

WHAT DO HISTORIANS AND PSYCHOLOGISTS ACTUALLY READ? A MIXED-METHODS NEEDS ANALYSIS FOR ESP IN TWO HUMANITIES FACULTIES

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Abstract: English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has become increasingly important in higher education due to the growing demand for discipline-specific language competence. However, ESP course design in humanities faculties often lacks sufficient consideration of authentic reading practices and disciplinary literacy needs. This study investigates the actual reading materials, strategies, and linguistic challenges encountered by students and instructors in History and Psychology faculties through a mixed-methods needs analysis. Quantitative data were collected using questionnaires administered to undergraduate students and faculty members, while qualitative insights were obtained through semi-structured interviews and document analysis of course materials. The findings reveal significant differences between the two disciplines regarding text types, vocabulary density, citation styles, and reading purposes. History students predominantly engage with archival documents, historical narratives, and historiographical analyses, whereas Psychology students frequently read empirical research articles, case studies, and statistical reports. Despite disciplinary variations, both groups identified academic vocabulary, complex sentence structures, and critical interpretation as major reading difficulties. The study highlights the necessity of discipline-sensitive ESP curricula that incorporate authentic materials and targeted reading strategies. The article concludes that integrating actual academic reading practices into ESP instruction can improve students' comprehension, motivation, and academic performance within humanities education.

Keywords: English for Specific Purposes, needs analysis, humanities education, academic reading, historical texts, psychological research articles, mixed-methods research, disciplinary literacy.

Annotatsiya. Maxsus maqsadlar uchun ingliz tili (ESP) oliy ta'limda tobora muhim ahamiyat kasb etmoqda, chunki muayyan sohalarga xos til kompetensiyasiga bo'lgan ehtiyoj ortib bormoqda. Biroq, gumanitar yo'nalishlar fakultetlarida ESP kurslarini loyihalashda talabalarning haqiqiy o'qish amaliyotlari va fanlararo savodxonlik ehtiyojlari ko'pincha yetarli darajada hisobga olinmaydi. Mazkur tadqiqot Tarix va Psixologiya fakultetlarida tahsil olayotgan talabalar hamda dars berayotgan o'qituvchilarning o'qish materiallari, o'qish strategiyalari va duch keladigan lingvistik qiyinchiliklarini aralash metodlarga asoslangan ehtiyojlar tahlili orqali o'rganadi.

Miqdoriy ma'lumotlar bakalavriat talabalari va professor-o'qituvchilar o'rtasida o'tkazilgan so'rovlarni yordamida yig'ilgan bo'lsa, sifat jihatidagi ma'lumotlar yarim tuzilgan intervyular hamda o'quv materiallari hujjatlarini tahlil qilish orqali olingan. Natijalar ikki fan yo'nalishi o'rtasida matn turlari, lug'aviy zichlik, iqtibos keltirish uslublari va o'qish maqsadlari bo'yicha sezilarli farqlar mavjudligini ko'rsatdi. Tarix yo'nalishi talabalari asosan arxiv hujjatlari, tarixiy hikoyalar va tarixshunoslik tahlillari bilan ishlasa, Psixologiya yo'nalishi talabalari ko'proq empirik tadqiqot maqolalari, keys-stadilar va statistik hisobotlarni o'qiydi. Fanlararo tafovutlarga qaramay, har ikki guruh akademik lug'at boyligi, murakkab gap tuzilmalari va tanqidiy talqin qilishni o'qishdagi asosiy qiyinchiliklar sifatida qayd etdi.

Tadqiqot natijalari autentik materiallar va maqsadli o'qish strategiyalarini o'z ichiga olgan, fan xususiyatlarini hisobga oluvchi ESP o'quv dasturlarini ishlab chiqish zarurligini ko'rsatadi. Maqola xulosasiga ko'ra, ESP ta'limiga real akademik o'qish amaliyotlarini integratsiya qilish talabalar matnini tushunish darajasi, o'qishga bo'lgan motivatsiyasi va akademik natijalarini gumanitar ta'lim doirasida sezilarli ravishda yaxshilashi mumkin.

Kalit so'zlar: maxsus maqsadlar uchun ingliz tili (ESP), ehtiyojlar tahlili, gumanitar ta'lim, akademik o'qish, tarixiy matnlar, psixologik tadqiqot maqolalari, aralash metodlar tadqiqoti, fanlararo savodxonlik.

