-called `adventurous learner´ - a learner who is not afraid to try out new things and to make mistakes (Marton, 1988). More often than not, it is children who belong to this type of learner, and therefore the communicative strategy is well-suited to their language learning needs. On the other hand, adults belong to the so-called `careful´ type of learner - a learner who is uncomfortable with making errors and is less likely to want to learn by means of trial-and-error (Marton, 1988 : 44). Therefore, the communicative strategy imposes a way of learning on the adult learner which does not agree with his or her psychological make-up, and which may result in the learner feeling infantile and humiliated when required to express his or her feelings through imperfect forms. For this reason it may not be suitable for the majority of older learners.

It is clear from the above that errors, and indeed fossilization, can be treated if a) students are `re-motivated´ to improve their second language proficiency by being made aware of the fact that their proficiency in English is not of an acceptable standard and of the negative consequences which their non-standard language might have (cf. Section 3.4.3.); and b) the method of remediation suits the psychological make-up of the particular age group of learners involved.

4.7 EXPLICIT GRAMMAR TEACHING

The most common syllabus type was, and probably still is, the grammatical syllabus - one in which "syllabus input is selected and graded according to grammatical notions of simplicity and complexity" (Nunan, 1989 : 28). Of late there has been much criticism of the explicit teaching of grammar - particularly from within the communicative approach. The results of certain studies seemed to support this view with Mukattash, for example, concluding that the subjects of his study "continued to produce basic and elementary grammatical errors" despite their exposure to grammar teaching, a result which "obviously casts serious doubts on the validity of the use of explicit grammatical explanations" (1986 : 203). However, these findings have been contradicted by a number of other researchers who found that grammar teaching can positively contribute to the improvement of language proficiency and the remediation of errors (cf. Dirksen, Schellens & Schuurs, 1987; Ellis, 1994; Long, 1983).

It is important to note that the term 'grammar teaching' is an umbrella term referring to forms of language teaching as diverse as audiolingual drills and suggestopedia. For this reason grammar teaching per se is "not necessarily wrong or contraproductive to the improvement of language proficiency", but that "the **type** of teaching could exercise a profound influence on the effectiveness of the teaching and learning" (Roos, 1990 : 50 - *my emphasis*). As a result of this, many researchers now suggest that there is "a definite need and place for <u>deliberate</u> teaching of linguistic principles" (Van Rensenburg, 1986 : 21). Although there have been mixed results about the relative utility of formal grammar instruction, studies generally support the hypothesis that such instruction has a positive influence on the rate and success of second language acquisition (Ellis, 1994).

It is particularly in the case of adult or advanced language learners that certain methods of grammar teaching, such as grammar explanation and translation, and situational drills, can

indeed aid second language acquisition and error remediation. "Because older children, teenagers, and adults are more advanced cognitively and are better able to apply learned rules, introducing them to some rules ... could aid in the acquisition process" (Richard-Amato, 1988 : 38).

However, it has also been indicated that if learners are not given a choice whether or not they should receive instruction or not (and therefore lack motivation) they do not benefit from formal instruction. If the learner resents the second language instruction and tries to remediate his or her errors, his or her second language will perhaps not improve at all. Therefore, yet again in this way, motivation plays a vital role in the process of second language acquisition and error remediation (Roos, 1990 : 52).

4.8 CONCLUSION

It is clear that motivation and explicit grammar teaching can influence the acquisition of the target language and the production of errors by learners. The needs of the learners and how these needs are addressed (or not addressed) by a particular course, coincide closely with the learner's level of motivation (or lack thereof). In this sense, a Needs Analysis and an Error Analysis therefore form a vital role in the process of course design. Through a Needs Analysis it becomes possible to establish important information regarding what the learner expects, and hopes to achieve from, the course in question, whilst an Error Analysis provides important data indicating the areas of greatest need - as far as language proficiency is concerned. It is also of paramount importance that a course be adapted to suit the needs of particular age groups - methods which are likely to be highly successful when employed in the teaching of children, are not necessarily going to be effective

at all, when employed in teaching adults a second language. The bottom line is simply this : If a learner's substantive and perceived needs are not addressed by a language course, the learner will lack motivation to learn, and without motivation, learning (and remediation) are unlikely.

CHAPTER 5

METHOD OF RESEARCH

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the methods employed in the present study are discussed. As this study makes use of two major forms of analysis - Needs Analysis and Error Analysis - the focus is on the methods used to conduct each of these analyses respectively.

5.2 SUBJECTS

The subjects of this study were 10 full-time lecturing staff members at an Historically Black University. The lecturers are all Afrikaans-speaking (i.e. Afrikaans is their first language and home language) and they received their primary, secondary and tertiary education at predominantly Afrikaans-medium institutions. In all cases, the lecturers are required to present all their lectures in English (which is the medium of instruction at this university).

At the time when the study was begun, 97% of the full-time staff members lecturing at the university were Afrikaans-speaking. It is for this reason that the study focuses on Afrikaans-speaking lecturers who are required to present lectures in English.

The lecturers were selected from across the range of subject groups offered at the university, viz. Business Sciences, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, Education and Arts, with two lecturers from each group chosen randomly.

The subjects were chosen regardless of their age, and they ranged in age from between 24 and 60 years of age. The sex of the subjects also played no part in their being selected to be part of the study, and six of the subjects were male and four of the subjects were female. [For further demographic information regarding the subjects, see Section 6.2].

5.3 NEEDS ANALYSIS - METHOD OF RESEARCH

5.3.1 INTRODUCTION

In Section 2.4.1, the different types of needs and their resulting forms of needs analysis are discussed. The following types of needs were identified :

1) Goal-oriented needs (Target-Situation Analysis)
2) Lacks (Present-Situation Analysis)
3) Process-oriented needs (Strategy Analysis)
4) Learners' wants
5) Socially-determined needs
6) Constraints (Means Analysis)
7) Language Audit

The present study focuses on the first four of these types of needs as the information regarding these needs is easily accessible and may be obtained from the subjects themselves. The socially-determined needs, constraints, and language audit fall outside the scope of this study as a result of their sheer magnitude, as well as the financial and time restrictions on this study. It is important to point out that error analysis is used here in conjunction with needs analysis techniques in establishing the second type of needs - learners' lacks. The error analysis is used to determine aspects pertaining to the learners' linguistic proficiency, whilst the needs analysis is used to determine other lacks such as the learners' subjective

views of their linguistic proficiency, the restraints of their present situation (learners do not have enough time, money, etc.), and their levels of motivation.

