NEEDS ANALYSIS OF THE SYRIAN UNDERGRADUATE
LEARNERS OF ENGLISH: TELESCOPING THE PAST
SIX YEARS OF CURRICULUM CHANGE PROJECT

SYNOPSIS

THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF

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Introduction:

Conducting a study which investigates and analyzes the needs of learners of English as a foreign language in any given context is not an easy thing to do. However, we feel that such a study would help in the discovery of some important guidelines which are likely to promote the process of acquisition/learning of a foreign language and optimally improve learners' level of proficiency. Our main concern has been to investigate the needs of Syrian learners of English and whether the new national English curriculum could address some of these needs. If the answer is "yes" then we have to trace the advantage of the new curriculum over the old one and what we can further do to promote the process of learning, and if not, then what the curriculum included and what the students need are two different things which have to be compromised and brought together. After all needs analysis proves to be attainable as we proceed from Chapter One to Chapter Six of this work.

Summary:

Chapter One highlighted some of the basic issues related to our study. Section one briefly discussed the importance of learning English in the contemporary world and surveyed the English language teaching methods available so far. It is a fact that English language is the most widely taught foreign language in the world. Reasons behind the overwhelming spread of English include imperialism, globalization, economically dominated politics, and the fact that it is the universal language of the internet. It is for these reasons that most countries are rushing for the best way to design, implement, and develop courses/curriculum to facilitate the process of teaching/learning English.

Methods and approaches to English language teaching go back over many years. They all revolve around the best sets of techniques used by teacher to
transmit a foreign language to learners. In a chronological order, we provided the reader with a brief summary of the methods and approaches to ELT available so far. These include Grammar Translation Method, the Direct Method, the Structural-Situational Approach, the Audio-lingual Approach, Notional-Functional Approach, and the Communicative Approach to English language teaching.

The development of new theories of language learning, under the impact of Chomsky's linguistics have led to theories investigating the learner's own innate language capacities and to revise views on both L1 and L2 acquisition leading to the evolution of SLA theory and research whose influence on language syllabus design is beginning to be felt. These studies along with communicative approach were later accompanied by curriculum studies to provide a body of theory and practice which can inform decision-making in language teaching curriculum development and innovation.

The second section in Chapter One aimed at putting the reader straightforward in the Syrian context. "Syria in the Past" summarizes the basic historic events that Syria witnessed since the dawn of history till the celebration of Evacuation Day and declaration of Independence in 1946. "Syria today" accounts for the great social, political, cultural and economical developments which Syria witnessed since 1946 onwards. We proceeded further to introduce the educational system in Syria which was followed by a brief summary of the English Language Teaching scenario in Syria. The aim of this section is to provide a historical overview of the ELT process in Syria. We gave an account of the English language National Curriculum and clearly distinguished between the old English curriculum and the new English curriculum which was implemented in 1996.
Chapter Two reviews the necessary theoretical issues related to the present study. It traced theoretically the notion of "Needs Analysis" and its importance and validity in syllabus design. Chronologically speaking, the notion of needs analysis has its origin in the work of Michel West (1926) who was the pioneer in this field. Many other scholars came after him and realized the significance of conducting Needs Analysis" for making the second/foreign English language syllabus more effective. In this context we reviewed Richterich's objective and subjective needs (1975), Munbay's Communicative Needs Processor (1978), Berwick's needs assessment in language program (1988), Bindley's role of needs-analysis approach (1970, 1980, 1983, and 1984), Nunan's learner-centered approach (1988), Graves's frame work of course development process (2001). We also referred to Widdowson (1978), and Hutchison and Water (1987).

Throughout the discussion, we made it clear that the mainstream activity in conducting Needs Analysis had been restricted to investigating the needs of students of ESP both in terms of describing their needs and then taking it into consideration in designing specific syllabuses. We also pointed out that the major trends in Needs Analysis unfortunately have been developed in bilingual and multicultural societies. These models show their inadequacies whenever they are applied to monolingual societies. We indicated that there is a need to push the Needs Analysis trend to acquire a new dimension which is more comprehensive in nature. We need to investigate the linguistic problems of a monolingual society to give a new orientation to foreign/second language learning and to widen its scope and improve its outcome.

Our aim was to make clear that Needs Analysis stands as an important link between students, teachers and course designers regardless whether we are up to designing ESP or GE syllabus. Since it is always possible to specify students'
needs (Hutchinson and Water 1987) and since GE has priority over ESP (Widdowson 1978) we concluded that Needs Assessment of students learning GE as a foreign language would definitely be fruitful and illuminating for GE curriculum designers.

Chapter Three dealt with the sample, tools, and procedures employed in this study to collect the required data from the subjects. It also described the scoring procedures and the statistical methods which we employed. It highlighted further the points which had been taken care of while attempting to analyze the data to get objective and reliable results as far as possible.

The sample in this study consists of (60) Syrian first year students from the English Department in AL-Ba'ath University. Two groups were isolated from the sample; "Group A" included students who were trained in the old English curriculum and "Group B" included those who were trained in the new English curriculum.

In order to collect the required data a questionnaire of seven parts was designed. Part one was intended to collect students' personal data. Part two, three and four, were intended to collect students' socio-psychological data and to illicit students needs for learning English. The rest of the questionnaire was intended to collect the necessary linguistic data. Statistical analysis of the data has been done with the use of the software SPSS for windows version 11.

The first three Chapters provided the theoretical background of the study and the method applied to carry out the research in a meaningful objective way. In Chapter Four and Chapter Five we shifted to analyze the data according to the approach discussed in Chapter Two.
Chapter Four starts with a definition of the notion of Objective Needs within the frame work of "Needs Analysis" as provided by Richterich (1975), Bindley (1970, 1980, 1983, and 1984), and Graves (2001). We shifted then to interpret the information collected from the first year Syrian undergraduate learners of English with regard to their objective needs for learning English. The objective needs of students consisted of analyzing two types of information- first, the students' background which includes country, culture, education, native language, age, sex and so on, and second, the analysis of the students' current language proficiency and language difficulties.

We pointed out that all students in our sample are Syrian nationals who belong to a monolingual society and speak one native tongue, namely Arabic. All the students are learning English as a foreign language. The majority of the students were found to belong to middle class with minorities who came from rich families. We pointed out that being rich does not avail one any special privilege because of two main reasons; first, Syria Constitution is built on the basis of socialism, and in a socialist country there is no advantage given to any group over the other; second, being a socialist country, all the students all over Syria study one national standard curriculum in both private and governmental schools.

Our sample consisted of two age groups. On average, students of "Group A" were found to be one year above the standard age which is 19 and we justified this by giving several reasons. Thereafter, we pointed out that the females' ratio in our sample was 80% whereas males' ratio was 20%. This can be attributed to the fact that girls in Syria opt for literature more than boys do. Boys have the tendency to go to more practical courses that might secure them a well-paid job in the future.
As we proceeded we analyzed the tense test to examine whether the students' control over different types of tenses could be arranged in an implicational order of difficulty - following (Agnihotri, Khanna, and Mukherjee 1994). The implicational scale showed that the all students in our sample are completely good in their control over five types of verbal forms; simple present, infinitival, simple past, conditional, and past continuous tense. The implicational scale also showed that the students did not have complete control over the other five tenses; present continuous, past prefect, present prefect continuous, past prefect continuous, and simple future tense. The mean score of the tense test showed that students of "Group B" were better than students of "Group A". This result partially reflected the advantage of the new curriculum over the old one.

Having completed the analysis of tense test for both groups, we conducted a comparison and contrast of the level of proficiency of both groups on the basis of the results of two cloze tests. The detailed analysis of the two cloze tests also revealed that "Group B" has performed better than "Group A" and was shown to have a better surface and academic proficiency. The reason behind "Group B" good performance can be attributed to the overall competence which they acquired after studying the New English Syllabus. On the basis of the analysis, we could identify some areas of weakness which need to receive special attention while modifying the new curriculum.

**Chapter Five** aimed at investigating the Subjective Needs of the Syrian learners of English. Here, learners are given the chance to spell out their wants and needs. This is likely to engage the abilities within the learners' developing competence in an area of cooperative negotiation, joint interpretation, and the sharing of expression.
Subjective Needs are as important as Objective ones. Unless Subjective needs are taken into account, Objective Needs may not be met. Therefore, we tried to derive the Subjective Needs of students from information about learner's attitudes, motivation and wants with regard to the learning of English. The spell out of students' attitudes towards the learning process and materials can be summarized from their responses as follows:

- The majority of students in both groups enjoy English classes.
- Students' attitudes towards materials on average were higher than their attitudes towards learning process.
- To some extent, both groups were reportedly satisfied with their English syllabus but not with the methods and approaches adopted by teachers in the classroom.
- "Group A" found the weekly period devoted to learning English sufficient whereas students of "Group B" found it insufficient.
- The majority of students in both groups were least satisfied with the availability of materials other than their textbooks.

On average, we found that students of "Group B" had higher attitudes than "Group A".

The next section in Chapter Five dealt with students' motivation for learning English since motivation is identified as the most powerful influence on learning. Following Gardner and Lambert (1972), we distinguished between instrumental and integrative motivations. Twenty items were given to the students and each item was given a four point scale ranging from "not important" to "very important". The response of the students can be summarized as follows:

- The first seven choices were found to be instrumental.
• Students' integrative motivation to learn English scored comparatively lesser than instrumental motivation.

• Learning English for Syrian students is a means not an end.

• Surprisingly the first choice for the students in both groups was item number 3 (It helps me to use computer and have access to Internet).

• On average students from "Group B" have scored higher motivation than students from "Group A".

The final section in Chapter Five was devoted to investigate students claimed control over English through answering two questions; first to arrange in order which skill they feel that they have best control over; secondly, the students were asked to state what they can do in English with regard to the four skills (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) in four items questions for each skill. This section aimed at involving learners and teachers in exchanging information (Nunan 1988). In the first question, students from both groups arranged in order the skills they feel that they best know as: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The second question contains four separate sections. Each section contained four questions to investigate what students can do in (reading, writing, listening, and speaking). The following findings can be drawn from the students' responses:

• All students in both groups arrange the skills in the same order.

• Students in both groups can do best in reading.

• Writing comes in the second position for the students in both groups.

• Listening came at the third position for both groups.

• Speaking came at the last position for both groups.

• The score of students of "Group B" was higher than the score of students of "Group A" concerning the four skills.
Although "Group B" scored higher than "Group A", still they have the same problems. The new curriculum devoted some effort to develop students' ability in listening and speaking but the students feel that they are in need for further training to have a better control over these skills.

Chapter Six presented the results of the statistical analysis. Twenty three variables were isolated from our questionnaire. We calculated the mean score and standard deviation for each variable, and presented the correlation analysis for all the variables.

Since proficiency in English was considered as the most important variable in our data, we tried to see what factors could affect it positively or negatively. On the basis of correlation analysis we saw that proficiency was influenced to some extent by age, sex, schooling, father and mother's education, father and mother's knowledge of English, attitudes, grammatical competence, and type of syllabus. Younger students were found to be better than elder ones. Females were also found to be to some extent better than males. Students who came from the scientific branch had also performed more satisfactorily than those who came from the literary branch. Proficiency was further found to be determined to some extent by father's education, mother's education, father's English and mother's English.

Thus, this study showed the significance of these social variables in relation to the level of proficiency. Attitudinal variables appeared to be highly significant in determining students' proficiency, whereas motivational variables turned out to be largely insignificant. To the extent proficiency in English correlates highly significantly with social variables and very insignificantly with motivational variables, proficiency appeared to be shaped by social rather than psychological factors. Finally, proficiency was found to be significantly determined by the curriculum that students had studied in schools. The study clearly showed that
students of "Group B" who had studied the new curriculum performed much better in Tense Test, Cloze (I) and Cloze (II) than students of "Group A".

As far as motivational variables are concerned, we noticed that students in Syria in general have a very high motivation for learning English. More importantly, the students' motivations in both Groups were found to be largely identical. All students in Syria want to learn English because they have to acquire it as a necessary tool for higher education, jobs, and social and economical development.

In short, this study has shown that if a learner is younger in age, has come from scientific branch, has educated parents who have some knowledge of English, has positive attitudes towards materials and process of language teaching in his/her school, and has studied a relatively good curriculum the learner is likely to have higher scores in English.

**Pedagogical Implications**

Implementing Needs Analysis has a significant role in the identification and examination of needs for any educational institution. An ongoing needs analysis should be a prerequisite for any program/course design in order to achieve effective instructional outcomes. Besides this, it can help educators and administrators to gain awareness of the 'context variable' (Chaudron, 1990) and program designers - to provide appropriate instructional input to promote effective learning.

Bearing in mind that administrators and educators traditionally rely on their perceived needs in specifying learners' felt needs, more objective assessment is required for a more effective instructional design. Therefore, an empirical
validation of needs is essential in order to get an objective state of affairs on these phenomena. An operational unit at language institutions can provide continuous objective and reliable data on changing needs of teachers and learners by administering questionnaires, interviews, diaries to all the participants. It can suggest an overview, reconsideration and redesign, if deemed necessary, of the curricula in general, syllabus design and instructional materials construction specifically, to enhance an effective instruction. The operation of such a unit can ensure that the institution is always informed, as regards the changing needs of teachers and learners, to make its plans accordingly.

Our study has shown that something fundamentally new had to be done to improve language learning. To help the Syrian learners achieve higher levels of proficiency in English, what we really need in the Syrian context can be summarized as follows:

- An ongoing needs analysis should be done for English curriculum design in order to achieve better effective outcomes.
- Since younger students were found to have a better level of surface and academic proficiency in English, it is recommended that teaching English in school should start as early as possible. In other word, instead of starting teaching English at class seven, we can start from class one, if not from the nursery level.
- Taking students' attitudes towards the process of teaching into consideration, it is suggested that English Teachers in Syria must attend annual professional courses in English to be acquainted with the latest developments and innovations in ELT methods/approaches.
- It also highly suggested that materials other than textbooks must be provided and made available at every school to enable students to enhance
and promote their level of proficiency. Such materials may include masterpieces in English fiction, drama, poetry, newspapers and magazines, advertisements posters, English movies, songs ... etc.

- With the absence of English target community which is a decisive factor in developing competence, it is recommended that the weekly period for studying English in schools must be extended as far as possible.

- Since most of the students in our study claimed to have a relatively poor control over listening and speaking skills, it is suggested that these areas must be given a special attention by teachers and curriculum designers and language laboratories are highly needed.

- Since schools are generally the first and most important place where students can learn English, and since schools fall within the immediate reach of teachers, parents, students to manipulate, we suggest that we should start with schools as a first step towards creating an acquisition rich educational environment. Level of proficiency in English in Syria is likely to improve if honest efforts are made to create an acquisition rich educational environment in schools.

Finally, this study was a modest step towards investigating the needs of Syrian learners of English and to see whether the new curriculum has addressed any of these needs. However, seeking a better level of proficiency in English in Syria remains a central research question for further studies, since there have been, and continue to be, needs which have to be met by curriculum, teachers, and course designers. It is, therefore, crucial to continue our attempts at needs analysis in order to arrive at a better understanding of the English Language learning/teaching scenario in Syria in order to affect better outcomes.
NEEDS ANALYSIS OF THE SYRIAN UNDERGRADUATE LEARNERS OF ENGLISH: TELESCOPING THE PAST SIX YEARS OF CURRICULUM CHANGE PROJECT

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Certificate

This is to certify that the thesis entitled "Needs-Analysis of The Syrian Undergraduate Learners of English: Telescoping The Past Six Years of Curriculum Change Project" submitted by Mr. Nader Yassin for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Linguistics has been completed under my supervision.

It is further certified that Mr. Nader Yassin has fulfilled all the conditions laid down in the academic ordinances with regard to the Ph.D. degree and that to the best of my knowledge the thesis contains his own research.

Professor A.R.Fatihi
Supervisor
To my wife

and my two lovely children:

Noor and Mohammad
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Preface

This study considers Needs Analysis; its importance and validity, in syllabus design is the point of departure. The study proposes the possibility of conducting a needs analysis in a monolingual society where English is taught for general rather than specific purposes.

It is an attempt to show that conducting Needs Analysis is important to throw light on the value of the new English syllabus and whether it has fulfilled all of, some of, or none of the students needs for learning English in a monolingual society. It also attempts to draw conclusions and to suggest some guidelines to be taken into consideration while modifying the new English curriculum in Syria to enable students to achieve their needs and promote their performance.

EFL/ ESL learners have a variety of needs due to various physiological, psychological, and educational factors such as age, previous education and cultural background (Peck, 1979). This entails a trend away from predetermined large-scale centralized curriculum towards programmes, which reflect and thereby meet learners' varying needs. As such, a systematic approach to identification of learners' needs is called for (Richards, 1985; Nunan, 1990; Jones, 1991; Pholsward, 1993; Benesch, 1996).

This study, therefore, investigates the needs of the Syrian undergraduate learners of English, telescoping the past six years of the gradual change of the Syrian English national syllabus. The study uses data collected from Syrian first year students of the Department of English, Al-Ba'ath University. The data were divided into two groups; "Group A" represents those who (were) trained in the old English curriculum and "Group B" represents those who (were) trained in the new English curriculum as to draw some comparison and contrast between them.

This study is built up on seven chapters. Chapter One accounts for the importance of English language and its impact on the whole world as a global
language and presents a summary of the English language teaching methods. In second section of this chapter some light has been spotted on Syria and its education system.

Chapter Two reviews the necessary theoretical issues related to the present study. Chapter Three accounts for the method we followed in conducting this research. Chapters Four and Five are devoted to present the results of data analysis concerning subjective and objective needs. Chapter Six deals with the descriptive statistics and correlations found among the variables, to be followed by a summary of the findings, a conclusion, and some recommendations in Chapter Seven.
Chapter One
Preliminaries

1.0 Introduction

This chapter is intended to highlight some of the basic issues related to our study. The chapter briefly looks at the importance of English language and the learning of English in the contemporary world and presents a summary of the English language teaching methods available so far. It also talks about Syria in the past and in the present and gives an account of the Syrian educational system and the scenario of English language teaching as well.

1.1 The English Language

English spread was foreseen, by John Adams, who, in the late of 18th century, made the following prophesy (cited by B. Kachru 1992) "English will be the most respectable language in the world and the most universally read and spoken in the next century". This view is built on the idea that substantial numbers of English speakers migrated from British Isles to, for example, New Zealand, Australia and North America and have brought with them the source of language and its potentials for change. Quirk et al (1985) states four criteria to judge on the importance of a language:

'One criterion is the number of spread of the language. A second is the extent to which a language is geographically dispersal: in how many continents and countries is it used or is a knowledge of it necessary? A third is its functional load: how extensive the range of purposes for which it is used? In particular, to what extent is the medium for highly valued cultural manifestations such as a science or a literature? A forth is the economic and political influence of the native speaker of the language?'

(Quirk et al 1985:3)
In considering the above criteria, we can say that the number of the native speakers of English is more than 300 million. But the spread of English over most of the world as an international language is a unique phenomenon in the world's history: about 1500 million people – over a third of the world's population – live in countries where English has some official status or more or one of the native languages, if not the dominant native language. English leads as the primary medium for twentieth century science and technology and its functional load tremendously felt in twenty-first century. The choice of an international language, or lingua franca, is never based on linguistic or aesthetic criteria but always on political, economic and demographic ones (ibid).

The other factor behind the spread of English is colonialism over Asian and African countries. Thus, the language was brought into new socio-cultural contexts by a very small number of users; nevertheless, English becomes extremely important and useful to the much larger local populations, who have continued to expand the roles of English, often with greater vigor in post-colonial times (Kachru & Nelson 1996: 72).

In fact, the English Language is the most widely taught foreign language in the world, chosen most often as the first language of study. The reasons behind the importance of English language are imperialism, economically politics and the fact that it is the universal language of the Internet. Generally speaking, when a language has got the position of a universal language, the position tends to be affirmed and extended by itself. Since “everyone” knows and uses English, people are almost forced to learn English and use it, and learn it better.

English has emerged as a truly global language. It is more widely scattered, more widely spoken and written, than any other language has ever been. It has become the language of the planet. Seventy-five percent of the world’s mail, its telexes and cables are written in English. It is the language of technology from Silicon Valley to Shanghai with ninety percent of the world’s electronically stored information in English. As a point of fact, the majority of the 50 million Internet
users communicate through the medium of English. Likewise, more than half the scientific and technical journals and periodicals published worldwide are printed in English. It is the official voice of the air and of the sea.

Given the totality of these statements, the importance of English cannot be underestimated. Moreover, it is for these reasons that most countries are rushing for the best way, advanced methodology to design, implement, and develop courses /curriculum to facilitate the process of teaching English.

1.2 English Language Teaching

In 19th century and with the coming up of educational opportunities modern languages came to occupy a place in the school curriculum. Two traditions are there at work in language teaching; Modern Language Teaching (MLT) and English Language Teaching (ELT).

MLT, as accounted for by Hawkins and Howatt, drew upon the model of Latin teaching which was taught through the Grammar-Translation Method. The modern languages become fixed within the grammar school system, which was heavily influenced by the academicism of the universities. Grammar-Translation Approach involves the learning and application of rules for the translation of one language into another. Knowledge of rule is regarded as being more important than application and the focus is on teaching about the language. There is no oral or pronunciation work, since it is the written language, which is taught, and 'mental discipline' is stressed rather than any ability to use the language practically. Howatt (1984) says:

‘high priority is attached to meticulous standard of accuracy which, as well as having an intrinsic moral value, was a prerequisite for passing the increasing number of formal written examinations that grew up during the nineteenth century’.

(Howatt 1984:132)
ELT tradition can be traced to a group of teachers who came together at the end of the 19th century under the banner of Reform Movement. This Movement advocated an approach to language teaching which challenged the tradition already established by MLT – a challenge which largely ignored by MLT but which founded the basis for British ELT tradition (White 1988). The Movement was a remarkable display of international and disciplinary co-operation in which the specialist phoneticians took as much interest in the classroom as the teachers did in the new science of phonetics (Howatt 1984:169). Reform Movement linguists emphasized that speech rather than the written word was the primary form of language. The International Phonetic Association was founded in 1886, and International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) was designed to enable the sounds of any language to be accurately transcribed (Richards & Rogers 1986).

Henry Sweet (1899) said that sound methodological principles should be based on a scientific analysis of language and a study of psychology. The main principles of Reform Movement are the primacy of speech, the emphasis on the centrality of connected text as the heart of the teaching-learning process, and priority of an oral methodology in the classroom (White 1988:11).

The scientific study of language was developed further in the works of Harold Palmer (1917, 1921, and 1924). He “provided a statement of intellectual principle on which the English language teaching profession was to be build for the next half century ”( Howatt 1984: 232 ). Palmer contribution was influenced by Bloomfield’s An Introduction to The Study of Language (1914), a seminal work in the evolution of American structuralist linguistics and the Audio-lingual Approach.

The roots of Audio-lingual Approach goes back basically to American linguists and in order to devised in America during the Second World War. Its focus was on the learner’s ability to gain the communicative skills required in everyday discourse, particularly the skills of listening and speaking in the target
language. The method was started in accordance with Moulton's first slogan: 'Language is speech, not writing' (cited by G. Nagaraj 1996:79).

Palmer's methodological principles which recently revived by Krashen (1982), whose contrast between 'acquisition' and 'learning' is a basic tenet for his Input Hypotheses, acted as strong influence on ELT methodology for the next two generations. Both, Palmer and Krashen drew a distinction between the capacity of a learner to pick up a language in an informal and untutored fashion compared with the ability to learn through formal classroom study.

Michael West (1926) carried out what would now be called Needs Analysis (to be further discussed in Chapter Two). In his report about Bengali pupils, he reflected his belief that the current approach to teaching English had 'low surrender value' because pupils derived little benefit from the amount of teaching they received during an incomplete course of instruction. He advocated developing practical information reading in English, which would enable Bengali to have access to the technological knowledge needed for economic development of their country.

Hornby (1954) termed his method the Situational Approach, as each new pattern or lexical item should be introduced to the class in advance of the work with the text, and the presentation be linked to classroom situation in which the meaning of the new item would be established. In fact, Situational Approach came to existence as a reaction against Direct Method of teaching English, in which the learners were exposed to the whole body of the language to begin with and then expected to gradually absorb its grammatical patterns.

In Situational Approach, grammar or the structure was the starting point in teaching language. Language is viewed as structurally related elements for the encoding of meaning, the elements being phonemes, morphemes, words, structures and sentence types. The structure of the language was identified with its basic sentence patterns and grammatical structures. The language was taught by
intensive oral drilling of the basic sentence patterns. Teaching techniques concentrated on repetition of a pattern a number of times so that the learner becomes perfect in the use of the pattern. Systematic courses and materials were developed based on important patterns to teach English as a second language. Hornby, actually, united the tradition of oral advocated by Palmer and the concern of Sweet and Jespersen with connected text.

ELT evolved from an applied linguistics base established by the late 19th century Reform Movement and Palmer, West and Hornby, within the British tradition, and by Bloomfield, Fries and Lado within the American tradition. While the American tradition focused on grammatical structure as the basis for the content of the language syllabus, the British school developed an interest in contextualized language use, which was combined with longstanding concern with language structure.

The development of new theories of language learning, under the impact of Chomskyan linguistics, gave rise to theories of the learner's own innate language learning capacities and to revise views on both L1 and L2 acquisition, leading to the evolution of SLA theory and research, whose influence on language syllabus design is only just beginning to be felt.

The purely linguistic nature of competence, as defined by Chomsky, was extended by Hymes (1966) to embrace the capacities underlying the communicative use of language (to be further discussed in Chapter Two). Hymes chose to adopt Chomsky's notion of competence as his starting-point and build from it a broader framework for the description of language use to which he gave the name 'Communicative Competence'. Believing that what was crucial was 'not so much a better understanding of how language is structured, but a better understanding of how language is sued'. Hymes and his colleagues' ideas sounded a new note in American linguistic studies which found echo in many of the practical problems and issues confronting workers in language education in the United State in the late sixties and early seventies. It was also consonant with
many of the ideas and aims of contemporary British research in general and applied linguistics.

Under the effect of structural linguists whether they are American or British who emphasized differences among languages as revealed in Contrastive Analysis, The Council of Europe emphasized that all languages expressed the same meanings, but with differing structural realization. This approach came to be called Notional-Functional Approach (to be taken up again in Chapter Two).

In addition, the interests of British and American schools of thought have come together in their concern with learning language for the fluent expression of the language user's intentions in a variety of contexts. A reappraisal of the principles upon which content and methodology are selected has been accompanied by a consideration of the role of language teaching education, and by the realization that curriculum studies may provide a body of theory and practice which can inform decision-making in language teaching curriculum development and innovation (White 1988: 21-22).

In the next section in this chapter our concern will be focusing on the context of the Syrian ELT process and educational system as well. To bring Syria into the scene, we have introduced some historical, geographical, political, and educational account of the country.

