

# NEEDS ANALYSIS OF ACADEMIC ENGLISH SKILLS AMONG ETHIOPIAN POLICE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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## Abstract

This study investigates the academic English language needs of first-year students at the Ethiopian Police University (EPU), aiming to inform the design of a discipline-sensitive English for Academic Purposes (EAP) curriculum. English functions as the medium of instruction at EPU. However, many students experience difficulties with the academic literacy skills essential for success in policing, law enforcement, and criminal justice education. The study employed a mixed-methods research design grounded in English for Specific Purposes (ESP), EAP, and Needs Analysis (NA) frameworks. Data were collected through questionnaires administered to 200 students and 30 instructors, as well as semi-structured interviews with selected 10 students and five teachers. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative data were examined through thematic analysis to identify patterns in perceived academic language challenges and required competencies. The findings indicate that six core skills—listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar, and vocabulary—emerged as critical for academic success. The analysis also revealed perception gaps between teacher emphasis on academic reading and writing and student prioritization of oral communication. These results highlight a misalignment between institutional expectations for advanced academic literacy and students' current proficiency levels. Based on the findings, the study recommends the development of a structured, needs-based EAP curriculum that strengthens academic literacy, enhances student performance, and aligns language instruction with the disciplinary demands of policing and criminal justice education.

**Keywords:** *academic literacy; curriculum design; English for academic purposes; Ethiopian police university; needs analysis; policing education; target situation analysis.*

## 1. Introduction

English functions as the dominant language of academic communication worldwide, including in Ethiopia, where it serves as the medium of instruction in higher education and professional universities such as the Ethiopian Police University (EPU). In this context, English plays a crucial role in supporting teaching, research, and scholarly communication across disciplines (Hyland, 2018; Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001). Its role extends beyond general communication to encompass academic literacy skills essential for disciplinary learning and knowledge production (Wingate, 2015; Hyland, 2016). Consequently, students in English-

medium universities must develop the linguistic and cognitive competencies necessary to engage with academic knowledge and disciplinary discourse.

Students entering higher education are expected to perform complex academic tasks in English, including reading discipline-specific texts and writing analytical assignments. They must also participate in seminars, deliver presentations, and engage in research-based projects. Successfully completing these tasks requires grammatical competence alongside proficiency in academic genres, rhetorical conventions, critical thinking, and discipline-specific discourse (Hyland, 2006; Wingate, 2015). As a result, English for Academic Purposes (EAP) has developed as a specialized branch of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) that focuses on supporting students' academic literacy development for participation in higher education (Basturkmen, 2010; Hyland, 2016).

A central principle in EAP research is that effective language instruction should be based on a systematic understanding of learners' academic language needs. Needs analysis therefore plays a critical role in curriculum development by ensuring alignment between course content and disciplinary requirements through identifying academic tasks, assessing learners' current proficiency, and examining learning challenges (Long, 2005; Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998). Contemporary studies of academic literacy also emphasize that academic language practices vary across disciplines, and therefore EAP instruction must reflect the discourse conventions and communicative practices of specific fields of study (Hyland, 2016; Basturkmen, 2019).

At the Ethiopian Police University (EPU), English is the medium of instruction across programs including policing, criminal justice, forensic studies, leadership, and security studies. Students are expected to engage with various academic materials such as textbooks, legal documents, policy reports, and research articles in English. They must also complete written assignments, examinations, presentations, and research projects as part of their academic training.

Within these programs, students are required to engage with specialized genres such as case study analyses, legal commentaries, investigative reports, and research proposals. These tasks demand the ability to interpret complex texts, synthesize information, and present arguments in an academically appropriate manner.

However, many students enter the university from diverse linguistic and educational backgrounds in which English instruction often emphasizes grammar and examination preparation rather than academic literacy development (Mekonnen, 2020). As a result, students often struggle with interpreting texts, constructing arguments, and applying discipline-specific vocabulary and conventions, which may hinder their academic performance.

