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Department of English Language and Literature  
Level: 3<sup>rd</sup> year

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ESP Module: Semester 2

## Lecture 10: Needs Analysis General Overview

### *Lecture Description:*

The following lecture explains what Needs Analysis (NA) is, describes its types, and outlines its procedure. It also offers an NA framework for current trends in ESP and reviews some research studies conducted within that framework in the context of ESP.

**Learning Objectives:** By the completion of the lecture, students should be able to:

1. Make a difference between subjective (learning) needs and objective (target) needs.
2. Understand the importance and role of Needs Analysis in ESP.
3. Describe the procedures involved in conducting a Needs Analysis.

### **Introduction**

Needs Analysis (NA) plays a pivotal role in the development and implementation of effective ESP courses. It serves as the foundation upon which course designers and instructors identify and understand the specific language needs of their learners, considering both their current proficiency and future communicative goals. By conducting a thorough needs analysis, educators can ensure that the ESP course is relevant, purposeful, and tailored to learners' academic, professional, or occupational contexts.

#### **10.1. Needs Analysis in ESP Course Design**

NA is considered as the basic principal of ESP area (Robinson, 1991, p.7). Its centrality in ESP course design has been emphasized by many researchers (Munby, 1978; Richetrich & Chancerel, 1987; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Strevens, 1988 Nunan 1988; Berwick, 1989; Brindley, 1989; Robinson, 1991; West, 1994; Jordan, 1997; Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998; Basturkmen 2006; and Basturkmen, 2010). They consider it as the major defining feature in ESP. "it is worthwhile for ESP practitioners to juxtapose their perception to the students' perception in order to extract suitable materials" (Abdullah, 2005, p.50). Similarly, Long (2005) confirms that NA is an essential step in any language course design that can provide detailed and selective goals in addition to academic support to meet the learners' needs in the course time frame.

Needs analysis was firmly established in the mid-1970s as course designers came to see learners' purposes rather than specialist language as the driving force behind ESP. Over more than three decades, the "Needs Analysis" concept has existed in the field of language education. Many scholars have contributed to the growth of the NA concept in the ESP area (Munby, 1978;

Richterich & Chancerel, 1987; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Berwick, 1989; Brindley, 1989; Tarone & Yule, 1989; Robinson, 1991; Johns, 1991; West, 1994; Allison et al., 1994; Seedhouse, 1995; Jordan, 1997; Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998; Iwai et al., 1999; Hamp-Lyons, 2001; Finney, 2002).

## **10.2. Definitions of the word “Needs”**

There has been a great deal of debate over the definitions of the term “need”; henceforth, it is also difficult to have one definition of the concept 'needs analysis' as this term is "a controversial one in the field of ELT in general and the field of ESP in particular" (Brindley, 1989, p.28).

The first interpretation is “narrow or product-oriented needs.” The learner’s needs are viewed as the language they will use in a specific communication situation. It concerns the target language behavior, meaning what the learners must be able to do by the end of the language course. Widdowson (cited in Robinson 1991) calls this “goal-oriented needs” (p. 7), while Berwick (1989) used the term “objective needs.”

The second interpretation of needs, according to Brindley, is the “broad or process-oriented needs.” This involves analyzing the learner's individual needs within the learning situation. In this interpretation, the teacher aims to identify and consider both affective and cognitive factors that influence learning, such as the learner’s attitudes, motivation, awareness, personality, wants, expectations, and learning styles. This is also referred to as 'subjective needs' by Widdowson (1978).

## **10.3. Types of Needs**

According to Dudley-Evans and St John (1998), many scholars have introduced key terms where “needs” are described differently, such as: objective/subjective (Brindley, 1989, p. 65), perceived/felt (Berwick, 1989, p. 55), target situation/goal-oriented and learning, process-oriented and product-oriented (Brindley, 1989, p. 63). Additionally, there are necessities, wants, and lacks (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, p. 55). Dudley-Evans and St John (1998, p. 123) argue that the variety of terms has “helped the concept of needs to grow’ and that ‘each of these terms represents a different philosophy or educational value, and merits careful thought.’ Under the main term “need,” Hutchinson and Waters (1987) state that it covers two types: Target Needs and Learning Needs.

### **10.3.1. Target Needs**

Target needs specify what learners must do in the target situation; that is, what they need to be able to accomplish by the end of their language course. Therefore, needs “are perhaps more appropriately described as objectives" (Robinson, 1991, p. 7). According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987, p. 55), the term “target needs” is divided into: Necessities, Lacks, and Wants.

#### **a. Necessities**

Necessities refer to “the type of need determined by the demands of the target situation.” They are also called “Objective Needs” (Jordan, 1997, p. 25), meaning what the learner must know to function effectively in the target situation.

