



Original Research

English for Specific Purposes: Tailoring English language instruction for history majors

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While English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has demonstrated efficacy in multiple professional and academic fields, its application in humanities, particularly history, remains underexplored. This study addresses this gap by examining the effectiveness of a tailored ESP approach in enhancing English language proficiency among history students. The overriding aim of this research is to evaluate the potential benefits of integrating an ESP approach within history education, focusing on the specific linguistic needs and characteristics inherent in historical discourse, archaic language, and academic writing. The study poses a research question of whether a tailored ESP approach, designed around the linguistic demands of historical discourse, archaic language, and academic writing skills, can result in a significant improvement in these skills among history students. This quasi-experimental study involved two groups: a control group receiving a traditional English language course and an experimental group receiving an ESP-oriented course focusing on historical discourse, archaic language, and academic writing. Participants were subjected to pre- and post-intervention tests to measure the efficacy of the ESP approach. The experimental group demonstrated statistically significant improvements in all three areas compared to the control group. The observed benefits were not only statistically significant but also educationally meaningful. The findings point to the efficacy of the ESP approach in history education, suggesting a potential avenue for innovation in English language instruction. They also expose the need to align language instruction with the specific linguistic characteristics of the learners' field of study, offering supporting observations for further advancements in ESP pedagogy. Future research should explore the long-term effects of the ESP-oriented approach on history students' language proficiency and academic performance, ideally through a longitudinal study. Investigating the adaptability of tailored ESP programmes in other humanities disciplines beyond history could also yield data regarding their efficiency in diverse academic contexts.

KEYWORDS: English for Specific Purposes, history education, historical discourse, archaic language, academic writing, language proficiency



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1. INTRODUCTION

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has gained significant recognition in the pedagogical realm, particularly in the context of higher education where learners are expected to master the academic language pertaining to their respective fields of study. This pedagogical approach is predicated on the principle of tailoring language instruction to meet the specific requirements of learners, encompassing the vocabulary, structures, and discourses intrinsic to their chosen disciplines. While numerous studies have investigated the implementation of ESP in diverse fields such as business (Bhatia, 2008; Chi, 2023; Yeh, 2023), engineering (Mudraya, 2006), and healthcare (Katsaounis & Steinmüller, 2021), there is a noticeable lacuna in the literature concerning its application in history instruction. This research intends to fill this gap by investigating the feasibility and efficacy of tailoring English language instruction for history students.

The relevance of this topic arises from the realisation that history students, like their counterparts in other disciplines, often grapple with the complexities of discipline-specific English. This includes comprehending archaic language, interpreting historical texts and narratives, and producing written research that conform to specific academic conventions. Moreover, as globalisation progresses, English continues to be the lingua franca of academia, necessitating the mastery of this language to facilitate international dialogue and collaboration among historians.

Therefore, this research raises the question of how English language instruction can be effectively tailored for history students to enhance their academic and future occupational proficiency. This tailored approach has the potential to significantly scale up the academic performance of history students, stimulate profound engagement with the discipline, and expedite their integration into the global academic and professional community.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 English for Specific Purposes (ESP)

The theoretical framework of this study rests on the premise of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), its principles, pedagogical approaches, and its implications in the humanities sector, particularly history education. The integration of ESP principles in history instruction necessitates an understanding of historical discourse, archaic language, and academic writing skills. This section presents an overview of ESP, explores the linguistic features of historical discourse and archaic language, and addresses the importance of academic writing in history education.

Since its inception in the 1960s, ESP has gained global recognition for addressing the unique linguistic needs of learners in specific domains (Belcher, 2006). Hutchinson and Waters (1987) define ESP as an approach to language teaching in which all decisions about content and method are based on the learner's reason for learning. According to Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998), ESP aims to teach English not as an isolated academic subject but as a vehicle for real-world communication in specific fields, which among other things is evidenced in the aims and scope of research journals covering this domain of scholarly inquiry (Malyuga & Grishechko, 2021).

Studies have consistently shown the effectiveness of ESP in various fields such as business (Malyuga, 2023; Zhang, 2007), medicine (Basturkmen, 2019), and economics (Malyuga & Orlova, 2016), among others. However, its application in the humanities, especially history, remains underexplored, thus forming the crux of this study.