Although English courses are offered at EPU, they tend to remain general in scope and may not sufficiently address the discipline-specific demands of policing education. More importantly, there is a lack of systematic and context-specific empirical evidence examining the academic English language needs of EPU students, particularly from both student and instructor perspectives. In addition, the extent to which current instructional practices align with these needs has not been clearly established. This indicates a significant research gap in understanding how academic language instruction can be effectively tailored to the specific requirements of policing and criminal justice education.

Therefore, this study investigates the academic English language needs of first-year students at the Ethiopian Police University. Specifically, it examines the academic tasks students are expected to perform, evaluates their current academic language proficiency,

and explores the challenges they encounter when using English in their studies. The study also considers instructors' perspectives in order to provide a more comprehensive understanding of academic language requirements. The findings aim to generate empirical evidence that can inform the development of a discipline-sensitive EAP curriculum, thereby supporting academic success and professional readiness in policing education.

This study addresses the following research questions:

1. What academic English language skills are perceived as most important by first-year students and instructors at Ethiopian Police University?
2. What discrepancies exist between students' and instructors' perceptions of academic language needs?
3. What implications do these findings have for the development of a discipline-specific EAP curriculum?

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Needs Analysis in English for Academic Purposes (EAP)**

Needs analysis (NA) is widely recognized as the foundation of English for Academic Purposes (EAP), as it systematically identifies the academic literacy practices and discourse competencies required in higher education (Long, 2005; Hyland, 2006). However, rather than functioning as a purely technical procedure, NA should be understood as an interpretive process that connects language use to specific institutional and disciplinary contexts. While previous studies emphasize the distinction between EAP and general English (Basturkmen, 2010; Hyland, 2016), they often underexplore how these distinctions operate in specialized professional settings.

In English-medium higher education environments, students engage with complex academic genres such as essays, research reports, presentations, and seminar discussions. Yet, as Hyland (2006) argues, academic language is not merely a set of discrete skills but a socially situated practice shaped by disciplinary conventions. Despite this recognition, much of the literature assumes relatively homogeneous academic contexts. In contrast, professional institutions such as the Ethiopian Police University (EPU) present unique demands, where academic literacy must support both theoretical understanding and practical communication. Limited proficiency in academic English, therefore, does not only affect academic performance but may also constrain students' ability to engage with legal, criminological, and research-based knowledge, highlighting the need for context-sensitive analysis.

#### **2.1.1 Target Situation Analysis (TSA)**

Target Situation Analysis identifies the academic tasks students are expected to perform; however, its role extends beyond listing tasks to examining how these tasks reflect disciplinary and institutional priorities. While earlier studies (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998; Long, 2005) highlight activities such as essay writing and seminar participation, they tend to generalize across contexts. In professional institutions, academic tasks may integrate operational and discipline-specific communication practices, suggesting that TSA should be applied with greater sensitivity to contextual variation.

#### **2.1.2 Present Situation Analysis (PSA)**

Present Situation Analysis (PSA) evaluates learners' current proficiency in relation to academic demands, but its analytical value lies in interpreting the gap between existing

abilities and required competencies. Although research (Chemir & Kitila, 2022) emphasizes this gap, limited attention is given to how contextual factors influence both learner performance and expectations. Therefore, PSA should not only measure proficiency levels but also critically relate them to the specific academic and professional requirements of the institution.

### **2.1.3 Learning Situation Analysis (LSA)**

Learning Situation Analysis examines learners' motivations, strategies, and contextual constraints; however, its contribution depends on how these factors are integrated into program design. While Basturkmen (2019) highlights the importance of combining TSA, PSA, and LSA, many studies treat them as separate components rather than interconnected dimensions. A more analytical perspective considers how learning conditions, institutional expectations, and learner goals interact to shape academic literacy development, particularly in specialized educational environments.

## **2.2 Academic English Skills and Needs Analysis**

Academic English skills are commonly described as a set of literacy competencies required for higher education. However, EAP research increasingly conceptualizes these skills as integrated and context-dependent practices embedded in disciplinary knowledge construction (Hyland, 2006; Wingate, 2015). Although needs analysis is widely acknowledged as essential (Long, 2005), much of the literature is based on general university contexts. Consequently, there is limited understanding of how academic skills function in professional institutions, where academic communication is closely linked with occupational practices, indicating a gap addressed by this study.