In Section 2.4.5, it is pointed out that there are three major groups of persons who play a role in the identification of needs - the learners, the teachers and the company. However, for the purposes of this study, the focus is solely on the needs of the learners, and therefore all information pertaining to learning needs was acquired from the learners themselves and concerns the needs of the specific subjects themselves.

5.3.2 INSTRUMENTATION

Ten different methods of collecting information for a Needs Analysis are distinguished in Section 2.4.6. These include :

1) Placement tests
2) Entry tests on arrival
3) Self-placement tests
4) Questionnaires
5) Observation
6) Previous research
7) Structured and semi-structured interviews
8) Learner diaries
9) Case studies
10) Final evaluation/feedback.

For obvious reasons, it is not possible to make use of all of these techniques within the limited scope of this study. Three of these techniques have been used in the present study, namely : a) **questionnaires** which lecturers were asked to complete (see **ADDENDUM A**); b) **semi-structured interviews** with the lecturers (see **ADDENDUM B**); and c) **observation** of a sample of lectures presented by the lecturers (used as part of the error analysis).

The questionnaire and semi-structured interview are used together in the needs analysis so that the weaknesses of one technique can be compensated for by the strengths of the other (for example, in the case of a questionnaire it is not possible to check whether or not a respondent understands the questions, whereas, in the case of an interview, it is possible to immediately establish if a respondent does not understand a question from the subject's reply or facial expression). However, the interview did not address exactly the same questions as the questionnaires, but rather attempted to acquire supplementary information which it was not possible to procure from the questionnaires - particularly information related to the subjects' **feelings** and **attitudes** toward various aspects of their needs regarding English.

The questionnaire was compiled using the frameworks of Munby (1978), Schutz and Derwing (1981), Yalden (1987), and Trim (1980) as models, and is used to establish information related to the following questions :

1) Who is the learner? (Demographic items).
2) What does the learner already know, or is the learner able to do, with regard to the target language? (Lacks/Present-Situation Analysis).
3) What would the learner like to know or be able to do, with regard to the target language? (Learners' wants and goal-oriented needs/Target-Situation Analysis).
4) How would the learner prefer to go about learning (to do) this? (Process-oriented needs/Strategy Analysis).

A semi-structured interview (Hoadley-Maidment, 1983) was used as follow-up to gather more in-depth (qualitative) information regarding the last three categories of questions addressed by the questionnaire, as well as to obtain information regarding the learners' motivation and attitudes toward the target language (English), and to the learning of that language. A semi-structured interview was preferred to that of a structured interview because of the fact that a semi-structured interview

can help put the interviewees at ease and therefore encourages the interviewee to respond more openly and without fear of judgement (see Section 2.4.6.)

5.3.3 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

Both the questionnaire and the interview were presented/conducted in the participants' first language (namely Afrikaans). This was done in order to a) avoid any possible confusion which may arise as a result of the participant not (fully) understanding the language of the questionnaire or interview; and b) to help the participants feel more at ease whilst completing the questionnaire and during the interview.

The lecturers involved were given the questionnaires to fill in, in their own time, so that they had time to carefully consider the questions and their answers.

The interviews were all conducted at the convenience of the participants and in a `safe' environment (i.e., the interviews were mainly conducted in the lecturers' own offices rather than in this writer's office), so that the participants could feel as comfortable and `in-control' as possible during the interview.

The interviews were tape-recorded on audio-tape so that the interviewer could give undivided attention to the interviewee and the interview `conversation' and to ensure that no information should be lost as a result of hastily written, and therefore possibly incomplete, notes.

5.3.4 DATA ANALYSIS

The tape-recorded interviews were then transcribed and the information gathered was ordered according to the four categories identified above (namely, the participants' perceptions regarding their present proficiency and use of the target language; the participants' wants and needs regarding the target language; the

participants' preferred learning strategies; and the participants' attitudes and degree of motivation with regard to the target language and to the learning of that language).

The information gathered from the questionnaires and interviews was then combined and divided into the following five categories of information :

1) Demographic information.
2) Participants' perceptions regarding their present proficiency and use of the target language.
3) Participants' wants and perceived needs.
4) Participants' preferred language learning strategies.
5) Participants' attitudes and level of motivation regarding the target language and to the learning of that language.

5.4 ERROR ANALYSIS - METHOD OF RESEARCH

5.4.1 INTRODUCTION

A series of successive steps is distinguished within Error Analysis. In its most complete form these include :

1) Selection of the language corpus.
2) Identification/recognition of errors.
3) Description of errors.
4) Explanation of errors.
5) Evaluation or grading.
6) Therapy/remediation of errors.

The present study focuses on all of these aspects of an error analysis with the exception of the explanation of errors. As the main purpose of the error analysis within this study is to establish the nature of the participants' linguistic 'lacks' as regards English, the explanation of identified errors falls outside the scope of this study. The remediation of errors is dealt with in Chapter 8.

5.4.2 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

This study makes use of **Authentic Data Collection** (Robinson, 1991) to obtain information regarding the participants' current performance in English. Audio tape-recordings were made of lectures presented in English by the participants. Although video-recordings of the lectures would have been more effective (as they can record and take account of non-verbal communication as well as verbal communication), in the case of this study, the cost of the video-equipment was inhibitive and it was therefore decided to make use of audio-tapes in conjunction with observation.

Each lecture was between sixty and ninety minutes in duration, and of this, a random sample of approximately 40 minutes of each lecture was analyzed. In all cases, the first few minutes and the last few minutes of the lectures were not used as part of the sample, as this time is generally used by lecturers to greet students and provide administrative information (e.g. dates of upcoming tests/exams, when the next lecture will take place, etc), and therefore contained language which is not information-rich for the purposes of analysis (Sinclair & Brazil, 1982 : 2-3). Furthermore it was found that lecturers tended to relax more after a few minutes, and even appeared to forget that they were being tape-recorded.