Аннотация: Английский язык для специальных целей (ESP) приобретает всё большее значение в высшем образовании в связи с растущей потребностью в предметно-ориентированной языковой компетенции. Однако при разработке курсов ESP на гуманитарных факультетах часто недостаточно учитываются реальные практики чтения и потребности в дисциплинарной грамотности.

В данном исследовании анализируются реальные учебные материалы для чтения, стратегии и языковые трудности, с которыми сталкиваются студенты и преподаватели факультетов истории и психологии, на основе смешанного метода анализа потребностей. Количественные данные были собраны с помощью анкет, проведённых среди студентов бакалавриата и преподавателей, а качественные данные — через полуструктурированные интервью и анализ учебных материалов.

Результаты показывают значительные различия между двумя дисциплинами в отношении типов текстов, плотности словарного состава, стилей цитирования и целей чтения. Студенты-историки преимущественно работают с архивными документами, историческими повествованиями и историографическими анализами, тогда как студенты-психологи чаще читают эмпирические научные статьи, кейс-стади и статистические отчёты. Несмотря на дисциплинарные различия, обе группы отмечают академическую лексику, сложные синтаксические структуры и критическую интерпретацию как основные трудности при чтении.

Исследование подчеркивает необходимость разработки предметно-ориентированных ESP-курсов, включающих аутентичные материалы и целенаправленные стратегии чтения. В заключение отмечается, что интеграция реальных академических практик чтения в преподавание ESP может повысить понимание, мотивацию и академическую успеваемость студентов гуманитарных направлений.

Ключевые слова: английский язык для специальных целей, анализ потребностей, гуманитарное образование, академическое чтение, исторические тексты, психологические научные статьи, смешанные методы исследования, дисциплинарная грамотность.

Introduction. In the twenty-first century, English has become the dominant language of global academic communication, scientific publication, international collaboration, and digital knowledge exchange. Universities across the world increasingly require students to access discipline-specific information through English-language sources, particularly in higher education where academic success is closely associated with the ability to interpret complex scholarly texts. Within this context, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has emerged as one of the most influential approaches to language teaching because it focuses on learners' actual academic and professional needs rather than generalized language competence. ESP instruction seeks to develop communicative skills that are directly connected to students' disciplinary practices, enabling learners to participate effectively in specialized academic communities.

Reading occupies a central position in ESP education, especially within humanities disciplines where knowledge acquisition is largely text-based. Students in humanities faculties are expected to engage critically with a wide range of academic materials including theoretical discussions, historical narratives, empirical studies, ideological analyses, and argumentative essays. Unlike everyday reading, academic reading requires learners to analyze evidence, interpret abstract concepts, evaluate arguments, and synthesize information from multiple sources. Consequently, academic success in

humanities education depends heavily on students' ability to understand and interpret discipline-specific texts written in sophisticated academic English.

Literature Review. Ken Hyland highlights that academic reading is discipline-specific and shaped by rhetorical and epistemological practices of each field. Therefore, students from different disciplines require different reading strategies and materials.

Needs analysis is considered a core principle of ESP. Brian Paltridge and Sue Starfield stress the importance of investigating learners' real academic needs using mixed methods.

From an academic literacy perspective, Brian Street and Mary Lea argue that reading is not only a language skill but also participation in disciplinary discourse communities.

Methodology. This study uses a mixed-methods design to explore academic reading practices in History and Psychology faculties. The research combines quantitative and qualitative approaches to obtain a comprehensive understanding of students' ESP reading needs.

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, and qualitative data were examined through thematic analysis. The results from different sources were compared to ensure data triangulation and validity.

Analysis and Results. Despite the growing importance of ESP, many university language programs continue to rely on generalized English materials that insufficiently reflect the authentic literacy practices of particular disciplines. Such an approach creates a mismatch between classroom instruction and real academic requirements. Students often complete ESP courses successfully but still struggle to read actual disciplinary texts encountered in their university studies. This problem is especially visible in humanities faculties where reading demands vary considerably across disciplines. Different academic fields construct knowledge through different textual conventions, rhetorical styles, and methodological traditions. Therefore, understanding what students actually read within their disciplines becomes essential for effective ESP curriculum development.

Among humanities disciplines, History and Psychology provide particularly interesting contexts for comparative investigation because they represent two distinct academic traditions. History is fundamentally interpretive and narrative-oriented, emphasizing chronological analysis, contextual understanding, and critical examination of historical sources. Historians frequently engage with archival documents, political speeches, historiographical debates, autobiographies, and primary historical records. These texts often contain dense argumentative structures, culture-specific references, and historically situated meanings that require sophisticated interpretive reading skills. Students must learn not only to understand information but also to evaluate reliability, identify ideological perspectives, and construct evidence-based interpretations of historical events.