## **2.3 Academic Listening Skills**

Academic listening is often defined as the ability to understand lectures and identify key information (Rost, 2011), yet such definitions risk oversimplifying the skill. In practice, listening involves interpreting extended discourse, recognizing organizational patterns, and processing discipline-specific terminology. In professional contexts, such as policing education, listening may also include understanding procedural instructions and applied discussions, suggesting that academic listening should be examined in relation to its contextual demands rather than as a generalized ability.

## **2.4 Academic Speaking Skills**

Academic speaking is typically associated with discussions and presentations (Bygate, 2018), but this characterization does not fully capture its contextual variability. In specialized institutions, speaking may involve structured briefings, formal reporting, or argumentation within professional frameworks. This indicates that academic speaking competence extends beyond general communicative ability to include context-specific discourse practices, which are often underrepresented in existing literature.

## **2.5 Academic Reading Skills**

Academic reading is widely recognized as cognitively demanding, requiring inference, synthesis, and evaluation (Grabe & Stoller, 2011; Alderson, 2000). However, its nature varies across disciplines. While general descriptions emphasize comprehension strategies, reading in fields such as policing involves interpreting legal texts, analyzing evidence, and evaluating

theoretical perspectives. This suggests that academic reading should be understood as a discipline-sensitive activity shaped by both textual complexity and professional relevance.

## **2.6 Academic Writing Skills**

Academic writing is often considered the most challenging skill due to its complexity (Hyland, 2006; Wingate, 2015), but such generalizations may obscure important contextual differences. In professional programs, writing tasks frequently include reports, case analyses, and research assignments that combine academic conventions with practical applications. Therefore, academic writing should be viewed not only as a linguistic skill but also as a form of professional communication shaped by disciplinary expectations.

## **2.7 Grammar for Academic Discourse**

In EAP contexts, grammar is treated as a resource for constructing meaning rather than a set of isolated rules (Biber et al., 2011). Although features such as nominalization and passive constructions are commonly highlighted (Hyland, 2006), their use varies depending on disciplinary norms. This suggests that grammar instruction should move beyond general descriptions to consider how grammatical choices function within specific academic and professional discourses.

## **2.8 Academic Vocabulary Development**

Academic vocabulary is essential for effective comprehension and communication (Nation, 2013), yet the distinction between general academic vocabulary and discipline-specific terminology is often insufficiently addressed. In professional contexts, learners must acquire vocabulary that reflects both academic discourse and operational practices. This highlights the need for a more contextualized approach to vocabulary development that aligns with learners' academic and professional needs.

## **2.9 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework**

### **2.9.1 Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical foundation of this study is grounded in the intersection of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), English for Academic Purposes (EAP), and Needs Analysis (NA). These interrelated frameworks collectively provide a robust lens through which academic language instruction is conceptualized as responsive to the disciplinary literacy demands of higher education. By synthesizing these theoretical perspectives, the study establishes a principled foundation for designing English instruction that aligns specifically with the academic requirements of Ethiopian Police University (EPU) students.