5.4.3 FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

This sample of the tape-recorded lectures was then transcribed and analyzed. Errors were identified, tabulated and described - the focus being on linguistic errors (i.e. errors related to morphology, syntax and lexis). A combination of different frameworks was used as the basis of this analysis, as no single framework contained all the necessary categories of the errors which were identified. Elements of Politzer and Ramirez's (1973) taxonomy for morphological and syntactic errors (as quoted in Dulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982) were combined with certain categories of error identified by Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982) - such as `double markings', `omissions' and `misorderings' - and

Burt and Kiparsky's (1972) linguistic category taxonomy (as identified in Dulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982). Certain categories of errors which were identified by these writers were not identified in this study, and were therefore not included in the framework for analysis. There were also certain categories of errors which were identified in this study which do not occur in these writers' frameworks. These categories of errors include the use of auxiliaries, multiple negation and errors at the level of lexis. For this reason these categories were added to the framework used in this study. Once the errors had been categorised, examples of errors were noted to illustrate deviant usages. Table 1 provides an outline of the framework used in this study.

Table 1 : FRAMEWORK OF LINGUISTIC ERRORS

LINGUISTIC CATEGORY AND ERROR TYPE	EXAMPLE OF LEARNER ERROR
1. **MORPHOLOGY**	
1.1 **Use of Indefinite Article**	
• ***a*** instead of ***an*** before vowels.	***a example***
1.2 **Use of Possessive Case.**	
• Omission of ***'s.***	***next week work***
1.3 **Simple past tense**	
• Regular past tense - omission of ***-ed.***	***she suck her thumb as a child***
• Irregular past tense - regularization by adding ***-ed.***	***He hitted the other man***
1.4 **Double Marking**	
• Comparative adverb or adjective incorrect - use of ***more*** + ***-er.***	***more clearer***
• Irregular plural - regularization by adding ***-s.***	***childrens***
• Use of ***busy*** + ***-ing.***	***busy lying in the road***

Table 1 : FRAMEWORK OF LINGUISTIC ERRORS (Continued)

LINGUISTIC CATEGORY AND ERROR TYPE	EXAMPLE OF LEARNER ERROR
2. SYNTAX	
2.1 Noun Phrase	
2.1.1 **Determiners**	
• Omission of the article	*... go to back of car*
• *The* instead of *a*	*the child (indefinite)*
• *A* instead of *the*	*use a spoon (definite)*
• *A* instead of ϕ	*give in to a ... pressure*
• *The* instead of ϕ	*the people (indefinite)*
• Substitution of possessive pronoun for definite article	*difficult for that person who has only studied ...*
• Use of the possessive with the article	*put it in the her mouth*
• Use of the incorrect possessive.	*Everybody tries to find out what their chances ..*
2.1.2 Number	
• Substitution of the singular for plural.	*There´s a lot of new role and choice which ....*
• Substitution of a plural for a singular	*Not a single children*
2.1.3 Pronouns	
• Omission of the subject pronoun	*(She) used her fist ...*
• Omission of the `dummy´ pronoun *it*	*Yes, is a nice day*
• Omission of the object pronoun	*Is it necessary to do now?*
• Subject pronoun used as redundant element.	*The man he ...*
• Interrogative pronoun replacement	*What theories relate to this?*
• Relative pronoun replacement	*The man what went there ...*
• Pronominal reflexes	*The little child it ...*
• Agreement with antecedent	*... any questions ... bring it along*
• Omission of the relative pronoun	*he is the one is responsible*

Table 1 : FRAMEWORK OF LINGUISTIC ERRORS (Continued)

LINGUISTIC CATEGORY AND ERROR TYPE	EXAMPLE OF LEARNER ERROR
2.1.4 Prepositions	
• Omission of the preposition	*the sun shines directly the land*
• Use of the incorrect preposition	*high tolerance from the sun*
• Redundant use of prepositions.	*There's competition in everyone in*
2.2 **Verb Phrase**	
2.2.1 Omission of the verb	
• Omission of the main verb	*So they also the energy*
• Omission of ***to be***.	*A plant a adaptive thing*
2.2.2 Tenses	
• Use of the continuous tense	
▸ Omission of ***be***	*You going to realise*
▸ Substitution of the continuous tense for the simple past tense	*In the past people were having a hard time*
▸ Substitution of the present continuous for the simple present tense	*I am wanting your assignments, now.*
• Other tense errors	
▸ Present instead of future tense of ***would*** conditional.	*If you begin with a high price ... the prices drop all the way ...*
▸ Past instead of present tense	*What is the second aspect ...? [It] was ..*
▸ Present instead of past tense	*what he do when the people complained ...*
▸ Use of ***to be*** with the simple past or present tense	*I'm hate this man ...*
2.2.3 Agreement of subject/ object and verb person	
• Disagreement of subject/ object and verb person.	*you be a very unhappy person at the end*
• Disagreement of subject/ object and verb number.	*there is not many clouds*

Table 1 : FRAMEWORK OF LINGUISTIC ERRORS (Continued)

LINGUISTIC CATEGORY AND ERROR TYPE	EXAMPLE OF LEARNER ERROR
2.2.4 **Auxiliaries**	
• Omission of the auxiliary verb.	*what my little girl could or not do*
• Incorrect form of auxiliary	*He don´t have a hope*
• Incorrect modal verb	*you could [should] evaluate the question*
• Omission of modal verb	*later there be no class*
2.2.5 Past Participle	*I have went through your tests ...*
2.3 Verb-and-verb Construction	
• Omission of *to* in identical subject construction	*Now if you able ... [to] ... classify according to ...*
2.4 Word Order	
• Repetition of the object	*The activities [object], the city decides about them*
• Omission or inversion retained in imbedded sentences	*we do it at least in front of two department members*
• Subject and object permuted	*It´s a better advantage the bigger a panel is*
• Misplaced conjunction	*The experiment belong to Shockten and the results*
• Other errors in word order	*On Tuesday in my office I will be available*
2.5 Transformations	
2.5.1 Negative transformation	
• Formation of *no* or *not* without the auxiliary *do*.	*.. I not like my wife*
• Multiple negation	*there won´t be no solution*

Table 5.4.3.1. FRAMEWORK OF LINGUISTIC ERRORS (Continued)