1.3 Syria

Syria is where the first alphabet was invented. This alphabet is called Ras Shamra alphabet in the city of Ugarit near Latakia today. Ugarit was a city on the Mediterranean coast of northern Syria. Its golden age dates from about 1450 to 1200 BC. The alphabet or Ras Shamra is considered a real document of the second millennium before Christ! It is an alphabetical script of 30 cuneiform signs (AncientNearEast.zzn.com). This has enriched human civilization with culture, science, and literature. Along its Mediterranean coast, silk caravans passed its
fertile land provided the world with wheat and so blessed humanity with prosperity. Trade caravans crossed the desert in winter and walls have witnessed, generation after generation, great civilization that have flourished and died leaving their ruins as a testimony to their glory and majesty.

1.3.1 Syria in the Past

Historians and political scientists usually use the term Great Syria to refer to the whole region Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine. This area was one part even though it suffers from a number of occupations through history. Many civilizations came to be clashed with the local one.

Enormous number of Greek immigrants flocked to the Kingdom of Syria. Syrian trade was vastly expanded as a result of the new comers’ efforts, reaching into India, the Far East, and Europe. The Greeks built new cities in Syria and colonized existing ones. Syrian and Greek cultures synthesized to create Near Easter Hellenism (www.congress library.com).

Replacing the Greeks, Roman emperors inherited already thriving cities Damascus, Tadmur (once called Palmyra), and Busra al-Sham in the fertile Hawran south of Damascus. By the time the Romans arrived, Greater Syrians had developed irrigation techniques, the alphabet, and astronomy.

In 629 AD Islam spread in the region and Damascus surrendered (635) to the great Muslim General, Khaled ibn al-Walid. The land called at that time Biladu Sham. The word ‘Sham’ derived from the Arabic word for dignity, indicating the high regard most Arabs have had for Damascus. Biladul Sham was the area which contains what is known now as Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine. In 661AD Umayyad Caliphate started in the area by Muawiyah and the capital was Damascus.

From 1516, Ottoman Emperor (Suliman al Qanuni) conquered Syria with unlimited authority over the land. The situation was very bad under the Turkish
occupation. The population decreased by nearly 30 per cent because of poverty and starvation. During the First World War, the British supported Arabs against the Ottoman in the war of 1916 and desiring to strengthen their position vis-à-vis the French in the determination at the Middle East's future asked Sherif Hussein, leader of the Hashemite family, to lead the Arabs in revolt.

At the same time while Arabs were proceeding in victory against Ottoman Empire British and French invaded the region and divided the area into parts in their mandate as Palestine and Jordan under the occupation of British, Syria and Lebanon under the French by an agreement called Sykes-Picot Agreement of 16th May 1916. British also declared what is known as Balfour Declaration of 1917, which promised Zionists a 'national home' in Palestine. This declaration was achieved in 1947 when Zionists invaded Palestine and became what is known nowadays as Israel.

French planned to establish sectarian states and sought to increase their strength by supporting and separating religious minorities and thereby weakening the Arab National Movement. Syrian nationalists continued to assert that French should leave the region by many local revolutions. The struggle against French army continued till French evacuated Syria. On April 17, 1946 Syria celebrated Evacuation Day, the date is a national holiday.

1.3.2 Syria Today

The legacy of ancient Syria, the Arab Empire, Ottoman Rule and the French Mandate left the people of Syria with loyalties to both their own nation and their neighbors. Syria today constitutes a small portion of the ancient geographical Syria. Syria today located on the eastern part of Mediterranean Sea. Its neighbors are Turkey from the north, Iraq from east, Jordan and Palestine from south and Lebanon from west and it is of 185,180 sq. Km (see Appendix VIII) with population amounts to 16,728,808 (www.loc.gov/frd/sytoc.html/).
Arabic language is spoken in Syria. Throughout the Arab world, the Arabic language is wrongly given as an example of diglossia in almost all the books of linguistics and linguistic dictionaries. Arabic language in reality is used and exists in three forms: Classical Arabic of the Quran, the literary language developed from the Classical and referred to as Modern Standard Arabic which has virtually the same structure wherever used, and the spoken language which is Syrian Arabic in Syria, Egyptian Arabic in Egypt and so on so forth. The Arabic language, thus, unlike diglossia, has one high standard or variety and as many low varieties as there are Arab countries. Educated Arabs therefore are bilinguals, with knowledge of both Modern Standard Arabic and their own dialects of spoken Arabic. Even uneducated Arabic speakers usually comprehend the meaning of many things said in Modern Standard Arabic even though they are not able to speak it. Arabs almost unanimously believe that the Arabic language is their greatest historical legacy.

The Syrian society is composed of a number of cohesive groups recognizing a common heritage and exhibiting great solidarity. Both linguistic and religious characteristics define these Syrian people. The majority of the Syrian populations are Muslims with some minority such as Christians and few Jews. Syrians are conscious of the Islamic-Arab tradition. This is true of Arab Christians, who follow Muslim customs in many of their daily activities and look with pride to the greatness of the Arab past. Syrians are addressed in political speeches as 'descendents of Umayyad', 'Arab citizens', 'Brother Arabs', and 'descendants of Ibn al Walid and of Saladin'.

From independence in 1946 through the late 1960s, Syria stood out as a particularly unstable country. A series of military coups had brought political turbulence to the region. In 1970 when Hafiz Assad came to power, he provided Syria with a period of uncommon stability.

During Al Assad era Syria witnessed great developments politically, socially, culturally, and economically. After October war 1973 the Syrians
enjoyed a period of peace and harmony and were more directed towards achieving higher levels of education and better life styles. Poverty, ignorance, illiteracy, and health problems were reduced to the minimum. Syria today is a country of well-established peace; civilized, technologically and socially developed. It is a country where morality reigns supreme; where virtues and morals outweigh false ideals of the modern highly industrialized civilizations.

1.3.3 Education System in Syria

The educational and cultural system in Syria aims at creating a socialist nationalist Arab generation which is scientifically minded and attached to its history and land, proud of its heritage, and filled with the spirit of struggle to achieve its nation's objectives of unity, freedom, and socialism, and to serve humanity and its progress. It is stated in the Syrian Constitution that "the nationalist socialist education is the basis for building the unified socialist Arab society. It seeks to strengthen moral values, to achieve the higher ideals of the Arab nation, to develop the society, and to serve the causes of humanity. The state undertakes to encourage and to protect this education".

Since 1967 all Syrian schools, colleges and universities have been under close government supervision with tuition-free public schools. The Ministry of Education is primarily responsible for all aspects of administration, including curricula development. The Syrian Constitution adopted in 13th March in 1973 included the idea of free education as follows:

**Article 37 [Free Education]**

Education is a right guaranteed by the state. Elementary education is compulsory and all education is free. The state undertakes to extend compulsory education to other levels and to supervise and guide education in a manner consistent with the requirements of society and of production.
1.3.3.1 Schooling

Schooling is divided into 6 years of compulsory primary education, 3 years of lower secondary education / preparatory school, and 3 years of upper secondary education. General secondary education offers academic courses and prepares students for university entrance; the last 2 years of this stage are divided into literary and scientific streams.

Vocational secondary training offers courses in industry, agriculture, commerce, and primary school-teacher training. The usual entrance age for primary school is seven and the usual entrance age for university is 18 years. This system was established in 1967, when the country signed the Arab Cultural Unity Agreement with Jordan and Egypt.

The demand for education has increased sharply. In 1984 one million boys and 818,000 girls attended primary schools, which numbered 8489 schools. Nearly 1600 secondary schools enrolled over 700,000 pupils. The number of schools and pupils are being increased year after year.

1.3.3.2 The Ministry of High Education

Ministry of High Education supervised four universities, one each in Damascus, Aleppo, Latakia, and Homs. Damascus University is considered as the first institution for higher education and the mother University of the Four Universities in Syria.

Damascus university had its origin from the Medical Institute (founded in 1901 and started in 1903), and the School of Law (founded in 1913), in 1923 it was named the “Syrian University”. After independence, new faculties were founded, and in 1958, the old faculties together with the recently founded ones were given the name of “Damascus University”. Higher education flourished after the Eighth Of March Revolution in 1963 and was given support after the Correctionist Movement led by Mr. President Hafez AL-Assad in 1970 who paid
special attention to higher education. It is inevitable to say that Damascus University was the pioneer in the Arab World in using the Arabic Language as a medium of instruction at the University. In 1923 Damascus University had faculties of law, medicine, pharmacology, letters, dentistry, Islamic jurisprudence, agriculture, architecture, engineering, science, fine arts, commerce, and education. At the beginning of the current century, when Damascus University was founded, the number of students did not exceed 650 students of both sexes. The number increased constantly until it reached 75,760 students in the academic year 1998-1999.

The university of Aleppo, opened in 1958, had faculties of engineering and sciences, agriculture, etc. Tishreen University in Latakia has similar curriculum. Al Ba'ath University in Homs opened in 1979 started with petroleum engineering and veterinary faculties and expanded later to contain faculties of Arts and Human Sciences, medicine, mathematics education, agriculture, and mechanical engineering etc. In 1980s the Syrian government was attempting to expand enrolment in its university faculties of science. In 1984, the number or graduates in medicine were 948 doctors and 1693 engineers with 3100 students from the faculties of Arts and Literature.

Recently the government of Syria has built and opened the country's first electronic university. It is called the Syrian Virtual University. The new, state-owned institution, known as the Syrian Virtual University, has begun accepting students and plans to be operational for the fall semester with an enrollment of 600. The university will be entirely online. Syrian students will use the facilities and advising network in Syria, but will obtain degrees from the foreign universities. The virtual university will concentrate on science, engineering, and information technology - fields in which Syrian universities traditionally have lagged. While instruction will be in English and European languages at first, ambitious plans call for eventually franchising the university throughout the Middle East, with courses taught in languages like Arabic, Armenian, and Farsi.
"Our target isn't only Syrian students," says Hassan Risheh, the minister of higher education. "I have been to Central Asia, and I've seen how hungry they are for knowledge about Islam and Islamic culture. We could also teach them a lot about our own ancient Mesopotamian heritage through interdisciplinary programs."

The Syrian government has given an unprecedented amount of support to the new university. "Higher education is the key to the success of our national economy," says Mr. Risheh. "We must encourage science and technology and focus on a wide range of research, and we can do that through the Syrian Virtual University. We are suffering from a lack of participation in the global economy, and higher education is our way out." (http://chronicle.com/free/2002/06/2002061901.htm)

1.3.3.3 University level

This level is consists of three stages. The first stage is the Licence/Bachelor stage. The Licence/Bachelor Degree is awarded after four to six years study depending on the subject. In Arts, Humanities, Law, Islamic Law, Economics, Social Sciences and Fine Arts, studies last for four years; in Engineering, Architecture, Agriculture, Pharmacy, Dentistry and Veterinary Science, five years. In the faculties of Engineering, including Architecture, the Licence is awarded on the results of the final year examination and of a practical project. In Medicine, the Licence/Bachelor of Docteur en Médecine is awarded after six years, marking the end of the first stage of medical studies.

The second stage is the Master's Degree, Postgraduate Diploma. The Master's Degree is awarded after a minimum of two years' study beyond the Licence/Bachelor Degree. A Postgraduate Diploma is conferred after one year's further study.

The third stage and highest level is the Doctorate Degree. It is awarded after three years' study following the Master's Degree. It involves personal research work and the defence of a thesis.
1.3.3.4 Teacher Education

Training of primary/basic school teachers: Primary school teachers are trained at Teacher Training Schools, Teacher Training Intermediate Institutes and Sports Institutes where they obtain a Primary Teaching Certificate, Shahâdat Ahliyyat Al-Ta‘lîm Al-Ibtidâ‘i.

Training of secondary school teachers: Teachers for intermediate education who hold the Baccalaureate attend a two-year training course. Graduates may teach without special training. Secondary school teachers attend the Faculty of Education at the Universities. They must be graduates. A Diploma and a Special Diploma in Education are conferred after one year’s study. For subjects where there is a shortage, preparatory school teachers are trained in two-year courses at an intermediate Institution. Vocational secondary teachers must hold the Technical Baccalaureate and follow a two-year course at an intermediate Institution. As from 1997, Teachers and Teacher Assistants will be trained in the Faculties of Education.

Training of higher education teachers: Teachers must hold an MA or a Ph.D to be appointed as assistant teachers, or teachers at the university level. Every year the Ministry of Higher Education offer many scholarships to graduate nominees who have done well in their studies to allow them to follow postgraduate studies either in Syria or abroad. After completion of postgraduate studies, these scholars have to teach at the Syrian universities for a minimum of ten years. The government offers many facilities for higher education teachers and highly appreciates their efforts to impart to new generations what they have learnt.

1.3.4 English Language Teaching In Syria

Syria like any other developing country tries to devote much effort for more advanced techniques and methods for teaching modern languages. Before 1996
not to much care given to the teaching of English not to mention the poor English syllabus which hardly addresses the demand of acquire a good grasp of English. Nowadays the situation is completely changed.

1.3.4.1 The general scenario

In a monolingual society like Syria, it is common for children to acquire one language as first/native language. When they first start school, all Syrian students are fluent in only one language, namely, Arabic. They start to learn a foreign language only in the seventh standard. Students had to choose either English or French as a compulsory subject. Historically, Syria was under the French mandate from (1916) to (1946). The French made all possible efforts to make French a native language in Syria in a way to obliterate the Arabic language and tradition and to bring up a new franchised generation Arabic in blood but French in language, concepts, and ideals. The Syrians were fully aware of what was going on behind the scene. They totally rejected the imposed French language and culture and were not influenced by it. This rejection of the French language continued to be influential even until today. There were two options available as to the choice of foreign language in class seven: French and English. The choice of English by most of the students marked the rejection of French and the increasing demand for learning English. The authorities, therefore, decided that 40/60% of the students were made to study French/English respectively by drawing lots.

English language in Syria is considered as foreign language and not a second language. The purposes of second language learning are often different from foreign language learning. Since the second language is frequently the official language or one of two or more recognized languages, it is needed for full participation in the political and economic life of the nation' (Paulston 1974:12-14); or it may be the language needed for education (Marckwardt 1963). Foreign language learning is often undertaken with a variety of different purposes in mind, for example, travel abroad, communication with native speakers, reading of a
foreign literature, or reading of foreign scientific and technical works. A second
language, because it is used within the country, is usually learnt with much more
environmental support than a foreign language whose speech community may be
thousands of miles away. A foreign language usually requires more formal
instruction and other measures compensating for the lack of environment support
(Stem 1983).

Students were more increasingly interested in English and wanted to have a
full grasp of it. They realized the importance of English as a world-wide language.
They thought, and they still do think, that learning English may offer the key to
understand the world and to achieve better communication with other human
cultures and civilizations.

However, the English language curriculum that was studied before 1996
could not fully meet the needs of students. Not only that, a Syrian university
student gets deeply frustrated when s/he realizes that all years of studying English
have not equipped him/her to negotiate successfully ordinary day-to-day
encounters that demand the use of English. The select few who do manage to
acquire high levels of proficiency in English become willing partners in the ELT
process. For most, English remains a burden intellectually and a non-starter
functionally.

1.3.4.2 Methods and Materials

The teaching of English in Syria even in universities and Departments of
English had meant, for a long time, the familiarity with, and paraphrase and
interpretation of well-known English literary texts, in particular the Elizabethan,
Restoration, Augustan, and Romantic texts, involving largely a reproduction of
received critical opinions. Most classroom lectures and examination scripts are
often bad reproductions of popular (help- books). Proficiency in English had
generally implied felicity to quote Shakespeare, Milton, Burns, Pope, Keats or
Eliot, or celebrated critics on them with relative ease, ability to write essays on
different topics, and the ability to speak in an outdated BBC accent. The ability to
negotiate day-to-day social encounters demanding the use of English and the
ability to read texts critically in a socio-historical context were rarely constitutive
pedagogical objectives.

The obsession with language correctness had marked most language
teaching projects since the introduction of English in Syria. Till 1996 all ELT
materials were specially prepared to introduce Syrian learners to the most
important scientific/literary texts. A play by Shakespeare, poems of pope,
Wordsworth and Keats, novels of Dickens, Hardy, and Fielding would constitute
essential components of secondary school program in ELT. The focus of teaching
was always on reading, comprehension, grammatical correctness and on new
vocabulary memorization.

Translation was frequently used as a very reliable tool for language
teaching. Most of the second language teaching materials across the world were
bilingual in nature and could often be used to learn either language (Agnihotri and
Khanna 1995:20). What the learner already knew was at least implicitly seen as an
asset. In addition to translation; grammar, memorization of paradigms and
vocabulary building constituted the backbone of language teaching. The main
contents of the books centered on selected necessary relatively short texts,
dialogues about familiar situations, and intensive grammar lessons, paying
marginal attention for teaching pronunciation and developing speaking
proficiency. Listening proficiency was ultimately out of consideration.

To sum up, before 1996 the English language teaching scene in Syrian
schools in general looked as follows: all education was through the Arabic
language, English was introduced in class 7 as a compulsory subject and was
never used as the medium of instruction for any other subject. English was taught
largely through the mother tongue to begin with and gradually one moved to the
reading of short poems, short stories, and one act plays by well-known authors.
Translation, grammar, and vocabulary building were extremely important
components of the program. Those who excelled in English were supposed to be
good at reading, translation, and correct sentence writing. More importantly
English is taught for only five hours per week. This hardly ample exposure to
English inside the classroom together with the highly restricted, if ever existent,
use of English outside the classroom made the learning process more difficult.

In the past few decades, the learner has become the centre for all methods
of language teaching. Be it the communicative approach, or suggestology, monitor
model or total physical response approach, procedural syllabus or task based
curriculum, the overwhelming emphasis is on the needs, aspirations, and comfort
of the learner. In general, these approaches give importance to the creativity of the
output, active learner involvement in interesting tasks and situations and the
facilitating role of the teacher. In Syria, these approaches have arrived recently,
and have been given consideration in preparing the new English curriculum.
Farrah, a member of the working team in editing the new curriculum, stated that
the new English curriculum is largely based on the communicative approach. It
aimed at developing the students overall proficiency in English by giving more
attention to the so long neglected skills of speaking and listening. Audio lingual
facilities were thus introduced in all schools, and students were encouraged to
speak in English more extensively.

1.3.4.3 English Language Curriculum Change Project (ELCCP)

The Ministry of Education distributed invitations for all school teachers
and English Departments in universities all over the country calling for willing
participants for the change projects. Many Teachers applied for working in the
project. The Board of the Curriculum Section in the Ministry of Education held a
meeting and selected from the applicants the most qualified teacher to be members
in the committee. The committee thus consisted of qualified teachers who are not
far from learners and their needs, some other school principals, and subject
experts from universities. These members were supposed to decide what should be
taught and how. They started working in the project as a team and put the
blueprint of the syllabus of the new curriculum. This blueprint was examined by a higher committee and was finally approved after affecting some amendments. The most important thing was to be sure that the new curriculum matching the Syrian Constitutional principles.

The fact that teachers have a primary knowledge about the process of education going on at schools was given primary consideration. It mattered also whether these teachers had training in education. However, such an attitude, good as it is, did not give much consideration for what students might think of the teaching process, teaching materials, or classroom situations. This kind of knowledge the students give about the process of teaching, though often expressed in an intuitive, or naive manner, is equally important for decision-making.

Farrah, one of the designer, when asked about the process of ELCCP, and whether any survey of students needs and attitudes was done, answered that "the students simply do not know what kind of changes must be done and in what way". These people forgot that there is a possibility, and thus a danger too, that there exists a perception gap between what the learners want, and what the teachers think is required, just as there are bound to be gap between what the teachers think, and what their principals or inspectors think. Top-down changes tend to be based on theoretical and ideological assumptions about what ought to be the content, the outcomes, and even the mode of learning (Agnihotri and Khanna 1995: 303). These assumptions, however, might not match the students' needs and demands.

All this suggests a need for bottom-up feedback - changes initiated by the practitioners (the teachers), and by the recipients (the learners) - and some mechanisms for getting that feedback. Changes resulting from this kind of feedback will be relevant, worthwhile and have a chance of better success, for after all, it is the learner and the teacher who would put it into practice, realize it - make it real. There is thus a need for studies for gathering hard data about facts of the classroom (teachers, learners, materials, process).
The present study is only a modest step towards achieving this goal. Here we attempt to investigate the students' needs for learning English and to see whether the new curriculum could achieve all of, some of, or none of these needs. To make the study more illuminating, we tried to measure the overall proficiency of a sample of students who have studied the new curriculum and to compare the results with the results of another group of students who have studied the old curriculum. This will give us an idea about the benefits of the new curriculum as opposed to the old one. It will also show what kind of amendments need to be done further.

1.4 Conclusion

We have discussed in this chapter the importance of English language and we summaries the major available approaches to English language teaching. We have also talked about Syria and its history, geography, and education system. Elaborated information is given also to the Syrian English Language Curriculum Change Project and followed by the scope summary of this study.
Chapter Two
Review of Literature

2.0 Introduction

There is indeed nothing so practical as a good theory (Wardhaugh 1969:116). In this sense, a good language teaching theory will strive to provide a conceptual framework devised for identifying all factors relevant in the teaching of languages and the relationship between them and for giving effective direction to the practice of language teaching, supported by the necessary research and inquiry (Nagai 1961:131). So, a good teaching practice is based on good theoretical understanding (Stern 1983).

This chapter is intended to trace theoretically the notion of "needs analysis" and its importance and validity in syllabus design. Chronologically speaking, the notion of needs analysis has its origin in the work of West (1926) who was the pioneer in this field. Many other scholars came after him and realized the significance of conducting "needs analysis" for making the second/foreign English language syllabus more effective. In this context, the models of "needs analysis" provided by Richterich, Munby, Berwick, Widdowson, Nunan, Brindley, Grave, Hutchison, and Water will be presented in detail.

2.1 Definition

In recent years, there has been a healthy trend in course design with the focus shifting from teacher-centered to learner-centered activities and in this connection, a lot of credibility is being given to need-based courses. Needs analysis or needs assessment is the process through which information as to the learner's needs and objectives is obtained and then analyzed.

'Needs Analysis' expressed generally as the identification of language needs consists primarily in compiling information both on the individuals or
groups of individuals who are to learn a language and on the use which they are expected to make of it when they have learnt it. In other words, the procedures associated with the analysis of needs offers the course designer a framework for the selection of language content according to the goals of particular learners and therefore the possibility of tailor-made programs, rather than starting with ready-made syllabus that does not of itself discriminate between differing objectives (Dictionary of Applied Linguistics:228).

2.2 The Notion of Needs Analysis

The notion of needs analysis originally came into existence with the new method of the experimental project of Michael West (1888-1973). West wrote a report called Bilingualism (with special reference to Bengal) published by the Indian Bureau of Education in 1926. West challenged the imperial education system which had pursued a policy known as 'filtering', that is, trying to ensure that the best students were 'filtered' through the system to end up in government employment of some appropriate kind. He invents the concept of 'surrender value' that means "the appropriate amount of benefit which will be derived by any pupil from an uncompleted course of instruction". In his view, training in spoken English took far too long to have any useful 'surrender value' for the majority of school leavers.

Basic literacy skills in English could be acquired much more rapidly, particularly if the children were already literate in their mother tongue. Moreover, they could be used in later life whereas spoken English was a useless skill for most Bengalis away from the major centers of imperial influence. West viewed that each year in school had to be treated as a separate educational experience in its own right, not merely as preparation for the next year that large numbers of the children would never reach.

In order to investigate his concept of 'surrender value' in more depth West completed a needs-analysis survey; an analysis of the Bengali's need of English'
stressing his interest in all Bengalis, not merely a few selected individuals of the upper class. His sample was started from class three (eight-year-olds) in 1919 (West 1922 chapter 5 report).

The book production in technical subjects in the English language during 1919 were taking both the United States and British together which was running at forty-eight times the Bengali level. Clearly, Bengali would never catch up. Human activity and human knowledge are becoming every year more complex and more specialized and the average man desires and is required more and more to keep in touch with new developments in his occupation or profession. One hundred years ago, the promoters of education in Bengal might reasonably have hoped by vigorous translation within a conceivable period to bring Bengal level with the knowledge of the rest of the world. The situation now immensely changed (Howatt, 1984).

West noticed the importance of practical informative reading and the need to provide worthwhile learning at each stage of the school. So, he decided that the teaching of reading must have first priority even if this meant the relative neglect of the spoken language. This idea supported by his experimental study conducted to the Bengali pupils of class 3 (eight-years-olds) as a pilot experiment. These students' knowledge of English on the standard tests West used was virtually zero. At this stage the reading materials were locally produced for primers and elementary readers. Each new text was introduced by the teacher who selected what he thought were the new words, glossed them and practiced them on the blackboard. Comprehension questions were set, to be answered in the vernacular. The result of this first trial was disappointing and the procedures were changed so that the children were actively encouraged to tell the teacher which words they did not understand. Still there were great difficulties.

Eventually, it seems to West that there were two main ways in which the reading text could be improved in order to help the children to achieve more. The first was to simplify the vocabulary by replacing old-fashioned literary words by
equivalents that are more common. The second was the principle of readability or what could be called a "lexical distribution principle".

West tried to reduce introducing new items in the text. This meant that instead of meeting a new word in every new sentence the children would have five or six sentences of practice material between each new word (West 1926:275). What West was getting at ultimately was access to international English particularly in the shape of informative texts.

West research was full of uncontrolled variables of one sort or another. Nevertheless, the main point was clear enough. The children made better progress in reading with text that did not introduce too many new words too frequently. This idea according to West meets the pupils needs which was supported by his research and considered to be the seed idea of "needs analysis".

2.3 The Notion of 'Communicative Competence'

The appearance of large number of overseas students fuelled an expansion of language teaching institutions in Britain itself, as well as hastening the development of English-teaching operations in the students' countries of origin. The expansion of higher education following the Robbins Report 1963 (cited be Howatt 1984) was the factor in bringing linguistics and ELT together. The evident importance of language in an educational program with a reformist ideology ensured a sympathetic hearing for ideas and proposals which shared the same basic aims, with the practical result that a number of projects were established both to research specific problems in language teaching and to produce useful classroom materials.

Language plays a role in a broader theory of communication. The starting-point is sociology, the roles people adopt, their rights and obligations, and the unspoken contracts they enter into preserve communication (Howatt 1984:277). In fact, the contributions of Hymes, Labov, Halliday and Hasan, and Widdowson are
considered the basis of enhancing the "Communicative Syllabus Design". Hymes in "Communicative Competence" speaks of 'rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless'. Labov (1970) said the same as 'the rules we need will show how things are done with words and how one interprets these utterances as actions'.

Halliday and Hassan (1976) published *Cohesion in English* which became a standard work of reference on the linguistic aspects of text construction for writers of teaching materials for advanced learners and for university level students of English. Halliday and Hasan defined cohesion by saying 'where the interpretation of any item in the discourse requires making reference to some other item in the discourse, there is cohesion'. Cohesion is one dimension of the general Hallidayan aim of devising principled methods of relating elements of grammatical structure to their use in discourse.