### **2.9.2 Conceptual Framework**

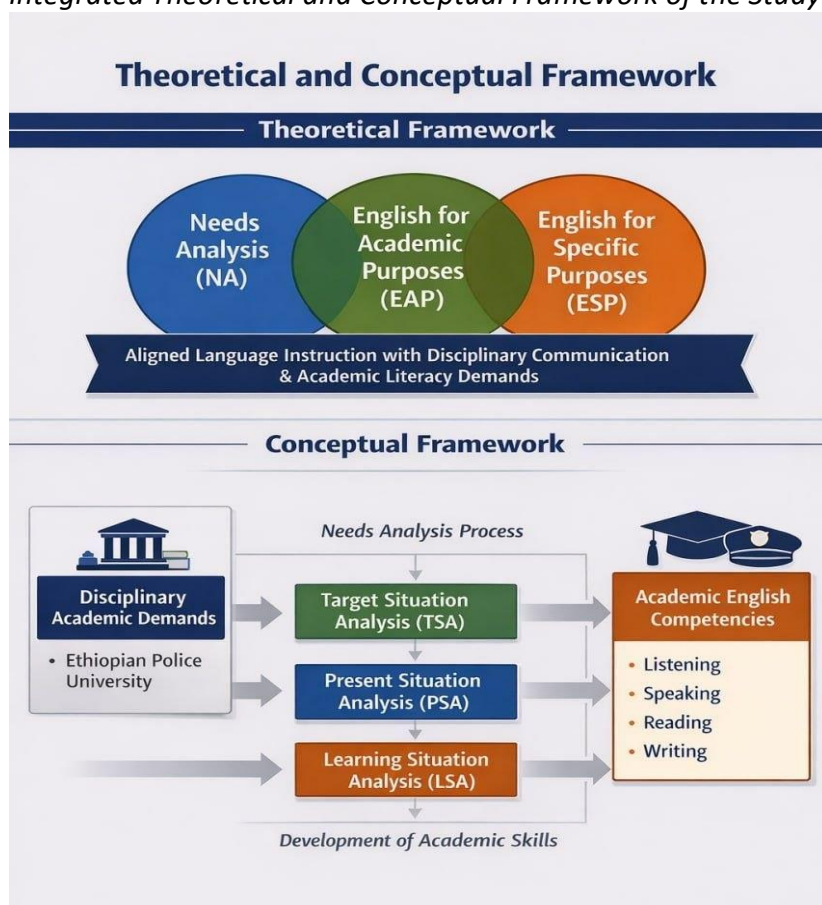
The conceptual framework of this study illustrates the relationship between academic disciplinary demands, needs analysis, and the development of academic language competencies at the Ethiopian Police University (EPU). The academic context of EPU serves as the primary independent variable, encompassing undergraduate programs in policing, criminology, law, leadership, and security studies, all delivered in English. These programs create specific literacy demands, including reading scholarly texts, writing analytical and research-based assignments, interpreting legal documents, and participating in academic discussions (Hyland, 2016; Wingate, 2015).

These demands are examined through three mediating components of needs analysis: Target Situation Analysis (TSA), Present Situation Analysis (PSA), and Learning Situation Analysis (LSA). TSA identifies required academic tasks such as essay writing, case analysis, and research reporting; PSA assesses students' current academic English proficiency; and LSA explores instructional conditions and learner expectations. Together, they reveal gaps between academic requirements and existing competencies.

The findings inform the development of essential academic English skills, including critical reading, academic writing, listening, speaking, vocabulary, and grammar. Consistent with Nation and Macalister (2013) and Hyland (2016), the framework positions needs analysis as the bridge to a discipline-sensitive EAP curriculum aligned with policing education.

**Figure 2.1**

*Integrated Theoretical and Conceptual Framework of the Study*



Source: Developed by the researcher (2026)

## 2.10 Summary

While the literature consistently underscores the central role of needs analysis in EAP (Long, 2005; Hyland, 2006), it largely reflects perspectives derived from general academic contexts. As a result, insufficient attention has been given to how academic language needs are shaped within professional institutions, where academic literacy is closely intertwined with occupational communication practices. This limitation highlights a significant gap in context-specific research.

To address this gap, the present study is grounded in an integrated theoretical framework combining Needs Analysis (NA), English for Academic Purposes (EAP), and English for Specific Purposes (ESP), which collectively emphasize aligning language instruction with disciplinary and professional communication demands. Correspondingly, the conceptual framework demonstrates how disciplinary academic requirements at the Ethiopian Police University inform needs analysis processes—Target Situation Analysis (TSA), Present Situation Analysis (PSA), and Learning Situation Analysis (LSA)—which in turn guide the development of academic English competencies.

By linking theoretical perspectives with a context-driven conceptual model, this study aims to provide a more comprehensive and context-sensitive understanding of EAP needs in professional higher education settings.

### **3. Method**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

The study aimed to investigate the academic English needs of first-year students at the Ethiopian Police University in order to inform the development of a discipline-sensitive English for Academic Purposes (EAP) curriculum. To accomplish this objective, the study employed a mixed-methods research design integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches.

