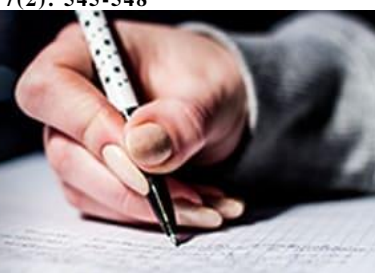


# International Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Studies



ISSN Print: 2664-8652  
ISSN Online: 2664-8660  
Impact Factor: RJIF 8.31  
IJAHS 2025; 7(2): 545-548  
[www.socialstudiesjournal.com](http://www.socialstudiesjournal.com)  
Received: 25-10-2025  
Accepted: 28-11-2025

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## ESP in India: Systematic Review of Limitations and Innovations in Language Education

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**DOI:** <https://www.doi.org/10.33545/26648652.2025.v7.i2g.350>

### Abstract

The present systematic review focuses on the limitations and innovations of ESP (English for Specific Purposes) in the Indian context. English in India is not only taught for communication with other countries, but also it is used for intra-state and inter-state communication. It has evolved through many challenges, innovative strategies, and adapted to the needs of the learners. Through analysing the origin and development of ESP in India, the review paper aims to identify the gaps and limitations of ESP, and what techniques to use for spotting the needs of the learners. By specifying challenges and innovations, the study will contribute to enhancing the quality of ESP education in India. The Systematic literature review of existing research on ESP and its successful initiatives in India, scrutinizing challenges and innovations of the field, and its impact on language education. The database between 2020 and 2024 will be used for the document search. The results of the review will present an overview of the area's development, spotlighting key challenges and innovations, with the help of analysing various aspects of ESP in India. The review paper aligns with one of the targets of SDG (Sustainable Development Goals) 4 and SDG 8. It is to provide observations for practitioners and researchers who are curious about teaching and learning of ESP, helping them to be aware of obstacles, innovations, and existing methods in the field.

**Keywords:** ESP, India, Initiatives, Innovations, Challenges, Systematic Literature Review (SLR).

### Introduction

English in India is not only taught for communication with other countries, but also it is used for intra-state and inter-state communication. English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is one of the branches of English Language Teaching (ELT) that focuses on the language needs of learners with specific purposes, such as academic performance, workplace communication, and technical writing <sup>[1]</sup>. Since its rise in the 1960s, ESP has passed through many challenges, innovative strategies, and new communicative methods, adapting to the needs of the learners. English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is a needs-oriented framework designed to identify and develop the language skills necessary for students' academic achievement and professional advancement <sup>[2]</sup>. With this statement, the present review aims to enumerate the methods and techniques that were used for identifying the needs of the ESP learners.

### Review of Literature

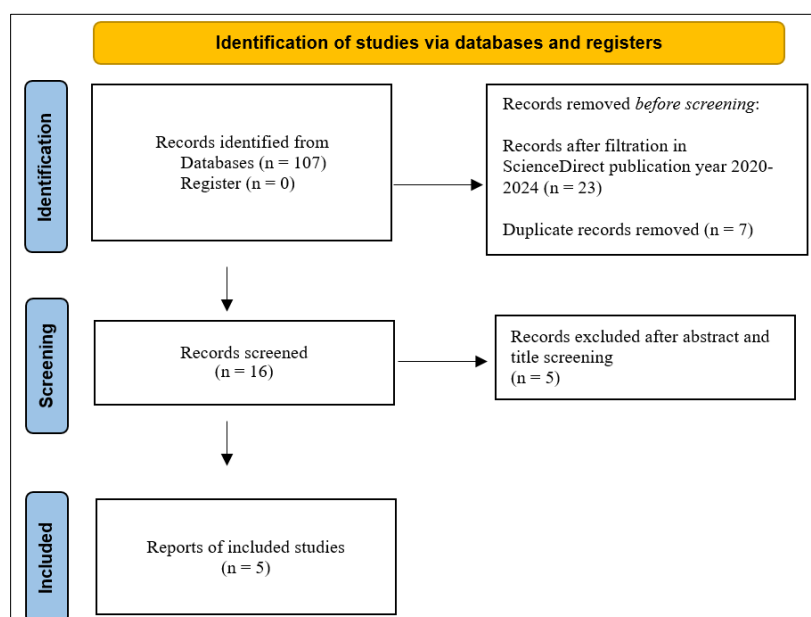
English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is one of the rapidly evolving fields of research in English Language Teaching, especially in countries where English is acquired as a second language. More than one billion non-native speakers use English as a second language around the world <sup>[13]</sup>. To enhance the language skills of the ESP learners, new methodologies and approaches emerged globally from ESP practitioners. The researchers did numerous studies in mapping the routes of teaching and learning ESP. <sup>[4]</sup> did a systematic review on trends in empirical research in ESP, which focused on undergraduate education and teacher-centred studies. They recommended further study of technology integration with ESP instruction through online learning platforms and multimedia resources. <sup>[5]</sup> scrutinized the impact of AI technologies in strengthening EFL learners' motivation, engagement, and attitude. Further, they analyse how AI-integrated learning reduces students' learning anxiety. They suggest exploring the factors which influence AI-integrated classes for EFL learners as a potential area for further research. <sup>[6]</sup>'s systematic review spotlights the application of

multimodal pedagogies in higher education and what are the materials and methods to be used to facilitate learners in acquiring language skills. They found the contribution of multimodality in learner language proficiency in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) as well as English for Academic Purposes (EAP). Review of [7] uncovered that proficiency in the English language, vocabulary insight, and self-efficacy are the leading components of students' academic success. [8] investigated the similarities and contractions between English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and English for Academic Purposes (EAP) by analysing literature published between 2017 and 2022. [9] highlighted the mobile learning for ESP that enhances vocabulary and language competencies of the learners. Additionally, they found that mobile learning in ESP is overshadowed by the business field of study. Though previous studies trace the trends and new methods of ESP, they fail to uncover the area of need analysis. Some reviews analysed materials used for the process of acquiring language skills, but they leave a gap in identifying the inadequate language skills of the learners. The present systematic review aims to observe what are the technologies to be used for identifying the needs of the learners. The consolidation of this systematic review aims to investigating the following research questions.