Widdowson (1978) in his book *Teaching Language as Communication* proposed a different type of teaching syllabus built around a graded selection of rhetorical (or communicational) acts which the learner would have to perform in using English for his particular purpose. The scientist, for example, would necessarily make extensive use of such acts as definition, classification, deduction, and so on. Other learners would need to communicate in more ordinary everyday situation where greetings, making social arrangements, and exchanging information would be more important.

Any teaching curriculum is designed in answer to three questions: What is to be learned? How is the learning to be undertaken and achieved? To what extent is the former appropriate and the latter effective? A communicative curriculum will place language teaching with the framework of this relationship between some specified purposes, the methodology which will be the means towards the achievement of those purposes, and the evaluation of the methodology. Breen and Candlin (2001:9) proposed some purposes in language teaching which must be considered such as (1) communication as a general purpose, (2) the underlying
demands on the learner that such a purpose may imply, (3) the initial contributions which learners may bring to the curriculum, (4) the process of teaching and learning, (5) the roles of teacher and learners, (6) the role of content within the teaching and learning, and finally (7) the place of evaluation of learner progress and evaluation of the curriculum itself from communicative point of view.

Actually, the switch of attention from teaching language system to teaching the language as communication highlighted the role of learner and his needs. The range of possible uses of language is as extensive as the range of possible purposes and intentions that people have for using it. So, the emphasis on the use of language as communication concentrates on the users themselves. The main problem of the users of language, and especially those living in developing countries, is that though they have received several years of formal English teaching, they frequently remain deficient in the ability to actually use the language, and to understand its use, in normal communication, whether in spoken or written mode.

2.4 The Notional-Functional Syllabus and the Council of Europe

The dynamic view of Needs Analysis can be taken from the Council of Europe Modern Language Projects group. This group intended to promote language learning in Europe and offer guidance and support to the many 'partners for learning' whose co-operation is necessary to the creation of a coherent and transparent structure of provision for effective learning relevant to the needs of the learners as well as of society (J.A. van Ek and J.L.M.Trim 2001).

In 1971 the Council recognized the importance of dividing the task of learning a language into smaller units, each of which could be credited separately, and also the necessity of basing curricula on learners needs rather than on language structures, as had previously been common practice. One of the major outcomes of this work is the "Threshold Level" specification (van Ek, 1975) which proposed a model for the description of language ability based on the
principle that language teaching should provide learners with the means of meeting their personal communicative needs. A lower level specification was also produced, under the name "Waystage Level". In 1991 revised and updated versions of both documents appeared as Threshold level 1990 and Waystage level 1990 (by J. A. van Ek and J. L. M. Trim) published by Council of Europe Press). Recently, a somewhat higher "Vantage" level (see Trim 1996) has been proposed for learners who wish to continue to improve their language proficiency beyond the "Threshold Level".

J. L. M. Trim(1998) wrote that the 'Council of Europe approach' to language teaching has been based on the central importance of specifying in appropriate detail the objectives to be aimed at in accordance with the best assessment of the needs, characteristics and resources of the learners concerned. The "Threshold Level" specifies in considerable detail what a language learner should be able to do in a particular language in order to deal with the business of daily living in another country and also to exchange information and opinion on everyday matters with other speakers of the language. It then suggests the language needed for the defined purpose.

The concepts of the threshold level, needs analysis, language function and notions were now applied to design courses. The meaning of functional syllabus is to arrange the syllabus in terms of functions and the language items needed for them see the table below which adopted from Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics (1985).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of discourse</th>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Exponents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>spoken</td>
<td>Speaking listening</td>
<td>Asking for directions</td>
<td>Bank harbour museum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Can you tell me where X is? Where is X?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vocabulary</th>
<th>Structure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In turn, the meaning of Notional Syllabus, as Wilkins (1976) defines, is to begin with meanings and concepts a learner needs in order to communicate and the language needed to express them. These concepts and meaning are known as *notions* such as: Time, Space, Argument, Judgments and Evaluation..etc.

The ideas of the Council incorporated in these courses meant for adults learning a second language soon filtered down to the school level. The courses were revised and redefined, and course books using the notional-functional syllabus soon became an accepted part of the English syllabus in schools.

2.5 Richterich's 'Objective' and 'Subjective' Needs

Richterich is a member in Council of Europe Modern Language Projects group. He pointed out that the learning process, by being responsive to learners' expressed needs, becomes a source of its own change. If feedback and consultation are built into the learning cycle, a learning activity can in itself become a kind of needs analysis which allows the teacher to perceive and provide for needs as they arise. Objectives can be modified in the light of feedback from learners (Richterich 1975).

Reichterich (as cited in R. West, 1994) comments that implementation of any sort of needs analysis has to deal first with some fundamental questions the answer to which the methodology. The questions are concerned with “what”, “why”, “when”, “who”, “for whom”, and “how” of the procedure.

Richterich (1983) noted that initial phase of "objective needs" analysis is considered as only a first step. It will establish broad parameters for program design but once learning begins, it is likely that, first, these language-related needs will change and that second, particular learning needs will come to light which were not identified pre-course. It is of course not so easy job as Richterich comments:
"The very concept of language needs has never been clearly defined and remains at best ambiguous." (Richterich 1983:2)

Richterich (1983), on the other hand, defines that "objective needs" analysis form the broad parameters of the program, but when learning starts this language related needs will alter, and some sort of learning needs which were not specified pre-course will appear. Therefore, at this step "subjective needs" analysis is essential to collect information from learners so as to guide the learning process.

Richterich and Chancerel (1987) point out that due to the fact that needs vary too much from person to person, the system should have to be continually adapted. Richterich and Chancerel (1987: 3) hold the idea that ‘experience shows that in general the learner is little aware of his needs and, in particular, that he is unable to express them except in very vague terms’.

2.6 Munby's Communicative Needs Processor

The central idea of Munby's formation of his framework is the concept of the language user's competence and its relation to knowledge and communication (Munby 1978:6). Needs analysis is at the heart of his approach. In an attempt to specify validly in the target communicative competence, Munby designed what is known as Communicative Needs Processor (CNP). He mentioned in the preface of his book "Communicative Syllabus Design" the effect of Dell Hymes and Michael Halliday discussion on communicative approach to language teaching:

"I was influenced at the macro-level by the sociolinguistic writing of Dell Hymes and Michael Halliday, and at more micro-level by the work of, in particular, Henry Widdowson, David Wilkins and Christopher Candlin".

Munby's Communicative Needs Processor (CNP) is considered the most popular procedure for the analysis of needs. Teachers of English, especially those concerned with the teaching of English for Specific Purpose, highly utilize his
approach to the analysis of needs and they follow his model for specifying communicative competence (see figure 2.1).

Munby's approach to build up participant or group of participants' profile works at two levels - priori and posteriori (see figure 2.2). At the priori level Munby includes some parameters such as participant, purposive domain, settings, interactions and instrumentality. The information about the participant should concern the identity and language:

"The data relating to identity tells us the participant's age, sex, nationality, and place of residence. . . . . The data concerning language identifies the participant's target language and the extent, if any, of his command of it..."

![Figure 2.1 Model for specifying communicative competence](image)

Figure 2.1 Model for specifying communicative competence
The purposive domain parameter for Munby specifies the occupational or educational purpose for which the target language is required, whereas the setting parameter specifies both physical and psychosocial setting in which the target language is required. Interaction parameter identifies those with whom the participant has to communicate in the target language and predicts the relationship that may be expected to obtain between him and his interlocutors. By instrumentality Munby is concerned with identifying constraints on the input in terms of medium, mode, and channel of communication.

At the posteriori level Munby presented parameter such as dialect, target level, communicative event, and communicative key. The main dimension of dialect here is the regional/non-regional e.g. to specify whether it is British of American, or regional variety of either. The participant target level of command should be stated in terms that will guide the further processing through the model. The parameter of communicative event is concerned with what the participant has to do, either productively or receptively and the parameter of communicative key
is concerned with how one does the activities comprising an event (the what one does).

Munby model is considered the most sophisticated application of needs analysis. It has received much criticism from being too mechanistic, and for paying too little attention to the perception of the learner. It has led, in some instances, to syllabuses with a narrow focus such as 'English of Motor Mechanics' and 'English for Biological Science'. The assumption behind the development of some such syllabuses is that there are certain aspects of language which are peculiar to the contexts in which it is used and the purposes for which it is used. For example, it is assumed that there are certain structures, functions, topics, vocabulary items, conceptual meanings, and so on that are peculiar to the world of the motor mechanic and which are not found in 'General English'.

It is also assumed that different areas of use will require different communication skills from the learner, and that these needs to be specifically taught for the area of use in question (Nunan 1988b).

2.7 Nunan (1988a) and Learner-Centered Approach

Nunan takes a 'bottom-up' view of curriculum development. Curriculum seen by him in terms of 'what teachers and learners actually do' (learner-centered curriculum) rather than 'what should be' (traditional curriculum). The focus of learner-centered curriculum is on ESP and it is also useful for 'those working in EFL and also to those working with children' (Nunan 1988a).

The key difference between learner-centered and traditional curriculum development is that, in the former, the curriculum is a collaborative effort between teachers and learners, since learners are closely involved in the decision making process regarding the content of the curriculum and how it is taught (see table 2.1).
Table 2.1 Characteristics of Traditional and communicative approaches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional approaches</th>
<th>Communicative approaches</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1- Focus in learning:</strong></td>
<td>Focus is on communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus is on the language as a structured system of grammatical patterns.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2- How language items are selected:</strong></td>
<td>This is done on linguistic criteria alone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This is done on linguistic criteria alone.</td>
<td>This is done on the basis of what language items the learner needs to know in order to get things done.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3- How language items are sequenced:</strong></td>
<td>This is determined on other ground with the emphasis on content, meaning and interest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This is determined on linguistic ground.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4- Degree of coverage:</strong></td>
<td>The aim is to cover, in any particular phase, only what the learner needs and sees as important.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The aim is to cover the 'whole Picture' of language structure by Systematic linear progression.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5- View of language:</strong></td>
<td>The variety of language is accepted and seen as determined by the character of particular communicative contexts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A language is seen as a unified entity with fixed grammatical patterns and a core of basic words.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional approaches</td>
<td>Communicative approaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6- Type of language used:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tends to be formal and bookish</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>7- What is regarded as a criterion of success:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aim is to have students produce formally correct sentences.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>8- Which language skills are emphasized:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading and writing.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>9- Teacher/Student role:</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tends to be teacher-centered.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>10- Attitude to errors:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incorrect utterances are seen as deviations from the norms of Standard grammar.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>11- Similarity/dissimilarity to natural language learning:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reverses the natural language Learning process by concentrating on the form of utterances rather than on the content.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Adapted from: Quinn 1984:61-64)
Nunan like Brindley and Richterich talked about "subjective" and "objective" needs analysis. He pointed out that the techniques for "subjective needs" analysis will therefore figure as prominently as a technique for "objective needs" analysis. However, in learner-centered system, course designers will engage in extensive consultation with learners themselves in deriving parameters and such system is considered as a utilitarian rational: skills are taught because the learner wishes to utilize them for some purpose beyond the learning environment itself, not simply because they happen to be part of a subject or academic discipline (Nunan 1988a:42).

'Objective' data is that factual information which does not require the attitude and view of the learners to be taken into account. Thus, biographical information on age, nationality, home language, etc. is said to be 'objective'. 'Subjective' information, on the other hand, reflects the perceptions, goals, and priorities of the learner. It will include, among other things, information on why the learner has undertaken to learn a second language, and the classroom tasks and activities which the learner prefers.

(Nunan 1988b:18)

2.8 Berwick's needs assessment in language program (1989):

Berwick (1978,1984,1989) defines needs as 'a gap or measurable discrepancy between a current state of affairs and a desired future state'. He also distinguishes two types of needs as 'felt' needs and 'perceived' needs. Berwick outlines some essential concepts in educational planning and how they are influencing the ways in which language program planners undertake language needs assessment as follows:

*Designs based on an organized body on knowledge:* This has been the predominant design until relatively recently. It emphasizes the direct link between an academic discipline (or other established body of knowledge) and content and procedures used during instruction. The focus in this design is generally on the
intellectual development of the learner, although, as in the case of structural or functional syllabuses, the primary point is transfer of a systematic body of knowledge. The main academic sources for designs in language programming include literature and linguistics.

*Designs based on specific competence*: These emphasize performance objectives and learning of skills for particular purpose, although 'skills' can mean almost any level of specificity the ('four skills'- reading, writing, speaking, and listening - versus using the target language to confirm order for a meal in a restaurant). Specification of objectives is a major component of this design, especially in programs designed to each language for specific purpose.

*Designs based on social activities and problems*: This approach to planning has been most influential in second (as opposed to foreign) language teaching, i.e., for immigrants or new residents of a culture in which target language is viewed as a tool for coping with the social and economic demands of daily life. Heavy emphasis is placed on language as a tool of survival and on exposure to experiences in the community which will assist survival.

*Designs based on cognitive or learning processes*: This orientation has always been a peripheral rather than mainstream way of approaching instructional design. It stresses the ways learners think (over content of instruction per se) and aims at strengthening the learner's ability to examine and solve problems on their own. Perhaps the best developed application of this approach in applied linguistics can be seen in the organization of composition courses and materials (for example Lawrence, 1972), although a theoretical basis for process approaches in instructional syllabuses has been developed in Widdowson (1984).

*Designs based on feelings and attitudes*: These approaches represent the humanistic, affective end of the planning spectrum, an appealing region to those who believe that learning must bring people together and that the capacity to learn increases with one's openness to others. Miller (1976) and Rogers (1969) offer exemplary rationales for this design in educational planning. Those who apply
humanistic values in language programming would emphasize development of the person through language (see, for example, La Forge, 1983; Moskowitz, 1978), and thus would view language more as a tool than an object.

*Designs based on needs and interest of the learner.* This approach to planning has generally supported rather than supplanted other approaches, although needs-based curricula have been in vogue for the past twenty years, particularly in public education systems. It constitutes a strong justification for the decisions planners make about instruction, for example, to say that their way of organizing it will meet learners' needs. The central characteristics of the approach include systematic assessment of learners' language needs, along with consultation of learners at appropriate points in the planning and instruction processes. Influential advocates of this orientation in applied linguistics would include Stevick (1971), Munby (1978), The Council of Europe (Richterich and Chancerel 1980).

Furthermore, various analyses and approaches to needs assessment were put forward: analytic view of needs analysis which examines expert opinion, and diagnostic approach which examines the learner's needs to be used in social services (Berwick, 1989); discrepancy analysis which attempts to examine what people know and what they ought to know, and democratic approach which is based on learner points of view (Stufflebeam *et al*, 1985, quoted in Berwick, 1989).

2.9 Brindley and the role of Needs Analysis:

Brindley, unlike others, called for a 'broad' or 'process-oriented' interpretation of needs. He sees needs primarily in terms of the needs of the learner as an individual in the learning situation. Needs analysis means, for him, trying to identify and take into account a multiplicity of affective of cognitive variables which affect learning, such as learner's attitudes, motivation, awareness, personality, wants, expectations, and learning styles.
Brindley adopted Richterich (1972, 1980, 1983, and 1984) distinction between what is called 'objective' and 'subjective' needs analysis. Objective needs analysis aimed at collecting factual information for the purposes of setting broad goals related to language content, whereas subjective needs analysis aimed at gathering information about learners which can be used to guide the learning process once it is under way.

In a research project to investigate the feasibility of implementing a learner-centered system in Australian Adult Migrant Education Project, Brindley (1984) made a survey on teachers' understanding of 'student needs'. The result of the survey can be categorized under three headings: the 'language proficiency' view of needs, the 'psychological-humanistic' view and the 'specific purpose' view (see table 2.2).

Table 2.2 Comparison of Approaches to Needs Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>View of the learner</th>
<th>Language proficiency' orientation</th>
<th>Psychological /humanistic' orientation</th>
<th>Specific purposes' orientation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>View of needs</td>
<td>Learner as a language learner</td>
<td>Learner as a 'sentient human being' in society with the capacity to become self-directing</td>
<td>Learner as a language user</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasizes</td>
<td>Objective needs stressed. Needs seen as gap between present and desired general language proficiency</td>
<td>Subjective needs stressed. Needs seen as gap between current state of awareness and state of awareness necessary for learner to become self-directing</td>
<td>Objective needs stressed. Needs seen as gap between present language performance in a specific area and language performance required in a particular communication situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ease of administration</td>
<td>Sensitivity to adults' subjective needs where learners is at terms of awareness</td>
<td>Collection of detailed data on objective needs. Whereas the learner is going in terms</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Educational rationale | Relevance of learning content and methods to individual learning styles. | Language proficiency in one or more skills. Relevance of language content to learner's proficiency level.

Language learners learn more effectively in a group containing learners of a similar proficiency level. Language learners learn more effectively if programme content is geared to their proficiency level. | of language performance relevance of language content to learner's personal goals and social roles

| Type of information | Biographical information | Biochemical information

Information on learners language proficiency

Information on learners language difficulties | Biographical information on native speakers use of language in learners' target communication situation

Information, where relevant, on the needs of other parties in the relevant communication situation e.g. factory foremen

<p>| Method of information collection | Standardized forms* Language proficiency tests* Observation | Standardized forms* Observation Counseling / interview Oral surveys* Group discussions Write questionnaires followed by discussion * | Standardized forms* Intensive language analysis in target communication situation language proficiency tests * Surveys of learners' pattern of language use* |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time of information collection</th>
<th>How analysis of information is used</th>
<th>Purposes for collecting information</th>
<th>Surveys of needs of particulars bodies or individuals outside A.M.E.S</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mainly pre-course some in-course diagnostic assessment and feedback, depending on teacher</td>
<td>Decision made concerning learners' current ability to use English</td>
<td>So that learners can be placed in groups of homogeneous language proficiency so that teacher can plan language content relevant to learners' proficiency level</td>
<td>Mainly pre-course Some ongoing in course consultation and feedback depending on teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-course constant in course consultation and feedback</td>
<td>Decisions provisionally made about types of learning environment, methods, and content which might be appropriate for learners subjective needs, taking into account their attitudes, motivation and awareness Decisions constantly revised and objectives modified in the light of ongoing negotiation</td>
<td>So that adults individual characteristics as learners can be given due consideration in providing learning opportunities so that adult can be helped to become self directing by being involved in decision making about their own learning</td>
<td>Decisions made on appropriate language content to meet communication needs of learners Reconciliation of language needs of learners with those of other parties (e.g. management)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>So that learners will be presented with language data relevant to their own personal goals and social roles so that motivation will be enhanced by the relevance of this language content and learning will thus be facilitated.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Brindley (1989:70) stated that in theory it would be possible for teacher to subscribe to all three of the approaches to needs analysis outlined above, their responses showed a tendency for some kinds of needs to be emphasized on the expense of others. In general, it appeared that while most teachers were attempting to diagnose learners' objective needs through collecting some combination of personal data, information about their language proficiency and interaction patterns, they had much more difficulty in systematically identifying and catering for subjective needs.

Brindley (1989) and Robinson (1980) consider all factual information about the learner-language proficiency, language difficulties, use of language in real life - to form objective needs, whereas cognitive and affective needs of the learner in language learning - confidence, attitudes, expectations - are considered to form subjective needs.

2.10 Kathleen Graves (2001) Framework of Course Development Process

Graves suggested a framework to course development to be carried on either in the planning or teaching or preplanning stages (see table 2.3). The framework suggested was built up crucially on learners' needs assessment typically to Richterich and Brindley ideas of 'objective' and 'subjective' needs analysis.

Table (2.3) Framework components:

Needs assessment: What are my students' needs? How can I assess them so I can address them?

Determining goals and objectives: What are the purposes and intended outcomes of the course? What will my students need to do or learn to achieve these goals?

Conceptualizing content: What will be the backbone of what I teach? What will I include in my syllabus?
Selecting and developing materials and activities: How and with what will I teach the course? What is my role? What are my students' roles?

Organization of content and activities: How will I organize the content and activities? What system will I develop?

Evaluation: How will I assess what students have learned? How will I assess the effectiveness of the course?

Consideration of resources and constraints: What are the givens of my situation?

Graves (ibid) pointed out that needs assessment can be conducted on favor of one's context. She talked about three possible stages of conducting needs assessment, stage 1, the planning stage, stage 2, the teaching stage, and stage 3, the preplanning stage, if one determines that the assessment must be modified in some way.

2.11 Needs Analysis and English for Specific Purpose (ESP)

The term 'needs analysis' gained prominence during 1970s and developed alongside with the formulation of a Communicative Approach to language teaching. It has been particularly associated with the field of ESP (English for Specific Purpose). Johns (1981) points out that one of the greatest contributions of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) to language teaching has been its emphasis on careful and extensive needs analysis for course design.

ESP is viewed as a cover term for teaching and learning English for multiple specific purposes: EAP (English for Academic Purposes), EOP (English for Occupational Purposes) and others (Johns, 1981; Robinson and Waters, 1993). English for Academic Purposes (EAP) is implemented in educational institutions where students learn it for their academic studies (Kenedy and Bolitho, 1984). In an EAP course, students are expected to acquire receptive and perceptive academic skills parallel to developing learning strategies and study skills (Jordan,
1997). Given the diversity and complexity of EAP objectives, it is crucial to conduct an in-depth needs assessment before planning and implementing an EAP curriculum and material (Johns, 1991; Robinson, 1991).

Although needs analysis research started as early as 1970’s and since then a large body of research has been compiled in this area (Johns and Dudley-Evans, 1991; West, 1994), it has mostly been carried out in ESP courses and thus has been neglected in the General English Courses (Seedhouse, 1995).

2.12 Needs analysis and General English (GE)

Analysis of the language used in different domains seems to indicate that, apart from certain technical terms, linguistic elements are remarkably similar (Nunan 1988b). It is argued that, whatever learners' final communicative purposes are, they should be taught those elements that represent a 'common core' of language. It is also pointed out that the great majority of learners want 'general English' rather than English for the sorts of specific purpose indicated above.

Widdowson (1983) extensively distinguished between 'general purpose English (GPE) and English for specific purpose (ESP). He suggests that ESP has a training function which is aimed at the development of 'restricted competence', whereas GPE fulfils an educative function and is aimed at the development of 'general capacity'.

"...ESP is essentially a training operation which seeks to provide learners with a restricted competence to enable them to cope with certain clearly defined tasks. These tasks constitute the specific purposes which the ESP course is designed to meet. The course, therefore, makes direct reference to eventual aims. GPE, on the other hand, is essentially an educational operation which seeks to provide learners with a general capacity to enable them to cope with undefined eventualities in the future. Here, since there are no definite intervening objectives formulated by pedagogic theory ...in GPE, the
actual use of language occasioned by communicative necessity is commonly a vague and distant prospect on the other side of formal assessment”.

(Widdowson 1983:6)

David Ingram has explained clearly what does 'general English' proficiency mean:

"If we say that X speaks Chinese......we do not mean that X can only give a lecture of engineering in Chinese ... Rather, when we say that someone can speak a language, we mean that that person can speak the language in the sorts of situations people commonly encounter. That is, there are certain everyday situations in which we, as human beings living in a physical and social world, are necessarily involved. We must all, for example, obtain food and shelter, we must find our way about, and we must establish relationships with other people. General proficiency, then, refers to the ability to use language in these everyday, not-specialist situations”.

(Ingram 1984:10)

It is often argued that the needs of the General English learner are not specifiable. This is an assumption that owes more to institutional inertia and the weight of tradition than to any reality, but it is a powerful force nevertheless. In fact, this is the weakest of all arguments, because "it is always possible to specify needs, even if it is only the need to pass the exam at the end of the school year. There is always an identifiable need of some sort" (Hutchinson and Water 1987).

What is important here is not the existence of a need but rather "an awareness of the need". If learners, sponsors and teachers know why learners need English, that awareness will have an influence of what will be acceptable as reasonable content in the language course, on the positive side, what potential can be exploited (abide). For the time being, the tradition persists in General English that learner needs cannot be specified and as a result no attempt is usually made to discover learner's true needs (ibid).
However, all language teaching should be based on learner needs. In theory there is no difference between ESP and GE. They have much in common. ESP must be seen as an approach not as a product. It is an approach to language learning which is based on learner needs. Course design in GE program usually determined either by tradition choice of textbook or ministerial decree. Whereas designing course is fundamentally a matter of asking question in order to provide a reasoned basis for materials, writings, classroom teaching and evaluation. The content of GE language program may vary from ESP but there is no reason to suppose that the process of learning should be different.

The foundation of all ESP in the simple question: Why does this learner need to learn a foreign language (Hutchinson and Water, 1987)? This question should be the starting question to any course design whether it is ESP or either. This question will be utilized in this work as to be conducted on learners exposed to GE language program.

2.13 Conclusion

It is clear so far that the mainstream activity in conducting "needs analysis" has been restricted to investigate the needs of students of ESP, both in terms of describing their needs and then taking them into consideration in designing specific syllabuses.

On the other hand, it is seen that major trends in "needs analysis" have largely been partially short-sighted and restricted in nature. Moreover, formal models of "needs analysis" have been developed in largely bilingual and multicultural societies. These models display their inadequacies whenever they are applied to monolingual societies.

The increasing awareness of the importance of "needs analysis" as well as the ever increasing need of people for mastering foreign languages, especially English, have been a great driving force to push the "needs analysis" trend to acquire a new dimension which is more comprehensive in nature. A careful
investigation of the linguistic problems of a monolingual society will certainly give new orientation to foreign/second language learning and will widen its scope and improve its outcome.

Indeed "needs analysis" stands as an important link between students, teachers, and course designers regardless to whether we are up to designing ESP or GE syllabus. In this spirit, Hutchinson and Water (1987) point out that "it is always possible to specify the students' needs even if it is only to pass the exam". Even more illuminating is Widdowson's view who argues that "GE has priority over ESP". In the same vein, this study proposes to move a little further in this direction. Needs of Syrian students learning GE as a foreign language will be examined and carefully analyzed on the basis of empirical data. The researcher will highlight certain relevant recommendations to be taken into consideration by syllabus designers while attempting to modify the new English Curriculum for Syrian students.

Following Richterich (1971), Munby (1978), Brindley (1989) and (Grave 2001), the present study distinguishes between "objective" and "subjective" needs. "Objective" needs as defined by Brindley( quoted by Grave 2001:70) account for different kinds of factual information about learners, their use of language in real-life communicative situations as well as their current language proficiency and language difficulties. "Subjective" needs, on the other hand, account for the cognitive and affective needs of the learners in the learning situation derivable from information about effective and cognitive factors such as personality, confidence, attitude, learners' wants and expectations with regard to the learning of English strategies.

In short, needs assessment in this study involves finding out what the learners know and can do, and what they need to learn or do so that the syllabus can bridge the gap (or some part of it). More precisely, needs assessment in this study involves seeking and interpreting information about Syrian students' needs so that the syllabus will address them more effectively.
3.0 Introduction

This chapter deals with the sample, tools, and procedure employed in this study to collect the required data from the subjects. It also describes the scoring procedures and the statistical methods employed. It highlights the points, which have been taken care of while attempting to analyze the data to get objective and reliable results as far as possible.