Specifically, the research adopted a convergent mixed-methods design in which quantitative and qualitative data were collected concurrently and integrated during the interpretation stage. This design enabled the researcher to compare, corroborate, and synthesize findings derived from both datasets. The mixed-methods approach was selected because contemporary EAP needs analysis research highlights the importance of combining statistical patterns with in-depth contextual insights (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015; Paltridge & Starfield, 2016). Quantitative data obtained through questionnaires provided broad insights into students' perceived academic language challenges and required competencies, whereas qualitative data gathered through semi-structured interviews offered deeper understanding of students' academic experiences and literacy-related difficulties (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Kvale et al., 2020).

The integration of both approaches strengthened methodological triangulation, thereby enhancing the credibility, trustworthiness, and overall validity of the findings.

#### **3.2 Theoretical Orientation**

The study was grounded in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and Needs Analysis (NA) frameworks.

The study employed three needs analysis frameworks to guide the methodological orientation and instrument design. Target Situation Analysis (TSA) identified the academic tasks students were expected to perform, including essay writing, research reporting, academic reading, lecture comprehension, and seminar participation (Hyland, 2016; Basturkmen, 2019). Present Situation Analysis (PSA) examined students' current academic English proficiency in relation to these tasks, while Learning Situation Analysis (LSA) explored contextual and learner-related factors influencing academic literacy development (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998; Long, 2015). The participants consisted of 200 first-year students and 30 instructors at the Ethiopian Police University. The student participants were first-year undergraduate students enrolled in Communicative English Skills courses across different academic programs. From a total population of 396 first-year students, 200 were selected

using simple random sampling, representing approximately half of the population. The students consisted of 180 males and 20 females aged between 25 and 35 years. First-year students were selected because they represent a critical transition stage into English-medium academic study. The teacher participants included 30 instructors comprising English language and subject-area teachers. Among them, 28 were male and 2 were female; 2 held PhD degrees, while 28 held MA or MSc degrees. All instructors had at least eight years of teaching experience, indicating substantial professional expertise. A census sampling technique was employed for teachers due to the manageable population size. Multiple instruments were used to ensure comprehensive data collection, including students' questionnaires, teachers' questionnaires, and semi-structured interviews with both students and teachers. The students' questionnaire gathered data on academic tasks and perceived language challenges through Likert-scale and open-ended items, while the teachers' questionnaire examined instructors' evaluations of students' academic English proficiency and course demands. In addition, semi-structured interviews with selected students provided in-depth insights into academic literacy challenges, whereas interviews with instructors explored their perspectives on students' academic language performance.

### 3.3 Data Analysis

Data analysis combined quantitative and qualitative procedures. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, analyzed using SPSS (version 23). Qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021), involving coding and identification of emerging themes.

### 3.4 Ethical Considerations

Ethical standards were maintained throughout the study. Participants were informed of the study purpose and assured of voluntary participation, confidentiality, and anonymity. Written informed consent was obtained.

### 3.5 Reliability and Validity of the Study

**Table 3.1**

*Reliability of the Instrument*

Skill	Students $\alpha$	Teachers $\alpha$	No. of Items	Reliability
Major English Language Skills	0.835	0.838	6	Good
Listening	0.810	0.964	19	Good–Excellent
Speaking	0.790	0.781	15	Acceptable
Reading	0.949	0.801	10	Excellent–Good
Writing	0.713	0.954	9	Acceptable–Excellent
<b>Overall (All Skills)</b>	<b>0.819</b>	<b>0.868</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>Good–Very Good</b>

Source survey data 2026

The reliability analysis indicates that the instrument demonstrates satisfactory to excellent internal consistency across the major English language skills for both students and teachers. Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranged from 0.713 to 0.949 for students and from 0.781 to 0.964 for teachers, suggesting acceptable to excellent reliability across subscales.

In addition to reliability, several measures were taken to ensure instrument validity. Content validity was established through careful alignment of questionnaire items with EAP and needs analysis frameworks. The instruments were reviewed by subject experts to ensure clarity, relevance, and appropriateness. Furthermore, pilot testing was conducted with a small group of participants to refine item wording and improve consistency before the main data collection.