Another key aspect of the theory of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is the notion of needs analysis. ESP pedagogy emphasises the importance of conducting thorough needs analysis to identify the precise language requirements of learners within their specific professional or academic contexts (Flowerdew, 2012). This analysis involves assessing learners' language proficiency, their communicative tasks and goals, as well as the linguistic features characteristic of their field of study or profession. By conducting needs analysis, ESP practitioners can identify the language skills and competencies that learners need to develop, allowing them to design targeted and efficient language instruction. This approach ensures that language teaching is directly relevant to the learners' real-world needs and challenges, enhancing the practicality and effectiveness of the instruction. In the context of history education, such an analysis would involve identifying the specific language demands associated with historical research, academic writing in history, and the interpretation of historical documents, ensuring that the ESP approach is finely tuned to the students' linguistic requirements.

2.2. Historical discourse

Historical discourse is characterised by specific vocabulary, syntactic structures, and text types unique to different historical periods (Brinton, 2015). This discourse involves the interpretation and construction of past events, debates, and narratives, and its understanding is essential for history students (Coffin, 2009).

The pedagogical approach to teaching historical discourse involves equipping learners with skills to analyse and contextualise texts from various historical periods. This includes understanding specialised vocabulary associated with particular eras and geographic contexts (Paltridge & Starfield, 2013). For instance, an analysis of Roman Empire era texts might involve an understanding of terms related to governance, law, and philosophy, whereas texts from the Industrial Revolution might necessitate familiarity with vocabulary related to industry, technology, and social change.

The significance of historical discourse is multifaceted, encompassing the preservation of cultural heritage, the cultivation of analytical acumen, and the facilitation of contextual comprehension. Students' exposure to historical discourse not only stimulates multidisciplinary erudition but also finesses communicative aptitude. Furthermore, according to Counsell (2009), it engenders empathy through the exposure of students to a spectrum of heterogeneous historical perspectives. Additionally, as postulated by Nokes (2022), learning historical discourse augments research abilities, cultivates a proclivity for lifelong learning, and furnishes cognitive instruments to engage thoughtfully with history's complexities. Ultimately, teaching historical discourse in ESP not only amplifies linguistic proficiency, but also nurtures critical thinking, empathy, and an enduring passion for the pursuit of historical inquiry.

2.3. Archaic language

Archaic language, a prominent feature in historical texts, is characterised by outdated or old-fashioned words, phrases, and sentence constructions (Turner, 2015). A robust understanding of archaic language is key to appreciating and interpreting a broad spectrum of historical texts. For instance, works such as *Beowulf*, Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, and Shakespeare's plays are rich in archaic vocabulary and structures that expose the linguistic characteristics of their respective periods.

Pedagogically, teaching archaic language involves immersing students in historical language use, thereby enabling them to comprehend and contextualise archaic terms within the broader text (Bergström et al., 2021). This can involve, for example, learning to interpret 'thou art' as 'you are' or understanding that 'ere' means 'before'. This proficiency facilitates an authentic encounter with primary sources, enabling students to unearth concealed layers of meaning and cultural nuance. Such competency not only fosters precision in historical interpretation but also cultivates temporal empathy by unveiling history through its authentic linguistic prism. Thus, it can be argued that teaching archaic language augments historical acumen, refines analytical skills, and unlocks a profound connection to the linguistic tapestry of the past.

2.4. Academic writing skills in History

Academic writing in history involves constructing a clear, evidence-based argument that demonstrates a deep understanding of historical phenomena (Page & Maxson, 2023). Effective

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academic writing in history is characterised by a clear thesis statement, logically structured paragraphs, and the apt use of referencing according to historical writing conventions (Giltrow et al., 2021). Furthermore, the ability to engage critically with primary and secondary sources, integrating them into one's argument, is a hallmark of proficient academic writing in history.

Lavelle (2007) argues that academic writing skills can be honed by dissecting and analysing well-structured historical essays and research papers. Through this process, students gain a practical understanding of how arguments are structured, how evidence is presented and interpreted, and how sources are cited in academic history writing. Moreover, providing students with frequent opportunities to write and receive feedback is crucial for refining their writing skills (Day, 2023).

The ramifications of effective academic writing proficiency are manifold. It not only refines communication skills but also empowers students to articulate intricate historical insights cogently (MacDonald, 2010) and promotes analytical rigour, facilitating the interpretation of complex historical narratives and the cogent evaluation of disparate viewpoints (Xie, 2020). Such skills are transferable, fortifying students for future scholarly endeavours and equipping them to contribute effectively to academic discourse within and beyond the realm of history.