#### **b. Lacks**

They refer to what the learners do not know or cannot do in English. According to Jordan (1997), gaps are defined as the difference between the learners' current language proficiency and the level required at the end of the course.

c. **Wants**

Unlike necessities, wants are referred to as 'Subjective Needs,' which are related to learners' motivation, readiness, and attitudes toward learning. Bowers (1980, as cited in Jordan, 1997, p. 26) claims that students will learn best what they want to learn.

**10.3.2. Learning Needs**

Learning needs show how students can progress from their current state (deficits) to their desired outcomes (necessities). Robinson (1991, p.7) defines learning needs as "...what the learner needs to do to actually acquire the language." Similarly, Hutchinson & Waters (1987) emphasize that a relevant NA must consider not only the target situation needs, where the question "What the learners need to learn" is central, but also the learning needs, meaning "How the learners will learn." Learning NA gathers information about the learners, their learning styles and strategies, language skills, selection of teaching materials, the setting, and the time load.

**10.4. Definition of Needs Analysis**

Several scholars offer different definitions and perspectives on NA. Pratt (1980, p.79) describes NA as "an array of procedures for identifying and validating needs, and establishing priorities among them." Likewise, Holec (1980, p.1) views NA as "classical procedures by which a link can be established between the learners and the curricula." For Iwai (1990, as cited in Sanghori, 2008, p.3), the term NA "generally refers to the activities that are involved in collecting information that will serve as the basis for developing a curriculum that will meet the needs of a particular group of students." Additionally, NA can be defined as "what learners will be required to do with the foreign language in the target situation, and how learners might best master the target language during the period of training" (West, 1994, p.1).

Similarly, Dudley-Evans and St-John (1998, p. 125) define NA as "professional information about the learners: The tasks and activities learners are/will be using English for [...] target situation analysis and objective needs." Additionally, Graves (2000) notes that NA is a systematic and ongoing process of gathering information about students' needs and interpreting the information to create an effective course that meets those needs. Richards (2001, p. 51) defines NA as: 'procedures used to collect information about learners' needs.'

To sum up, NA plays a crucial role in improving and assessing ESP courses (Lindsay & Knight, 2006). NA serves as the initial step in the course design process, where various data are collected to assist the practitioner in determining the course's focus, content related to language and skills, and methodology.

**10.5. Significance of NA Process**

NA is ultimately a highly pragmatic activity based on highly contextualized situations (Tarone & Yule, 1989). In other words, NA is regarded as a fundamental step in all types of language learning and teaching contexts, whether for specific or general purposes, as it aligns

any learning program with the real-life needs of learners. It can be observed that many researchers emphasize the importance of NA in designing ESP courses (Richerich, 1983; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Robinson, 1991; Jordon, 1997; Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998; and Long, 2005).

Richards (2001, p.52) discusses this issue from the angle of curriculum design; he considers NA as 'fundamental' to the planning of language courses and in language teaching it serves different purposes which enable:

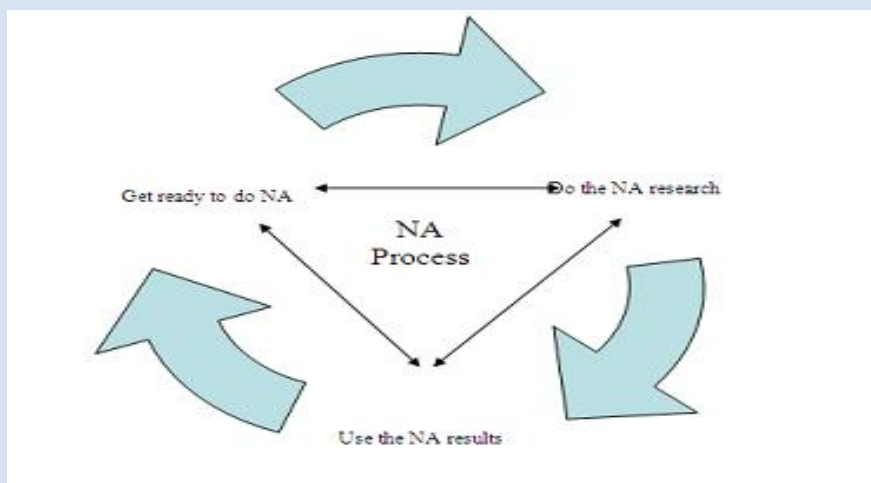
1. To find out what language skills a learner needs in order to perform a particular role, such as sales manager, tour guide, or university student.
2. To help determine if an existing course adequately addresses the needs of potential students.
3. To determine which students from a group are most in need of training in particular language skills.
4. To identify a change of direction that people in a reference group feel is important.
5. To identify a gap between what students are able to do and what they need to be able to do.
6. To collect information about a particular problem learners are experiencing.