Based on these procedures, the instrument is both reliable and valid for assessing listening, speaking, reading, writing, and overall English language skills, and is appropriate for use in the main study.

## 4. Results and Discussion

This study examined the academic English language needs of first-year students at Ethiopian Police University (EPU) based on questionnaire responses from teachers (N = 30) and students (N = 200). Descriptive statistics were used to determine the perceived importance of major academic English skills and their sub-skills. The reliability of the instrument was confirmed using Cronbach's alpha, indicating acceptable internal consistency. The discussion is informed by contemporary scholarship in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP), which emphasizes that curriculum design should be grounded in systematic needs analysis and aligned with disciplinary literacy practices (Basturkmen, 2019; Hyland, 2018; Wingate, 2022). Importantly, each finding is interpreted in relation to relevant theoretical perspectives to strengthen the analytical depth of the study.

### 4.1 Overall Academic English Needs

**Table 4.1**

*The Importance Levels of the Major Academic English Skills*

No.	Skill / Category	Teacher Mean	Teacher SD	Teacher N	Student Mean	Student SD	Student N
1	Speaking	4.467	0.5713	30	4.64	0.493	200
2	Listening	4.300	0.4661	30	4.62	0.508	200
3	Writing	3.867	0.5074	30	4.65	0.510	200
4	Reading	4.500	0.5085	30	4.58	0.534	200
5	Grammar	4.000	0.4549	30	4.55	0.499	200
6	Vocabulary	3.933	0.5208	30	4.52	0.549	200
7	Overall Average	4.21	0.53	30	4.57	0.49	200

For each sub-skill ranking, 5 indicates very important and 1 indicates not very important. The higher the mean, the more important the skill is.

The findings reveal that all six core components of academic English—listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar, and vocabulary—were perceived as highly important by both instructors and students. Teachers reported an overall mean score of 4.21, while students rated the importance even higher at 4.57. This convergence suggests a shared recognition of English as a foundational academic tool.

This finding aligns with EAP theory, which emphasizes that academic success depends on the integration of macro-skills supported by grammatical competence and discipline-specific vocabulary (Hyland, 2018; Nation, 2013). Furthermore, the slightly higher student

ratings may reflect heightened awareness of linguistic challenges during transition to university study, supporting research that learners often recognize language demands when directly experiencing academic tasks (Wingate, 2022). Thus, the results reinforce the theoretical view that comprehensive language proficiency is central to academic achievement.

In the qualitative phase, interview participants ranked major academic language skills based on their perceived importance. Most instructors prioritized reading and writing, followed by listening and speaking.

This prioritization reflects established theoretical perspectives that position reading and writing as central to knowledge construction and assessment in higher education (Hyland, 2019). However, variation among instructors—particularly those emphasizing listening—suggests contextual influence, especially in lecture-based environments. This supports the argument that academic literacy is not uniform but shaped by institutional practices and instructional modes.

Students generally agreed with instructors, indicating alignment between perceived and actual academic demands. However, minor variations suggest that perceptions are influenced by immediate academic experiences. This finding supports needs analysis theory, which highlights that learner perceptions are dynamic and context-dependent (Basturkmen, 2019).

## 4.2 Academic Listening Needs

**Table 4.2**

*Academic Listening Sub-Skills*

No.	Listening Sub-Skill	Teacher Mean	Teacher SD	Teacher N	Student Mean	Student SD
1	Listening skills	4.00	0.871	30	4.42	0.524
2	Understanding instructions during training sessions	3.73	0.980	30	4.60	0.530
3	Comprehending police radio communication	4.20	0.805	30	4.58	0.515
4	Conversations with colleagues/superiors	4.00	0.910	30	4.49	0.540
5	Details in witness statements/interviews	4.00	0.947	30	4.58	0.506
6	Understanding accents or dialects	4.13	0.937	30	4.62	0.487
7	Active listening for key information	4.00	0.947	30	4.60	0.501
8	Everyday conversations	3.87	1.008	30	4.45	0.582
9	Discussions/seminars/presentations	3.87	1.074	30	4.59	0.523
10	Instructions and information requests	3.90	0.923	30	4.61	0.530
11	Lectures for general understanding	3.97	0.890	30	4.59	0.542
12	Listening for specific information	4.10	0.995	30	4.51	0.618
13	Asking questions in lectures	3.93	0.980	30	4.54	0.557
14	Understanding lecture main ideas	4.07	0.980	30	4.54	0.510
15	Recognizing supporting ideas	4.00	0.983	30	4.53	0.520
16	Lecture organization	4.13	0.819	30	4.60	0.531