LINGUISTIC CATEGORY AND ERROR TYPE	EXAMPLE OF LEARNER ERROR
2.5.2 Question transformation	
• Omission of auxiliary	*How [does] that influence ...?*
2.5.3 *There* transformation	
• Use of ***is*** instead of ***are***	*there is a lot of overlaps*
• Omission of ***there***	*in the CBD is a sharp drop*
• Use of ***it was*** instead of ***there was.***	*it was more sunshine ...*
3. SENTENCE FORMATION	
3.1 Sentence Fragments	
• Omission of subject	*the first one is the one-price _ _ _ _ (?)*
• Omission of object	*You can think about your when at the disco ...*
• Use of conjunctions	
▸ Omission of subordinate conjunctions	*he indicated (that) during each period ...*
▸ Omission of co-ordinate conjunctions	*... there is more sunshine it is rise in temperature*
▸ Unnecessary addition of the conjunction	*This is important because as the man is ...*
4. LEXIS	
4.1 Vocabulary	
• Incorrect verb	*the sun totally destructs the vegetation*
• Incorrect adverb	*Can you measure interaction very good ...*
• Incorrect noun	*humans are quite destructive people*
• Incorrect pronoun	*this plant has to cool themself down*
• Incorrect adjective	*ultra-violet rays very ... damage rays*
• Incorrect conjunction	*try and apply a .. theory*
• Use of L1	*you have different skemas*
• Incorrect demonstrative	*plant can´t absorb that kind of rays*

Table 1 : FRAMEWORK OF LINGUISTIC ERRORS (Continued)

LINGUISTIC CATEGORY AND ERROR TYPE	EXAMPLE OF LEARNER ERROR
4.2 Parts of Speech	
• Substitution of an adverb by an adjective	*if the exam goes bad*
• Substitution of an adjective by an adverb	*She looked beautifully*
• Substitution of a noun by a verb	*there´s a wind chilling factor*
• Substitution of an adjective by a noun	*ultra-violet rays very ... damage rays*
• Substitution of an adjective by a verb	*it´s allowed aggression*

5.4.4. DATA ANALYSIS

Once the errors had been categorised, the frequency of the different categories of errors was calculated by adding up the number of errors which occurred in each specific category (and sub-category) in each subject´s text. The percentage of errors at the level of morphology, syntax, sentence construction and lexis, respectively - in relation to the total number of errors - was then calculated. Furthermore, the percentage of sub-categories of errors in relation to the total number of errors within their category was calculated (e.g., the percentage of errors in the use of the indefinite article as compared to other errors at the level of morphology was calculated). Errors were then `graded´ in terms of being either `global´ or `local´ errors (cf. Section 3.4.5.) and the number or `global´ versus `local´ errors occurring in each category of error was determined.

5.5 CONCLUSION

Although there are numerous techniques which may be used in a needs analysis and an error analysis, this study makes use of those techniques which this writer believes best suit the specific focus and nature of this study, as well as the particular nature of the research population.

CHAPTER 6

RESEARCH RESULTS : NEEDS ANALYSIS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the data obtained from the needs analysis conducted as part of this study. The results are discussed in terms of the demographic information; information regarding the subjects' present use of English and their perceptions of their present proficiency in English (Present Situation Analysis); the subjects' wants and needs with regards to their future use of English (Target Situation Analysis); the learners' preferred learning strategies (Strategy Analysis); and the learners' levels of motivation. It was agreed that the subjects may remain anonymous (See Addendum C), and therefore each of the ten subjects has been assigned a number from 1 to 10, and will be referred to in this, and consecutive chapters, as Lecturer 1, Lecturer 2, etc.

6.2 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

6.2.1. SUMMARY OF THE DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Table 2 provides a summary of the most important demographic information of each individual lecturer :

Table 2 : SUMMARY OF DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

	AGE	TERTIARY INSTITUTION ATTENDED	PLACE OF RESIDENCE	TOTAL NO. OF YEARS TEACHING IN ENGLISH	GENDER
L1	40 yrs	U.O.F.S	Riebeeck-stad	6	FEMALE
L2	27 yrs	U.O.F.S	Welkom	2	MALE
L3	31 yrs	U.O.F.S	Riebeeck-stad	5	MALE
L4	29 yrs	U.O.F.S	Riebeeck-stad	4	MALE
L5	46 yrs	P.U. for CHE	Welkom	16	MALE
L6	24 yrs	P.U. for CHE	Welkom	1	MALE
L7	27 yrs	R.A.U.	Welkom	1	FEMALE
L8	28 yrs	U.O.F.S	Welkom	6	MALE
L9	60 yrs	U.O.F.S	Welkom	25	FEMALE
L10	35 yrs	U.O.F.S	Welkom	2	MALE

L1 = Lecturer 1; L2 = Lecturer 2, etc.

The research participants ranged in age from 24 to 60 years of age, with the majority (70%) being between the ages of 24 and 35; 20% between 40 and 50 years of age; and 10% between 50 and 60 years of age. Six of the subjects were male and four were female. All of the subjects were born in South Africa and were South African citizens. All the subjects resided in the Free State Goldfields area.

All the subjects received their primary, secondary and tertiary education at Afrikaans-medium institutions. Each of the subjects possessed at least two tertiary qualifications, and 70% of the subjects received two or more of their tertiary qualifications at the University of the Orange Free State, and 30% received two or more of their tertiary qualifications at Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education.

The lecturers were selected from across the range of subject groups offered at the university with two lecturers from each of the following departments : Psychology, Sociology, Business Economics, Geography, and Teacher Education.

Table 3 presents the lecturers' previous experience presenting classes/lectures in English at primary, secondary and tertiary education levels.

Table 3 : SUMMARY OF LECTURERS' EXPERIENCE IN PRESENTING LECTURES IN ENGLISH

LECTURER	Primary School Level	Secondary School Level	Tertiary Level
L1	0 years	0 years	>5 years
L2	0 years	0 years	1-2 years
L3	0 years	0 years	>5 years
L4	3-4 years	0 years	3-4 years
L5	0 years	<1 year	>5 years
L6	0 years	0 years	<1 year
L7	0 years	0 years	<1 year
L8	0 years	1-2 years	1-2 years
L9	0 years	>5 years	>5 years
L10	0 years	1 years	1-2 years

L1 = Lecturer 1, L2 = Lecturer 2, etc.