Richards (1991) also emphasizes that gathering information from learners, teachers, administrators, and employers during the course planning process will help identify overall and specific language needs, as well as the content of the language program. Additionally, it will provide data to review and evaluate the existing program. In this regard, Brindley (1989, p.67) states that "language users learn more effectively if the programme content is relevant to their specific needs and interests." This clearly indicates that needs analysis (NA) is of great importance in ESP course design.

Furthermore, NA identifies the problem or need and then proceeds to identify the aims, content, implementation, target population and outcome of an intervention (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). "A needs analysis helps the teacher to understand the difference between where the learners are, in terms of communicative competence, and where they need to be to meet their business aims." (Fredo, 2005, p. 15). In the same line of thoughts, Abdullah (2005, p.76) indicates that lack of learners' needs awareness can create difficulties to learn ESP course effectively.

### **10.6. Needs Analysis Procedure**

For an NA process to be carried out systematically, a variety of procedures can be used, and the type of procedures selected determines the information acquired (Richards, 2002). Brown (2009) compares the NA models proposed by Jordan (1997), Schutz and Derwing (1983, p.35), and Graves (2000, p.100). He concludes that these models are more or less similar in that they all consist of three major stages, which are clearly shown in figure (6).



**Figure 10.1: A Framework for Doing NA (Mohammadi & Nacer, 2013, p.1015)**

Brown (2009, as cited in Mohammadi & Nacer, 2013, p.1016) explains his comprehensive NA framework, which consists of three main stages with ten steps.

**A. Get ready to do NA**

1. Define the purpose of the NA
2. Delimit the student population
3. Decide upon approach (es) and syllabus (es)
4. Recognize constraints
5. Select data collection procedures

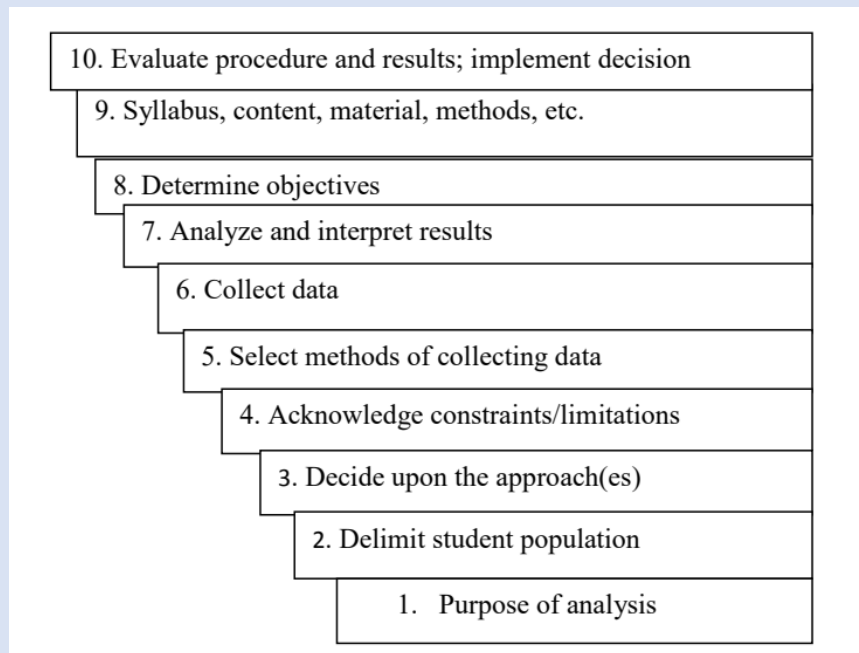
**B. Do the NA research**

6. Collect data
7. Analyse data
8. Interpret results

**C. Use the NA results**

9. Determine objectives
10. Evaluate the report on the NA project.

To present a balanced argument on NA and the steps taken to perform NA, the Brown's (2009) NA framework has been adopted in the current study aiming to conduct a comprehensive NA. Jordan (1997, p. 23) sees needs analysis as a systematic process and identified the steps ESP practitioners must follow in conducting needs analysis. The steps are as represented below:



**Figure 10.2. NA Procedure Steps Jordan (1997, p. 23)**

## Conclusion

To be concise, NA can play a crucial role at all stages of an ESP course, bringing relevance and making the learning experience more precise. Needs Analysis allows practitioners to design relevant courses in terms of topics and materials that meet the needs of participants.