17	Taking brief notes	3.67	0.994	30	4.48	0.575
18	Identifying different views	3.97	1.098	30	4.55	0.538
19	Understanding key vocabularies	3.83	0.913	30	4.62	0.518
20	<b>Overall Average</b>	<b>3.97</b>	<b>0.95</b>	30	<b>4.55</b>	<b>0.54</b>

Academic listening sub-skills were rated highly important by both teachers ( $M = 3.97$ ) and students ( $M = 4.55$ ), with students assigning consistently higher importance. Key sub-skills included understanding lecture organization, identifying main ideas, listening for specific information, and note-taking.

The higher student ratings suggest strong awareness of listening demands in academic contexts, particularly in lecture-based instruction. This finding aligns with listening theory, which conceptualizes academic listening as an active, strategic process involving interpretation of discourse structure and key information (Field, 2018; Vandergrift & Goh, 2012).

Moreover, the emphasis on note-taking and lecture comprehension supports the theoretical view that listening is closely integrated with other academic skills, especially writing. This reinforces the argument that explicit instruction in listening strategies is essential for academic success (Rost, 2011).

### 4.3 Academic Speaking Needs

**Table 4.3**

*Academic Speaking Sub-Skills*

No.	Speaking Sub-Skill	Teacher Mean	Teacher SD	Teacher N	Student Mean	Student SD	Student N
1	Giving clear and concise instructions	4.63	0.556	30	4.49	0.576	200
2	Conducting interviews or interrogations	4.13	0.860	30	4.45	0.582	200
3	Explaining procedures to non-native speakers	4.63	0.490	30	4.48	0.558	200
4	Responding appropriately in emergency situations	4.07	0.691	30	4.45	0.574	200
5	Presenting case findings or reports orally	4.60	0.563	30	4.48	0.609	200
6	Interviewing and interrogations	4.73	0.450	30	4.44	0.598	200
7	Participating actively in discussions in English	4.67	0.479	30	4.45	0.565	200
8	Asking and answering questions in English	4.43	0.626	30	4.48	0.549	200
9	Making presentations / Presenting oral reports	4.43	0.728	30	4.42	0.620	200
10	Giving oral instructions	4.63	0.556	30	4.33	0.708	200
11	Talking to colleagues and instructors in the class	3.90	0.759	30	4.39	0.678	200
12	Speaking from notes	4.30	0.794	30	4.39	0.670	200

13	Communicating ideas confidently	4.17	0.747	30	4.32	0.684	200
14	Speaking clearly (pronunciation)	4.40	0.621	30	4.37	0.666	200
15	Communicating ideas fluently	4.53	0.571	30	4.44	0.607	200
16	<b>Overall Average</b>	<b>4.43</b>	<b>0.64</b>	30	<b>4.43</b>	<b>0.63</b>	200

Academic speaking skills were rated equally important by both teachers and students ( $M = 4.43$ ). Highly ranked sub-skills included participating in discussions, asking and answering questions, presenting reports, and communicating ideas clearly and fluently.

This strong agreement reflects the interactive nature of academic environments, where communication plays a central role in learning. The findings align with communicative competence theory, which emphasizes fluency, clarity, and pragmatic appropriateness in academic discourse (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010; Hyland, 2018).

Additionally, the importance of presentations and discussions supports the view that speaking contributes to knowledge construction through interaction, consistent with socio-constructivist perspectives on learning (Wingate, 2022).