**Research Question:** What are the strategies to be used for identifying the needs of the learners in English for Specific Purposes?

## Methodology

The present systematic review was conducted by using the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) framework. It aims to provide a transparent synthesis of existing research by identifying, assessing, and integrating the relevant studies. The study follows a systematic process consisting of four stages—identification, screening, eligibility, and exclusion, which are presented in Figure 1. Based on the PRISMA guideline, the first step in conducting the systematic review is the identification procedure, which is presented in Table 1. The initial identification process yielded 107 documents related to the study. When the publication of literature is limited between 2020 and 2024, the number of documents is reduced to 23. After the identification process, 23 documents were extracted as a CSV file to remove duplicate records. After removing duplication, 16 documents were retrieved for the screening procedure. In the screening process, the researchers read the abstract and the title of the documents to remove the irrelevant articles for the study. After abstract reading, 5 documents were included that met the aim of the study. In the process of eligibility, 0 documents were not retrieved. Table 2 shows the description of the inclusion and exclusion criteria carried out for this study.



**Fig 1:** PRISMA 2020 flow diagram used in the study

**Table 1:** Database and keyword identification

Database	Keywords Identification	Number of documents found
Science Direct	“English for Specific Purpose” AND “Need Analysis”	71
Science Direct	“English for Specific Purpose” AND “India”	23
Science Direct	“English for Specific Purpose” AND “Techniques” AND “India”.	13
Total		107

**Table 2:** Inclusion and Exclusion criteria

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Documents published between 2020 and 2024	Document published before 2020 and after 2024
Open access	Closed access
Text written in English	Text not written in English

## Results and Discussion

Finally, 5 documents were included for systematic review. The summary of the included document is given in the following Table 3.

**Table 3:** Summary of the selected studies

Sl. No	Author	Aim	Sample size	Findings
1.	(Alibakhshi & Labbafi, 2021)	To investigate the academic and real-life task-based Language needs of Marine engineering students.	20-Marine engineering students	The results concluded that a Maritime English syllabus should be developed in consideration of both subject specialists and students
2.	(Li, 2024)	To identify the task-based language needs of philosophy students and the differences between philosophy teachers' and students' attitudes to task-based language needs.	20 undergraduate students of philosophy and 10 teachers who teach philosophy to undergraduate students	The results suggest that philosophy students require comprehensive language proficiency for their academic success
3.	(12)	To identify the methods and materials used in designing ESP (English for Specific Purposes) courses and their functionality when applied to the specific case of English for manufacturing.	N/A	The results offered practical guidelines for ESP instructors based on theoretical and practical insights
4.	(Ou <i>et al.</i> , 2024)	To address the needs of developing the critical skills for GAI (Generative Artificial Intelligence) in advanced academic writing.	60 PhD students from different domains	The results showed micro-curriculum enhanced students' understanding of GAI ethics, benefits, limitations, and its impact on academia
5.	(Havery, 2024)	This study investigated how novice English as an additional language students learned to read patient documentation during their work placements	3 supervisors and 16 students of the selected hospital	The results indicated that ESP courses for nursing students emphasize written and spoken communication, with collaboration between language and nursing experts to support workplace literacy.

The current systematic review identified various methods for conducting needs analysis of ESP (English for Specific Purposes) learners. (Alibakhshi & Labbafi, 2021) employed a mixed-method approach combining qualitative and quantitative analysis to spot the needs of ESP learners. By using the results of the interview among the students and the TBLN (Task-Based Language Need) scale, they analysed the perspective of maritime students and subject specialists. (Li, 2024) also used a mixed-method approach, which included semi-structured interviews and designed questionnaires for identifying the needs of language proficiency for philosophical students. <sup>[12]</sup> used descriptive and analytical material methods, which are based on the results of language placement tests, to offer practical guidelines for ESP instructors. (Ou *et al.*, 2024) used textual analysis, including self-assessment, interaction with GAI (Generated Artificial Intelligence), and reflective texts. Through cross-case comparisons and longitudinal comparisons, students' learning and cognitive processes were facilitated before and after the learning activities. (Havery, 2024) used a multi-site case study. Through an ethnographic approach combined with discourse analysis, the interaction of students and clinical facilitators was investigated. The findings of the study indicate that not only mixed-method approaches were used for needs analysis of ESP, but also that there are numerous methods and techniques to be used. The present systematic review is limited to enumerating the methods used for identifying the needs of ESP learners by collecting data from one database only. The study also recommends that more databases be used for future systematic reviews.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the present systematic review highlights the methods and techniques used for identifying the needs of

ESP learners. Though this study gives insights into need analysis in ESP, a very small number of studies have been done. The synthesis of this study would help ESP practitioners to be aware of various methods for spotting the needs of the learners. The review paper aligns with one of the targets of SDG (Sustainable Development Goals) 4 and SDG 8. It is to provide observations for practitioners and researchers who are curious about teaching and learning of ESP, helping them to be aware of existing methods in the field.

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