## Practice:

**Task 1:** Read the following learner profiles and determine:

- The **objective (target)** needs
- The **subjective (learning)** needs

### Learner Profile 1: Nursing Students

A group of nursing students is enrolled in an ESP course in preparation for a clinical internship abroad. They will need to communicate with doctors, patients, and medical staff in English. They say they struggle with pronunciation, lack confidence in patient interactions, and are unfamiliar with hospital documentation in English.

### Learner Profile 2: Engineering Undergraduates

Fourth-year engineering students are taking an ESP course focused on technical writing. Their future jobs require them to write manuals, project reports, and emails. They mention difficulty expressing complex ideas clearly and organizing information logically in English.

### **Learner Profile 3: Business Professionals**

A group of mid-career professionals working in international business is attending an ESP course for workplace communication. They need to negotiate, write reports, and present proposals in English. Some express anxiety about public speaking and limited vocabulary in finance and marketing.\*

## **Lecture 11: Approaches to Needs Analysis**

### ***Lecture Description:***

This lecture presents different methods for conducting Needs Analysis (NA) in English for Specific Purposes (ESP). It reviews key models, including Target Situation Analysis (TSA), Present Situation Analysis (PSA), Deficiency Analysis, Strategy Analysis, and Means Analysis. Each method is explained in terms of its purpose, process, and use in actual ESP course settings. The focus is on how combining multiple methods can give a fuller understanding of learners' needs and result in more effective course planning.

**Learning Objectives:** By the end of this lecture, students should be able to:

1. Identify and define different approaches to Needs Analysis used in ESP.
2. Distinguish between TSA, PSA, and other types of analysis and explain their relevance.
3. Understand how each approach contributes to the overall NA process.

4. Apply selected NA models to hypothetical or real scenarios involving specific learner groups.

## **Introduction**

Several ESP researchers have explored the development of needs analysis approaches and models. Jordan (1997) outlines five primary approaches to NA: Target-Situation Analysis, Present Situation Analysis, Deficiency Analysis, Strategy Analysis, and Means Analysis.

### **A. Target Situation Analysis (TSA)**

The concept of "target need" is the result of a Target Situation Analysis (TSA). The term was first introduced by Chambers (1980, p. 29), who defines TSA as "communication in the target situation." According to West (1994), TSA is a type of Needs Analysis that emphasizes identifying learners' language requirements in the occupational or academic contexts they are being prepared for. Similarly, Robinson (1991, p. 8) argues that "a needs analysis, which focuses on students' needs at the end of a language course, can be called a TSA."

For Jordan (1997), TSA is best expressed through Munby's (1978) model, which emphasizes the learners' needs at the end of a language course and the target performance level. In his work, he introduced a NA approach with a communicative design, linking needs analysis to situations and functions, and creating a "Communication Needs Processor" (CNP) model that served as the foundation of the NA approach. Munby's model generates a profile of learners' language needs, which is then translated into "a communicative competence specification from which a syllabus can be developed" (Jordan, 1997, p.24). Munby's model involves two stages: the CNP and the needs profile, derived from the CNP in terms of micro-skills and micro-functions. Building on Munby's model, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) propose a framework focused on asking questions about the target situation and the attitudes of the various participants in the learning process toward that situation.

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

However, many researchers have criticized the limitations of Munby's model, arguing that it is not very practical. The model is considered rigid, takes a lot of time to report a target profile for each learner, and fails to prioritize the list of micro-elements and their linguistic functions. It also omits other affective factors (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; John, 1998; West, 1994).

### **B. Present-Situation Analysis**

The term Present Situation Analysis (PSA) was first coined by Richterich and Chancerel (1980) as a complement to TSA (Robinson, 1991; West, 1994; Tudor, 1996; and Jordan, 1997). Unlike TSA, PSA ascertains the students' state of language

development at the beginning of the language course. The sources of information are: learners themselves, the teaching establishment and the 'user institution'. Dudley-Evans and St John (1998, p.125) state that PSA "estimates strengths and weaknesses in language skills and learning experience". Broadly speaking, PSA addresses two aspects: "lacks" and "wants" (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Jordan (1997, p.26) explains that the necessities that the learner lacks can be also referred to as Deficiency Analysis (DA).

### **C. Deficiency Analysis**

As mentioned above, What Hutchinson and Waters (1987) consider as "lacks" can be directly linked to Deficiency Analysis (DA). DA attempts to analyse the gap between learner's present language level and the linguistic proficiency level that he would reach (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998). Therefore, DA can be used as the basis of the language syllabus (Jordan, 1997) because it could provide data about both the gap between present and target linguistic level, mastery of language, language skills, and learning strategies.