> = more than, < = less than

The above demographic data provide information which makes it clear that the population of this study may be regarded as homogenous as far as their first language, place of residence, and the fact that they all attended Afrikaans-medium educational

institutions is concerned (cf. Table 2). However, it is clear that in terms of other facets of demographics they differed widely. Firstly, it is clear from Table 2 that the subjects belonged to vastly different age groups, and that they had vastly different levels of experience in teaching at English-medium institutions. The implications which this may have for teaching these individuals, is discussed in Section 8.2.

6.3 PRESENT SITUATION ANALYSIS

In this section, the data collected (from both the questionnaire and the interview) regarding the lecturers' present use of the target language (English) and their perceptions of their present proficiency in English, are considered.

6.3.1 PRESENT USE OF ENGLISH

Afrikaans is the mother-language of all of the lecturers involved in this study, and 90% of the lecturers speak only Afrikaans at home, whilst 10% speak both English and Afrikaans at home.

All of the subjects passed English at second language level in Standard 10 and 20% have completed a first year 'practical English' course. The majority (70%) of lecturers first began formally learning English at primary school level (Sub A/Grade 1), whilst the other 30% did so at kindergarten (pre-primary) level.

Table 4 summarises the information obtained regarding the lecturers' present use of English (productive and receptive) :

Table 4 : SUBJECTS' PRESENT USE OF ENGLISH (PRODUCTIVE AND RECEPTIVE)

	Spoken English	Written English
Lecturer 1	40%	60%
Lecturer 2	65%	93%
Lecturer 3	35%	25%
Lecturer 4	60%	20%
Lecturer 5	10%	15%
Lecturer 6	40%	80%
Lecturer 7	60%	60%
Lecturer 8	90%	55%
Lecturer 9	45%	60%
Lecturer 10	45%	50%
AVERAGES :	**49.5%**	**51.8%**

[Percentages (%) indicate the percentage of the total language use (in any language) of the individual]

* It is clear from the information given in Table 4 that the individual lecturers had very different levels of contact with the English language in its different forms - spoken and written. For example, whilst Lecturer 8 indicated that 90% of the language he heard spoken, and which he speaks, is English, Lecturer 5 indicated that only 10% of all the language he hears spoken, and which he speaks is English.

  However, the majority (60%) of the lecturers indicated that less than 50% of all spoken language which they heard or produced, is English. Furthermore, the subjects indicated that, of this total amount of spoken English, an average of only 15% of all the English which they heard was First Language English.

  The lecturers claimed that in most cases (on average, 90% of the time), they spoke English or heard English spoken in conjunction with their interaction with students. In this case therefore, the spoken English which they heard is

Second Language or even Third Language English. Lecturers also indicated that they had spoken English with, and had heard some English (on average 20% of the total) spoken by, English-speaking colleagues.

* According to the lecturers, of all the WRITTEN language which they produced and read, an average of 51.8% was English and this was usually in the form of academic materials (e.g. articles, reference books, class notes, tests, exams, etc.) and departmental and administrative correspondence.

Lecturers were asked questions related to how they felt about using English within their class setting and in general. The following is a summary of the responses :

* 90% of lecturers indicated that at times they felt uncomfortable communicating in English and that they need to, and would like to, improve their confidence with regards to using English. For example, one lecturer commented :

> As English is not my mother-language, I feel uncomfortable and hold myself back from speaking in meetings [staff meetings, departmental meetings, etc.]. I am afraid that my English is not good and that I will look stupid and the English-speakers will ridicule my use of English.

* 80% of the lecturers indicated that they felt it is difficult to present a class in a language which is not their first language, and the fact that they have to present classes in English does cause some anxiety for them.

Lecturers were asked a variety of questions so as to establish what they use and need English for at present. The results include the following :

* In all cases, the lecturers indicated that of the four skills related to the use of English (speaking English, writing in English, understanding spoken English, and understanding written English), they most commonly used and needed English to SPEAK and to WRITE. Of these two it was indicated that SPOKEN English was the most commonly used.

* In all cases, the lecturers used SPOKEN English most often in their communications with **students** (lectures, individual consultations with students, etc.) and with **English-speaking colleagues** (in casual conversations).

* More than half of the lecturers indicated that they spoke English in conjunction with **clients, business persons** and in **meetings.** 80% of the lecturers indicated that they had presented papers at **conferences** and **seminars** in English, and that they had experienced some difficulty in doing so. A small number of lecturers (20%) indicated that they spoke English **socially** (with friends, neighbours, etc.).

* According to the lecturers, they used WRITTEN English predominantly in the compilation of **class tests, exams** and **class notes.** Two lecturers from the Psychology department also indicated that they made use of written English in the form of **psychological reports** for their clients.

* All the lecturers indicated that as far as their own **further studies** are concerned, it is vital that they UNDERSTAND WRITTEN English well, as most (if not all) of the reference works available are written in English. The majority of lecturers (80%) indicated that they had not, however, experienced any difficulty in understanding such texts written in English.

6.3.2 SUMMARY OF THE SUBJECTS' PRESENT USE OF ENGLISH

The information gathered pertaining to the subjects' present use of English may be summarised as follows :

1. In general, the subjects had very little contact with First Language English in the spoken form. It is therefore likely that the greatest part of the English which they hear on a daily basis contains at least some erroneous use of English. If one considers the fact that one is unlikely to improve one's own proficiency in English by hearing erroneous English, then it may be assumed that this contact with English is generally not beneficial to the lecturers' proficiency in English.

2. The lecturers lacked confidence with regards to their use of English, and would, for this reason, like to improve their proficiency in English.

3. The lecturers used English in a number of different situations, the most important being the use of SPOKEN English related to their job functions.

6.3.3. LECTURERS' PERCEPTIONS REGARDING THEIR PRESENT PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH

Lecturers were asked to indicate whether they experienced any difficulties in communicating within their class setting, as well as in other situations, and if so, what they believed to be the cause of such difficulties. The following is a summary of the results obtained :

* 90% of lecturers indicated that they had experienced difficulties in communicating (in English) within their class setting.

* 60% of lecturers responded that they had experienced difficulties in communicating (in English) in other situations.

* 90% of the lecturers indicated that they believed such communication difficulties were as a result of **language differences** between themselves and - particularly - the students (who are predominantly South Sotho speakers). It was felt that these communication difficulties are 'two-way' problems (i.e. both that the lecturers are misunderstood or not understood at all, by the students, or that the students are misunderstood or not understood by the lecturers. This was seen to be as a result of the fact that both the lecturers - being Afrikaans-speakers - and the students - being predominantly South Sotho speakers - attempted to communicate in a third language, namely English).