Taking the above into account, this study argues that ESP in history education entails a thorough understanding of historical discourse, archaic language, and academic writing skills as the three key learning domains for future specialists. This study thus aims to investigate the effectiveness of an ESP approach designed around these three linguistic areas in improving English proficiency among history students.

Table 1
Course outline

WEEKS	MODULE	TOPICS
1-3	Historical Discourse	Historical texts, narratives, and debates
4-5	Archaic Language	Archaic vocabulary, sentence structures, and idioms
6-8	Academic Writing Skills	Essay structure, argumentation, and referencing

3. MATERIAL AND METHODS

To address the research question, this study employs quantitative research methods. This methodology offers the distinct advantage of a holistic perspective, leveraging numerical data to derive generalised conclusions.

The study's sample comprises undergraduate history students from two universities, selected via stratified random sampling. The sample size constitutes 30 students, 15 per university, ensuring a representative spectrum of English proficiency levels across diverse geographical and institutional contexts. A control group of 30 students was also established, not exposed to the tailored English language instruction, to serve as a comparative reference. Additionally, the selection of students from different universities adds ecological validity to the study, allowing for a broader understanding of the potential applicability of the tailored English language instruction in varied educational settings.

The data acquisition process incorporates pre-intervention and post-intervention assessments to gauge students' English proficiency levels prior to and following the instruction. These tests specifically target historical discourse understanding, use of archaic language, and academic writing skills.

The intervention involves an eight-week English language course designed explicitly for history students. This course integrates key aspects of historical discourse, including specialised vocabulary, comprehension of archaic and historical texts, and specific writing skills required for history assignments.

Quantitative data from test scores will be analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics to determine the effectiveness of the tailored instruction.

This research's methodological approach ensures comprehensive data collection and analysis, enhancing the understanding of ESP's potential application in history education. The results may illuminate effective strategies for improving English language instruction across different disciplines, thus making a significant contribution to ESP pedagogy.

4. STUDY RESULTS

4.1. Course overview

The eight-week English language course designed specifically for History students was structured in a manner to progressively build students' competencies in historical discourse understanding, use of archaic language, and academic writing skills. The course was divided into three core modules, each focusing on a distinct area of historical English proficiency (Table 1).

This thorough and sequential approach to the course ensured that students could build a robust understanding of English specific to their field, supporting their overall academic performance and future professional endeavours. The integration of various activities and practical assignments provided an interactive and dynamic learning experience, facilitating the practical application of the course's content. The course aimed to bridge theory and practice by encouraging students to actively apply their language proficiency in historical research and writing, fostering deeper engagement with historical materials. Overall, this pedagogical approach aimed to equip history students not only with language skills but also with the confidence and competence to excel in their academic pursuits and future careers.

4.1.1. Historical discourse

The first three weeks of the course covered the module on historical discourse. This module aimed to equip History majors with the necessary skills to competently interpret and engage with historical texts, narratives, and debates. Students were introduced to the specific vocabularies used in different historical periods and geographic contexts. For instance, the students analysed texts from the Roman Empire era, which often employed vocabulary related to governance, law, and philosophy, and compared these with texts from the Industrial Revolution, which incorporated terms associated with industry, technology, and social change. Table 2 illustrates some example vocabularies from different historical eras.

Table 2
Course examples of vocabulary in historical contexts

HISTORICAL PERIOD	RELEVANT VOCABULARY
Ancient Egypt	pharaoh, pyramid, hieroglyphics, obelisk, sphinx, mummification, ankh, papyrus
Roman Empire	senate, consul, plebeian, aqueduct, gladiator, patrician, praetor, legion, centurion, tribune
Middle Ages	feudalism, knight, serf, vassal, chivalry, manor, fief, guild, crusade, schism
Renaissance	humanism, perspective, Reformation, patron, vernacular, fresco, sonnet, secular, chiaroscuro, heliocentrism
Enlightenment	empiricism, rationalism, scepticism, deism, absolutism, salons, philosophes, social contract, constitutional monarchy
Industrial Revolution	mechanization, proletariat, bourgeoisie, urbanization, mass production, factory system, textile, labour union, steam engine, assembly line
World War I	trench warfare, armistice, militarism, alliance system, total war, propaganda, reparations, U-boat, draft, League of Nations
World War II	blitzkrieg, Holocaust, fascism, Axis Powers, Allied Powers, D-Day, Manhattan Project, rationing, kamikaze, UN
Cold War Era	containment, Iron Curtain, arms race, space race, domino theory, deterrence, proxy war, glasnost, perestroika, NATO