### **D. Strategy Analysis (SA)**

As its name indicates, this approach of NA deals with the strategies that learners employ in order to learn a language. In other words, SA focuses more on "the methodology employed to implement language programmes" (Nunan 1988, cited in Jordan 1997, p. 27). SA attempts to establish how the learners wish to learn rather than what they need to learn, West (1998, as cited in Sanghori, 2008, p.12). Allwright (1982) was the pioneer of SA; his departure was the students' perceptions of their needs in their own terms. In this respect, Allwright (1982, cited in Jordan, 1997, p.27) stresses that learners should take stand on the insight of their needs, and in return addresses three aspects:

**Needs:** The skills that belong to learners themselves;

**Wants:** The learners' needs that take precedence over any other ones;

**Lacks:** They imply the disparity between the learner's existent know-how and the desired one.

Finally, Allwright (1982, as cited in West, 1994) states that the investigation of learners' preferred learning styles and strategies gives us a picture of the learners' conception of learning.

### **E. Means Analysis**

Munby's model (1978) failed to consider logistics and pedagogy issues, the latter led to debate about practicalities and obstacles in implementing a needs-based language course. For this reason, Holliday and Cooke (1982) introduce Means Analysis as an attempt to adapt language course to local situations. In other words, MA "looks at the environment in which a course will be run [...] the environment in which the project will take root, grow healthily and survive" (Dudley-Evans & St John 1998, p.124). In this approach the course designer or the teacher first identifies the relevant features of the situation and then sees how the positive features can be used to advantage to accommodate what would conventionally be seen as constraints. Basturkmen (2010) provides a more explicit meaning of "mean analysis" as the "identification of the constraints and opportunities in the teaching situation" (pp. 18-19). Her

analysis included gathering information on the classroom culture, learner factors, teacher profiles, and the status of language teaching in the organization.

### **F.Learning Centred Approach**

In ESP area, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) consider knowing the starting point (PSA) and destination (TSA) is not sufficient. In other words, target situation can determine the destination but practitioners should choose the route according to the conditions of learning situation. Accordingly, a Learning Centred Approach emerged to respond to these approaches' deficiencies. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) strongly advocate this approach in which learners' learning needs play a central role contrasting other approaches that put much emphasis on language needs. They propose that more attention should be given to how learners learn.. They believe that such analysis will help the practitioners to know "what the learner needs to do in order to learn" (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, p.54). In this respect, they draw distinction between: Learner-Centered,: infers that 'learning is totally determined by the learner' and Learning-Centered: involves learning 'a process of negotiation between individuals and society' which includes in turn teaching, syllabus, method, materials, etc (Hutchinson & Waters. p.172).

For them ESP is an "approach to language teaching which is directed by specific and apparent reasons for learning" (1987, p.16). Based on this approach, learners should be taught skills that enable them to reach their target, furthermore the process of learning and motivation should be considered as the fact that learners learn differently (Sanghori, 2008, p.12).

In ESP realm, Hutchinson and Waters (1987, p.74) confirm that both; target needs and learning needs should be taken into consideration. They elaborate: The ESP learning situation and the target situation will both influence the nature of the syllabus, materials, methodology, and evaluation procedures. Similarly each of these components will influence and be influenced by others. In learning needs analysis, (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987, p.62-63) propose a framework which consists of different questions,. The framework proposed by them is illustrated in the following table:

**Table 11. 1: Analysing Learning Needs adapted from (Hutchinson & Waters, 1996, p.62)**

<b>Why are the learners taking the course?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compulsory or optional;</li> <li>• Apparent need or not;</li> <li>• Are status, money, promotion involved?</li> <li>• What do learners think they will achieve?</li> <li>• What is their attitude towards the ESP course? Do they want to improve their English or do they resent the time they have to spend on it?</li> </ul>
<b>How do the learners learn?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is their learning background?</li> <li>• What is their concept of teaching and learning?</li> <li>• What methodology will appeal to them?</li> <li>• What sorts of techniques are likely to bore / alienate them?</li> </ul>
<b>What resources are available?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number and professional and competences of teachers;</li> <li>• Attitude of teachers to ESP;</li> <li>• Aids;</li> <li>• Opportunities for out-class activities.</li> </ul>
<b>Who are the learners?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age/sex/nationality;</li> <li>• What do they know already about English?</li> <li>• What subject knowledge do they have?</li> <li>• What are their interests?</li> <li>• What is their socio-cultural background?</li> <li>• What teaching styles are they used to?</li> <li>• What is their attitude to English or to the cultures of the English-speaking world?</li> </ul>
<b>Where will the ESP course take place?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are the surroundings pleasant, dull, noisy, cold,...etc?</li> </ul>
<b>When will the ESP course take place?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time of the day;</li> <li>• Every day/one a week...etc;</li> <li>• Full time/part time;</li> <li>• Concurrent with need or pre-need.</li> </ul>