3.1 The goal of this study

Keeping in view the significance of needs analysis in the process of learning a second/foreign language, this research aims at the analysis of students' needs for learning English in Syria. It is generally believed by the teachers in Syrian Universities that their students' expression in English is poor in such a way that they are unable to express themselves fluently and perfectly when they are required to. Therefore, the suggestion had been made to change radically the national English curriculum gradually starting from seventh standard in 1994-1995 to twelfth standard in 1999-2000. It was also suggested that English must be incorporated in the syllabus of fifth and sixth standards as well. The plan had been successfully put into effect. The new curriculum aimed at satisfying the ever increasing need for learning English in Syria and to properly fulfill this need. It aimed at improving the overall proficiency of students giving more space to the formerly neglected aspects of learning English, namely the speaking and listening proficiency.

To sum up, our aim in this study is

- To present socio-psychological profile of the two Groups of students A and B;
- To explore students' attitudes, motivations towards
learning process, materials and towards themselves;

- To investigate students' needs for learning English;
- To examine to what extent the new curriculum had met students' needs;
- To measure the level of overall general proficiency of the both Groups; and
- To examine the nature of relationship between social, attitudinal, motivational data on the one hand and language proficiency data on the other.

3.2 Sample

In language study, as in natural sciences, sociology, psychology, many kinds of work require the collection of quantitative data. Quantitative data is usually referred to as statistics. In turn, the word statistics refers either to quantitative information or to a method of dealing with quantitative information (Abu Neel, 1987).

The sample in our study is a systematic random sample and was taken from a finite population where 'the number of entities is fixed and countable' (Butler 1985). The sample was taken in the hope that our results will be generalisable to the population of the subjects.

Our sample in this study consisted of 60 undergraduate subjects from the first year (20 subjects trained in old curriculum "Group A" and 40 subjects trained in new curriculum "Group B") from the English Department of Al Ba'ath University in Homs, Syria, in the academic year 2001-2002. The total number of students admitted to this college in the first year was 450. They were divided into eight sections of 56 each. Two sections were selected at random (by drawing lots). However, in these two sections 101 students were attending the class at the time of collecting data. Data was found complete in respect of 60 subjects only.
It is important to keep in mind that each section contains two types of students; fresh students "Group B" who were admitted to the university in the academic year 2001-2002 and were naturally trained in the new curriculum, and non fresh students "Group A" who were admitted in the academic year 2000-2001 and were obviously trained in the old curriculum. Members of this group had failed in their first year in the English department due to various reasons. The only advantage they had over the students of "Group B" is that they have been exposed to English for seven years whereas students of "Group B" had completed only six years of formal training in English.

The final analysis in this study is, therefore, based only on 60 subjects. The rest were excluded either because they were found incomplete or because they did not meet the requirements for being included in this study. In other words the excluded subjects did not study the Syrian English curriculum in the past six years because they were studying abroad before joining the university in Syria.

All of the 60 subjects included in this study had completed twelve years of school education and at least six years of formal training in English in Syria and they are a mixture of males and females. The students had come from two different branches of secondary school (Literary and Scientific). Students of literary secondary school are admitted to the English department on the basis of either their general average regardless of their score in the English subject or with respect of their score in English subject only whereas students of scientific secondary school are admitted on the basis of their high scores in the English subject only regardless of their general average, see figure (3.1).

The study was only confined to the English department for several considerations. The first one is that those who are admitted to this department have either scored 90% of the maximum mark in English in the high school which means they are good and promising in this field, or they have been admitted on the basis of their general average in high school but have shown special interest in the field as such. The second reason is that these students' needs for learning English
should considerably be higher than others' which makes our investigation more illuminating. The last reason is that the present investigator is himself a graduate from this department. It was only his close association with the staff that made the intensive and long data collection possible. The average time needed was approximately two hours.

*Figure 3.1 Distribution of the subjects*

![Figure 3.1 Distribution of the subjects](image)

The subjects were of the age group of 17-25 years. Most of the students that join the university come from the same city where the university is located except for 10 to 15% of the students who come from other cities in the country. Therefore, almost all the students are of the same background in so far as early education, social class, culture, and socio-economic factors are concerned. The students are all native speakers of Arabic, and they are learning English as a foreign language.
The focal point in our sample is that it includes two groups of students. The basic difference between these two groups is that Group B (40) had trained completely in the new English curriculum; the one that differs in several observable ways from the previous one and Group A (20) had trained in the old curriculum.

It must be also pointed out that English in general is taught as a foreign language in Syria. It is also important to point out that the learning process does not take place in a natural setting simply because of the absence of the target language community in Syria. In this regard, the presence or absence of the target community, i.e., whether the language is learned in native or in non-native context, is found to be decisively important in developing proficiency levels (see Agnihotri, Khanna and Sachdev 1998).

Thus, students are exposed to English only in the classroom, with the exception of a very limited exposure through mass media (some English TV programs and some other English newspapers and magazines). To sum up, this hardly ample exposure to English in the classroom together with the highly restricted use of English outside the classroom, if ever existent, could make the learning process more difficult. Despite the difficulty involved in learning English in Syria, there has been an increasing demand to master this language. The new generation seems to be aware of the importance of learning English in the "age of internet" as one of the students says.

3.3 Tools

The tools used in this study were initially designed and tested in a pilot study before they were finalized. All the necessary modifications were made on the basis of the results of the pilot study. The questionnaire used in this study was devised to elicit:
(a) socio-psychological, and
(c) linguistic data.
3.3.1 socio-psychological data (Appendices I-IV)

Personal data is intended to elicit information about students such as: age, sex, social class, mother tongue, and the number of years of exposure to English, father's education, mother's education, father's English, mother's English, and exposure to English outside the school.

Age (Variable 1): We have in this study two groups; 'Group A' which was trained in old curriculum belongs to the age group of (18-23) and 'Group B' which was tainted in new curriculum belongs to the age group of (17-19).

Sex (Variable 2): The total number of students participating in our study is 60 divided into two groups; 'Group A' 20 students 4 males and 16 females, 'Group B' 40 students 8 males and 32 females (see Figure 3.1 above).

Type of school (Variable 3): The participants in this study came from two types of secondary school, literary or scientific. For the distribution of these students into literary and scientific, see Figure (3.1).

Father's Education (Variable 4): This variable is intended to investigate the level of education of the participant's father.

Mother's Education (Variable 5): This variable is intended to investigate the level of education of the participant's mother.

Father's English (Variable 6): This variable is intended to examine whether the English of the father plays any role in student's level of proficiency because there is no other kind of exposure available for the student to communicate in English outside the classroom.

Mother's English (Variable 7): This variable is intended to do the same purpose as in variable 6 above.
The other items in the appendix such as the mother tongue, which is Arabic for all subjects, do not play any significant role. The social background and economic status do not play any significant role because all students came approximately from the same social and economic background and even those who were belong to rich families studied in the same kind of schools (governmental tuition free schools) and were exposed to the same syllabus. Item number 10 is consistent for all subjects since all of them started learning English at class 7. Items number 11 and 12 are considered marginal since very few students have attended private institutional courses in English and for a very short period.

**Attitude** (Appendix II): this section is intended to investigate students' attitudes towards the learning process and materials used through five-points agreement scale ranging from 'not good' to 'very good'. This section consists of ten statements; the first five statements are intended to investigate students' attitude towards the learning process and the approach, which has been adopted in their schools (Variable 8). The next five statements are intended to investigate students' attitude towards the materials they studied such as books and other helping devices (Variable 9). The total score of this inventory will be dealt with as one variable (Variable 10). The total mark on this variable was converted into percentage.

**Claimed proficiency over English** (Appendix III): The objective of this section is to let students rate themselves and state their claim about what they can do and what they know in English receptively (listening and reading) and productively (writing and speaking). In question number one the students were asked to arrange in order the skills they feel they know best. The second question was intended to elicit detailed information about students' conscious knowledge of their skills whether they are receptive or productive. This questionnaire is adopted from Nunan's (1988:15) Sample Needs Analysis Survey Form with some modification. This question consists of four variables. (Variable 11) stands for writing and
consists of four statements. The answer on these statements should be either yes or no; number 2 is given to yes and number 1 is given to no. The total score of this variable will be out of 8. Variables (12, 13, and 14) are standing for reading, listening and speaking, respectively, and they were treated exactly as variable 10. The total score of these four variables together will construct a separate variable (variable 15) and then it will be converted into percentage.

Motivation (Appendix IV): This section consists of 20 statements intended to elicit students' instrumental and integrative motivations towards learning English. Statements (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12) refer to instrumental motivations (variable 16) and statements (14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20) refer to integrative motivations (Variable 17). This questionnaire is adopted from (Islam 1995). A four-point scale is given to each item ranging from "not important" to "very important". The sum of Variable 16 and Variable 17 will be (Variable 18) after converting the total score into percentage.

3.3.2 Linguistic Data (Appendix V, VI, VII)

This section consists of three parts:

Part one (variable 19) is intended to test participants' ability to use English tenses and to investigate the implicational order of difficulties in the use of tense since the use of tenses is considered to be one of the most problematic areas for Syrian students learning English (see Appendix V). It consists of ten sentences. The sentences used were taken from one of the exercises listed in the Grammar Book of the 10th standard. The participants were asked to put the correct form of the verb in brackets. Each answer will be given one mark and the total score will be converted into percentage.

Part Two (variable 20) Easy Cloze Test: This test is intended to examine the surface fluency of the participants in English. It is easy because it is administrated to five students informally in the pilot study. The text was entitled "The Computer". Every seventh word was deleted from the text, with first and last
sentences left intact in order to make the text readable and easier for the participants (see Appendix VI). The "exact word" method is adopted for scoring process. The total number of blanks amounts to (31). The scores may range from 0 to 31 and raw scores are converted into percentage.

Part Three (variable 21) Difficult Cloze Test: The text was chosen from the textbook of first year students of The Institute of Teacher Training entitled "Safety at Home". The text was checked in the pilot study and found difficult. The same procedure of scoring as in the easy cloze test was followed (see Appendix VII). The students were asked to retrieve the exact word and fill in the blanks, which amounted to (40). The scores ranging from 0 to 40 and raw scores were converted into percentage.

The principle of cloze testing is based on the Gestalt theory of 'closure'. Thus, cloze tests measure the readers' ability to decode (elect the most acceptable word based on all the contextual clues available). The subject has to restore the text by filling in as many of the deleted words as he/she can. Cloze test is primarily used to measure students' second/foreign language proficiency in a holistic manner (Farhady et al 1996).

Three ways are usually employed to score up a cloze test. The first is the exact word method in which the reader is supposed to retrieve the exact word used in the original passage. In the contextual appropriateness method, the reader must guess on appropriate, acceptable word in the context. The third method called restoration method and is based on guessing words that make sense in the context of the passage even if they are not necessarily grammatically correct.

According to Cohen (1980) the subject will use 'linguistic knowledge, textual knowledge and knowledge of the world' to fill in the blanks. In cloze test the words are deleted systematically. Thus, the construction of a cloze is mechanical as every nth word (where it varies between the fifth up to tenth word) is deleted. Farhady et al (1996:281) defines standard cloze test, which is more
popular, as "a passage of appropriate difficulty and approximately 220-250 words with every 7th word deleted".

Initially cloze test was used to determine the readability of texts in the reader's native language (Taylor 1953); this technique was found very useful for testing various aspects of the language proficiency of native speakers (Potter 1968 and Klare et al. 1972). Now, it is increasingly used to test the proficiency of second and foreign learners (Oller and Inal 1971). It is a means of assessing learner's internalized grammatical knowledge.

The total score of variables 19, 20, and 21 will be considered collectively as to measure the linguistic data as a whole in one variable (variable 22). The total score of variable 22 will be converted into percentage.

3.4 Procedure

The data was checked informally in the pilot study in order to decide its validity, difficulty and time requirements. Five students from the first year in the Department of English, Al-Ba'ath University, were chosen for this purpose. The required time needed for the completion of the data was at least four hours.

The head of the English Department of AL Ba'ath University was contacted. After explaining the main objectives to him, he kindly agreed to spare the time needed with his students in the class. With his generous cooperation, the test was administered to the students. Yet, to obtain serious responses, an atmosphere of challenge was created in the class. Students were told to consider the test as a challenge to their English language ability. Initially the general background information inventory was administered. It included information such as: age, sex, mother tongue and number of years of exposure to English, etc. It was followed by the social-psychological and linguistic data.

Apparently the students seemed to be tense when attempting the cloze tests. They spent two hours to complete the questionnaire. Initially, the researcher
wanted to get elaborated data about the students' level of proficiency but found it quite difficult, and even impossible, to have more time with the students due to the teachers' hectic schedules and their urgent need to complete the requirements of the syllabus before the examination. Therefore, two hours were only given to the researcher and accordingly one of the components of the questionnaire was deleted and the researcher tried to do with the available data since it no doubt gives a general overview of our study.

3.5 Analysis of the data

The data collected was scored, codified, tabulated, and then analyzed in light of the principles of statistical methods.

3.5.1 Scoring and codification

The first step in data analysis after the process of data collection is to score and codify the information collected. In codification we have to distinguish between two types of data: qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative data are classified on the basis of some attributes or qualities such as: sex, types of schools, scales etc. In order to deal with such kind of data statistically, we codify the answers by giving them numbers (see list of variables below).

Quantitative data, on the other hand, is classified according to some characteristics that can be measured such as: age, scales, tests' results etc. In this type of classification there are two elements, (i) the variable and (ii) the frequency. A variable may also be continuous or discrete. A continuous or running variable can take different values such as: the age; whereas a discrete variable, such as the type of school, is given a numerical record either 1 or 2 (see the list of variables below).

Quantitative or numerical data may be found almost everywhere in business, economics, social studies, language studies and many other areas. A numerical data must be possessed in order to be dealt with statistically. The
numerical information can be used statistically to present, analyze, and interpret this information. Statements of facts conveyed in exact quantitative terms are always more convincing than vague utterance. In a way, statistical matters present meaningful overall information from the mass of data. The data in the present study can thus be classified into two types, qualitative and quantitative.

List of the variables isolated from the questionnaire and their scoring:

Variable 1(age): It is a running variable.
Variable 2(sex): 1 is given to male and 2 is given to female.
Variable 3(type of school): 1 is given to Literary school and 2 is given to Scientific school.
Variable 4 (father Education): Sex-point scale for scoring ranging as follows:
0 stands for nil education
1 stands for Elementary School
2 stands for Preparatory School
3 stands for Secondary School
4 stands for graduation
5 stands for M. A.
6 stands for Ph.D
Variable 5 (mother Education): scoring of this variable as V4
Variable 6(father English): A five-point scale is used for scoring ranging from "not good" to "very good".
Variable 7(mother English): A five-point scale is used for scoring ranging from "not good" to "very good".
Variable 8 (attitudes towards learning process): This variable consists of 5 statement. A Five-point scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to" strongly agree" is given to each statement. The total score will be out of 25.
Variable 9 (attitudes toward materials): same as V8
Variable 10 (the sum of V8 and V9): it was converted into percentage.

Variable 11 (Motivation instrumental): A four point scale is used for scoring ranging from "not important" to "very important" for each item. The total number of items is 12 and the total score will be out of 48.

Variable 12 (Motivation integrative): A four point scale is used for scoring ranging from "not important" to "very important" for each item. The total number of items is 8 and the total score will be out of 32.

Variable 13 (the sum of V11 and V12): the total score was converted into percentage.

Variable 14 (writing): It consists of four statements. The answer on each statement should be either yes or no. Yes is given 2 and no is given 1. The total score will be out of the maximum marks 8.


Variable 16 (listening): the same procedure adopted in V14.

Variable 17 (speaking): the same procedure adopted in V14.

Variable 18 (total score of the 4 skills): The total score of Variables (14,15,16,17) after converting it into percentage.

Variable 19 (tense test): It consists of ten statements. Each statement is given one mark the maximum score will be out of 10 and then it converted into percentage.

Variable 20 (easy cloze test): each blank is given one mark. The total score of the student will be out of 31 and then it will be converted to percentage.

Variable 21 (difficult cloze test): each blank is given one mark. The total score of the student will be out of 40 and then converted to percentage.
**Variable 22** (the sum of V19, V20, and V21): the total score was converted into percentage.

**Variable 23** (group): fresh student is given 2 and non fresh student is given 1.

### 3.5.2 Tabulation and analysis

All information collected throughout the questionnaire was classified into different types; social (personal) data, psychological (attitude-motivation) data, and linguistic data. This information was displayed in two statistical tables, one for "Group A" and one for "Group B". Data was distributed in different columns and rows so that their relationship can easily be calculated, quantified and understood. Tabulation of data in a matrix facilitates comparison, gives identity to the data and simplifies complex data.

The tabulation and the analysis of the data were done with the help of computer. The use of computer to analyze complex data has made complicated research designs practical. Performing calculations almost at the speed of light, the computer has become one of the most useful research tools in physical and behavioral sciences as well as in the humanities (Best & Kahn 1993:371). The tabulation, classification, correlation analysis and graphics in this study were done by a software package called Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) for Windows version 11.
Chapter Four
Objective Needs

4.0 Introduction

Basically, needs assessment involves finding out what the learners know and can do, and what they need to learn to do. Needs assessment involves, also, seeking and interpreting information about students' needs (Grave 2001). Among the huge literature of needs analysis, there is one way of conceptualizing needs analysis which distinguishes between "objective" and "subjective" needs. Thus, this Chapter is intended to interpret the information collected from the first year Syrian undergraduate learners of English in the Department of English in Al-Ba'ath University with regard to their needs for learning English. This chapter is devoted to analyze the "objective" needs of learners.

4.1 "Objective Needs"

Two types of information can give us a view of the students' objective needs. First is the students' background, which includes country, culture, education, language spoken, family, age, sex and so on. Second is the analysis of the students' current language proficiency and language difficulties. We will try in this chapter to deal with each type of information in some detail.

4.2 Students' background

The data collected from the students gives us an insight about the students' background. All the students in our sample are Syrian nationals. All the students belong to monolingual society, speaking one language which is Arabic. Arabic language is the medium of instruction in all Syrian schools and universities. English is used as a medium of instruction only in Departments of English in universities, and in private lingua institutes.
The majority of the students were found to belong to the middle class. Few of them came from rich families. Nevertheless, being a member in a rich high class does not give any special privilege to these students since they were studying in the same governmental tuition-free schools and were exposed to the same syllabus. Both private and governmental schools are teaching the same syllabus in Syria.

Our sample in this study was deliberately taken from the students of English Department in the Al-Ba'ath University. These students were supposed to have higher motivation to study English, and they showed more ability to express their views and reveal their attitudes and motivations towards English. To some extent, they were also able to give some judgments over the process of teaching English in their schools. Other students who chose to study courses other than English have relatively less interest in learning English because English is not the medium of instruction in their colleges. English language has nothing to do with their study except that it is taught as a compulsory subject in the curriculum. This does not mean, however, that they are not showing a genuine desire to learn English especially to be able to access the internet, to know the latest developments, and to communicate with international friends.

Age: Our sample consists of two age groups; "Group A" 18-23 years and "Group B" 17-19 years. The mean score of "Group A" is 20 with a standard deviation of (1.39), whereas the mean score of the age of "Group B" is 18 with a standard deviation of (.53) see table (4.1) below.

Table 4.1: Mean and Standard deviation of age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group A</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1.39</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group B</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>.53</td>
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63
From the table above, we notice that there is "two years" difference in the mean score of age between "Groups A" and "Group B". That means that students from "Group A" were exposed to English language, according to the mean score, two years more than students from "Group B". If the difference in age was only one year it is understood because students from "Group A" were not fresh in first year since they had failed in their first year as students in the English department. However, for those who were found to be more than 19 years old it means that they had also failed one more year before they even join the department of English. It is also possible that some of these students have twice taken their high secondary school (10+2) exam, even though they have passed the first one. It is known that some students in Syria opt for repeating their 10+2 exam when they do not score good marks which will enable them to choose what they want.

Sex: The average of females in our study is 80%, whereas the average of the males is 20% in both Groups see table (4.2) below. It is a common tendency of females in our country to join faculties of humanities especially Arabic and English departments since these courses will qualify them to be teachers in future, which is the easiest, and the most convenient job for females. There is no wonder then if the average of females is found to be more than the males who have the tendency to study practical courses such as medical, economic, engineering, informatics, and other scientific courses. The males prefer practical courses because the latter will entitle them to get highly-paid jobs which will enable them to provide the financial support to their families in future.

Table 4.2: Percentage of sex

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
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<tr>
<td>Group A</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>80%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group B</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>80%</td>
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</table>
4.3 Current language proficiency and language difficulties

The level of overall proficiency of the both groups, "Group A" and "Group B" can be drawn from the analysis of two kinds of linguistic tests : (1) students' control over tense test and (2) two cloze tests.

4.3.1 Tense Test

Following Agnihotri, Khanna, and Mukherjee (1994), this test is intended to examine whether the students' control over different tenses could be arranged in an implicational order of difficulty. We will try to address the following questions: Does the control over a particular tense subsume the control over another? Does the ability of controlling the use of some tenses affect the control of others?

The implicational scale used in this test is developed originally from Guttmann (1950) and the validity of its use in sociolinguistics from Bicherton (1975); Gal (1979); Mukherjee (1980); and in applied linguistics from Anderson (1978). Some modification has been done to this scale to suit our case study in this research.

Chambers and Trudgill (1980) mentioned that for two variables (x) and (y) which co-occur in some speech community, it must follow that (x) implies (y), but not vice versa. If we adopt such an idea, it means that some speakers have (x) and some have (x) and (y) but none has only (y) (Agnihotri et al 1994). Our discussion here will consider this idea as the leading direction in the analysis of the result of this test.

The procedure used for arranging the variable (table 4.3 and table 4.4) was first to arrange the rows according to the scores of the subjects, with the highest at the top, and secondly, by arranging the columns in a descending hierarchy according to the total scores for each item. The types of tenses isolated from the test are shown below:
1. Simple present tense
2. Infinitive
3. Simple Past
4. Conditional
5. Past Continuous
6. Present Continuous
7. Past Perfect
8. Present perfect Continuous
9. Simple Future
10. Past Prefect Continuous

The implicational scales for both Groups (A,B) show us that the population are completely good in their control over five types of verbal forms; simple present, infinitival, simple past, conditional, and past continuous tense. There are no significant differences between both Groups. This achievement is a reflection of the extensive drilling in the classroom regarding those verbal forms.

The differences between the two Groups started to appear from item number 6 (present continuous tense). Subjects in "Group A" scored 55-per cent in this item, while "Group B" scored remarkably 80 per cent.

No crucial difference appeared in the score of both Groups regarding item number 7 (past perfect tense). Both Groups scored 55 per cent of the total score which indicates a weakness of training in the program. It could also be the effect of the mother tongue. In English, the use of past prefect with simple past tense is important when we have a sequence of events, which happened one before the other. In Arabic, the procedure is different. The sequence of events happened in the past can be conveyed by using adverbs rather than separate forms of verbs.

Items number 8 and 10 (present prefect continuous and past prefect continuous respectively) seem to be difficult to acquire. There is a slight difference between the scores of both Groups. "Group A" scores 40 per cent in
item 8 and 5 per cent in item 10, whereas "Group B" scored 45 per cent in item 8 and 8 per cent in item 10. This low score in both items reflects the difficulty in acquiring these tenses. It may be recommended that such types of tenses should be undertaken at the advanced stage of instructional program (see Agnihotri et al 1994).

What is surprising in this implicational order of difficulties is to have item 9 (simple future) at this position of difficulties. Both of the Groups marked low score, 25 per cent of the subjects answered correctly from "Group A" and 48 per cent from "Group B". The effect of the mother tongue cannot be the source of error in this case simply because it is very easy to connect /sa/ or /sawfa/ in Arabic with the English equivalent /will/ or /shall/. The problem may be in the combination of future particle with verb "to have". It might be the case that students do not know exactly the use and function of the verb "to have".

The students tend to associate verb to have only with perfect tenses and do not recognize it as a main verb in a sentence. Differences between "Group A" and "Group B" in their control over the use of tenses were marginal. Both or them show to some extant an acceptable control except for the use of simple future, present prefect continuous and past prefect continuous tenses. This, in fact, reflects one of the characteristics of the old curriculum, namely, its extensive focus on grammar. Needless to say that such an emphasis on grammar was even at the expense of other communicative factors in learning English, which produced a generation of learners who can not perform well when it comes to other levels of proficiency such as listening and speaking. Table (4.5) shows the level of both Groups in terms of mean and standard deviation.

Thus, in comparing fresh students with non-fresh students, we may say that the effect of the new curriculum on the "Group B" is proved to be clear. Had the designers noticed the areas of difficulties before, they would probably devote some effort for applying some extensive drilling for the use of simple future,
Table 4.3: Implicational Scale of the tense test for Group A

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<th>Present perfect</th>
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Table 4.4: Implicational Scale of the tense test for Group B

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</tr>
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<td>32</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
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<tr>
<td>35</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
present prefect continuous and past prefect continuous tense so that students will optimally acquire these tenses and learn how to use them properly.

Table 4.5: Mean and Standard Deviation of the tense Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group A</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>61.50</td>
<td>19.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group B</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>73.50</td>
<td>15.94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This result may partially reflect the advantage of the new curriculum in the process of internalizing the grammatical rules of English by students.

4.3.2 Cloze Tests

The use of cloze test in this study aimed at measuring the overall proficiency of the learners in both Groups. The generalization, which we may conclude about our subjects' proficiency, depends on the analysis of the cloze tests. As we mentioned in Chapter One, the absence of target language community in our society let the English syllabus in schools play the major role in forming the student's English language competence.

In this study, we have two cloze tests: easy and difficult ones. The easy cloze test is intended to investigate the surface level of proficiency and the difficult cloze is intended to examine the academic/cognitive level of proficiency.

The concept of "surface fluency" and "academic/cognitive proficiency" first appeared in the work of Skutnabb-Kangas and Toukomaa (1976). Skutnabb-Kangas and Toukomaa are considered the pioneers in this field. They distinguished clearly between "surface fluency" in a language and "academic/cognitive proficiency" in the same language. This idea was developed later by Cummins (1979a) who distinguished between two levels: "surface fluency" and "conceptual-linguistic knowledge". Cummins (1980a) talked further about what is known as Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills that means the
'manifestation of language proficiency in every day communicative context' and about Academic/Cognitive Proficiency that means the 'manifestation of language in decontextualized academic situation'.

Haskell (1975) suggests three levels in order to judge on a cloze test score:

1- **Independent level**: In this level, the mean scores of the students should be at least 53% correct indicating that they find the text easy to comprehend without any help from the teacher.

2- **Instruction level**: In this level, the mean scores of the students are 44-53%. It is presumed that students falling in this category find the text readable with the help of the teacher.

3- **Frustration level**: when the students have a mean score below 44% correct, they are considered to be in frustration level. Here, the students find the passage too difficult to read with the help of a teacher.