The historical discourse module, spread over three weeks, adopted a multi-pronged pedagogical approach to facilitate students' mastery of historical language, narratives, and debates. This comprehensive approach involved several distinct, but interrelated steps, ranging from vocabulary introduction to text analysis, comparative studies, group work, and presentations. Below is a detailed breakdown of the teaching methodology used in this module.

1. Direct Instruction. This involved teaching specific historical vocabulary pertinent to different periods. The words were not merely introduced, but their historical context, implications, and usage were explored in detail. The teachers provided real historical texts to demonstrate how these words were used. Table 2 above exemplifies the range of vocabulary taught, contextualised within different historical periods.

2. Historical Text Analysis. Students were given excerpts of historical documents from different periods (Ancient Egypt, Roman Empire, Middle Ages, Renaissance, Enlightenment, In-

dustrial Revolution, and the World Wars). These texts offered real-world examples of the vocabulary and discourse styles typical of these eras. Analysing these texts fostered students' nuanced understanding of the discourse structures and language features, including sentence construction, rhetoric, and argumentation styles.

3. Comparative Studies. Students were tasked to compare texts from different eras to discern shifts in language usage, style, and rhetoric over time. This comparative study method gave students an opportunity to understand how language evolves and is affected by historical context. It also enabled them to distinguish between language used in different historical periods, thereby developing a comprehensive understanding of historical discourse and its key features.

4. Group Work. Collaborative activities were a significant part of the module. Course participants were divided into groups, each focusing on a particular historical era, and given tasks like creating a glossary of key vocabulary, summarising

main arguments, identifying rhetorical devices, and presenting their findings. This approach facilitated active learning, peer learning, and enhanced students' interpretive and communication skills.

5. Presentations. Each group presented their findings to the class, fostering understanding of historical discourse and honing presentation and public speaking skills. These presentations served as a platform for peer feedback and discussion, creating a lively, interactive learning environment that encouraged critical thinking and in-depth understanding of historical discourse.

6. Continuous Assessment. Students were assessed throughout the course through quizzes, short writing assignments, and presentations to ensure they were actively learning and comprehending the material. Feedback was provided in real-time to address any misunderstandings or gaps in knowledge. This approach was crucial for tracking student progress and adjusting teaching strategies as necessary.

In summary, the historical discourse module's pedagogical approach was holistic, not just promoting understanding of historical vocabulary and discourse but also refining skills such as analysis, comparison, collaboration, and presentation, thereby enriching the overall learning experience.

4.1.2. Archaic Language

The next module within the course's intended structure focused on the use of archaic language, spanning two weeks. This module involved a deep dive into the linguistic characteristics of different historical periods, with students learning to comprehend and use archaic vocabulary, sentence structures, and idioms. Through analysing texts such as *Beowulf* and the works of Chaucer and Shakespeare, students were immersed in historical language use, learning how to contextualise archaic terms within the broader text. See Table 3 below for examples of archaic vocabulary and structures.

Table 3
Course examples of archaic language

ARCHAIC TERM	MODERN EQUIVALENT	ARCHAIC EXPRESSION	MODERN EQUIVALENT	ARCHAIC SENTENCE	MODERN ENGLISH EQUIVALENT
Anon	Soon, shortly	Methinks	I think	I know not	I don't know
Art	Are	Aforementioned	Previously mentioned	I have not the time	I don't have time
Betwixt	Between	Art thou	Are you	'Twas	It was
Ere	Before	Pray tell	Please tell me	Doth/dost	Does/do
Fain	Gladly, willingly	Godspeed	Good luck	Thou art	You are
Hence	From here	'Tis	It is	Hath	Has
Hither	Here	An thou wilt	If you will	Mayst	May
Marry	Indeed	Hark!	Listen!	Hither come	Come here
Nigh	Near	Well met	Nice to meet you	Thee I love	I love you
Prithee	Please	Wouldst thou	Would you		
Soot	Sweet	Wilt thou	Will you		
Thee, thou	You				
Thine	Yours				
Verily	Truly				
Whence	From where				
Wherefore	Why				
Withal	In addition				
Yonder	Over there				
Forsooth	Indeed				

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The module on archaic language, extending over two weeks, was structured to ramp up students' understanding of old English language forms and their transformation over time. The methodology followed during this course module combined traditional teaching methods with interactive activities and immersive learning experiences. The following outline presents the step-by-step approach used to teach this module.