### 10.7. Dudley-Evans and St. John's Model of NA

Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998, p.125) design their NA model for Business English courses, which aims to gather the needs of the relevant stakeholders for effective ESP course development. In the following, Figure (4) identifies the eight factors in the Dudley-Evans and St. John's needs analysis model

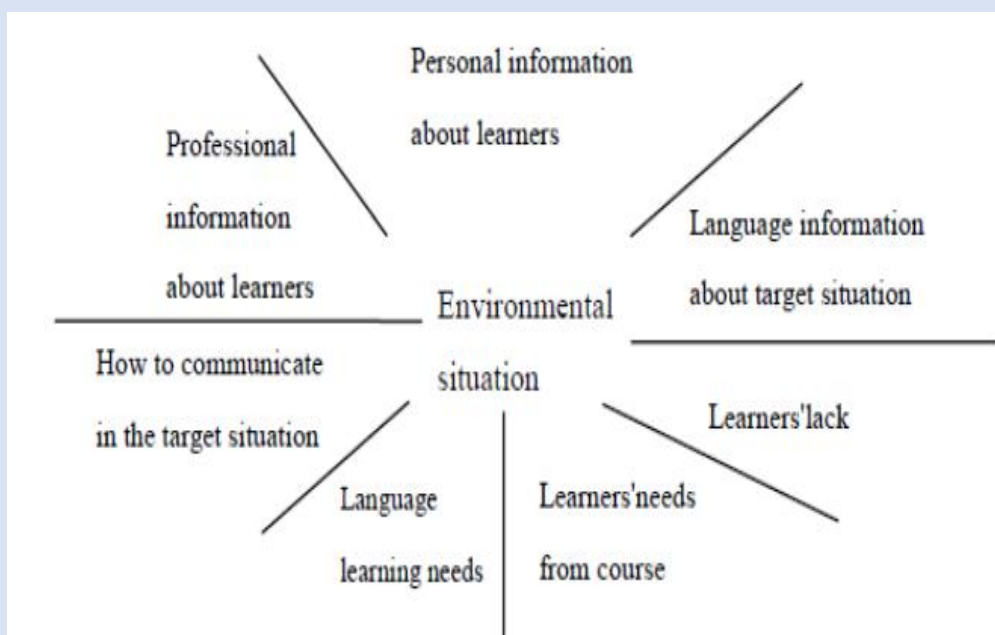


Figure 11.1: What needs analysis establishes (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998, p. 125)

Figure 1 illustrates the model suggested by Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998). This model focuses on (1) learners' professional information, (2) learners' personal information, (3) learners' language information about the target situations, (4) learners' lacks, (5) learners' needs from course, (6) language learning needs, (7) communication information in the target situation, and (8) environmental information.

Dudley-Evans and St John's (1998) model on language needs is practical and pragmatic all aspects as they clearly define and prioritize the main four components for ESP needs assessment: TSA (Target Situation Analysis), PSA (Present Situation Analysis) and LSA (Learning Situation Analysis) and MA (Means Analysis). In the present research NA questionnaire, the researcher used the same model's components and categorized them into sections and related questions for investigating HRM students' needs. These components are defined by Dudley-Evans and St John (1998), are as follows:

- A. professional information about the students: the tasks and activities students are/will be using English for-target situation analysis (TSA) and objectives needs.
- B. personal information about the students is concerned with learners' general profile, previous language learning experiences.
- C. English language information about the students: what their current skills and language use are- present situation analysis (PSA)-this could allow us to assess (D). PSA determines strengths and weakness in language skills.
- D. the students' lacks: the gap between (C) and (A)-lacks
- E. language learning information: effective ways of learning skills and language in (D)-learning needs-Learning Situation Analysis (LSA)
- F. knowledge of how language and skills are used in target situation-linguistic analysis, discourse analysis and genre analysis.
- G. students' needs from the course: what is wanted from the course?
- H. environmental situation: information about the environment in which the course will be run-means analysis.

Dudley -Evans and St John's (1998) model is a the most recent and comprehensive concept of NA which encompasses an eclectic approach which permits the researcher to conduct inclusive analyses of learners' needs . Moreover, this model combines both Munby's (1978) model and Hutchinson and Waters' (1987) Learning Centred Approach. That is to say, Dudley-Evans and St. John's (1998) NA model incorporates all previously mentioned approaches to NA: "target situation analysis, present situation analysis, deficiency analysis, strategy analysis or learning needs analysis, means analysis, register analysis, discourse analysis, and genre analysis" (p.125). Many scholars consider their model as a full NA model that would help ESP researchers in identifying the learner's needs efficiently and practically (Robinson, 1991; West, 1994; Songhori, 2008; Khan, Ghulamullah, Mohsin, Dogar, & Awan, 2011; Flowerdew, 2013).