* 30% of lecturers said that they felt that the communication difficulties were as a result of the **cultural differences** between themselves and the students.

* 40% of the lecturers indicated that they experience difficulty in **expressing** themselves **fluently and clearly**, and therefore felt **awkward** and **apprehensive** when trying to communicate in English.

* Lecturers indicated that although they were much more concerned about making errors in front of English-speaking colleagues than in front of students, that they felt that they managed to communicate better with their English-speaking colleagues than with their students.

The lecturers were asked to evaluate their own proficiency in various aspects of English use. Table 5 provides a summary of the information provided by the lecturers.

Table 5. : LECTURERS' EVALUATIONS OF THEIR PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH

	LEXIS	GRAMMAR	UNDER-STAND SPOKEN ENGLISH	UNDER-STAND WRITTEN ENGLISH	SPEAK ENGLISH	WRITE IN ENGLISH
L1	Below Average	Below Average	Very Good	Very Good	Above Average	Above Average
L2	Above Average	Above Average	Excel-lent	Very Good	Very Good	Above Average
L3	Above Average	Below Average	Above Average	Very Good	Very Good	Above Average
L4	Below Average	Above Average	Excel-lent	Excel-lent	Above Average	Poor
L5	Below Average	Below Average	Above Average	Very Good	Above Average	Above Average
L6	Above Average	Below Average	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	Excel-lent
L7	Above Average	Above Average	Very Good	Excel-lent	Very Good	Above Average
L8	Above Average	Very Good	Excel-lent	Excel-lent	Excel-lent	Excel-lent
L9	Above Average	Above Average	Excel-lent	Very Good	Very Good	Above Average
L10	Above Average	Above Average	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good

L1 = Lecturer 1; L2 = Lecturer 2, etc.

Excellent = Requiring little or no improvement.
Very Good = Requiring only marginal improvement.
Above Average = Requiring less improvement than the average person.
Below Average = Requiring more improvement than the average person.
Poor : Requiring much improvement.
Very Poor : Requiring extensive improvement.

From Table 5 it can be seen that, in general, the lecturers indicated that their main difficulties, with regards to their use of English, lay in the area of grammar, vocabulary, and the ability to write in English.

All of the lecturers agreed that they felt that the majority of their Afrikaans-speaking colleagues also need to improve their English. The following comment made by one of the lecturers summarizes the opinions expressed by the majority of lecturers :

> "Most of the lecturers don't think that their English is poor - they refuse to believe that it is. Some of the lecturers' English is shocking - I can hardly believe that they can present a class in English. If I were one of their students I would become extremely frustrated just trying to make head-or-tail out of what they are saying".

It is clear from the above that in general, although most of the subjects believe that their Afrikaans-speaking colleagues definitely need to improve their proficiency in English, that the majority consider their own proficiency in English to be good and generally above average. However, they all indicated that though they did not feel it to be a very important priority, that there was room for improvement in their use of English and that they would like to improve their English.

Although the lecturers were interested in improving their proficiency in English, it is clear that they felt that it was not vital that they do so and that their proficiency is, at present, sufficient so as not to demand immediate or urgent attention. However, the majority of lecturers did indicate that, although they believed that their proficiency in English is sufficient for the purposes of lecturing at the Historically Black University where they are presently employed, it is not so for activities outside of the University. One of the lecturers stated in the interview that he felt that "although my English is good enough to use here [the HBU], it is not good enough for the professional world", and another that "If you want to achieve anything in the world today, you need to speak, write and understand English well". Many of the lecturers also indicated that they wished to improve their English so as to improve their 'image' and to help them appear "more professional".

6.4. TARGET SITUATION ANALYSIS

In this section, the data collected from both the questionnaire and interview regarding lecturers' wants and needs with regard to their future use of English, are discussed.

Lecturers were asked to indicate which language ability (regarding English) they consider to be most important for them to master, and why. Without exception, the lecturers responded that it was most important that their ability to SPEAK in English be of a high standard. They indicated that the reason for this is the fact that they use (and will use, in the foreseeable future) SPOKEN English most in their everyday activities and within their job-setting.

Lecturers were then asked questions related to which aspects of their use of English they would like to improve and for which purposes (i.e. for general use, for use in their occupation, for use in their own further studies, etc.) they would like to improve their English. The following is a summary of the lecturers' responses :

6.4.1. Aspects of their Use of English which the Lecturers Would Like to Improve

* All the lecturers indicated that they believe it is necessary to, and that they wish to, expand and improve their English VOCABULARY.

  The majority (80%) of the lecturers pointed out that they would wish to focus on learning vocabulary linked to their specific subject-area (e.g. Geography, Sociology, etc.); 60% indicated that they would like to focus on vocabulary of a general nature; and 10% indicated that they wish to focus on vocabulary lined to the expression of emotions.

* All of the lecturers indicated that they believe the use of correct GRAMMAR to be imperative, and that they feel that it is necessary to (and that they wish to) improve their English grammar. However, the majority of the lecturers pointed out that although they regarded grammar to be important, they believed that it was less important than the ability to communicate effectively.

* 30% of lecturers indicated that they would like to improve their PRONUNCIATION of English.

Lecturers were asked to indicate the priority which they assigned to the improving of various aspects of their use of English. Table 6 provides a summary of the responses given by the lecturers :

Table 6. : LECTURERS' PRIORITIES AS REGARDS THE LEARNING OF VARIOUS ASPECTS OF ENGLISH

	Extension of vocabu-lary	Improve-ment of grammar	Under-stand spoken English	Under-stand written English	Speak in English	Write in English
L1	4	1	5	6	2	3
L2	1	2	6	5	4	3
L3	3	6	5	4	1	2
L4		1	4	3	1	1
L5	1	2	5	6	3	4
L6	3	2	4	5	1	6
L7	1	2	5	6	4	3
L8	6	5	3	4	1	2
L9	3	3	6	6	4	4
L10	3	3	5	5	2	6

1 indicates highest priority
6 indicates lowest priority

L1 = Lecturer 1
L2 = Lecturer 2, etc.

When asked what they would hope to achieve from a 'language-improvement course', the lecturers responded as follows :

* 80% of the lecturers indicated that they would hope to improve their ability to SPEAK English.