1. Direct Instruction. The first step was to introduce the students to the archaic language forms. A variety of resources was used, including Table 3 above, which listed examples of archaic vocabulary, expressions, and sentence constructions with their modern English equivalents. Each term was explored in depth, discussing its origin, usage, and how it transitioned to modern form.

2. Text Analysis. The course integrated the study of notable works from historical periods that prominently used archaic language. Texts like *Beowulf*, Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*, and Shakespeare's plays offered an authentic context for learning. Students analysed these texts, identifying archaic terms, understanding their use in context, and comparing them to their modern English counterparts.

3. Contextual Learning. The students learned to apply the archaic language in its historical context. The emphasis was on comprehending the underlying narrative or message within the text, considering the historical and linguistic background.

4. Translation Exercises. Students were given exercises to translate passages written in archaic English to modern English and vice versa. This translation work aimed to deepen their understanding of archaic language structures and improve their ability to understand and use these forms.

5. Interactive Activities. The module incorporated interactive activities, such as role-play and dramatic reading of historical plays. These activities were designed to immerse students in the era of the archaic language, improving their comprehension and pronunciation of archaic terms.

6. Group Work. Collaborative activities were also a part of the module. For instance, students were assigned group tasks like creating a play or a dialogue using archaic language. This not only reinforced their learning but also encouraged teamwork and creative expression.

7. Assessment and Feedback. The students' learning was continually assessed through quizzes, translation exercises, and presentations. The teachers provided constructive feedback,

helping course participants correct their misunderstandings or misconceptions about archaic language use if any arose during any stage of module progression.

The pedagogical approach for the archaic language module was immersive, engaging, and comprehensive. It not only taught students the linguistic characteristics of archaic English but also honed their analytical skills and fostered a deeper appreciation for the evolution of the English language.

4.1.3. Academic writing skills

The module on academic writing skills, spread across three weeks, was designed to enhance the students' ability to write coherent, structured, and well-argued historical essays. The pedagogical approach was a balanced mix of theoretical understanding and practical application, ensuring students could grasp the principles of academic writing and put them into practice effectively. The following stages describe the methodology used.

1. Direct Instruction. Initially, the instructor explained the fundamentals of academic writing, laying the groundwork for more advanced concepts. The class was introduced to the structure of an academic essay comprising an introduction with a clear thesis statement, body paragraphs presenting evidence-based arguments, and a succinct conclusion. The importance of a coherent argument, logical flow, and clear, concise language was stressed.

2. Study of Examples. Students studied an array of historical essays and research papers. These samples were carefully chosen to represent a variety of subjects, argument styles, and writing techniques. While examining these essays, students were encouraged to dissect the structure, understand the writer's argumentation strategy, appreciate the use of evidence, and recognise the rhetorical techniques employed.

3. Practical Workshops. Following the theoretical lessons, practical workshops were organised, where students were given the opportunity to write academic essays under guided supervision. They were provided with a set of essay questions and a pool of sources from which to draw evidence. In these workshops, students practiced crafting clear thesis statements, building evidence-backed arguments, and ensuring the overall coherence of their essays.

4. Peer Review and Feedback. The course incorporated a peer review process where students exchanged and critiqued each other's essays. This fostered a collaborative learning environment and allowed students to learn from each other's strengths and weaknesses. In addition to peer review, personalised feedback was given by the instructor, identifying areas of improvement and offering constructive advice to enhance writing skills.

5. Referencing and Citation. A significant portion of the module was devoted to teaching students the correct usage of citations and references, critical to academic integrity. The students were introduced to the referencing styles commonly used in historical writing and were taught how to cite sources correctly both within the text and in the bibliography.

6. Revision and Editing. The last week concentrated on revision and editing techniques. Students were taught how to proofread their essays, correct grammatical errors, refine their arguments, and improve the clarity and flow of their writing.

6. Assessment. The module concluded with a final assessment, where students were required to write a complete academic essay on a given historical topic, demonstrating their understanding of the essay structure, argumentation techniques, and referencing.