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, Needs Analysis is not merely a preliminary step in ESP course design; it is a continuous and dynamic process that ensures the course remains aligned with learners' evolving requirements. Understanding the distinctions between target needs, learning needs, and learner wants helps educators create meaningful, learner-centered content. A well-conducted needs analysis ultimately enhances the effectiveness of ESP instruction by providing the right linguistic tools for learners to succeed in their specific domains.

### Practice:

**Task 1:** Match each type of Needs Analysis approach with its correct description. Write the correct letter next to each number.

No.	NA Approach	Match
1	<b>Target Situation Analysis (TSA)</b>	A. Focuses on the current language skills, strengths, and weaknesses of learners before instruction begins.
2	<b>Present Situation Analysis (PSA)</b>	B. Identifies the gap between learners' current abilities and the target situation needs.
3	<b>Deficiency Analysis</b>	C. Examines the learning strategies learners use or prefer in order to improve instruction.
4	<b>Strategy Analysis</b>	D. Investigates the learning context, including institutional constraints and available resources.
5	<b>Means Analysis</b>	E. Identifies what learners need to do with the language in their future target situation

**Task 2:** Read the scenario below and answer the questions that follow

You have been asked to design an ESP course for a group of hotel receptionists in a tourist-heavy city. Most learners are currently working but lack confidence when communicating with English-speaking guests. The administration has limited access to resources and time for training, and learners prefer hands-on activities rather than reading-based tasks.

1. Which types of Needs Analysis approaches would be most useful for this situation? Choose **two** and explain why.
2. What information would you need to collect to carry out each of the approaches you selected?

## **Lecture 12: Methodology and Factors in Conducting Needs Analysis**

### ***Lecture Description:***

This lecture introduces various methodologies used to conduct Needs Analysis (NA) in ESP, focusing on practical tools such as interviews, questionnaires, observations, and tests. It also examines key factors that influence the NA process, including institutional context, time constraints, and available resources. Students will learn how to select appropriate data collection tools and adapt them to different teaching situations.

***Learning Objectives:*** By the end of this lecture, students should be able to:

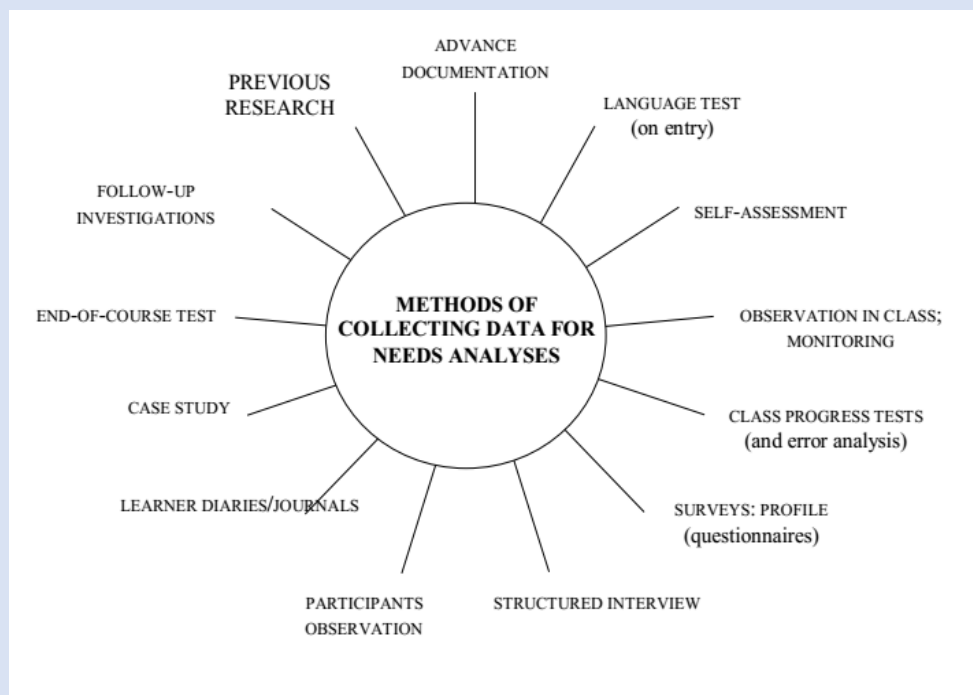
1. Identify and describe common methods for collecting data in a needs analysis (e.g., interviews, surveys, observations).
2. Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each data collection method.
3. Understand how contextual factors (e.g., time, access, institutional support) affect the NA process.
4. Choose appropriate tools and techniques based on the teaching and learning environment.