Following Haskell, we divide each Group into three levels see table (4.6).

**Table 4.6: Students’ levels according to Haskell**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th><strong>Group A (n=20)</strong></th>
<th></th>
<th><strong>Group B (n=40)</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cloze (1)</td>
<td>Cloze (2)</td>
<td>Cloze (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nos. of students</td>
<td>Nos. of students</td>
<td>Nos. of students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Independent level</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(over 53%)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instruction level</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(44-53%)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Frustration level</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(below 44%)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table (4.6) above shows a clear image about the differences between "Group A" and "Group B" regarding Cloze I. The mean scores of both Groups reveal this image see table (6.1) in Chapter Six. The majority of the students in
"Group A" were in the frustration level. Only two students out of twenty were found in the independent level and one in the instruction level. This reflects that they found the passage very difficult to comprehend and were unable to retrieve its deleted words. Students' poor mean score, which is 31.25, indicates their failure in holding the basics of surface fluency.

On the contrary, "Group B", preformed well. Their mean score was 55.65. The passage for them was readable and easy to comprehend with less difficulty in comparison with "Group A". Twenty-five students were in independent level with three students in instruction level, and twelve students in frustration level. This group shows good grasp over the basics of the surface fluency. The effect of the new syllabus is shown to play a positive role in their performance.

The difference between "Groups A" and "Group B" in Cloze I is extended slightly to Cloze II. Although the majorities in both Groups were in the frustration level, yet some differences deserve to be noticed. The mean score of "Group A" was 21.45. Nineteen students from this group were in frustration level with only one student in independent level. The passage of Cloze II seemed to be very difficult to read and comprehend. The researcher himself was frustrated to see this result. He suspected that he had perhaps chosen a wrong text. Nevertheless, the results of "Group B" to some extent balanced the situation. The mean score of this group was 38.17 with 17% above the score of "Group A". Twenty-eight students were in the frustration level and six of them in independent level and six in instruction level.

The result in Cloze II provides a clear image of the students' lack of grasping the academic/cognitive proficiency. Students need to be equipped with some level of proficiency to face the requirements of the academic tasks. Such a score in Cloze II needs a deep thinking from the teacher, designers, and all participants in the learning process. It is true that the effects of the new curriculum is clear in the performance of "Group B" but it is still not enough to ensure high
proficiency level. Students need more care regarding their levels in academic/cognitive proficiency.

4.3.3 Classification of deleted words in Cloze Tests

In order to examine in some detail the difficulties behind the retrieval of the deleted words in cloze tests, we classified these words into content words (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs) and function words (articles, auxiliaries, conjunctions, Complimentizer, quantifiers, pronouns, prepositions, infinitivals). In Cloze (I) 31 words were deleted, whereas 40 words were deleted in Cloze (II). For the distribution of deleted words into content and function categories in the two Cloze tests see table (4.7).

Table 4.7: Classification of deleted words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parts of speech</th>
<th>Number of deletion</th>
<th>Number of deletion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cloze I</td>
<td>Cloze II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content Words</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Nouns</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Verbs</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Adjectives</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Adverbs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Function Words</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Articles</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Auxiliaries</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Conjunctions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Complimentizer</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Quantifiers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Pronouns</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Prepositions</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Infinitivals</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Cardinals</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total number of deletion</strong></td>
<td>31</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Some of the categories motioned in table (4.7) were easy for students to retrieve and some were difficult. The mean score of "Group A" for content words was 41.17 in Cloze I and 17.33 in Cloze II, whereas the mean score for function words was 45.71 in Cloze I and 26.25 in Cloze II. It seems that functional words sound easier than content words for "Group A" to retrieve. In "Group B" the case is reversed. The mean score was 65.39 for content words and 62.35 for function words in Cloze I, whereas the mean was 35.5 for the content words and 37.85 for function words in Cloze II see Table (4.8).

Table 4.8: Percentage of retrievals in different categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Cloze I A%</th>
<th>Cloze I B%</th>
<th>Cloze II A%</th>
<th>Cloze II B%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-Nouns</td>
<td>29.43</td>
<td>53.5</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-Verbs</td>
<td>25.16</td>
<td>48.66</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-Adjective</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>32.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-Adverbs</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Scores</td>
<td>41.16</td>
<td>65.39</td>
<td>17.33</td>
<td>35.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Cloze I A%</th>
<th>Cloze I B%</th>
<th>Cloze II A%</th>
<th>Cloze II B%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-Article</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>16.25</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-Auxiliaries</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>26.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-Conjunctions</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-Complementizer</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-Quantifiers</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-Pronouns</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>44.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-Prepositions</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-infinitives</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>43.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Scores</td>
<td>45.71</td>
<td>62.35</td>
<td>26.25</td>
<td>37.85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3.3.1 Nouns

The acquisition of nouns in English necessitates the knowledge of its system. It is known that nouns are divided into two types; abstract and concrete. Concrete nouns are also subdivided into common and proper nouns. We have 11
nouns in cloze I and 14 nouns in cloze II; 3 abstract nouns in cloze I and 5 in cloze II, and 7 common nouns in cloze I and 10 in cloze II. For the classification of nouns and their percentage of retrieval see table (4.9) and table (4.10).

It is clear from table 4.9 that "Group B" performs better than "Group A" in Cloze I. In terms of percentage, there was no big difference between retrieving abstract and common nouns for both Groups. The score of the subjects in both Groups was slightly higher in favor of common over abstract nouns. "Group A" scored 28.33% in retrieving abstract nouns and 29.9% in common nouns whereas "Group B" scored 50.83% for abstract nouns and 54.64% for common nouns. Such a score suggests that the real problem does not lie so much in the ability of students to use different noun categories but rather it shows the difference between both Groups and the significant gap which need to be bridged between them. No doubt that "Group B" is better than "Group A" in cloze I, though it is not the best level of proficiency that they both should acquire.

In cloze II, there were 14 nouns to be retrieved by students (10 common and 4 abstract). The slight higher score in favor of common over abstract nouns in cloze one has been reversed in cloze two. "Group A" got 30% for abstract and 20.5% for common nouns whereas "Group B" got 38.5% for abstract and 36.75% for common nouns. Such a score might be justified if we consider the position of the nouns in the text.

The subjects found retrieval of common nouns easier than retrieval of abstract nouns in cloze I but the same does not apply to cloze II which means that what matter is not really the type of noun but rather its position in the text. For example, subjects' percentage in retrieving item number 3 "fire" is 50% in "Group A" and 62.5 in "Group B" (see table 4.10), whereas the score of item number 8 (which is also "fire") is 5% in "Group A" and 20% in "Group B", despite the fact that the two items are same. This means that the problem has nothing to do with the kind of nouns but with its position in the text. If the students find the text readable they perform well and the vice versa.
Table 4.9: classification and retrieval of nouns in Cloze I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Close I</th>
<th>Group A</th>
<th>Group B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Noun deleted</td>
<td>Noun kinds</td>
<td>Retrieval %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-computers</td>
<td>common</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-software</td>
<td>Common</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-keyboard</td>
<td>Common</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-oven</td>
<td>Common</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-voice</td>
<td>Common</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-machine</td>
<td>Common</td>
<td>58.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-answer</td>
<td>abstract</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-memory</td>
<td>abstract</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-rules</td>
<td>Common</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-access</td>
<td>abstract</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total percentage</td>
<td></td>
<td>29.43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.10: classification and retrieval of nouns in Cloze II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Close II</th>
<th>Group A</th>
<th>Group B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Item no</td>
<td>Noun deleted</td>
<td>Noun kinds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Fire</td>
<td>Common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>Common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Water</td>
<td>Common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Fire</td>
<td>Common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>King</td>
<td>Common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>Common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Lack</td>
<td>Abstract</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Cause</td>
<td>Abstract</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Gas</td>
<td>Common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Place</td>
<td>Common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Families</td>
<td>Common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>safety</td>
<td>Abstract</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Order</td>
<td>Abstract</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Couple</td>
<td>Common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total percentage</td>
<td></td>
<td>35.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What is clearly noticeable is that "Group B" performed rather well in comparison to "Group A" in both cloze tests. The reason behind their good performance can be attributed to the overall competence which they have acquired after studying the new curriculum.

4.3.3.2 Verbs

The acquisition of verb system in English involves the knowledge of the distinction between finite vs. non-finite and main vs. auxiliary as well as tense, aspect and mood distinctions. The language learner should know that a finite verb shows the tense and the subject of the verb whereas the non-finite verb does not carry such information. Non-finite verbs generally refer to infinitivals and participles.

Main verbs are those which carry the meaning in a clause as compared to auxiliary verbs which carry grammatical information about tense and help in forming aspect, voice and modality (Quirk et al. 1985). Lack of knowledge in any aspect of verb use may hinder good performance and may be a significant source of errors.

Table 4.11: classification and retrieval of verbs in Cloze 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item No</th>
<th>Close (I)</th>
<th>Group A</th>
<th>Group B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1- have</td>
<td>Non-finite</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>2- enter</td>
<td>Non-finite</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>3- make</td>
<td>Non-finite</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>4-written</td>
<td>Non-finite</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>5- read</td>
<td>Finite</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>6-changed</td>
<td>Non-finite</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>7- will</td>
<td>Auxiliary</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>8-have</td>
<td>Finite</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>9- do</td>
<td>Finite</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In this study, there were 8 main verbs and one auxiliary deleted in Cloze I and 5 main verbs and two auxiliaries deleted in Cloze II. Tables (4.11) and (4.12) present the verbs that were deleted in the two passages.

In Cloze I, the percentage of retrieval in "Group B" is noticeably high in comparison with "Group A". The relatively good performance of "Group B" shows that they have acquired a good command over the use of verbs in English, thanks to the new curriculum.

Table 4.12: classification and retrieval of verbs in Cloze II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Close (II)</th>
<th>Group A</th>
<th>Group B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verb deleted</td>
<td>verb kinds</td>
<td>Retrieval %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>are</td>
<td>Finite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>left</td>
<td>Non-finite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>should</td>
<td>Auxiliary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>think</td>
<td>Finite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>may</td>
<td>Auxiliary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>be</td>
<td>Finite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>create</td>
<td>Non-finite</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the other hand, most of the students in "Group A" managed to retrieve item 26, and some of them managed to retrieve items 18, 3, and 8. Most of them failed in retrieving items 15, 31, 22, and 25, and none of them managed to retrieve item 21. In the case of item 21, the failure of the students in providing the required word may be accounted for if we take into consideration the fact that the verb read is used idiomatically in this context. What is surprising is the failure of most students in providing the auxiliary will in item 25. It seems that students of "Group A" have not acquired a good grasp over the simple future form though it can easily be associated with the Arabic system of future tense which the students have already mastered as native speakers of Arabic. This also reminds us of the
students' performance in the tense test where the students' ability to use future simple tense came in a very low grade in the implicational scale. Similarly, most of the students failed to provide the exact word in item 22. This shows that they do not have a good grasp over the simple pasivization rules.

As we look at Cloze II, we can clearly see that students of "Group B" have also done better than students of "Group A". It is obvious that the performance of students of "Group A" in finite verbs (items 1 and 17) is considerably better than in non-finite verbs (items 14 and 38) and auxiliaries (items 15 and 29). Generally, retrieving auxiliaries demands the knowledge of simple grammatical structures, which the students obviously seem to lack. Retrieving lexical verbs is cognitively demanding and challenging, yet the students could retrieve these kinds of verbs with a relative success.

To account for such findings we can say that the acquisition of the different grammatical structures is not enough to make students retrieve content words, but at the same time it is not a prerequisite to do so. The poor performance of the students in retrieving auxiliaries and non-finite verbs indicates a weakness in the old curriculum in presenting these areas. Their acceptable performance in retrieving content verbs indicates their relative and partial ability to comprehend the passage as a whole despite the fact that 19 students out of 20 were in the frustration level.

Students of "Group B" performed a little bit better than "Group A" despite the fact that 28 students out of 40 were in the frustration level. It is interesting also to find that the highest percentage of retrieval was also in retrieving content finite main verbs. It indicates that the students have relatively understood the passage as a whole but they lack the weapons which might enable them to fight the difficulties in filling in the gaps perfectly well. This leads us to claim that though the new curriculum has noticeably improved the students' performance as a whole it failed to completely bridge the gap between what the students need to learn and what they are really taught.
4.3.3.3 Adjectives

Adjectives are words used to qualify a noun or a pronoun. The class of adjectives comprises items that have a similar syntactic function, rather than merely a resemblance in form (Quirk et al 1972: 229). The form of adjectives does not necessarily indicate their syntactic function in a sentence. Adjective can be used attributively and predicatively. An attributive adjective is used before the noun as an attribute whereas a predicative adjective is used after the verb and forms a predicate.

The acquisition of the adjective system in English involves a proper knowledge of adjectives' functions and positions in syntactic structures. In fact, an English learner should know that in syntactic structures there are certain positions which can only be filled with adjectives (regardless of the meaning of the adjective or the sentence).

In our first Cloze I, there was only one adjective deleted whereas in Cloze II there were four adjectives to be retrieved by students. Table (4.13) presents a list of the adjectives deleted from both tests.

Table 4.13 Classification of Adjectives in Cloze (I) and (II)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item No</th>
<th>Cloze (I)</th>
<th>Cloze (II)</th>
<th>Group A</th>
<th>Group B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adjective deleted</td>
<td>Adjective kind</td>
<td>Adjective deleted</td>
<td>Adjective kind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Different</td>
<td>attributive</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>terrible</td>
<td>Attributive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Late</td>
<td>predicative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>reasonable</td>
<td>attributive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>intensive</td>
<td>Attributive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

80
In Cloze I, we can see that most of the students in both groups were able to retrieve the deleted adjective *different* simply because it is a common tendency of everybody to use the collocation *different ways* in so many contexts.

When it came to Cloze II, some students performed relatively well in relation to items 34 and 39. However, none of the students in "Group A" and only 15% of students in "Group B" could retrieve the adjective *terrible*. It is surprising that the students could not even provide semantically or grammatically acceptable substitutes that fit perfectly well in the context of the sentence. Their extremely poor performance cannot be justified even if we admit that the second cloze was very difficult for them to read and comprehend.

In fact, it indicates that students have not acquired yet a good grasp over the use of adjectives in English. If we take it the other way round we can also say that students seem to lack proficiency in dealing with different syntactic structures of English. By using cloze test we can test the level of acquisition of second or foreign language in learners. We can locate the areas of deviance from the target language. We can know the areas which must be strengthened and can thus provide more input so the rules of grammar may eventually be acquired. Looking at the adjective *late*, which is used predicatively, we also recognize the poor performance of students in retrieving it.

This test actually should give us a better understanding of the nature of input to which students must be further exposed. To acquire a good grasp over the use of adjectives it is not enough to spend years teaching students how to morphologically derive adjectives from nouns (danger-dangerous) and from verbs (desire-desirable). Learners of English should know that not all adjectives can be morphologically derived from other parts of speech, neither is it true that adjectives can be identified by their form nor linguistic shape. More importantly, learners of English should be fully aware that in sentences there are certain positions that can only be filled by adjectives to make grammatical sentences whether or not these sentences are semantically acceptable.
4.3.3.4 Adverbs

The adverb class is heterogeneous in nature. Quirk et al (1972:267) defines the adverb as the item which does not fit the definition for other parts of speech. The most common characteristic of the adverb is morphological: the majority of adverbs have the derivational suffix "-ly". But as we know some adjectives have also "-ly" suffix, as in friendly, for instance. There are also many adverbs that lack this termination such as often, here, when, well, now, etc. There are two types of syntactic functions that characterize the adverbs, but an adverb needs to have only one of these:

(1) clause constituent
(2) modifier of adjective and adverb.

An adverb may function in the clause itself as adverbial, as a constituent distinct from subject, verb, object, and complement. As such it is usually an optional element as in (John always loses his pencils). As a modifier it might be used to modify an adjective or another adverb as in (They are very lucky; they are remarkably intelligent). Any learner of English should at least know the information provided above about adverbs. Lack of input in this area may contribute negatively to the students' poor performance in English.

In our study we had one adverb in cloze I and two adverbs in cloze II as shown in table (4.14). Students of both Groups did rather well in items 23 and 28 with "Group B" showing more ability to retrieve the deleted adverbs. When it came to item 13 the performance of both groups was not satisfactory. "Group A" was extremely frustrating either because of the difficulty they faced in reading and understanding a new passage or due to a significant gap in their level of proficiency which again and again shows itself to be very poor.
Table 4.14 Classification of Adverbs in Cloze I and II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item No</th>
<th>Cloze (I)</th>
<th>Cloze (II)</th>
<th>Group A</th>
<th>Group B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adverb deleted</td>
<td>Adverb kind</td>
<td>Adverb deleted</td>
<td>Adverb kind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>When</td>
<td>Time adverbial</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>Intensifier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Doubly frequency</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3.3.5 Articles

The knowledge of articles requires that the learner knows the difference between definite and indefinite articles and their functions in sentences. The simplest definition states the role of the article as to designate an object as familiar. Briefly stating, articles have been categorised into two major groups: Definite vs. Indefinite. Indefinite articles are ‘a’ and ‘an’. The article a/an is used before singular countable nouns.

The choice of the indefinite article depends on the initial sound of the word immediately following it. If the initial sound of the following word is vocalic, the indefinite marker ‘an’ is used but if the initial sound of the word is consonantal, the indefinite marker ‘a’ is used.

According to Karel Horalek (1955), the article is a formal (grammatical) word by means of which the subject which is spoken of is closely defined (determined). The primary function of both articles is determinations but the definite article ‘the’ has also the secondary function of individualisation, specialisation, particularisation, and familiarisation of the related noun. The term “definite” apparently means that the noun, to which the article is added, stands for something definite.
In our study, there were two deleted articles in cloze I and three deleted articles in cloze II. Table (4.15) presents a list of the deleted articles in both tests. Table (4.15) clearly shows the poor performance of both groups in retrieving articles. Though students of "Group B" have been a little bit better than those of "Group A" especially in their overall scoring in cloze I, yet they too have not done well with respect to use of articles. This may be an indication that the use of articles is independent of overall proficiency though this needs to be further explored. Experience has shown that the area of articles is difficult for all speakers of English – native or non-native. This, however, does not mean that formal training in the use of articles cannot be fruitful.

Table 4.15 Classification of Articles in Cloze I and II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item No</th>
<th>Article (I)</th>
<th>Article kind</th>
<th>Cloze (II)</th>
<th>Article kind</th>
<th>Group A Retrieval %</th>
<th>Group B Retrieval %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Indefinite</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>the</td>
<td>Definite</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>The</td>
<td>Definite</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Indefinite</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>The</td>
<td>Definite</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3.3.6 Prepositions

The acquisition of prepositions in English involves the knowledge of prepositions and prepositional phrases. A prepositional phrase consists of a preposition followed by a prepositional complement, which is characteristically either a noun phrase or a clause (wh-clause or V-ing clause) in nominal function as in (at the bus-stop; from what he said; by praising the president) see Quirk et al (1972). In our study there were two prepositions deleted from cloze I and three prepositions deleted from cloze II. Table (4.16) presents a list of the deleted prepositions.
Table 4.16: Classification of prepositions in cloze I and II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item No</th>
<th>Cloze I</th>
<th>Cloze II</th>
<th>Group A</th>
<th>Group B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preposition deleted</td>
<td>Retrieval %</td>
<td>Retrieval %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>with</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Of</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>In</td>
<td></td>
<td>50</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Of</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Of</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We notice that students have performed very well in items 1 and 30, and relatively well in 16 and 36. However, their extremely poor performance in item 6 shows that they have found the passage very difficult to understand. The prepositions to be retrieved usually do not give the students much of a choice to provide acceptable substitutes that fit in the contexts of the respective sentences. Therefore, these blanks were left completely empty. This test, however, is not enough to evaluate the students' level of competence in dealing with prepositions. A further elaborated test can be done to further explore this area.

Generally speaking, Cloze Test is a very powerful testing device which can throw some light on students' level of competence in English. In this sense, it can help us to decide the kind of input necessary to strengthen the acquisition process further. By knowing learners' errors, we gain evidence of the system of the language s/he is using (i.e., has learned) at a particular point in the course and it must be reported that s/he is using some system although it is not yet the right system. Errors are significant in three ways:

(a) First to the teacher, in that they tell him how far towards the goal the learner has progressed and, consequently, what remains for him to learn.
(b) They provide to the researcher evidence of how language is learned or acquired, what strategies or procedures the learner is employing in his discovery of the rules.

(c) They are indispensable to the learner himself because we can regard the making of mistakes as a device the learner uses in order to learn.

When a learner of a second / foreign language attempts to produce utterances/sentences in the target language, this set of utterances is not identical to the corresponding set of utterances, which may be produced by a native speaker of the target language. This linguistic output is a combination of the rule systems of a number of sources, such as the learner’s native language, the target language, and various social psychological factors, involved in the process of learning. That is why a systematic evaluation of the learning process, and all the other factors which affect it in a way or another, is a very important device to promote the process of learning so that a student will optimally comprehend and produce the relevant structures of the target language.

4.4 Conclusion

In this Chapter we tried to interpret the information collected from the first year Syrian undergraduate learners of English in the Department of English in Al-Ba'ath University with regard to their needs for learning English. We concentrated in this chapter on the analysis of the "objective needs" of learners. Students' social backgrounds, age, sex, and otherwise have been studied and presented in the first section. It was followed by an analysis of the linguistic data which included an examination of students' control over the use of tenses in English. Next, we analyzed in detail students' overall proficiency in English through one tense test and two cloze tests, an easy and a comparatively difficult one. The observations we noticed are found to be meaningful and illuminating. Students of "Group B", who were trained in the new curriculum, were found to be in many ways better than student's of "Group A", who were trained in the old curriculum.
Some areas of weakness have been identified. It is strongly recommended that these areas receive special attention while modifying the new curriculum. It is also recommended that an extensive needs assessment should be carried out further to take it into consideration in any future modifications of the Syrian English Curriculum.
Chapter Five
Subjective Needs

5.0 Introduction

Language learning within a communicative curriculum is most appropriately seen as communicative interaction involving all the participants in the learning and including the various material resources on which the learning is exercised. Therefore, language learning may be seen as a process which grows out of the interaction between learners, teachers, texts, and activities. When learners are given the chance to spell out their wants, this communicative interaction is likely to engage the abilities within the learners' developing competence in an area of cooperative negotiation, joint interpretation, and the sharing of expression. Here comes the analysis of students' needs as part of the learners' involvement in assessing the learning process.

"Subjective Needs" are often as important as "Objective Needs". Unless subjective needs are taken into account, objective needs may not be met. As Brindley (1989:70) pointed out, subjective needs are derivable from information about affective and cognitive factors such as personality, confidence, attitude, motivation, learner's wants, and expectations with regard to the learning of English and learning strategies.

Different students have different needs, and the information gathered through needs assessment can help designers to make choices as to what to teach and how to teach it (Graves 2001). Keeping in view the importance of subjective needs assessment, the needs of Syrian learners of English will be analyzed in this chapter to get a clear idea about what these learners want and expect to learn.
5.1 Cognitive Factors

Cognitive approach has had a significant impact on language teaching methodology, moving us towards methods involving the learners being actively engaged in making sense of their input (Williams & Burden 1997:39). The information processing habits of the learner will provide insights into the interaction between the learner's cognitive style and the subject matter. According to Brown (1973:238), cognitive style refers to 'self-consistent and enduring individual differences in cognitive organization and functioning'. Brown stated that these cognitive strategies may be particularly helpful in the analysis of errors and teaching of grammar. As language is generally full of exceptions to rules and ambiguities, an open-minded learner may perform better at the task of learning a language (Khanna 1983:39). Any understanding to learner's strategy must account for cognitive factors such as personality, attitude, motivation and expectation.

5.2 Personality

Too much attention has been paid to such outside factors as the teacher, teaching method and materials (Nida 1959). Nida suggests that a better understanding of the causes of learning a foreign language can be found by examining some of the more subtle and less obvious conditions relating to the personality of the learner.

Several studies such as Wittenberg et al (1944, 1945), Pimsleur et al (1964), Smart et al (1970), and Bartz (1974) have attempted to investigate relationship between personality traits and language learning. Pimsleur et al (1964) compared average achievers and underachievers in high schools. Social conformity, extraversion, flexibility and tolerance for ambiguity were some of the characteristics that a successful foreign language student was assumed to have.

The instruments generally used for the investigation of the relationship between personality traits and foreign language learning have generally not been very systematic and their construction has been guided by intuition rather than by
any theory of empirical investigation. Leino (1972:9) points out that little information is available on the reliability and validity of the instruments and the generalizability of the results is further limited by the small number of subjects especially in the studies where high and low achievers have been compared. Moreover, the subjects in the majority of studies have been university students; so there may have been selection even as to personality traits. Therefore, the question whether certain personality traits help language learning is still open and need to be further explored.

5.3 Attitudes (Appendix II)

A considerable amount of research has been done on the relationship between attitude and motivation and proficiency in learning a second/foreign language (Gardner & Lambert 1959, 1972, Ely 1986). Burstall (1975) points out that peoples' attitudes may vary very considerably and maturational factors may influence the development of peoples' attitudes towards foreign language learning. Favorable attitudes may reach their peak at about age ten and thereafter decline fossilizing into stereotypes with maturation.

As Cook (1978) observes an absolute identity with a foreign culture may involve loss of native identity. May be that is why the Syrian political attitude towards English language was not without cautions three or four decades ago. As the contemporary world witnesses huge changes which affect the whole glob equally, the Syrian stance cannot but change to keep up with the new demands of the modern era. For Syrian learners, however, mastering English does not and should not mean an adoption of the values of foreign cultures. What is required is a generation who can easily and increasingly assimilate English without ceasing to be Arab Syrians.

In general, positive attitude towards a second/foreign language and its speakers appeared to be associated with high proficiency in second language. In their three American studies (Louisiana, Maine, Connecticut) Gardner and Lambert established that:
"A friendly outlook towards the other group whose language is being learned can differentially sensitize the learner to the audio-Lingual features of the language, making him more perceptive to form of pronunciation and accent than is the case for a learner without this open and friendly disposition".

(Gardner and Lambert, 1972:134)

It has also been said that the acquisition of foreign language does not necessarily change positively or negatively the learner's attitude towards the target language group (Oller et al 1977).

The present study basically aims at examining in some detail the students' attitudes towards the learning process and towards the materials being taught in order to see how these attitudes correlate with other factors in English language learning in Syria. The investigation of the students' attitudes in this study has been done through asking them 10 questions; five questions were intended to illicit their attitudes towards learning process, method, and approaches, and five questions were intended to illicit their attitudes towards materials used in classroom, sufficiency of learning hours and the general atmosphere in school, see (Appendix II). Table (5.1) presents the attitudes of students of "Group A" arranged in a hierarchical order from the most to the least positive.