The academic writing skills module, with its multi-faceted pedagogical approach, was designed to effectively fuel students' capabilities to craft high-quality, well-researched, and compelling historical essays and research. It was also intended as an instrument to build their confidence and equip them with the necessary skills to excel in their academic writing tasks.

4.2. Pre-intervention results

Before the intervention, both the control and experimental groups were subjected to a pre-test to measure their baseline proficiency in historical discourse understanding, comprehension and use of archaic language, and academic writing skills. The test comprised a series of written and verbal assessments, each designed to evaluate a specific component of English language proficiency within a historical context.

The scores obtained by the students in these tests ranged from 0 to 100, with 100 indicating complete proficiency in the tested skill. The results from the pre-tests are summarised as follows.

1. Historical Discourse Understanding. The average score for the experimental group was 58.3, with a standard deviation of 10.2, indicating a moderate understanding of historical discourse. The control group scored an average of 59.1 with a standard deviation of 10.5. This slight difference is statistically insignificant, confirming the comparable proficiency levels of the two groups in understanding historical discourse before the intervention.

2. Archaic Language Comprehension and Use. The experimental group scored an average of 53.7 with a standard deviation of 11.3, whereas the control group obtained an average of 54.2 with a standard deviation of 11.7. This suggests a moderate level of competency in the understanding and usage of archaic language within historical texts. The difference between the two groups at this point is statistically negligible.

3. Academic Writing Skills. For this component, the experimental group scored an average of 57.9 with a standard deviation of 12.1. The control group, on the other hand, recorded an average of 58.4 with a standard deviation of 12.4. The similarity in scores suggests that both groups had a similar proficiency level in academic writing skills before the course.

The pre-test results demonstrate that both the control and experimental groups started from a similar proficiency level. This parity between the groups affirms the validity of using the control group as a benchmark to measure the effectiveness of the tailored English language instruction for history students.

The baseline results also indicate that there is room for improvement in all tested skills among both groups of students, affirming the need for an intervention such as the tailored English language course. In the following sections of the study, we present the results from the post-test to ascertain whether the course has led to significant improvements in the students' proficiency levels upon course completion.

4.3. Post-intervention results

Upon the completion of the eight-week course, the same tests administered during the pre-intervention phase were re-administered to both the experimental and control groups. This was done to measure any changes in the students' proficiency in historical discourse understanding, use of archaic language, and academic writing skills. The post-intervention test results are summarised as follows.

1. Historical Discourse Understanding. The average score for the experimental group rose to 78.5, with a standard deviation of 9.5, indicating a significant improvement in understanding historical discourse. In contrast, the control group demonstrated only a marginal increase, with an average score of 60.2 and a standard deviation of 10.7.

2. Archaic Language Comprehension and Use. The experimental group showed a marked improvement, with an average score of 74.6 and a standard deviation of 10.1. The control group's scores remained statistically unchanged, with an average of 55.4 and a standard deviation of 11.8.

3. Academic Writing Skills. The experimental group scored an average of 76.7, with a standard deviation of 11.3. In comparison, the control group had an average score of 59.7, with a standard deviation of 12.5.

In terms of statistical significance, a paired-sample t-test was conducted, revealing that the gains in scores of the experimental group in all three categories were statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). In contrast, the changes in the control group's scores were not statistically significant.

These results indicate that the experimental group, which underwent the tailored English language instruction, showed substantial improvement in their understanding of historical discourse, comprehension and use of archaic language, and academic writing skills. This can be attributed to the course's comprehensive approach, incorporating historical discourse, archaic language, and academic writing modules, effectively catering to the specific needs of history students.

In contrast, the control group, which did not receive the specialised instruction, did not demonstrate a significant improvement in these areas, highlighting the effectiveness and necessity of tailored English language instruction in improving English proficiency for History students.

These findings provide evidence to suggest that tailoring English language instruction to meet the specific needs of history students enhances their academic and future occupational proficiency. Table 4 below summarises the pre-test and post-test results for both groups.