### **Introduction**

Many scholars shared the agreement on the diversity of the methods used to collect data in NA (Basturkmen, 2010; Chen, 2009; Brown, 2009; Long, 2005; Richards, 2002; Graves, 2000; Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998; Jordan, 1997; and West, 1994). ESP practitioners have a wide range of data collection methods to elicit the information needed to determine the needs for which the learner requires a language and arranges the needs according to the priorities.

#### **12.1. Data Collection Methods for NA**

According to Dudley-Evans and St John (1998, p.132), there are six main methods for data collection in NA, which include questionnaires, analysis of authentic spoken and written texts, discussions, structured interviews, observation, and assessments. Generally, data collection methods are primarily used to gather information about the learner to determine their learning objectives, the skills to focus on, the context in which the language will be used, with whom the language will be used, and the level of proficiency needed. Due to these factors, conducting NA with different data collection methods “leads to a very focused course” (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998). As figure (5) illustrates, Jordan (1997) proposes thirteen methods of collecting data.



**Figure 12.1: Methods of Collecting Data for Needs Analyses (Adapted, Jordan, 1997)**

Generally, questionnaires, interviews, and placement tests are the main tools used to collect NA data. The former are used to gather information on a larger scale (Brown, 1995; Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998; Graves, 2000). Additionally, they can include questions that other tools cannot cover. They also allow for a variety of questions such as bio-data, self-ratings, and judgmental ratings (Brown, 1995). Moreover, questionnaires are useful for collecting data from a large number of individuals. On the other hand, NA data can also be collected through interviews. Open-ended questions enable the collection of more authentic information from individuals (Brown, 1995). Generally, interviews are time-consuming; therefore, they are often used as follow-up to other methods like questionnaires. Along with interviews, placement tests are essential for determining the learner's level. The goal is to create homogeneous learning groups.

To summarize, to gather more NA information, different methods should be used together; this approach is called triangulation. It involves using more than one method of data collection and sources of information (West, 1997; Richards, 2001; Long, 2005; Brown, 2009). According to Long (2005, p. 28), triangulation enhances "credibility of...interpretations of data." Richards (2001) argues that each data collection method has strengths and weaknesses; thus, using multiple sources of information can complement each other.

## **12.2. Sources for NA Data Collection**

Sources of NA data collection are other methodological factors in NA that should be considered. Brown (1995), Dudley-Evans and St John (1998), Richards (2001), Long (2005), and Rahman (2015) agree that NA information has multiple sources. In this context, Brown (1995) categorizes data collection sources into four groups. The first is the target group, which includes learners, teachers, and administrators. The second is the audience, referring to people who are required to act on the NA results (such as course managers, supervisors, or any

governing bodies overseeing the language course). The third is the resource group, which can provide relevant information, including parents, financial sponsors, future employers, or specialization professors. The fourth consists of needs analysts, who are either external consultants or members of the institution.

Jordan (1997, p.29) supports that the stakeholders in needs analysis are the student, the course designer and teacher, the employer/sponsor, and the target situation. What is expected from each of them, he states, is as follows:

- a. Student: needs – present, current, subjective, felt, learning, learner-centred, wants/likes, lacks, deficiency analysis, present situation analysis (PSA) and process-oriented
- b. Course Designer and Teacher: purposes/needs- perceived needs, process-oriented, PSA, strategy analysis, means analysis, constraints, learning-centred.
- c. Employer/Sponsor: demands – product-oriented, PSA and TSA, language audits
- d. Target Situation: (Subject/department) needs – target, future, objective, target-centred, goal-oriented, aims, necessities, TSA, language analysis

## Conclusion

In summary, effective Needs Analysis relies heavily on choosing suitable methods and understanding the factors that can influence the data collection process. By combining quantitative and qualitative approaches and considering contextual factors such as institutional goals, learner characteristics, and time limitations, ESP practitioners can gain a comprehensive understanding of learners’ needs. Mastering these techniques enables course designers and teachers to make informed decisions that directly improve the relevance and success of the ESP course.

## Practice:

**Task 1:** Match each data collection method with its corresponding strength.

Method	Match
1. Questionnaire	A. Captures learners’ performance in real-life settings.
2. Interview	B. Collects large amounts of data efficiently.
3. Observation	C. Provides in-depth, personalized insights.
4. Placement Test	D. Helps determine learners' current proficiency levels.

## Task 2:

You are designing an ESP course for medical interns who are about to work in English-speaking hospitals. You are required to conduct a Needs Analysis, but you only have one week and limited access to learners. The hospital wants the course to focus on realistic communication situations.

1. Which **two methods** would you choose to collect data quickly and effectively in this situation? Justify your choices.
2. What **specific information** would you try to gather with each method?