Table (5.1) shows that students of "Group A" have a highly positive attitude towards learning English which is indicated by their choice of item (1) which got the highest score 68%. It shows that students enjoy English classes at school. Such an attitude is supposed to trigger the learning abilities and to promote the acquisition of the language. Item (2) got 65% and came at the second rate. It indicates that the students were satisfied with their English textbooks.
Table 5.1: Students' attitudes "Group A"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Order</th>
<th>Types of attitude</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>GI %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Process</td>
<td>I enjoyed English classes at school.</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Material</td>
<td>The English books I have studied at school were very useful.</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Weekly period/hours devoted to learning English were sufficient.</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Material</td>
<td>The English curriculum I have studied at school facilitated my further study at the university.</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Material</td>
<td>The materials in the English books were above our levels.</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Material</td>
<td>The English books I have studied at school contributed/encouraged me to join the English Dept. in the university.</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Process</td>
<td>The attitude of the teacher in involving the student to interact with each other was satisfactory.</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Process</td>
<td>The teaching methods adopted by our teacher were very good.</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Our teachers always explain English lessons only in English.</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Material</td>
<td>Lots of English materials beside our main books were always available in the school.</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
However it is significant to see whether such an attitude has got anything to do with, or whether it is positively correlated with the students' level of proficiency, as explored in tense and cloze tests, see Chapter Six. Students have also positively expressed their attitude towards the period of teaching per week, which gets the score of 60% and came at the third rate. Carroll (1963) has suggested that the total amount of time spent on a given language is an important variable in the learning process. As Titone (1977) points out, while children will benefit from a more extended period of time in order to be able to digest new behavioral materials like language skills, adults will be able to profit from intensive courses due to their high degree of transfer ability.

The question, whether the curriculum they studied was facilitating their study in the university, came at the forth rate and the score was 54%. This relatively low percentage clearly shows that there is a gap between what the students learnt in schools and what they were exposed to in the university. It also explains why most students expressed that they entered the English Department to learn and master the English language itself rather than to know about English literature, history and culture.

The item, which inquires whether the materials in the syllabus were above their level, took the fifth rate with score of 54%. This means that the students found the syllabus above their ability to comprehend and follow. It also means that the old curriculum used to offer advanced stage materials without going through the details, eliminating the difficulties or pave the way for these new materials.

Students scored 53% for the role of contents of the English textbook in encouraging them to join English Department in university. If we put it the other way we can say that deficiency, rather than efficiency, in the old curriculum actually urged the students to seek learning English in English departments. The attitude of the teachers in involving them to interact with each other came at the seventh rate with score of 51%. This relatively negative attitude highlights the
authoritarian role of teachers of the old curriculum. There has been hardly interaction between teachers and students who remained passive rather than active recipients of the teachers' instructions.

The eighth and ninth rate went to the method the teachers adopted and to the dominance of their using English in the classroom with the score of 50%. This again highlights the relatively poor role of the teachers in as far as their methods in engaging students in the learning process are concerned. It also draws attention to the fact that some of these teachers were not fluent speakers of English and that the use of the English language inside the classroom was not their priority.

The tenth rate went to the availability of English materials other than the textbooks being taught to them with score of 48%. It shows how eager these students are to be involved more and more in learning through reading other materials and having access to other sources of English.

The spell out of the students' attitudes of "Group A" towards the learning process and materials in our data can be summarized as follows:

- Most of the students in "Group A" enjoy English classes.
- Their attitudes towards materials (items 2, 4, 5, 6, 10) are higher than their attitudes towards the learning process (items 1, 3, 7, 8, 9).
- They are somehow satisfied with their English syllabus but the method adopted by teachers and their approaches were less satisfactory.
- The weekly period/hours devoted to learning English were reportedly sufficient.
- The majority of the students were least satisfied with the availability of materials other than their textbooks. This indicates that textbooks alone are not sufficient.
"Group B" to some extent reacted the same way as "Group A", but the score was higher with some changes in the hierarchy of the ten questions, see table (5.2).

Table 5.2: Students' attitudes "Group B"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Order</th>
<th>Types of attitude</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>GII %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Process</td>
<td>I enjoyed English classes at school.</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Material</td>
<td>The English books I have studied at school were very useful.</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Material</td>
<td>The English books I have studied at school contributed/encouraged me to join the English Dept. in the university.</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Material</td>
<td>The English curriculum I have studied at school facilitated my further study at the university.</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Our teachers always explain English lessons only in English.</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Process</td>
<td>The teaching methods adopted by our teacher were very good.</td>
<td>67.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Process</td>
<td>The attitude of the teacher in involving the student to interact with each other was satisfactory.</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Material</td>
<td>The materials in the English books were above our levels.</td>
<td>61.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Weekly period/hours devoted to learning English were sufficient</td>
<td>59.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Material</td>
<td>Lots of English materials beside our main books were always available in the school.</td>
<td>55.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Students of "Group B", like those of "Group A", enjoyed their English classes at school and found the textbooks very useful to them. This is particularly indicated by the fact that item (1) which got 81%, and item (2) which got 74%, hierarchically occupies the same order in tables (5.1) and (5.2). Surprisingly item (3) which got 74%, indicated that the English new curriculum, unlike the old curriculum, encouraged the student to join the English Department. This is another advantage of the new curriculum over the old one; it actually encouraged and gave confidence to the students to choose to major English in the university level. Item (4) is in the same position as in "Group A".

The score in Item (5) was 68% and it shows that teachers used English as a medium of instruction inside the class room more often than not. It is relevant to mention here that the ministry of education in Syrian started a very powerful and effective program before implementing the new curriculum. According to this program English teachers were given scholarships and facilities to develop their proficiency in English. They had been introduced to the new curriculum and received a formal training in it. One of the program priorities was to insist on the use of English as a medium of instruction inside the class room, to engage students more actively in the learning process, and not to neglect the audio-visual activities as the occasion rises.

Item number (6) scored 67.6%. It showed that the methods adopted by the teachers in the learning process were more acceptable and appreciated than those adopted by the teachers of old curriculum. Item (7) scored 65% and reflected students' appreciation of the efforts of the teacher in involving them in the learning process and in encouraging them to interact with each other in the classroom.

Item number (8) scored 61.5% and indicated that the students did not consider the English syllabus above their level. It seems that the new curriculum moves smoothly step by step from the least towards the more difficult. The ninth position went to the sufficiency of hours devoted to learning English per week.
with score of 58.6%. This is remarkable and illuminating because it reflects the students' desire to enjoy a longer period in learning English. Five hours per week is actually nothing if we believe that more exposure to English can contribute positively to students' internalizing of second/foreign language structures.

The last position was the same as in "Group A". The students were not satisfied with the availability of materials which can take them beyond the limits of their curriculum. This reflects students' eagerness for more exposure to English materials and English sources which will help them to promote their competence and performance in English. It seems that curriculum alone cannot help students reach the desired level of proficiency.

In a way the new curriculum failed to meet students' wants and expectations in learning English though it has been in many respects better than the old curriculum. The findings in this section can be summarized as follows:

- Most of the students in "Group B" enjoy English classes.
- Their attitudes towards materials (items 2, 3, 4, 8, 10) are higher than their attitudes towards learning process (items 1, 5, 6, 7).
- They were satisfied with their English syllabus but the method adopted by teachers and their approaches were less satisfactory.
- The weekly period/hours devoted to learning English were not sufficient as it came at the eighth rate.
- The majority of the students were least satisfied with the availability of materials other than their textbooks. This indicates that textbooks are not enough for them.

The findings of the attitude questions in "Group A" and "Group B" reflect students' relatively high attitudes towards the materials taught over the learning process. Both groups show their interests in English classes and they consider the materials useful and beneficial. Their ideas about the method and attitudes of their
teachers were negative with comparison to their attitudes towards materials. The mean score of "Group B" was higher than "Group A" and this is normal since "Group A" were talking about their old syllabus whereas "Group B" were talking about the new syllabus. The advantage of the new syllabus over the old one is definitely clear. One interesting deference between "Groups A" and "Group B" is that "Group A" considered the weekly period for teaching English as sufficient, whereas "Group B" considered it insufficient, see table (5.2).

Moreover, "Group A" considered the English books above their level because it came at the fifth rate, whereas "Group B" considered it lower than their level as it came in the eighth rate, see table (5.1) and table (5.2). Both Groups negatively responded to the availability of other materials beside their own books, which indicates that students are in need to improve their knowledge and achieve higher levels of proficiency which textbooks alone can not provide. This reflects their conscious awareness of what they need to learn and what they are really taught.

5.4 Motivation (Appendix IV)

If we were asked to identify the most powerful influence on learning, motivation would probably be high on most our lists. It seems only sensible to assume that learning is most likely to occur when we want to learn. However, the concept of motivation has passed through a number of different interpretations as theories of psychology have changed, and the term has come to be used in different ways by different people.

There is no question that learning a foreign language is different from learning other subjects, mainly because of the social-psychological nature of such a venture. Language, after all, belongs to a person's whole social being; it is a part of one's identity, and is used to convey this identity to other people. The learning of a foreign language involves far more than simply learning skills, or a system of rules, or a grammar; it involves an alteration in self-image, the adoption of new
social and cultural behaviors and ways of being, and therefore has a significant impact on the social nature of the learner. As Crookall and Oxford (1988:136) claim, "Learning a second language is ultimately learning to be another social person."

Gardner (1985), similarly, states that the success in learning a foreign language will be influenced particularly by attitudes towards the community of speakers of that language. It is for these reasons that the Social Psychology of Language has developed into an important discipline in its own right.

In socio-psychological approach, the learner's motivation to learn a foreign language will depend on his attitudes and his willingness to cope with the linguistic and non-linguistic features that characterize the speakers of the target language.

Mowrer (1950) explained his concept of identification in the light of socio-psychological theory as the tendency of the child to imitate the parents in first language development. In second/foreign language learning this process is extended to the target language group.

Gardner and Lambert (1972) distinguish between integrative and instrumental motivations. Integrative motivated student learns foreign language because s/he finds the language pleasant and interesting and because s/he wishes to enter into an active interaction with the target language speakers. Instrumental motivation is characterized by utilitarian objectives such as obtaining admission in a particular course or getting a better job. The learner's interest in the other group is confined to achieving personal advantages. The success in foreign language learning is likely to be less if the underlying motivation is instrumental rather than integrative, see Gardner and Lambert (1959), Gardner, Lambert, Olton and Tunstall (1961) and Gardner (1966).
In the Philippines study Gardner and Lambert (1972) state that in setting where there is urgency about mastering a second language for utilitarian ends, the instrumental approach to language study is extremely effective. The same findings have been found in the Bombay study by Lukmani (1972). In this study we will examine whether the motivation of the Syrian learners of English have triggered the learning process or otherwise.

The advanced technological developments and the fast spread of the Internet worldwide created an urgent need for the Syrian learners of English to master a foreign language. If we arrange hierarchically the statements in Appendix IV according to the responses of the subjects, we can clearly notice the superiority of the instrumental motivations over the integrative ones. Thirteen statements from the twenty statements in Appendix IV were dedicated to investigate the instrumental motivation, whereas seven statements were devoted to examine the integrative motivation. Tables (5.3) and (5.4) present students of "Group A" and "Group B" motivations for learning English respectively.

Table (5.3) and table (5.4) show the percentage of the responses of the subjects in both Groups in terms of their preferences for different motivational reasons to study English. It is remarkable that the most preferred reason to study English (the first choice in the table) was identical in both Groups with a slight difference in percentage. All subjects in our study want English to help them in using computer and have access to Internet. The following five choices (2,3,4,5,6,) are the same in both Groups with some slight difference in order. We notice that the choices of the subjects in both Groups are instrumental concerning items (1,2,3,4,5,6,7).

The integrative motivations started to appear in both tables (5.3) and (5.4) as choices from number 8 up to number 20 in different orders in both Groups. The final choice was identical in both Groups. Both Groups did not majoring English to travel abroad for tourism. This choice comes at the last in students interests.
Table 5.3: Student Motivation "Group A"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Order</th>
<th>Motivation</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Group A %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Instrumental</td>
<td>It will help me to use computer properly and make use of internet</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Instrumental</td>
<td>It will help me to get a good job.</td>
<td>92.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Instrumental</td>
<td>It will help me to know about the scientific developments taking place in all the world</td>
<td>91.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Instrumental</td>
<td>It will help me to read English newspapers and magazines</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Instrumental</td>
<td>It will enable me to pursue higher study in the future</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Instrumental</td>
<td>It will help me to translate documents, articles, newspaper.</td>
<td>83.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Instrumental</td>
<td>It will help me to communicate with the whole world since English is the most wide spread language.</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Integrative</td>
<td>Learning English will add to my personality and prestige</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Instrumental</td>
<td>It will help me to read correspondence and reply to them.</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Instrumental</td>
<td>It helps me to introduce my country, my culture and myself to other nationalities.</td>
<td>77.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Integrative</td>
<td>To converse with English speaking people about political issues.</td>
<td>76.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Integrative</td>
<td>My family members wanted me to study English.</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Instrumental</td>
<td>It will help me to watch English programs on TV.</td>
<td>73.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Integrative</td>
<td>It will help me to live and behave like English speaking people</td>
<td>71.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Integrative</td>
<td>It will help me to make good friends among English speaking people</td>
<td>71.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Instrumental</td>
<td>It will help me to listen to the English programs on radio.</td>
<td>71.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Instrumental</td>
<td>It will help me to read English novels, poetry and drama.</td>
<td>68.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Integrative</td>
<td>It enables me to converse with tourists.</td>
<td>68.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Instrumental</td>
<td>In order to watch English movies.</td>
<td>56.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Integrative</td>
<td>To travel abroad for tourism.</td>
<td>46.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Order</td>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>Statement</td>
<td>Group B %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Instrumental</td>
<td>It will help me to use computer properly and make use of internet</td>
<td>94.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Instrumental</td>
<td>It will help me to get a good job.</td>
<td>91.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Instrumental</td>
<td>It will help me to communicate with the whole world since English is the most wide spread language.</td>
<td>88.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Instrumental</td>
<td>It will help me to translate documents, articles, newspaper.</td>
<td>87.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Instrumental</td>
<td>It will enable me to pursue higher study in the future</td>
<td>86.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Instrumental</td>
<td>It helps me to introduce my country, my culture and myself to other nationalities.</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Instrumental</td>
<td>It will help me to watch English programs on TV.</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Integrative</td>
<td>It enables me to converse with tourists.</td>
<td>83.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Instrumental</td>
<td>It will help me to listen to the English programs on radio.</td>
<td>83.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Instrumental</td>
<td>It will help me to read English newspapers and magazines</td>
<td>81.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Instrumental</td>
<td>It will help me to know about the scientific developments taking place in all the world</td>
<td>80.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Instrumental</td>
<td>In order to watch English movies.</td>
<td>79.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Integrative</td>
<td>To converse with English speaking people about political issues.</td>
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<td>It will help me to listen to the English programs on radio.</td>
<td>75.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Integrative</td>
<td>Learning English will add to my personality and prestige</td>
<td>72.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Integrative</td>
<td>It will help me to make good friends among English speaking people.</td>
<td>65.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Integrative</td>
<td>It will help me to live and behave like English speaking people</td>
<td>63.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Integrative</td>
<td>My family members wanted me to study English.</td>
<td>63.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Integrative</td>
<td>To travel abroad for tourism.</td>
<td>51.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The choices of the subjects from both Groups indicate the following:

- The first seven choices in both Groups were found instrumental.
- The vast majority of the subjects in both Groups preferred learning English in order to help them in using computer and have access to the Internet.
- The marginal differences in percentage between both Groups concerning the 20 statements indicate that the motivation to learn English for Syrians is the same regardless whether they have been trained in the old curriculum or in the new one.
- The interest of the subjects in both Groups is not English literature, but English language itself.
- Thinking logically of the first seven choices of the subjects in both Groups, we find that one leads to another. To choice to learn English in order to make use of computer and have access to Internet permits the possibility to find a good job. It also enables one to communicate with people world widely, which gives one the opportunity to surf the newspapers in the web, which lets one know about the latest scientific developments in the world, which may offer the chance to pursue higher studies outside the country, which improves the capability of learners to translate materials of different kinds.
- The subjects' choices reflect their awareness of their needs. Students have shown an ability to decide their motivations for learning English.
- Integrative motivation to learn English language was lesser than the instrumental motivation in terms of percentage in both Groups. In "Group A" the percentage was 80.68% for instrumental motivations and 69.82% for integrative motivations. In "Group B" the percentage was 84.90% for instrumental motivations and 68.08% for integrative motivations.
- The total percentage of the choices of the subjects in both Groups was approximately the same.
5.5 Claimed control over English (Appendix III)

One of the purposes of subjective needs analysis is to involve learners and teachers in exchanging information so that the agendas of the teacher and the learner may be more closely aligned (Nunan 1988). Information about goals, objectives, and learning activities should be clear to learners. It may be that learners have different goals from those of the teachers simply because they have not been informed in any meaningful way what the teacher/designer goals are. The Information provided by the learners can be used to guide the selection of content and learning activities. If the learners have the chance to spell out their ability to use English or the difficulties they face in controlling the four skills, then the teacher/designer would make some effort to solve the problems.

The skills are the meeting point between underlying communicative competence and observable communicative performance; they are the means through which knowledge and abilities are translated into performance, and vice versa (Breen and Candlin 2001). Widdowson (1978:57) distinguishes between two kinds of skills: 'speaking and writing are said to be active, or productive skills, whereas listening and reading are said to be passive or receptive skills'. The ultimate demands on the learner in terms of specific target repertoire will derive from and depend upon the underlying competence of communicative knowledge and communicative abilities. By specifying the present communicative competence of the learners we would be able to account for what the learner needs to know, and what the learner needs to be able to use such knowledge.

Starting from the notion that the learner can be a provider of feedback to others concerning his claimed control on English, skills, and learning progress, the present study attempted to ask the learners two questions. The first question addressed to the learners was to rate on order the skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) that s/he had a better control over. The second question was about what the learners can do concerning these four skills.
The analysis of the students' responses to the first question is shown in Graph (5.1) and Graph (5.2). The total score in "Group A" was 65.02 per cent whereas the total score in "Group B" was 78.22 per cent, which means that students of "Group B" are better than students of "Group A". Although the score in "Group B" was higher than in "Group A", yet the order of the skills was the same. In other words, "Group A" ranked reading as the best skill they know, then followed by writing, listening, and speaking respectively. Speaking was considered the least among the four skills. The same order of the skills was in "Group B". All subjects in both Groups are aware of their limits in respect to listening and speaking. In the second question we will discuss each skill separately with some elaborations.

Question Two in Appendix III contains four separate sections and was intended to ask the students about what they can do in English with regard to the
four skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking). Each section contained four
questions to which the subject has to answer by either yes or no. The responses of
the subjects were tabulated and calculated to get an overall idea about students' skills in English

5.5.1 Reading

The focus here is to consider the way in which learners draw upon their existing skills. Many researches have been done on learning skills and learning strategies. Knowles (1976:23) points out that one of our main aims in education is 'helping individuals to develop the attitude that learning is a lifelong process and to acquire the skills of self-directed learning'.

In this age of explosion of knowledge the skill of reading plays the pivotal role in the life of every educated man. Reading or the ability to understand the written language will be the most useful skill to achieve the goal of education. It was once thought that with the increasing popularity of the telephone, cell phone, the radio, the cinema, television and other media of oral communication, the written language would lose its importance. But this has not happened. On the contrary, people's interest in the printed word is increasing day by day; see the attitudes and the motivations of our subjects in this study, tables (5.3) and (5.4) above.

Our subjects in this study were asked to provide us with information about what they can read through four questions. In reading the subjects were asked to answer the question: Can you read in English (a) Simple stories? (b) News papers? (c) Forms? (d) Advertisement?, see Appendix III. We have received different responses but in totality they stated that they can do better in reading than in any other skills.

In "Group A" eight subjects can read only simple stories and they are unable to read forms, news papers, and advertisements. Six subjects can read
simple stories and forms and are unable to read newspapers and advertisements. Five subjects can read simple stories, forms, and advertisements but cannot read newspapers. Only one subject answered positively to the four choices, see Graph (5.3).

In "Group B" two subjects can read only simple stories and they are unable to read forms, newspapers, and advertisements. Seven subjects can read simple stories and forms and are unable to read newspapers and advertisements. Eighteen subjects can read simple stories, forms, and advertisements but cannot read newspapers. Thirteen subjects answered positively to the four choices, see Graph (5.4).

Looking carefully to the responses of the subjects, we can notice:

- Reading simple stories is the easiest for the subjects in both Groups.
- Reading newspapers is the most difficult activity for the subjects in both Groups.
- The hierarchy of difficulties concerning the reading question is identical in both Groups.
- "Group B" is better than "Group A" in terms of percentage and mean score.

5.5.2 Writing

Writing is often regarded as the visual representation of speech. Writing serves a pedagogical purpose in second/foreign language teaching. It can be used to fix the structures and vocabulary already taught. At the initial stages, writing
should be viewed as a means of fixing the materials taught orally. The skill of writing would have developed almost automatically with the development of the oral skills. Everyone who understands and speaks a language would have been able to write by simply learning the script. It is also not as simple as that because the acquiring of writing skill involves a complicated process such as manipulation, structuring and communication (Baruah 1984).

In the present study, we tried to know what the subjects can do in writing by asking them "what can you write in English?" with four choices; Can you write an essay? Can you write a letter (personal/business)? Can you write notes? And Can you fill in forms?

Five subjects in "Group A" are not able to do any of the four choices given to them. Six subjects can write notes and are not able to write essays, letters, and fill in forms. Six subjects can do two things; they can write notes and fill in forms but they cannot write essays and letters. Only three subjects can do three things; they can write notes, fill in forms, and write essays but they are not able to write letters. No subject has been found able to do all the choices in writing, see Graph (5.5).

In "Group B" the situation is remarkably different. Graph (5.6) shows that only one subject can only write notes and he is not able to fill in forms or write an essay or write a letter. Eleven subjects can write notes and fill in forms but are not able to write an essay or a letter. Seventeen subjects can do three things except writing a letter. Eleven subjects can do the four choices given to them (see Graph 5.6). Considering both Groups we can say:

- The hierarchy of difficulties concerning writing question is identical in both Groups.
- Writing a letter (personal/business) is the most difficult activity for the subjects in both Groups.
"Group B" is much better than "Group A" in terms of percentage and mean score.

5.5.3 Listening

The first skill that a student acquires is the ability to understand the spoken words; the skill of listening. Next, he tries to reproduce these sound sequences to express his own desires and needs and thereby acquire the skill of speaking. Reading and writing skills are the basic skills in the school course. A person who understands spoken English can

1. recognize the characteristic English speech sounds, in isolation as well as in combination;
2. distinguish such sounds from similar sounds in his mother tongue;
3. understand the lexical meanings of words in contexts and grammatical meaning conveyed by stress and intonation patterns;
4. grasp the mood of the speaker and the theme of the discourse;
5. anticipate words and the structures from the context for understanding speech at normal conversational speech;
6. guess the meaning of an unfamiliar word from the context.

Let us see what our subjects in this study can do in listening. In "Group A" eight subjects cannot do anything in listening skill. They are extremely poor in listening. They find listening very difficult for them. May be that is why they have
failed in their first year as students of English. Eight subjects are able to understand the teacher in the classroom, but they are unable to understand native speakers of English, or understand songs, or even understanding TV program/movies. Only four subjects can understand two things; the teacher in the classroom and native speaker of English but they cannot understand neither songs nor TV program/movies, see Graph (5.7).

Subjects in "Group B" are better regarding listening skill. Four subjects are very poor in listening to such an extent that they can not understand anything they listen to in English. Ten subjects can understand their teacher in the classroom. Sixteen subjects can understand their teacher in the classroom, and TV program/movies, but they can neither understand native speakers of English nor English songs. Only one subject can understand everything he listens to in English, see Graph (5.8). Given such totality we can say:

- Listening to, and understanding English is difficult for the Syrian students.
- "Group B" is slightly better than "Group A" in terms of their percentage and mean score.
- Most subjects find difficulties in understanding English songs and native speakers of English.
- The hierarchy of difficulties concerning the listening question is not completely identical in both Groups.
5.5.4 Speaking

Language is primarily speech, and knowing a language is often defined as the ability to understand and speak the language. The development of the other skills, namely reading, and writing, would be comparatively easy if they are based on oral foundation. Therefore, oral skill has a crucial role to play in a second /foreign language teaching program. A person who speaks English can

1. produce the characteristic English speech sounds and sound patterns, both in isolation and in combination;
2. use appropriate stress and intonation patterns;
3. use appropriate words and structures to express the intended meaning;
4. recall words and structures quickly;
5. organize his thoughts and ideas in logical sequences;
6. adjust his speech according to his audience, situation and subject-matter.

The two skills of listening and speaking are grouped together under a single heading of "aural-oral skills" because they usually function together and constitute the basic language skills. In our study, it looks that the main problem of our subjects is listening and speaking. We have seen their knowledge in listening and now we will check their knowledge in speaking.

In "Group A" thirteen subjects are not able to do anything regarding the four choices in speaking skills. Seven subjects are able to speak only with their class mates and friends. No subject has been found to be able to speak with teachers, foreigners, or even to chat, see Graph (5.9).

Subjects in "Group B" are much better than the subjects of "Group A". Four subjects are not able to speak with anybody. Twelve subjects can speak with their friends and class mates only. Seventeen subjects are able to speak with their friends/class mates, teachers, and to chat. Only one subject claimed that he can speak fluently with everybody, see Graph (5.10). This indicates the following:
• Speaking is the most difficult skill for the Syrian students.
• "Group B" is much better than "Group A" in terms of percentage and mean score.
• There is a remarkable positive influence of the new curriculum on "Group B".
• Subjects in both Groups need extensive training in listening and speaking skills.

The common factor involved in the learning of four skills is the "language code", i.e., the different systems of the language. This means that the learning of the language code will equally facilitate the learning of the skills. Skills, such as, listening, speaking, reading, and writing can be mastered only by exercising skills in the actual communication situations. But our students in Syria rarely get the opportunity to practice their English in actual communicative situations. With the absence of the target language community, there is little hope to develop in the students a native-like competence. In the case of reading and writing skills, students to some extent preformed well. It is said that reading good English holds the key to the development of real communicative competence. By extensive effort from the teachers in the classroom and by their effort to motivate the interaction between students, we may overcome the problems of our students.
5.6 Conclusion

In this Chapter we have discussed in some detail the subjective needs of the Syrian learners of English. We tried to focus on their attitudes towards the learning process and materials, their motivation towards learning English, and their claimed control over the use of English. We noticed that Syrian students in general have a positive attitude towards learning English. They appreciated the material they have been taught but found it rather insufficient. They expressed their needs for a more extended exposure to English in the class room, and were not completely satisfied by five hours exposure per week. Most of the students were of the view that teachers have to be more cooperative in engaging students in the process of learning. Students need to be put in communicative situations where they can communicate only in English so that they might better develop their speaking and listening proficiency.

Students' motivations towards English were found to be mainly instrumental. This reflects that their need to learn English is a kind of urgency. Learning English for them is a means not an end. Through learning English they can have access to the Internet, which becomes a symbol of globalization and an open window to the world. Learning English can also enhance students' opportunities in getting good jobs within or across the boundaries of their own country. Moreover, mastering English is students' way to introduce themselves, their culture, ideology, and history to the world.