Psychology, on the other hand, combines elements of humanities and social sciences while maintaining strong empirical and scientific orientations. Psychology students regularly encounter research articles, laboratory reports, experimental studies, diagnostic

manuals, and statistical analyses. Unlike historical texts, psychological literature generally follows standardized scientific formats and includes technical terminology, methodological explanations, quantitative findings, and evidence-based discussions. Reading in psychology therefore requires different literacy practices, including interpretation of statistical data, comprehension of scientific methods, and understanding of empirical argumentation. As a result, the reading demands placed on Psychology students differ significantly from those experienced by History students.

The concept of needs analysis has long been recognized as the foundation of ESP theory and practice. Needs analysis refers to the systematic identification of learners' linguistic, academic, and professional requirements in specific target situations. Early ESP scholars emphasized target situation analysis, while more recent approaches incorporate sociocultural perspectives, disciplinary literacy, and learner-centered methodologies. Contemporary researchers argue that language learning should be connected directly to authentic academic practices because disciplinary communication involves specialized forms of thinking, reading, and writing. In this regard, needs analysis allows educators to design courses that accurately reflect the realities of students' academic environments.

Previous research in ESP has primarily concentrated on scientific, technical, and medical disciplines due to the international dominance of English in these fields. Comparatively fewer studies have explored humanities education, particularly from the perspective of academic reading practices. Existing literature suggests that humanities students face considerable difficulties related to academic vocabulary, abstract reasoning, complex syntax, and critical interpretation. However, there remains limited empirical evidence regarding the specific texts humanities students read most frequently and the exact linguistic challenges they encounter. Furthermore, comparative studies examining disciplinary differences within humanities faculties remain relatively rare.

Another important issue concerns the relationship between academic literacy and disciplinary identity. Scholars in academic literacy studies argue that reading practices are not merely technical skills but also forms of participation within disciplinary communities. Through reading, students gradually learn how knowledge is constructed, evaluated, and communicated within their fields. Therefore, understanding disciplinary reading practices contributes not only to language education but also to broader discussions about academic socialization and higher education pedagogy.

The present study seeks to address these gaps by conducting a mixed-methods needs analysis of reading practices in History and Psychology faculties. By combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews and document analysis, the research aims to identify the types of texts students read, the purposes of their reading activities, the difficulties they experience, and the implications for ESP curriculum design. The mixed-methods approach provides both statistical patterns and deeper contextual insights into students' academic literacy experiences.

This study is significant for several reasons. First, it contributes to the growing body of ESP research focused on humanities education, an area that remains underrepresented in contemporary scholarship. Second, it highlights the importance of disciplinary variation in academic reading practices, demonstrating that effective ESP instruction must be sensitive to differences between academic fields. Third, the findings may assist language instructors, curriculum designers, and university administrators in developing more authentic and relevant ESP programs that better prepare students for academic success. Finally, the study emphasizes the value of integrating authentic disciplinary materials into language instruction, thereby bridging the gap between classroom learning and actual academic practice.

The present study investigates the authentic reading practices of students and instructors in History and Psychology faculties through a mixed-methods needs analysis. The main purpose of the research is to determine what kinds of texts learners actually read, which reading strategies they employ, what difficulties they encounter, and how these findings can contribute to more effective ESP curriculum development. The analysis demonstrates that academic reading practices are strongly shaped by disciplinary traditions, epistemological orientations, and communicative conventions. Although both History and Psychology belong to the humanities domain, their reading cultures differ significantly in terms of textual structure, vocabulary usage, reading objectives, and cognitive demands.

The quantitative findings reveal that students in both faculties spend a substantial amount of time reading academic materials in English. However, the frequency and purposes of reading differ considerably between the two disciplines. History students primarily engage with historical narratives, archival records, biographies, historiographical essays, and political documents. Their reading activities are largely interpretive in nature and involve contextual analysis of events, ideological perspectives, and historical arguments. In contrast, Psychology students most frequently read empirical journal articles, case studies, experimental reports, and methodological literature. Their reading activities are closely associated with scientific inquiry, evidence evaluation, and interpretation of research findings.