* 80% of the lecturers indicated that they would hope to improve their English GRAMMAR.

* 70% indicated that they would hope to expand and improve their English VOCABULARY.

* 70% indicated that they hope to improve their ability to UNDERSTAND WRITTEN AND SPOKEN ENGLISH.

* 70% of the lecturers indicated that they wish to improve their ability to WRITE in English.

6.4.2. PURPOSES FOR WHICH LECTURERS WISHED TO IMPROVE THEIR ENGLISH

* All the lecturers would like to improve their English for **general purposes** (i.e. for use in everyday situations, for example, speaking to friends, when shopping, at the bank, etc.).

* All the lecturers indicated that they believe that English will be useful to them in the future, with regards to their careers, and for this reason they all wish to improve their English for use in presenting lectures and conference papers; the compilation of study manuals, tests, exams, etc; further studies; and other activities linked to their job description (i.e. **occupational** and **academic purposes**).

* 30% of the lecturers indicated that they would like to improve their English for use in a **private endeavour** (e.g. psychology private practice, etc).

6.4.3 SUMMARY OF THE INFORMATION OBTAINED FROM THE TARGET SITUATION ANALYSIS

From the above information it is clear that the lecturers have vastly different priorities regarding the improvement of their English. For example, whilst Lecturer 1, Lecturer 5 and Lecturer 7 regarded the expansion and improvement of their English vocabulary as being the highest priority, Lecturer 8 regarded it as being his lowest priority, and whilst Lecturer 1 and Lecturer 4 considered the improvement of their grammar to be of the highest priority, Lecturer 3 regarded this as being his lowest priority.

However, in general and on average, the highest priority was assigned to the lecturers' need to improve their ability to SPEAK in English. The improvement of GRAMMAR is given second priority, followed by the need to expand and improve VOCABULARY and the ability to WRITE in English. The ability to UNDERSTAND WRITTEN and SPOKEN English was the lowest (in general) of the lecturers' priorities regarding the improvement of their use of English.

All the lecturers indicated that they wish to improve their English for general purposes, as well as occupational and academic purposes.

6.5. INFORMATION REGARDING THE LECTURERS' PREFERRED LEARNING STRATEGIES

In this section the information obtained from the questionnaire and interview regarding the manner in which the lecturers would prefer to go about improving their use of English, is discussed.

6.5.1 LECTURERS' PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE OF LEARNING ENGLISH

Lecturers were asked questions related to their previous learning of English, and the method/s or technique/s of instruction used, and what they thought of this method/s or technique/s of instruction :

* All the lecturers indicated that they learnt English within the school-system.

* 20% of the lecturers learnt English during the first year of their tertiary education.

* Only one of the lecturers (Lecturer 3) made any previous attempt to improve his proficiency in English through, for example, attending remedial classes, etc.

* 90% of the lecturers indicated that they had received "traditional" (formal) instruction in English. They indicated that within the class-setting they had learnt English mainly by means of repetition, rule-learning and comprehension exercises. In all cases, no group work or little or no discussions in English had taken place during these classes.

* Only one lecturer (Lecturer 8) indicated that he had learnt English (at primary and secondary school level) by means of communicative language teaching methods (discussion, group work, learning by means of trial-and-error, etc.).

* Of the lecturers who indicated that they learnt English via "traditional" methods, all but one (namely Lecturer 9), indicated that they felt negatively about such a method of instruction and that they had not enjoyed this instruction.

* Lecturer 8, who was taught English using communicative language teaching methods, indicated that he felt positively about this method of instruction and that he had enjoyed his English instruction.

6.5.2. LECTURERS' PERCEPTIONS REGARDING THE BEST METHOD/S TO USE TO LEARN ENGLISH

Lecturers were asked questions related to which method/s they believe will best aid them in their attempt to improve their proficiency in English.

* 60% of the lecturers indicated that they prefer to learn a language by means of repetition, imitation and rule-learning.

* 30% of the lecturers indicated that they prefer to learn a language through trial-and-error (i.e. they are prepared to try to do something new in the target language, make mistakes, and learn from their mistakes).

* One lecturer (Lecturer 8) indicated that he enjoyed learning a language by means of both repetition and rule learning, and trial-and-error.

* All of the lecturers indicated that they prefer to master one aspect of language learning at a time (for example, to completely master the use of the future perfect tense, before moving on to learning about the use of articles, etc.).

* All of the lecturers indicated that they believed that they could learn from both the instructor and fellow learners in a `language-improvement course'.

* All of the lecturers indicated that a language-improvement course, designed specifically for lecturers, would be a way in which they would like to improve their proficiency in English.

* All the lecturers indicated that they are interested in both the results of instruction and the method of instruction employed in a course, and that they would wish to be given information by the instructor (during the course), regarding which method/s of instruction were being employed and why.

When the lecturers were asked which factors they believed to be most important in ensuring that English be learnt successfully, the following responses were given :

* 60% of the lecturers indicated that they believe that the most important factor in ensuring that English be learnt successfully, is that the course should be PRACTICAL in nature (i.e. the lecturers do not, for example, want to be taught how to analyse a poem, as they believe that the ability to analyse poetry is not relevant to the purposes for which they require English).

* 40% of the lecturers indicated that they believe it is very important that the instruction in a language-improvement course should be interesting and `learner-friendly´.

* 40% of the lecturers indicated that some form of external motivation or reward is important. For example, lecturers suggested that they would like to receive a certificate of some sort at the end of such a course.

6.5.3 LEARNERS´ PREFERRED LEARNING SITUATION/ENVIRONMENT

The lecturers were asked general questions related to the type of learning situation/environment in which they would prefer to attempt to improve their proficiency in English.

* All the lecturers agreed that both the instructor (of a `language-improvement course´) and the learner should be involved in making decisions regarding the content of a `language-improvement course´.

* 80% of the lecturers indicated that they would prefer to try to improve their English in classes which were divided into small groups (of 3-5 members) and where they could then discuss various topics through the medium of English within these groups.

* 20% of the lecturers indicated that they would prefer to learn English on their own by means of individual instruction.

* The majority (90%) of the lecturers indicated that they would be prepared to spend a maximum of between one and two hours a week on improving their English.