The most important thing in this chapter is that students who were trained in the new curriculum ("Group B") were better than students who were trained in the old curriculum ("Group A") in many ways. This result is matching with the results of the chapter four so far discussed.
Chapter Six
Statistical Analysis

6.0 Introduction

One important part of statistics is concerned with methods of sampling, and with the relationship between measurements made on samples, and the properties of the population these samples are intended to represent (Butler 1985). The ultimate purpose of statistics is to develop generalizations that may be used to explain phenomena and to predict future occurrences (Best & Kahn 1993:274).

The variables isolated from the questionnaire in this study are dealt with statistically in terms of mean, standard deviation, and correlation. The procedures of correlation analysis refer to the techniques used in measuring the closeness of the relationship between the variables. This technique should be broken down into three steps:

(1) Determining whether a relation exists and, if it does, measuring it.
(2) Testing whether it is significant.
(3) Establishing the cause and effect relation, if any.

It is important to keep in mind that the proof of cause and effect relation can be developed only by means of an exhaustive study of the operative elements themselves. In other words, correlation analysis helps in determining the degree of relationship between two variables but it does not tell us anything about cause and effect relationship (see Gupta 1982, Abu Neel 1987, and Rifaie 1993).

For the correlation analysis of our data in this study, Pearsonian coefficient of correlation is adopted. Gupta (1982:6.23) points out that 'Karl Pearson's coefficient of correlation is based on the following assumptions:
(1) There is linear relationship between the variables, i.e., when two variables are plotted on a scatter diagram a straight line will be formed by the points so plotted.

(2) The two variables under study are affected by a large number of independent causes so as to form a normal distribution.

(3) There is a cause and effect relationship between the forces affecting the distribution of the items in the two series. If such a relationship is not formed between the variables, i.e. if the variables are independent, there cannot be any correlation.

The significance of the values of the correlation coefficient (r - value) basically depends on the sample size. The sample in this study consists of 60 students.

\[
N = (60) \quad r \pm \text{significant} \geq .25 \quad P \leq .05 \\
r \pm \text{significant} \geq .33 \quad P \leq .01
\]

Descriptive statistical analysis limits generalization to the particular group of individuals observed (Best & Kahn 1993). For the comparison between "Group A" and "Group B", mean and standard deviation for each group is presented in a separate table; table (6.1) for "Group A" and table (6.2) for "Group B".

For correlation analysis there will be one correlation matrix (table 6.3) since there is a separate variable for group which is variable 23. The analysis of the 23 variables in this study was computed by using SPSS package.
Table 6.1 Descriptive Statistics "Group A"

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Table 6.2 Descriptive Statistics "Group B"

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</table>
6.1 Variable 1 (age)

In "Group A" the average of age was found to be one year above the standard age which was supposed to be (19). The mean score of the age in this group is 20 with standard deviation 1.39 (table 6.1). Being one year above the average could have different possible reasons. Some students may have failed in the first year in the university or in the pre-university level. They may be in the second year but planning to reappear in some first year papers to gain higher marks, and they happened to be in the class during the time of collecting the data. They may have missed one year for some other reasons, such as having a health problem, or being out side the country, or being a house wife who can not devote much time to attend regular classes. Besides some students have jobs and are not in a hurry to finish their study in the minimum time required for graduation.

As it is shown in the matrix (table 6.3) the correlation analysis reveals a negative significant correlation between variable 1(age) and variable 3 (schooling) \( r = -0.30 \ P < 0.05 \). The majority of the students who came from the scientific branch happened to be younger than the other students who came from the literary branch. There is a negative significant correlation of the variable (age) with variable 5 (mother's education) \( r = -0.30 \ P < 0.05 \). This means that the mothers of younger students are better educated than others. This indicates the increasing level of education among young women in Syria. It is worth mentioning that the government statistics concerning illiteracy in Syria was zero in the year 2000.

A negative correlation has been found between age and variable 8 (attitude towards learning process) \( r = -0.28 \ P < 0.05 \). Here also the younger the student the higher his/her attitude towards learning process. The same can be said for the correlation between age and variable 9 (attitude towards materials) \( r = -0.29 \ P < 0.05 \) and variable 10 (total score of attitudes) \( r = -0.31 \ P < 0.01 \).

There is a very high negative correlation between (age) and variable 14 (claimed control over writing), variable 15 (claimed control over reading),
variable 16 (claimed control over listening), variable 17 (claimed control over speaking), and variable 18 (total score of claimed control over the four skills) with r-value as: \( r = -0.57 \ P < 0.01 \), \( r = -0.39 \ P < 0.01 \), \( r = -0.38 \ P < 0.01 \), \( r = -0.48 \ P < 0.01 \), and \( r = -0.43 \ P < 0.01 \) respectively. This indicates that younger students have a higher claimed control over the four skills in comparison with the elder ones.

There is a very high negative significant correlation between age and variables 20 (cloze I) \( r = -0.56 \ P < 0.01 \), variable 21 (cloze II) \( r = -0.37 \ P < 0.01 \) and variable 22 (total general proficiency) \( r = -0.42 \ P < 0.01 \). The younger the student, the higher is his/her proficiency. This result came in favor of "Group B" since most of the younger students belong to this group. This indicates that the acquisition of language can be more profitable if it starts earlier. This result is matching with all the studies which have been done so far on the relation between age and acquisition of foreign/second language. The number of years of exposure to language in "Group A" did not benefit them in achieving good proficiency in English whereas the factor of age in "Group B" played a significant role in their performance.

The variable of (age) correlates negatively with variable 23 (group) \( r = -0.67 \ P < 0.01 \). This indicates that the majority of the young students belong to "Group B". For the distribution of age in both Groups, see Graph (6.1).
6.2 Variable 2 (Sex)

Graph (6.1) shows the distribution of our sample in terms of gender. In both Groups the percentage of female is 80% and is 20%. The reason behind this has been discussed in Chapter Four, section 4.1. The mean score of the variable sex in "Group A" is 1.800 with standard deviation of .410, whereas the mean score of this variable in "Group B" is 1.800 with standard deviation of .405.

[Graph: 6.2 Sex Distribution in both Groups]

When we come to the correlation analysis of the variable (sex) with the other variables, a significant correlation has been found with variables 5 (mother's education) \( r = .33 \ P < .01 \). This means that the majority of the females' mothers are educated. There is a significant correlation also with variable 15 (claimed control over reading) \( r = .32 \ P < .01 \). This indicates that females are better in reading as they claimed.

Significant correlations appeared between sex and variable 19 (tense test) \( r = .26 \ P < .05 \), variable 20 (cloze test I) \( r = .25 \ P < .05 \), variable 21 (cloze test II) \( r = .27 \ P < .05 \), and variable 22 (total proficiency score) \( r = .32 \ P < .05 \). This leads to the interpretation that on average the females performed better than the males, see correlation matrixes in table (6.3).
Questions about gender enter into education in all contexts at all levels. In the 1970s and 1980s there were much researches talked about how the social processes of education led to discrimination on the basis of gender. Spender (1982) in her investigation about the interaction in the classroom, language, and the curriculum noticed the marginal position of girls in the classroom. Strategies were developed to make the curriculum more girl-friendly in response to such concerns. Gillborn and Gipps (1996), Gillborn and Merza (2000) and Bartlell et al (2001) found that girls do better than boys in school examinations at all levels. However, differences in achievement do not favor girls in all cases uniformly across subjects (Arnot, 1998). Girls do achieve higher numbers of passes in some subjects and boys achieve higher numbers in others. Girls do better in English, history, and French but do worse in mathematics and physics, for example (DfEE 1997a). At (A) level, girls do significantly better in English and French and obtain significantly fewer passes in mathematics and physics (ibid). In all three end key stage assessments girls are currently outperforming boys in English (DfEE, 2000a).

6.3 Variable 3 (Schooling)

We have mentioned in Chapter Three that students in our study came from two types of schools; literary and scientific. At the beginning of the eleventh standard, students have to choose either to go to literary branch or to scientific one. After the board examination, students who want to join English Department and are coming from literary branch must have scored a certain pass percentage. This percentage changes every year and is decided by The Ministry of High Education according to the number of students passed in the board examination and according to the capacity in the Departments. The pass percentage most often centers around 60%. Students of literary branch are allowed also to join English Department if they scored 85% in English subject regardless of their pass percentage in other subjects in the board examination. Students from the scientific branch are only allowed to join English Department if they scored 95% in English.
subject regardless of their pass percentage in other subjects in the board examination. As far as English syllabus is concerned, the difference between literary and scientific is only in the text books. The grammar books are typically the same.

The sample in this study as shown in figure (3.1) chapter Three consists of 16 students from literary branch and 4 from scientific in "Group A" and 21 students from literary branch and 19 from scientific in "Group B". The mean score of variable 3 (schooling) in "Group A" is 1.200 with standard deviation of .410 whereas in "Group B" it is 1.475 with standard deviation of .506. It is clear that the ratio of students from scientific branch in "Group B" is higher than of "Group A" (see table 6.1 and table 6.2).

Looking at the correlation matrix table (6.3), we find that variable 3 (schooling) correlates with variable 5 (mother's education) \( r = .35 \) \( P \leq .01 \). This may indicate that the educated mothers push their children to choose scientific rather than literary branch. A significant correlation has been found between the variable of (schooling) and variable 8 (attitudes towards learning process) \( r = .26 \) \( P \leq .05 \). Students from the scientific branch have higher attitudes towards learning process in English language teaching. Variable schooling also significantly correlates with variable 14 (claimed control over writing) \( r = .45 \) \( P \leq .01 \), variable 15 (claimed control over reading) \( r = .44 \) \( P \leq .01 \), Variable 16 (claimed control over listening) \( r = .59 \) \( P \leq .01 \), Variable 17 \( r = .40 \) \( P \leq .01 \) (claimed control over speaking), and variable 18 (total score of claimed control over the four skills) \( r = .38 \) \( P \leq .01 \). The indication here is that students coming from scientific branch are better in the four skills than the students who come from the literary branch as they claimed.

What is interesting is that there are significant correlations between variable schooling and variable 19 (tense test) \( r = .46 \) \( P \leq .01 \), variable 20 (cloze I) \( r = .38 \) \( P \leq .01 \), variable 21 (cloze II) \( r = .38 \) \( P \leq .01 \), and variable 22 (total score of proficiency) \( r = .50 \) \( P \leq .01 \). The interpretation here is that students coming from
the scientific branch performed better than students coming form the literary one. This may be seem normal if we take into account the fact that students coming from the scientific branch are admitted to the English department only on the basis of their high scores in the subject of English. If this is the case it is strongly recommended that students coming from the literary branch should also be admitted to the English department on the basis of only their scores in English subject which will give them better chances of achieving higher levels of proficiency. This may be also seen as an advantage of the of the scientific text books which contributed significantly to the proficiency of the students coming from scientific branch and, if it is so, a further study may be needed to further investigate this phenomenon.

However, we should not forget the effect of some other factors such as cognitive ability and personality traits which also need to be checked and taken into consideration.

The significant correlation of the variable schooling with variable 23 (group) $r = .26 \ P < .05$ indicates that the majority of the students coming form the scientific branch gathered in "Group B". For the distribution of students in terms of literary and scientific in both Groups see Graph 6.3 and Graph 6.4 below.
6.4 Variable 4 (father's education)

The mean score of this variable in "Group A" is 2.800 with standard deviation of 1.105 whereas in "Group B" the mean score is 3.050 with standard deviation of 1.413. It is clear from the mean score that fathers' education of students of "Group B" is higher than fathers' education of students of "Group A" (see table 6.1 and table 6.2).

This variable has been found highly correlated with variable 5 (mother's education) $r = .63 \ P < .01$. The higher the father's education, the higher is his wife's education. This variable correlates significantly also with variable 6 (father's English) $r = .48 \ P < .01$ and variable 7 (mother's English) $r = .34 \ P < .01$. This means that educated fathers has chosen educated wives and if his English is good his wife's English is relatively good also.

There is high correlation between father's education and variable 14 (claimed control over writing) $r = .42 \ P < .01$, variable 15 (claimed control over reading) $r = .45 \ P < .01$, variable 16 (claimed control over listening) $r = .32 \ P < .01$, and variable 18 (total score of claimed control over the four skills) $r = .33 \ P < .01$. We may interpret this finding in such away that students whose fathers are educated claim to be good in writing, reading, listening, and in their overall claimed control over the four skills. This claim may be taken into consideration since there is a significant correlation between this variable and variable 20 (cloze I) $r = .32 \ P < .01$, variable 21 (cloze II) $r = .33 \ P < .01$, and variable 22 (total score of general proficiency) $r = .32 \ P < .01$. Father's education seems to play a significant role in encouraging his children to do better in all aspects of life including education and knowledge acquisition.

6.5 Variable 5 (mother's education)

The mean score of variable 5 in "Group A" is 2.20 with standard deviation of 1.152 whereas the mean score of this variable in "Group B" is 2.80 with
standard deviation of 1.305. The level of students' mothers' education is higher in "Group B".

The correlation analysis of this variable shows high correlation with variable 6 (father's English) $r = .44 \ P < .01$ and variable 7 (mother's English) $r = .45 \ P < .01$. The higher the education of the mother the higher is her English and her husband's English as well.

There are high correlations between mother's education and variable 14 (claimed control over writing) $r = .42 \ P < .01$, variable 15 (claimed control over reading) $r = .46 \ P < .01$, variable 16 (claimed control over listening) $r = .36 \ P < .01$, and variable 18 (total score of claimed control over the four skills) $r = .27 \ P < .05$. The interpretation here is that students whose mothers are educated claimed to be good in writing, reading, listening, and in their overall claimed control over the four skills. It also seems that educated mothers play significant role in encouraging their children to do better in everything especially in education and acquiring knowledge.

Only one significant correlation has been found between variable 5 (mother's education) and variable 20 (cloze I) $r = .33 \ P < .05$. This indicates that students whose mother education is high their result in cloze I was also high. It is worth mentioning that the effect of father's education in students' achievements is shown to be higher than the effect of mother's education and this is due to the significant role the father plays in the life of the family in the Syrian society.

6.6 Variable 6 (father's English)

The mean score of variable 6 (father's English) in "Group A" is 2.70 with standard deviation of 1.218 whereas the mean score of this variable in "Group B" is 2.60 with standard deviation of 1.257. Here the father's English in "Group B" is shown to be slightly higher than father's English in "Group A".
The matrix correlation in Table (6.3) shows that there is a very high significant correlation of variable 6 with variable 7 (mother's English) \( r = .53 \) \( P < .01 \). The higher the father's English the higher is his wife's English. But, this variable does not play any significant role with the students' general proficiency.

6.7 Variable 7 (mother's English)

The mean score of this variable in "Group A" is 2.40 with standard deviation of 1.142 whereas the mean score in "Group B" is 2.38 with standard deviation of 1.148. There is a very slight difference between both Groups concerning variable 7 (mother's English).

There is no any correlation noticed between this variable and the others except those which have been discussed in this Chapter in sections 6.4, 6.5, 6.6.

6.8 Variable 8 (attitudes towards learning process)

The difference between "Group A" and "Group B" concerning this variable is noticeably big (see table 6.1 and table 6.2). The mean score of variable 8 in "Group A" is 13.95 with standard deviation of 2.964 whereas the mean score in "Group B" is 17.00 with standard deviation of 2.755. This indicates that students of "Group B" have a relatively higher attitude towards the learning process than students of "Group A".

Correlation matrix table (6.3) shows high significant correlations between variable 8 and variable 9 (attitudes towards materials) \( r = .68 \ P < .01 \) and variable 10 (total score of attitudes) \( r = .92 \ P < .01 \). This means that those who have high attitudes towards learning process have also high attitudes towards materials and have high attitude in totality.

Correlations have been found between variable 8 and variable 11 (instrumental motivation) \( r = .28 \ P < .05 \) and variable 13 (total score of motivation) \( r = .26 \ P < .05 \). This means that those who have high attitudes towards
learning process have also high instrumental motivation and have high general motivation towards learning the English language.

Moreover, students who have high attitudes towards learning process have high score in variable 14 (claimed control over writing) \( r = .31 \) P \( \leq .05 \). A significant correlation appears between variable 8 and variable 20 (cloze I) \( r = .36 \) P \( \leq .01 \). The indication here is that students who have high attitudes towards the learning process scored good marks in cloze I.

Finally, a significant correlation appears between variable 8 and variable 23 (group) \( r = .46 \) P \( \leq .01 \) which means students of "Group B" have higher attitudes towards the learning process than students who belong to "Group A". Other significant correlations with other variables have been discussed in this Chapter in sections 6.1 and 6.3 above.

6.9 Variable 9 (attitudes towards material)

The mean score of variable 9 in "Group A" is 13.70 with standard deviation of 2.658 whereas the mean score in "Group B" is 16.00 with standard deviation of 2.716. The difference between "Group A" and "Group B" is also noticeable in variable 8. Students of "Group B" in general have relatively higher attitudes towards the materials than students of "Group A".

Correlation matrix table (6.3) shows very high significant correlations between variable 9 and variable 8 (attitudes towards materials) \( r = .68 \) P \( \leq .01 \) and variable 10 (total score of attitudes) \( r = .91 \) P \( \leq .01 \). This means that those who have high attitudes towards materials have high attitudes towards learning process and have high attitude in totality. There is a highly significant correlation between variable 9 (attitude towards materials) and variable 14 (claimed control over writing) \( r = .31 \) P \( \leq .05 \). This indicates that students who have high attitudes towards materials have high score in variable 14 or they claim to be good in writing. There is a significant correlation between variable 9 and variables 20
(cloze I) $r = .35 \ P \leq .01$, variable 21 (cloze II) $r = .25 \ P \leq .05$ and variable 22 (total score of general proficiency) $r = .26 \ P \leq .05$. Students who have high attitudes towards materials have good score in cloze I, cloze II, and total score of general proficiency.

Significant correlation appears between variable 9 and variable 23 (group) $r = .45 \ P \leq .01$ which means that the majority of students who have high attitudes towards materials belong to "Group B". Other significant correlations with other variables have been discussed in this chapter in sections 6.1 and 6.8 above.

6.10 Variable 10 (total score of attitudes)

The mean score of variable 10 in "Group A" is 55.30 with standard deviation of 9.995 whereas the mean score in "Group B" is 67.15 with standard deviation of 9.807. The difference between "Group A" and "Group B" is noticeable as in variables 8, 9.

A significant correlation is noticed between this variable and variable 14 (claimed control over writing) $r = .34 \ P \leq .01$. Students who have high total score in attitudes have high claimed control over writing.

Significant correlations have been found between variable 10 and variables 20 (cloze I) $r = .39 \ P \leq .01$, variable 21 (cloze II) $r = .27 \ P \leq .05$ and variable 22 (total score of general proficiency) $r = .27 \ P \leq .05$. This suggests that students who have high total score in attitudes have good score in cloze I, cloze II, and total score of general proficiency.

Significant correlation appears between variable 10 and variable 23 (group) $r = .49 \ P \leq .01$ which means that the majority of students who have high total score in attitudes belong to "Group B". Other significant correlations with other variables have been discussed in this Chapter section 6.1, section 6.8 and section 6.9 above.
6.11 Variable 11 (instrumental motivation)

The mean score of variable 11 in "Group A" is 38.40 with standard deviation of 5.093 whereas the mean score in "Group B" is 40.25 with standard deviation of 4.253. The score of "Group B" in instrumental motivation is higher than the score of "Group A". On average, most of the students are fully aware of the importance of learning English for their future career.

It is clear from correlation matrix table (6.3) that variable 11 correlates highly with variable 12 (integrative motivation) \( r = .44 \ P < .01 \) and very highly with variable 13 (total score of motivation) \( r = .91 \ P < .01 \). This means that students who have high instrumental motivation have relatively high integrative motivation and have high total motivation.

6.12 Variable 12 (integrative motivation)

The mean score of variable 12 in "Group A" is 22.75 with standard deviation of 2.693 whereas the mean score in "Group B" is 23.50 with standard deviation of 2.727. The score of "Group B" in integrative motivation is higher than the score of "Group A".

The correlation matrix table (6.3) shows that variable 12 correlates only with variable 11 (instrumental motivation) \( r = .44 \ P < .01 \) and variable 13 (total score of motivation) \( r = .69 \ P < .01 \).

6.13 Variable 13 (total score of motivation)

The mean score of variable 13 in "Group A" is 76.43 with standard deviation of 8.314 whereas the mean score in "Group B" is 79.30 with standard deviation of 7.978. The score of "Group B" in total score of motivation is higher than the score of "Group A".
There is no correlation noticed between this variable with the other variables except those discussed in section 6.8, section 6.11 and section 6.12 in this Chapter. It is significant to mention here that almost all the students in both groups have shown very high motivation for learning English. However, this high motivation did not correlate significantly with their performance. This suggests that even those who did not do well in cloze I and II, for instance, have high motivation for learning, but there are other factors which negatively affect their performance. These factors include the non-availability of a good curriculum (as in the case of students of "Group A"), the non-availability of helping materials and/or good teaching staff, weakness in the process of teaching/learning, and some other social/psychological factors.

**6.14 Variable 14 (claimed control over writing)**

The mean score of variable 14 in "Group A" is 5.35 with standard deviation of 1.040 whereas the mean score in "Group B" is 6.95 with standard deviation of .815. Students in "Group B" claim to be better in writing than the students in "Group A".

Very high significant correlation of the variable 14 has been found with variable 15 (claimed control over reading) \( r = .72 \ P \leq .01 \). Students who are very good in writing are also very good in reading. A very highly significant correlation also has been found with variable 16 (claimed control over listening) \( r = .61 \ P \leq .01 \). We can say also that Students who are good in writing are very good in listening. The same significant correlations have been found with variable 17 (claimed control over speaking) \( r = .69 \ P \leq .01 \) and variable 18 (total score of claimed control over the four skills) \( r = .65 \ P \leq .01 \). It is noticed from this correlation that students who are good in writing are also good in reading, listening and speaking.

Very high significant correlations have been found between variable 14 and variables 19 (tense test) \( r = .41 \), variable 20 (cloze I) \( r = .79 \ P \leq .01 \), variable 21
\( r = .60 \quad P < .01 \), and variable 22 (total score of general proficiency) \( r = .72 \quad P < .01 \). This means that students who claim to have good control over writing are very good in tense test, cloze I, cloze II, and in total score of general proficiency in English. Students are aware of their levels and what they need.

A high significant correlation is found between variable 14 and variable 23 (group) which means that students who have high claimed control over writing mostly belong to "Group B". Four other significant correlations with other variables see sections 6.1, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 6.8, 6.9, and 6.10 above.

**6.15 Variable 14 (claimed control over reading)**

The mean score of variable 15 in "Group A" is 6.05 with standard deviation of .887 whereas the mean score in "Group B" is 7.05 with standard deviation of .846. The claim of Students in "Group B" is more than the claim of the students in "Group A".

Very high significant correlation has been found between variable 15 and variable 16 (claimed control over listening) \( r = .59 \quad P < .01 \). Students who are good in reading are also good in listening. A very high correlation has also been found between this variable and variable 17 (claimed control over speaking) \( r = .64 \quad P < .01 \). We can say also that students who are good in reading are good in speaking. A very high significant correlation have been found with variable 18 (total score of claimed control over the four skills) \( r = .71 \quad P < .01 \). This suggests that students who are good in reading are also good in listening and speaking.

Very high significant correlations have been found between variable 15 and variables 19 (tense test) \( r = .41 \quad P < .01 \), variable 20 (cloze I) \( r = .74 \quad P < .01 \), variable 21 (cloze II) \( r = .53 \quad P < .01 \) and variable 22 (total score of general proficiency) \( r = .67 \quad P < .01 \). This means that student who claim to have good control over reading are very good in tense test, cloze I, cloze II, and in the total
score of general proficiency in English. This indicates that students are fully aware of their level of proficiency.

A high significant correlation is found between variable 15 and variable 23 (group) which means that students who have high claimed control over reading mostly belong to "Group B". For other significant correlations with other variables see sections 6.1, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, and 6.14 above.

6.16 Variable 16 (claimed control over listening)

The mean score of variable 16 in "Group A" is 4.80 with standard deviation of .768 whereas the mean score in "Group B" is 5.82 with standard deviation of .984. The claim of students in "Group B" with regard to listening proficiency is higher than the claim of the students in "Group A".

Very high significant correlation of the variable 16 has been found with variable 17 (claimed control over speaking) \( r = .67 \ P < .01 \). We can say that students who are good in listening are good in speaking. A high significant correlation has been found with variable 18 (total score of claimed control over the four skills) \( r = .54 \ P < .01 \).

Very high significant correlations have been found between variable 16 and variable 19 (tense test) \( r = .50 \ P \leq .01 \), variable 20 (cloze I) \( r = .62 \ P \leq .01 \), variable 21 (cloze II) \( r = .45 \ P \leq .01 \) and variable 22 (total score of general proficiency) \( r = .64 \ P \leq .01 \). This means that student who claim to have good control over listening are very good in tense test, cloze I, cloze II, and in total score of general proficiency in English.

A significant correlation is noticed between variable 16 and variable 23 (group) which means that students who have high claimed control over listening mostly belong to "Group B". Four other significant correlations with other variables see sections 6.1, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 6.14 and 6.15 above.
6.17 Variable 17 (claimed control over speaking)

The mean score of variable 17 in "Group A" is 4.35 with standard deviation of .489 whereas the mean score in "Group B" is 5.70 with standard deviation of .939. The claim of students in "Group B" is more than the claim of the students in "Group A".

A very high significant correlation has been found between this variable and variable 18 (total score of claimed control over the four skills) $r = .71 \ P < .01$. It has been established so far that students who claim to be good in writing, for example also claim to be good in the other skills (reading, listening, and speaking).

A highly significant correlations have been found between variable 17 and variables 19 (tense test) $r = .64 \ P \leq .01$, variable 20 (cloze I) $r = .77 \ P \leq .01$, variable 21 (cloze II) $r = .60 \ P \leq .01$ and variable 22 (total score of general proficiency) $r = .82 \ P \leq .01$. This means that students who claimed to have good control over listening are very good in tense test, cloze I, cloze II, and in total score of general proficiency in English.

A significant correlation is found between variable 17 and variable 23 (group) which means that students who have high claimed control over listening mostly belong to "Group B". For other significant correlations with other variables see sections 6.1, 6.3, 6.14, 6.15 and 6.16 above.

6.18 Variable 18 (total score of claimed control over the four skills)

The mean score of this variable in "Group A" is 65.02 with standard deviation of 7.52 whereas the mean score in "Group B" is 78.22 with standard deviation of 12.07. The claimed control over the four skills of the students of "Group B" is higher than those of "Group A".
Correlation matrix (table 6.3) shows significant correlations between variable 18 and variable 19 (tense test) \( r = .39 \ P < .01 \), variable 20 (cloze I) \( r = .66 \ P < .01 \), variable 21 (cloze II) \( r = .44 \ P < .01 \) and variable 22 (total score of general proficiency) \( r = .60 \ P < .01 \). This means that students who are good in the four skills are good in tense test, cloze I, cloze II, and total score of general proficiency.