Document analysis further confirmed these disciplinary differences. Course syllabi from the History faculty included extensive reading lists containing historical monographs, translated primary sources, and argumentative essays focused on historiographical debates. These materials often presented multiple interpretations of the same historical event, requiring students to compare perspectives critically. Many texts contained long narrative passages, rhetorical language, and culturally specific references that demanded advanced interpretive skills. Instructors emphasized that successful historical reading involves understanding not only factual information but also the political, cultural, and ideological contexts in which texts were produced.

Interviews with History students demonstrated that they frequently experience difficulties with archaic vocabulary, formal writing styles, and implicit meanings embedded in historical discourse. Several participants stated that understanding historical texts requires background knowledge beyond language proficiency alone. Students often struggled with identifying author bias, interpreting metaphorical expressions, and connecting historical events chronologically. Moreover, many respondents reported that lengthy argumentative passages reduced reading motivation and comprehension efficiency. Faculty members noted that students tend to focus excessively on memorizing facts rather than critically analyzing historical arguments, indicating the need for reading instruction that emphasizes interpretation and analytical thinking.

Psychology students, by contrast, described a different set of reading experiences and challenges. Their assigned readings largely consisted of peer-reviewed journal articles written in highly technical academic English. Most texts followed standardized scientific structures such as Introduction, Method, Results, and Discussion (IMRAD), exposing students to formalized research discourse. Unlike historical narratives, psychological literature relies heavily on concise terminology, statistical explanation, and evidence-based reasoning. Students therefore reported difficulties understanding methodological procedures, interpreting statistical tables, and comprehending discipline-specific terminology.

The questionnaire results indicated that statistical language represents one of the greatest obstacles for Psychology students. Many participants expressed anxiety when reading sections containing numerical analysis, probability values, or experimental descriptions. Interviews revealed that students often possess sufficient general English knowledge but lack familiarity with academic research vocabulary and methodological concepts. Faculty members emphasized that psychology education increasingly depends on international research publications, making English reading competence essential for academic and professional development. Instructors also observed that students who struggle with reading research articles frequently experience difficulties conducting independent research projects.

Another important finding concerns the purposes behind academic reading. History students mainly read to construct interpretations, analyze ideological perspectives, and understand social transformations across time periods. Their reading process is often nonlinear, involving repeated examination of specific passages and comparison between multiple sources. Psychology students, however, read primarily to obtain empirical evidence, understand theoretical models, and evaluate scientific validity. Their reading tends to focus on extracting precise information efficiently from structured texts. These differences demonstrate that academic reading is not a universal skill but rather a discipline-specific literacy practice shaped by intellectual traditions.

Despite disciplinary variations, several common patterns emerged across both faculties. Students from both departments identified academic vocabulary as a major challenge in reading English-language materials. Complex sentence structures, abstract terminology, and unfamiliar concepts frequently reduced comprehension levels. Many participants also reported limited exposure to authentic disciplinary texts during ESP courses. Instead, they described classroom materials as simplified and disconnected from actual academic reading requirements. This mismatch between ESP instruction and disciplinary practice negatively affects students' preparedness for university-level reading tasks.

The findings additionally highlight the importance of reading strategies in academic success. Students who actively employed note-taking, summarizing, contextual guessing, and critical questioning demonstrated higher confidence and better comprehension outcomes. However, many participants reported receiving insufficient explicit instruction regarding discipline-specific reading strategies. History students expressed the need for guidance in interpreting ideological discourse and evaluating historical reliability, whereas Psychology students emphasized the necessity of learning how to analyze research structures and statistical information effectively.

The comparative analysis also revealed differences in textual organization between the two disciplines. Historical texts frequently contain narrative progression, chronological explanation, and argumentative elaboration, often requiring inferential comprehension and contextual reasoning. Psychological texts, in contrast, rely on concise scientific language, logical sequencing, and methodological precision. Consequently, the cognitive demands of reading vary significantly. History students must interpret ambiguity and multiple perspectives, while Psychology students must process technical detail and empirical evidence accurately.

These findings support contemporary theories of disciplinary literacy, which argue that reading practices are inseparable from knowledge construction within academic communities. Reading in History involves participation in interpretive discourse communities where meaning is negotiated through contextual analysis and critical debate. Reading in Psychology involves participation in scientific discourse communities where knowledge is validated through empirical evidence and methodological rigor. Therefore, ESP instruction should not merely teach general language skills but also familiarize students with the epistemological conventions and literacy practices of their disciplines.