Table 4
Pre-test and post-test results for both groups

Group	PRE-TEST		POST-TEST	
	Control	Experimental	Control	Experimental
Historical Discourse Understanding	59.1 ± 10.5	58.3 ± 10.2	60.2 ± 10.7	78.5 ± 9.5
Archaic Language Comprehension and Use	54.2 ± 11.7	53.7 ± 11.3	55.4 ± 11.8	74.6 ± 10.1
Academic Writing Skills	58.4 ± 12.4	57.9 ± 12.1	59.7 ± 12.5	76.7 ± 11.3

Note: all values are mean ± standard deviation. The post-intervention scores for the experimental group in all areas were significantly higher than the pre-intervention scores ($p < 0.05$). In contrast, the control group did not show any significant improvement from the pre-test to the post-test.

5. DISCUSSION

This study's findings are a significant addition to the ongoing dialogue on English for Specific Purposes (ESP), reinforcing the value of tailoring English language instruction to meet the specific needs of learners within a variety of academic disciplines. The data offers compelling evidence of the efficacy of such a pedagogical approach in the realm of history education, a field often overlooked in ESP research.

Comparative analysis of pre- and post-intervention test scores demonstrates a significant improvement in the experimental group's abilities across all targeted aspects – understanding historical discourse, using archaic language, and academic writing. These improvements contrast with the control group's results, where no such significant changes were observed, thereby strengthening the argument for the effectiveness of the tailored ESP approach.

The experimental group's advancements in comprehending and engaging with historical discourse align well with prior research that highlights the importance of context in vocabulary learning (Schmitt, 2007). By embedding vocabulary teaching within specific historical contexts, students could better associate new words with their usage, thus enhancing retention and application. This approach could also cultivate students' ability to understand the nuances of language as used in various historical eras, contributing to a more nuanced appreciation of historical narratives.

The participants' marked improvement in deciphering and employing archaic language could transform the way history students interact with primary source materials. Traditional texts, often written in an older form of English, present a unique challenge to contemporary students. This study's findings suggest that targeted language instruction could bridge this gap, allowing students to fully engage with these texts, hence laying the foundation for a more in-depth understanding of historical phenomena.

Furthermore, the experimental group's significant progress in academic writing skills bears evidence to the effectiveness of explicit teaching of genre-specific writing conventions, a claim supported by Teng et al. (2022). Students not only learned about the structure of academic essays but also the disciplinary

conventions of historical writing, including appropriate citation styles and argumentation techniques. This skill set is vital for their future academic work, such as producing research papers, theses, or dissertations, and could be beneficial in their professional careers.

The study's results further indicate that a tailored ESP approach could facilitate greater engagement with the discipline. As students gain confidence in their language skills, their ability to interpret historical events, engage in academic discourse, and produce quality academic work could be enhanced. Consequently, their overall academic performance may improve, as could their satisfaction with the learning experience.

However, the implications of these findings extend beyond the academic realm. English, being the lingua franca of international scholarly discourse, is essential for historians aiming to collaborate with international peers or aiming to disseminate their research globally. Thus, an improvement in English language proficiency could greatly expand students' future career prospects, facilitating their integration into the global community of historians.

This study fills a significant gap in the ESP literature by presenting a successful case of applying a tailored ESP approach in history education. Nevertheless, additional research should investigate this approach's long-term impacts on students' academic performance and career trajectories. It would also be worthwhile to adapt and apply this methodology across various cultural and institutional contexts, and to other fields in the humanities, thus broadening the applicability of ESP.

6. CONCLUSION

This study set out to investigate the efficacy of a tailored English for Specific Purposes (ESP) approach in enhancing English language proficiency among history students. The research question focused on whether a pedagogical approach designed around the specific linguistic needs and characteristics of historical discourse, archaic language, and academic writing would result in a statistically significant improvement in these skills.

The methodology incorporated a quasi-experimental design involving a control group and an experimental group, both subjected to pre- and post-intervention testing. The intervention

comprised an eight-week course focusing on three core components: historical discourse, archaic language, and academic writing skills, each vital for success in history studies.

The results of the study provided robust evidence in support of the research question. There was a statistically significant improvement in the experimental group's scores in understanding historical discourse, use of archaic language, and academic writing skills in the post-intervention test. The control group, in contrast, did not exhibit a similar improvement. This improvement was not only statistically significant but also educationally meaningful, demonstrating the practical benefits of a tailored ESP approach in history education. The study's results contribute valuable data in the field of ESP, particularly its application in the humanities, an area often overlooked in the literature. By demonstrating the tangible benefits of such an approach in history education, the study extends the scope of ESP, arguing for its broader applicability across various academic disciplines.

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