There is a correlation between variable 18 and variable 23 (group) \( r = .50 \ P < .01 \). This indicates that students of "Group B" have higher score in claimed control over the four skills than students of "Group A". For other significant correlations with other variables see sections 6.1, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 6.15, and 6.16 above.

6.19 Variable 19 (tense test)

The mean score of this variable in "Group A" is 61.50 with standard deviation of 19.80 whereas the mean score in "Group B" is 73.50 with standard deviation of 15.94. The score of tense tests of the students from "Group B" is higher than those of "Group A".

This variable correlates highly with variable 20 (cloze I). This means that students who are good in tense test are good in cloze I \( r = .48 \ P < .01 \). There is correlation of this variable with cloze II \( r = .48 \ P < .01 \). This means also that students who are good in tense test are also good in cloze II. The very high correlation has been found between this variable and variable 22 (total score of general proficiency) \( r = .82 \ P < .01 \) which means that students who are good in tense test are good in their general proficiency. The significant correlation of variable 19 with variable 23 (group) \( r = .31 \) indicates that students from "Group B" are better than students from "Group A" in tense test. For other significant correlations with other variables see sections 6.2, 6.3, 6.14, 6.15, 6.16, 6.16, 6.17 and 6.18 above.
6.20 Variable 20 (cloze I)

The mean score of this variable in "Group A" is 31.25 with standard deviation of 9.87 whereas the mean score in "Group B" is 55.65 with standard deviation of 11.87. The score in (Cloze I) of the students from "Group B" is higher than those of "Group A".

This variable correlates highly with variable 21 (cloze II) $r = .56 \ P < .01$. This means that students who are good in Cloze I are also good in cloze II. A very high correlation has been found between this variable and variable 22 (total score of general proficiency) $r = .82$ which means that students who are good in tense test are good in their general proficiency.

The significant correlation of variable 20 and variable 23 (group) $r = .72 \ P < .01$ indicates that students of "Group B" have performed better than students of "Group A". Four other significant correlations with other variables see sections 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 6.8, 6.9, 6.10, 6.14, 6.15, 6.16, 6.17, 6.18, and 6.19 above.

6.21 Variable 21 (cloze II)

The mean score of this variable in "Group A" is 21.45 with standard deviation of 12.77 whereas the mean score in "Group B" is 38.17 with standard deviation of 13.90. The score of cloze II of the students of "Group B" is higher than those of "Group A".

This variable correlates highly with variable 22 (total score of general proficiency) $r = .82 \ P < .01$. This also means that students who are good in cloze II are good in general proficiency. The correlation of variable 21 and variable 23 (group) $r = .50 \ P < .01$ indicates the better achievement of the students from "Group B" over the students from "Group A". For other significant correlations with other variables see sections 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 6.9, 6.10, 6.14, 6.15, 6.16, 6.17, 6.18, 6.19, 6.20, and 6.21 above.
6.22 Variable 22 (total score of general proficiency)

The mean score of variable 22 in "Group A" is 38.04 with standard deviation of 11.35 whereas the mean score in "Group B" is 55.77 with standard deviation of 10.53. It is clear that "Group B" is better than "Group A". For the differences in achievement between the two groups in terms of linguistic data see Graph 6.5 below.

The correlation matrix (table 6.3) shows clearly the significant correlation of variable 22 with variable 23 (group) $r = .61 P < .01$. This leads us to conclude that "Group B" is better than "Group A" by all measures.
Chapter Seven

Conclusion

Conducting a study which investigates and analyzes the needs of learners of English as a foreign language in any given context is not an easy thing to do. However, we feel that such a study would help in the discovery of some important guidelines which are likely to promote the process of acquisition/learning of a foreign language and optimally improve learners' level of proficiency. Our main concern has been to investigate the needs of Syrian learners of English and whether the new national English curriculum could address some of these needs. If the answer is "yes" then we have to trace the advantage of the new curriculum over the old one and what we can further do to promote the process of learning, and if not, then what the curriculum included and what the students need are two different things which have to be compromised and brought together. After all needs analysis proves to be attainable as we proceed from Chapter One to Chapter Six of this work.

7.0 Summary

Chapter One highlighted some of the basic issues related to our study. Section one briefly discussed the importance of learning English in the contemporary world and surveyed the English language teaching methods available so far. It is a fact that English language is the most widely taught foreign language in the world. Reasons behind the overwhelming spread of English include imperialism, globalization, economically dominated politics, and the fact that it is the universal language of the internet. It is for these reasons that most countries are rushing for the best way to design, implement, and develop courses/curriculum to facilitate the process of teaching/learning English.

Methods and approaches to English language teaching go back over many years. They all revolve around the best sets of techniques used by teacher to
transmit a foreign language to learners. In a chronological order, we provided the reader with a brief summary of the methods and approaches to ELT available so far. These include Grammar Translation Method, the Direct Method, the Structural-Situational Approach, the Audio-lingual Approach, Notional-Functional Approach, and the Communicative Approach to English language teaching.

The development of new theories of language learning, under the impact of Chomsky's linguistics have led to theories investigating the learner's own innate language capacities and to revise views on both L1 and L2 acquisition leading to the evolution of SLA theory and research whose influence on language syllabus design is beginning to be felt. These studies along with communicative approach were later accompanied by curriculum studies to provide a body of theory and practice which can inform decision-making in language teaching curriculum development and innovation.

The second section in Chapter One aimed at putting the reader straightforward in the Syrian context. "Syria in the Past" summaries the basic historic events that Syria witnessed since the dawn of history till the celebration of Evacuation Day and declaration of Independence in 1946. "Syria today" accounts for the great social, political, cultural and economical developments which Syria witnessed since 1946 onwards. We proceeded further to introduce the educational system in Syria which was followed by a brief summary of the English Language Teaching scenario in Syria. The aim of this section is to provide a historical overview of the ELT process in Syria. We gave an account of the English language National Curriculum and clearly distinguished between the old English curriculum and the new English curriculum which was implemented in 1996.

**Chapter Two** reviews the necessary theoretical issues related to the present study. It traced theoretically the notion of "Needs Analysis" and its importance and validity in syllabus design. Chronologically speaking, the notion of needs analysis has its origin in the work of Michel West (1926) who was the

Throughout the discussion, we made it clear that the mainstream activity in conducting Needs Analysis had been restricted to investigating the needs of students of ESP both in terms of describing their needs and then taking it into consideration in designing specific syllabuses. We also pointed out that the major trends in Needs Analysis unfortunately have been developed in bilingual and multicultural societies. These models show their inadequacies whenever they are applied to monolingual societies. We indicated that there is a need to push the Needs Analysis trend to acquire a new dimension which is more comprehensive in nature. We need to investigate the linguistic problems of a monolingual society to give a new orientation to foreign/second language learning and to widen its scope and improve its outcome.

Our aim was to make clear that Needs Analysis stands as an important link between students, teachers and course designers regardless whether we are up to designing ESP or GE syllabus. Since it is always possible to specify students' needs (Hutchinson and Water 1987) and since GE has priority over ESP (Widdowson 1978) we concluded that Needs Assessment of students learning GE as a foreign language would definitely be fruitful and illuminating for GE curriculum designers.

Chapter Three dealt with the sample, tools, and procedures employed in this study to collect the required data from the subjects. It also described the scoring procedures and the statistical methods which we employed. It highlighted
further the points which had been taken care of while attempting to analyze the data to get objective and reliable results as far as possible.

The sample in this study consists of (60) Syrian first year students from the English Department in AL-Ba'ath University. Two groups were isolated from the sample; "Group A" included students who were trained in the old English curriculum and "Group B" included those who were trained in the new English curriculum. The distribution of the sample in terms of gender and schooling is illustrated in figure (3.1) in Chapter Three.

In order to collect the required data a questionnaire of seven parts was designed; part one (Appendix I) was intended to collect students' personal data. Part two, three and four (Appendix II, Appendix III, and Appendix IV), were intended to collect students' socio-psychological data and to illicit students' needs for learning English. The rest of the questionnaire (Appendix V, Appendix VI, and Appendix VII) was intended to collect the necessary linguistic data. Statistical analysis of the data has been done with the use of the software SPSS for windows version 11.

The first three Chapters provided the theoretical background of the study and the method applied to carry out the research in a meaningful objective way. In Chapter Four and Chapter Five we shifted to analyze the data according to the approach discussed in Chapter Two.

**Chapter Four** starts with a definition of the notion of Objective Needs within the frame work of "Needs Analysis" as provided by Richterich (1975), Bindley (1970, 1980, 1983, and 1984), and Graves (2001). We shifted then to interpret the information collected from the first year Syrian undergraduate learners of English with regard to their objective needs for learning English. The objective needs of students consisted of analyzing two types of information- first, the students' background which includes country, culture, education, native language, age, sex and so on, and second, the analysis of the students' current
language proficiency and language difficulties (see Appendix I, Appendix V, Appendix VI, and Appendix VII).

We pointed out that all students in our sample are Syrian nationals who belong to a monolingual society and speak one native tongue, namely Arabic. All the students are learning English as a foreign language. The majority of the students were found to belong to middle class with minorities who came from rich families. We pointed out that being rich does not avail one any special privilege because of two main reasons; first, Syria Constitution is built on the basis of socialism, and in a socialist country there is no advantage given to any group over the other; second, being a socialist country, all the students allow Syrian study one national standard curriculum in both private and governmental schools.

Our sample consisted of two age groups. On average, students of "Group A" were found to be one year above the standard age which is 19 and we justified this by giving several reasons (see section 4.2 and section 6.1). Thereafter, we pointed out that the females' ratio in our sample was 80% whereas males' ratio was 20%. This can be attributed to the fact that girls in Syria opt for literature more than boys do. Boys have the tendency to go to more practical courses that might secure them a well-paid job in the future.

As we proceeded we analyzed the tense test to examine whether the students' control over different types of tenses could be arranged in an implicational order of difficulty - following (Agnihotri, Khanna, and Mukherjee 1994). The implicational scale showed that the all students in our sample are completely good in their control over five types of verbal forms; simple present, infinitival, simple past, conditional, and past continuous tense. The implicational scale also showed that the students did not have complete control over the other five tenses; present continuous, past prefect, present prefect continuous, past prefect continuous, and simple future tense. The mean score of the tense test showed that students of "Group B" were better than students of "Group A". This result partially reflected the advantage of the new curriculum over the old one.
Having completed the analysis of tense test for both groups, we conducted a comparison and contrast of the level of proficiency of both groups on the basis of the results of two cloze tests. The detailed analysis of the two cloze tests also revealed that "Group B" has performed better than "Group A" and was shown to have a better surface and academic proficiency. The reason behind "Group B" good performance can be attributed to the overall competence which they acquired after studying the New English Syllabus. On the basis of the analysis, we could identify some areas of weakness which need to receive special attention while modifying the new curriculum.

Chapter Five aimed at investigating the Subjective Needs of the Syrian learners of English. Here, learners are given the chance to spell out their wants and needs. This is likely to engage the abilities within the learners' developing competence in an area of cooperative negotiation, joint interpretation, and the sharing of expression.

Subjective Needs are as important as Objective ones. Unless Subjective needs are taken into account, Objective Needs may not be met. Therefore, we tried to derive the Subjective Needs of students from information about learner's attitudes, motivation and wants with regard to the learning of English. The spell out of students' attitudes towards the learning process and materials can be summarized from their responses (Appendix II) as follows:

- The majority of students in both groups enjoy English classes.
- Students' attitudes towards materials on average were higher than their attitudes towards learning process.
- To some extent, both groups were reportedly satisfied with their English syllabus but not with the methods and approaches adopted by teachers in the classroom.
- "Group A" found the weekly period devoted to learning English sufficient whereas students of "Group B" found it insufficient.
The majority of students in both groups were least satisfied with the availability of materials other than their textbooks.

On average, we found that students of "Group B" had higher attitudes than "Group A".

The next section in Chapter Five dealt with students' motivation for learning English since motivation is identified as the most powerful influence on learning. Following Gardner and Lambert (1972), we distinguished between instrumental and integrative motivations. Twenty items (Appendix III) were given to the students and each item was given a four point scale ranging from "not important" to "very important". The response of the students can be summarized as follows:

- The first seven choices were found to be instrumental.
- Students' integrative motivation to learn English scored comparatively lesser than instrumental motivation.
- Learning English for Syrian students is a means not an end.
- Surprisingly the first choice for the students in both groups was item number 3 (It helps me to use computer and have access to Internet).
- On average students from "Group B" have scored higher motivation than students from "Group A".

The final section in Chapter Five was devoted to investigate students claimed control over English through answering two questions; first to arrange in order which skill they feel that they have best control over; secondly, the students were asked to state what they can do in English with regard to the four skills (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) in four items questions for each skill (see Appendix IV). This section aimed at involving learners and teachers in exchanging information (Nunan 1988). In the first question, students from both groups arranged in order the skills they feel that they best know as: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The second question contains four separate
sections. Each section contained four questions to investigate what students can do in (reading, writing, listening, and speaking). The following findings can be drawn from the students' responses:

- All students in both groups arrange the skills in the same order.
- Students in both groups can do best in reading.
- Writing comes in the second position for the students in both groups.
- Listening came at the third position for both groups.
- Speaking came at the last position for both groups.
- The score of students of "Group B" was higher than the score of students of "Group A" concerning the four skills.

Although "Group B" scored higher than "Group A", still they have the same problems. The new curriculum devoted some effort to develop students' ability in listening and speaking but the students feel that they are in need for further training to have a better control over these skills.

Chapter Six presented the results of the statistical analysis. Twenty three variables were isolated from our questionnaire. We calculated the mean score and standard deviation for each variable, and presented the correlation analysis for the all the variables.

Since proficiency in English was considered as the most important variable in our data, we tried to see what factors could affect it positively or negatively. On the basis of correlation analysis we saw that proficiency was influenced to some extent by age, sex, schooling, father and mother's education, father and mother's knowledge of English, attitudes, grammatical competence, and type of syllabus. Younger students were found to be better than elder ones. Females were also found to be to some extent better than males. Students who came from the scientific branch had also performed more satisfactorily than those who came from the literary branch. Proficiency was further found to be determined to some
extent by father's education, mother's education, father's English and mother's English. Thus, this study showed the significance of these social variables in relation to the level of proficiency. Attitudinal variables appeared to be highly significant in determining students' proficiency, whereas motivational variables turned out to be largely insignificant. To the extent proficiency in English correlates highly significantly with social variables and very insignificantly with motivational variables, proficiency appeared to be shaped by social rather than psychological factors. Finally, proficiency was found to be significantly determined by the curriculum that students had studied in schools. The study clearly showed that students of "Group B" who had studied the new curriculum performed much better in Tense Test, Cloze (I) and Cloze (II) than students of "Group A".

As far as motivational variables are concerned, we noticed that students in Syria in general have a very high motivation for learning English. More importantly, the students' motivations in both Groups were found to be largely identical. All students in Syria want to learn English because they have to acquire it as a necessary tool for higher education, jobs, and social and economical development.

In short, this study has shown that if a learner is younger in age, has come from scientific branch, has educated parents who have some knowledge of English, has positive attitudes towards materials and process of language teaching in his/her school, and has studied a relatively good curriculum the learner is likely to have higher scores in English.

7.1 Pedagogical Implications

Implementing Needs Analysis has a significant role in the identification and examination of needs for any educational institution. An ongoing needs analysis should be a prerequisite for any program/course design in order to achieve effective instructional outcomes. Besides this, it can help educators and
administrators to gain awareness of the 'context variable' (Chaudron, 1990) and program designers - to provide appropriate instructional input to promote effective learning.

Bearing in mind that administrators and educators traditionally rely on their perceived needs in specifying learners' felt needs, more objective assessment is required for a more effective instructional design. Therefore, an empirical validation of needs is essential in order to get an objective state of affairs on these phenomena. An operational unit at language institutions can provide continuous objective and reliable data on changing needs of teachers and learners by administering questionnaires, interviews, diaries to all the participants. It can suggest an overview, reconsideration and redesign, if deemed necessary, of the curricula in general, syllabus design and instructional materials construction specifically, to enhance an effective instruction. The operation of such a unit can ensure that the institution is always informed, as regards the changing needs of teachers and learners, to make its plans accordingly.

Our study has shown that something fundamentally new had to be done to improve language learning. To help the Syrian learners achieve higher levels of proficiency in English, what we really need in the Syrian context can be summarized as follows:

- An ongoing needs analysis should be done for English curriculum design in order to achieve better effective outcomes.
- Since younger students were found to have a better level of surface and academic proficiency in English, it is recommended that teaching English in school should start as early as possible. In other word, instead of starting teaching English at class seven, we can start from class one, if not from the nursery level.
- Taking students' attitudes towards the process of teaching into consideration, it is suggested that English Teachers in Syria must attend
annual professional courses in English to be acquainted with the latest developments and innovations in ELT methods/approaches.

- It also highly suggested that materials other than textbooks must be provided and made available at every school to enable students to enhance and promote their level of proficiency. Such materials may include masterpieces in English fiction, drama, poetry, newspapers and magazines, advertisements posters, English movies, songs ... etc.

- With the absence of English target community which is a decisive factor in developing competence, it is recommended that the weekly period for studying English in schools must be extended as far as possible.

- Since most of the students in our study claimed to have a relatively poor control over listening and speaking skills, it is suggested that these areas must be given a special attention by teachers and curriculum designers and language laboratories are highly needed.

- Since schools are generally the first and most important place where students can learn English, and since schools fall within the immediate reach of teachers, parents, students to manipulate, we suggest that we should start with schools as a first step towards creating an acquisition rich educational environment. Level of proficiency in English in Syria is likely to improve if honest efforts are made to create an acquisition rich educational environment in schools.

Finally, this study was a modest step towards investigating the needs of Syrian learners of English and to see whether the new curriculum has addressed any of these needs. However, seeking a better level of proficiency in English in Syria remains a central research question for further studies, since there have been, and continue to be, needs which have to be met by curriculum, teachers, and course designers. It is, therefore, crucial to continue our attempts at needs analysis in order to arrive at a better understanding of the English Language learning/teaching scenario in Syria in order to affect better outcomes.
APPENDIX - I
SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGICAL DATA

1. Name:  
2. Age:  
3. Sex:  
4. Mother Tongue:  
5. Fresh: Yes [ ] No [ ]  
6. Your Secondary School certificate was Literary [ ] or Scientific [ ]  
7. What language do you generally speak at home?  
8. Supply the following information about your family:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Monthly Income</th>
<th>Mother tongue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. (a) How good is your father's English? Please tick ( V ) below the related number.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not good</th>
<th>Bad</th>
<th>Ok</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Very good</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b) How good is your mother's English?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not good</th>
<th>Bad</th>
<th>Ok</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Very good</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. In which class did you begin your learning of English?

11. Have you ever studied English in any language Institute? If yes....

   Yes [ ]  No [ ]

   Where? How many months?

   How many hours per week?
12. Are your still attending English language courses outside your school?

Yes □ No □

Where? How many months?

How many hours per week?
APPENDIX – II
ATTITUDES TOWARDS LEARNING PROCESS

Please furnish the following data about your school: Please tick ( ✓ ) at the appropriate place.

1. I enjoyed English classes at school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>OK</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. The attitude of the teacher in involving the student to interact with each other in English was satisfactory.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>OK</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Our teachers always explain English lesson only in English.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>OK</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. The teaching methods adopted by our teachers were very good.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>OK</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Weekly period / hours devoted to learning English in school are sufficient.
6. The English books I have studied at School are very useful.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>OK</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. A lot of English materials beside our main books are always available in the school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>OK</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. The English books I have studied at school contributed/euouraged me to join the English Department of the University.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>OK</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. The English curriculum I have studied at School facilitated my further study at the University.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>OK</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10. The general atmosphere in our school was satisfactory.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>OK</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX – III
CLAIMED CONTROL OVER THE FOUR SKILLS

1- What can you best do in English? Arrange them in order, number 1 to the least, and number 4 to the best.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>listening</th>
<th>Speaking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2- Read carefully and answer the following questions:

1. **Writing:**
   a) Can you write an essay? [ ] Yes [ ] No
   b) Can you write a letter (personal /business)? [ ] Yes [ ] No
   c) Can you write notes? [ ] Yes [ ] No
   d) Can you fill in forms? [ ] Yes [ ] No

2. **Reading:**
   Can you read in English
   a) Simple stories? [ ] Yes [ ] No
   b) Newspapers? [ ] Yes [ ] No
   c) Forms? [ ] Yes [ ] No
   d) Advertisement? [ ] Yes [ ] No

3. **Listening:**
   When you listen to English can you understand
   a) Native speakers of English? [ ] Yes [ ] No
   b) Teachers in the classroom? [ ] Yes [ ] No
4. Speaking

Are you able to communicate in English with

a) Foreigner?  

b) Teachers?  

c) Chatting?  

d) Class mate / friends?
APPENDIX – IV
MOTIVATION

Why do you need to learn English?

Please tick (✓) in the appropriate column against each statement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Very important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Slightly important</th>
<th>Not important at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. It will help me to get a good job.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. It will help me to read English novel, poetry, and drama.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. It will help me to use computer properly and to be able surf the Internet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. It will help me to know about the scientific developments taking place in the entire world.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. It will help me to introduce my country, my culture, and myself internationally.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. It will help me to read English newspapers and magazines.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. It will help me to watch English programs on TV.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. It will help me to watch English movies.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very important</td>
<td>Important</td>
<td>Slightly important</td>
<td>Not important at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. It helps me to listen to the English programs on radio.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. It will help me to translate documents, newspaper, articles.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. It will help me to read correspondence and reply to them</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. It will enable me to pursue my higher study in the future.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. My family members wanted me to study English.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. It will help me to live and behave like the English-speaking people.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. It will help me to communicate with the whole world since English is the most widely spread language.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Learning English will add to my personality and prestige.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. It enables me to converse with tourists.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. To converse with English speaking people about political issues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. It will help me to make good friends among</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

157
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English speaking people</th>
<th>Very important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Slightly important</th>
<th>Not important at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20. To travel abroad for tourism.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State if you have any other needs....</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX V
TENSE TEST

Put the verbs between brackets into the correct forms:

1- She usually (spend) all her money on clothes.

2- He generally drinks coffee but today he (drink) tea.

3- My parents (live) in Cairo since 1995.

4- They (sell) all the goods last week.

5- The police (catch) the thief before he stole the money

6- When I first met him, he (study) painting.

7- I went into the garden to see what the boys (do).

8- If you do not hurry up, you (miss) your train.

9- He (have) an operation next week.

10- My father will arrive tomorrow. I (receive) just a letter from him.
APPENDIX VI
CLOZE TEST (I)

The computer

Computers are only machines. They are built to help people ...1... jobs at home, school and work. ...2... are also built to help people ...3... fun. Computers can be used many ...4... ways with special programs called application ...5...

There are many ways for people ...6... give information to the computer. The ...7... can be used as a typewriter to ...8... commands. Buttons, like those on a microwave ...9... can be used to give instructions. ...10... microphone can be used to enter ...11... instructions.

The computer is a very simple ...12... It can only decide whether the ...13... to a question is "yes" or "...14...". It uses only the binary numbers, 0 and 1, to ...15... a code that includes all the letters ...16... the alphabet and the numbers from 0 to 9. Punctuation ...17... other keyboard characters can also be ...18... in binary code.

Computers come in ...19... shapes. A computer stores information in its ...20... Some information is stored permanently in ...21... Only Memory or ROM. ROM cannot be ...22... and remains in the computer even ...23... the computer is turned off. The ...24... for doing the addition and subtraction ...25... be stored in ROM.

Some computers ...26... another kind of memory called Random ...27... Memory or RAM. Information stored in ...28... computer’s RAM can be changed. When ...29... enter a program, it is stored ...30... RAM. General purpose computers can also ...31... many different kind of jobs. You can use it to solve math problems, write letters, or play games.
**List of deleted words Cloze I**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1-with</th>
<th>17-and</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>computer</td>
<td>18-written</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>have</td>
<td>19-all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>different</td>
<td>20-memory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>software</td>
<td>21-read</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>to</td>
<td>22-changed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>keyboard</td>
<td>23-when</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>enter</td>
<td>24-rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>oven</td>
<td>25-will</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>26-have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>voice</td>
<td>27-access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>machine</td>
<td>28-the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>answer</td>
<td>29-you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>30-in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>make</td>
<td>31-do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>of</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX VII
CLOZE TEST (II)

Safety At Home

Safety is sought everywhere but it should be well taken care of at home where children are most affected by home accidents. Familiar sources of danger at home ...1... three among too many unexpected other ...2... They are fire, electricity and medicines.

...3... accidents are more frequent than any ...4..., and the victims are usually the ...5... whose curiosity causes them a lot ...6... injury. Accidents here may include hot ...7... burns or burns caused by direct ...8... Electricity is defined as the silent ...9... of Death dwelling at home. This ...10... danger may strike both adults and ...11... if not carefully handled because your ...12... mistake is your last.

Medicines have ...13... less harm if they were carelessly ...14...accessible to children. A special locker ...15... contain all needed medicines; too high ...16... enable children to reach.

When we ...17... that thousands of children die because of ...18...of safety at home, we feel more ...19... more responsible for the safety of ...20...families.

Carelessness is the major ...21... of so many accidents at home. ...22... overflow of a teakettle on ...23... burning gas fire carelessly left boiling ...24... cause a disaster when the non burning ...25... escapes and fills the kitchen awaiting ...26... slightest spark to put the whole ...27... ablaze. It is our responsibility to be ...28... careful at home, otherwise we would ...29... very sorry when it is too ...30...
Surely we cannot assume that all ...31... including children should know all about ...32... at home, nor can we assume ...33... all husbands and wives have got a ...34... standard of knowledge which enables them ...35... keep their home safe. So, in ...36... to secure a minimum standard ...37... knowledge, it was found an exigency to ...38... a kind of institutes in which ...39... courses are given to the newly married ...40... about safety at home. The experience the couple gets is inevitably extended to their children who in turn get used to be careful, thus turning knowledge to become a habit.
<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-are</td>
<td>21-cause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-ones</td>
<td>22-the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-fire</td>
<td>23-a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-other</td>
<td>24-may</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-children</td>
<td>25-gaz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-of</td>
<td>26-the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-water</td>
<td>27-place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-fire</td>
<td>28-doubly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-king</td>
<td>29-be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-terrible</td>
<td>30-late</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-children</td>
<td>31-families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-first</td>
<td>32-safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-no</td>
<td>33-that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-left</td>
<td>34-reasonable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-should</td>
<td>35-to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-to</td>
<td>36-order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-think</td>
<td>37-of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-lack</td>
<td>38-create</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-and</td>
<td>39-intensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-our</td>
<td>40-couple</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX VIII
SYRIAN MAP
Bibliography


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