* All of the lecturers indicated that they would prefer the instructor of a `language-improvement course´ to be a colleague of theirs, rather than someone from outside of the university. However, the majority of lecturers did indicate that if an `outside-instructor´ were well-trained (in teaching English as a Second Language), and provided positive and constructive criticism (rather than negative and destructive criticism), they would be quite happy to receive their instruction from such a person.

* 90% of the lecturers indicated that they would not feel uncomfortable about making language errors within a class-setting and having these errors pointed out to them, if other participants in the course also made errors and had these errors pointed out to them.

* The majority (90%) of the lecturers indicated that they believe that their employer (the university) should cover most, or all, of the costs of such a course. The reasons given for this opinion were two-fold :

  1. By being able to attend a free course, lecturers would be encouraged to attend the course, rather than being discouraged by possible financial constraints.

2. The lecturers believed that the university (as an institution) will benefit if the lecturers improve their proficiency in English, as it will improve the 'image' of the university as well as improve the lecturers' ability to communicate, and therefore teach, their students.

6.5.4 SUMMARY OF INFORMATION RELATING TO THE LECTURERS' PREFERRED LEARNING STRATEGIES

Some conflicting information regarding the lecturers' preferred learning strategies was obtained in this study. Although, for example, the overwhelming majority of the lecturers indicated that they did not enjoy the 'traditional' method of language teaching (which involved rule-learning, repetition and imitation) employed by the school system, the majority indicated that they would prefer to learn a language by means of such techniques. It may be that the subjects have not been exposed to, or are not aware of, any other possible methods of language learning and teaching, and are therefore sceptical about learning a language by means of, for example, trial-and-error. It is also difficult to reconcile the fact that although the majority of the lecturers indicated that they would not like to learn a language by means of trial-and-error, all of them indicated that they would like to learn a language by means of actually using that language in the class setting (for example, in group or class discussions, etc), which would inevitably result in the use of some language which they have not yet completely mastered.

Other important information which was obtained regarding the lecturers' preferred learning strategies includes the fact that the lecturers would rather follow a linear learning pattern (i.e. they would prefer to master one item of language use before moving on to another) and that they are only prepared (or able) to devote between one and two hours a week to attempt to improve their proficiency in English.

6.6. INFORMATION REGARDING THE LECTURERS' ATTITUDES AND LEVEL OF MOTIVATION WITH REGARDS TO ENGLISH

Lecturers were asked to indicate whether they used, or avoided the use of, English in a number of different circumstances. The majority of the lecturers indicated that, as far as possible, they preferred to use Afrikaans rather than English at work; at the doctor, dentist, etc.; when shopping; at the bank, post-office, etc.; when socialising; and when deciding which newspaper or magazine to read, or which television programme to watch.

6.6.1 LECTURERS' PERCEPTIONS REGARDING THE NATURE OF ENGLISH

The lecturers were asked questions related to their perceptions of the nature of English.

* 90% of the lecturers indicated that they consider English to be a tool of communication, rather than as a collection of words, or a set of grammatical rules.

* 70% of the lecturers pointed out that they consider correct grammar (and particularly verb tenses) to be the most difficult aspect of English to master. 20% consider vocabulary to be the most difficult to master.

6.6.2 LECTURERS' PERCEPTIONS REGARDING THE RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF ENGLISH

Lecturers were asked questions related to their perceptions regarding the relative importance of the English language in South Africa, the world, the work-place, etc., and how they feel about this.

* All the lecturers agreed that the English language is extremely important in South Africa, and indeed the world, today.

* 80% of the lecturers indicated that they are unhappy about the fact that English seems to hold an elevated status (compared to that of the other official languages) in South Africa. These lecturers also pointed out that although they are not happy about this situation, they believe that they have no choice in the matter and that therefore they need to adapt to the circumstances.

* When asked whether they felt that the university should adopt some form of regulation regarding prospective (or even present) lecturers' proficiency in English, the response was mixed. Although almost all the lecturers believe that such regulations would be in the best interests of the university and her students, many indicated that **they** would not like to be subject to such regulations. In the words of one lecturer : "I might lose my job if they [the university] ever test my English".

* All the lecturers indicated that they believe that they will be forced to use English more and more in the future and that they are also going to be pressurised to improve their proficiency in English at some time in the near future.

* The lecturers indicated that the pressure to use English increasingly and to improve their proficiency in English, would probably be as a result of "indirect pressure" (i.e. pressure resulting from the current state of affairs in South Africa, the political circumstances, etc.), rather than from any specific person, group, their employer, etc.

* The majority of lecturers indicated that they feel unhappy about this state of affairs and that they feel some anxiety regarding their language-use and the place of Afrikaans in the future.

6.6.3 LECTURERS´ LEVELS OF MOTIVATION REGARDING THE IMPROVEMENT OF THEIR PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH

* 80% of the lecturers indicated that they feel motivated to improve their proficiency in English. Lecturer 8 and Lecturer 9 indicated that they believe that their proficiency in English is "good enough" for their present situation and they do not, at present, feel motivated to improve their English.

* When asked which factors would discourage them from taking part in a `language-improvement course´, 60% of the lecturers indicated that they would not wish to partake in such a course if the course did not address their specific language needs; 40% indicated that they do not think they have enough time to take part in such a course; and 20% indicated that they would not like to take part in such a course if the instructor or fellow-learners criticise them negatively.

* Finally, when asked if they would like to participate in a `language-improvement course´ for lecturers, all of the lecturers indicated that they would - provided that their needs are taken into consideration.

6.6.4. SUMMARY OF THE LECTURERS´ ATTITUDES AND MOTIVATION WITH REGARDS TO ENGLISH.

From the above information, it is clear that the majority of lecturers feel motivated to improve their proficiency in English and would like to take part in a so-called `language improvement course´ - if it addresses their specific needs. It would seem that this motivation is mainly of an external nature. All the lecturers appear to be very aware of the status of English as a `world-language´, as well as it being of immense importance in South Africa today, and it is such factors which provide the greatest part of their motivation to improve their English (external motivation).

6.7 CONCLUSION

The results of the Needs Analysis conducted in this study provide important information about the subjects' goal-oriented needs, process-oriented needs, wants and lacks. More in-depth information regarding the last of the categories of needs, namely **lacks**, was obtained from the Error Analysis conducted in this study. In the following chapter, the results of this Error Analysis are discussed.