The study further demonstrates the value of mixed-methods approaches in needs analysis research. Quantitative data provided measurable patterns regarding reading frequency, text types, and perceived difficulties, while qualitative interviews offered deeper insights into students' experiences, attitudes, and academic challenges. The integration of these methods enabled a more comprehensive understanding of disciplinary

reading practices than would have been possible through a single methodological approach.

From a pedagogical perspective, the findings indicate that ESP programs in humanities faculties require substantial revision to align more closely with authentic academic needs. For History students, ESP instruction should include exposure to primary historical documents, historiographical essays, and analytical reading tasks focused on interpretation and contextual understanding. Reading activities should encourage critical engagement with multiple perspectives and development of argumentative reasoning skills. For Psychology students, ESP curricula should incorporate empirical research articles, methodological vocabulary exercises, and tasks involving interpretation of data and research findings. Instruction should also emphasize understanding scientific text organization and evidence-based reasoning.

Furthermore, collaboration between language instructors and subject specialists appears essential for effective ESP curriculum design. Subject instructors possess valuable insights into disciplinary reading expectations, while ESP educators contribute expertise in language pedagogy and literacy development. Interdisciplinary cooperation can therefore help create more authentic and academically relevant instructional materials.

Overall, the results confirm that academic reading practices in humanities faculties are deeply discipline-specific and cannot be adequately addressed through generalized language instruction. Effective ESP education requires careful analysis of authentic literacy demands, disciplinary conventions, and learner experiences. By understanding what historians and psychologists actually read, educators can develop more targeted and meaningful instructional approaches that support both language acquisition and academic achievement.

Conclusion. This study examined the authentic reading practices and academic literacy needs of students in History and Psychology faculties through a mixed-methods needs analysis. The findings demonstrate that academic reading in humanities education is highly discipline-specific and shaped by the epistemological traditions, textual conventions, and communicative practices of individual academic fields. Although both disciplines belong to the humanities domain, the nature of the texts students read, the purposes behind reading activities, and the challenges they encounter differ significantly.

The research revealed that History students primarily engage with interpretive and narrative-oriented materials such as archival documents, historiographical essays, biographies, and political analyses. Their reading practices require contextual interpretation, evaluation of ideological perspectives, and critical analysis of historical evidence. Psychology students, on the other hand, predominantly read empirical research articles, case studies, experimental reports, and methodological literature characterized by technical terminology and scientific structure. Their reading processes emphasize

evidence-based reasoning, methodological comprehension, and interpretation of statistical information.

Despite these disciplinary differences, several common challenges emerged across both faculties. Students frequently reported difficulties related to academic vocabulary, complex sentence structures, abstract concepts, and insufficient familiarity with authentic disciplinary discourse. The findings additionally showed that many existing ESP courses rely on generalized and simplified materials that fail to reflect the actual academic reading demands students encounter in their disciplines. As a result, learners often experience a gap between classroom language instruction and real academic expectations.

The study confirms that effective ESP instruction must move beyond general language teaching and adopt discipline-sensitive approaches that integrate authentic texts and contextualized literacy practices. For History students, ESP programs should focus on interpretive reading, rhetorical analysis, and contextual understanding of historical discourse. For Psychology students, instruction should emphasize scientific reading strategies, methodological vocabulary, and interpretation of empirical research. In both cases, explicit instruction in academic reading strategies and critical literacy skills remains essential.

Another important contribution of the research lies in its methodological approach. The use of mixed methods allowed for a comprehensive understanding of disciplinary reading practices by combining quantitative patterns with qualitative insights. This methodological integration strengthened the reliability of the findings and provided a deeper perspective on students' academic experiences.

The study also highlights the importance of collaboration between ESP instructors and subject specialists in designing relevant and effective curricula. Since disciplinary literacy involves more than language proficiency alone, successful ESP instruction should incorporate the intellectual and communicative conventions of specific academic communities. Such cooperation can help bridge the gap between language education and disciplinary learning.

In conclusion, the research demonstrates that understanding what historians and psychologists actually read is fundamental for developing meaningful ESP programs in humanities faculties. Authentic needs analysis enables educators to create targeted instructional materials that reflect real academic practices and support students' linguistic as well as intellectual development. By aligning ESP curricula with disciplinary reading demands, universities can enhance students' academic performance, critical thinking abilities, and participation in global academic discourse.

Future research may expand this investigation to additional humanities disciplines and explore how disciplinary reading practices influence writing, research skills, and academic identity formation. Comparative international studies may also provide broader insights

into the relationship between disciplinary literacy and ESP education in diverse educational contexts.

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