#### 4.4 Academic Reading Needs

**Table 4.4**

*Academic Reading Sub-Skills*

No.	Reading Sub-Skill	Teacher Mean	Teacher SD	Teacher N	Student Mean	Student SD	Student N
1	Reading professional/academic textbooks	3.97	0.928	30	2.36	0.924	200
2	Reading for general and specific info (skimming/scanning)	4.37	0.669	30	2.06	0.765	200
3	Reading journal/magazine/newspaper articles	4.13	0.776	30	2.69	0.870	200
4	Reading instruction manuals/guides	4.10	0.960	30	2.67	0.796	200
5	Reading course handouts to get information	3.97	1.033	30	2.65	0.743	200
6	Reading instructions for assignments/projects	3.83	0.747	30	2.40	0.868	200
7	Reading instructions for labs/field trips	4.03	0.850	30	2.09	0.852	200
8	Reading lecture/study notes	3.93	0.740	30	2.35	0.901	200
9	Reading reference books (encyclopedia, dictionaries)	4.13	0.819	30	1.99	0.811	200
10	Interpreting graphs/diagrams/tables	4.27	0.740	30	2.02	0.773	200
11	<b>Overall Average</b>	<b>4.07</b>	<b>0.83</b>	30	<b>2.33</b>	<b>0.83</b>	200

A substantial discrepancy was observed between teachers and students regarding academic reading. Teachers rated reading highly ( $M = 4.07$ ), whereas students reported significantly lower importance ( $M = 2.33$ ).

This discrepancy suggests a misalignment between perceived and actual academic literacy demands. It indicates that students may underestimate the importance of reading in university study. This finding aligns with previous research showing that novice students often fail to recognize the central role of academic reading during the transition to higher education (Wingate, 2015).

Theoretically, academic reading involves complex processes such as critical evaluation, inferencing, and interpretation of multimodal texts (Grabe & Stoller, 2019; Hyland, 2018). The gap identified in this study highlights the need for explicit instruction in reading strategies, supporting the argument that academic literacy must be taught rather than assumed.

#### 4.5 Academic Writing Needs

**Table 4.5**

*Academic Writing Sub-Skills*

No.	Writing Sub-Skill	Teacher Mean	Teacher SD	Teacher N	Student Mean	Student SD	Student N
1	Writing laboratory reports	4.50	0.682	30	2.58	0.964	200
2	Writing assignment	4.73	0.450	30	2.74	1.082	200
3	Writing field trip reports	4.47	0.571	30	2.65	1.032	200
4	Writing paragraphs/essays	4.20	0.714	30	2.56	1.035	200
5	Writing descriptions of experiments	4.40	0.675	30	2.60	1.027	200
6	Writing project/field reports	4.23	0.774	30	2.59	1.052	200
7	Writing notes in lecture / note-taking	4.30	0.794	30	2.69	1.040	200
8	Preparing presentations	4.47	0.681	30	2.68	1.065	200
9	Writing summary	4.50	0.630	30	2.58	0.979	200
10	<b>Overall Average</b>	<b>4.42</b>	<b>0.66</b>	30	<b>2.63</b>	<b>1.03</b>	200

A similar gap was observed in academic writing. Teachers rated writing as highly important ( $M = 4.42$ ), while students reported lower importance ( $M = 2.63$ ).

This divergence suggests that students may underestimate the significance of writing or lack confidence in performing academic writing tasks. The finding supports research indicating that novice learners often struggle with genre-specific writing conventions and academic expectations (Wingate, 2022).

From a theoretical perspective, academic writing is a socially situated and genre-based practice requiring explicit instruction and scaffolding (Flowerdew, 2016; Hyland, 2018). The identified gap therefore reinforces the need for structured writing instruction, including practice in argumentation, summarization, and report writing.

#### 5. Conclusion

The findings of this study demonstrate that academic English proficiency is widely recognized as essential for first-year students at Ethiopian Police University. Both instructors

and students assigned high importance to the six core academic language skills—listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar, and vocabulary—indicating a shared awareness of English as more than a medium of instruction. Rather, it functions as an epistemic tool through which disciplinary knowledge is accessed, constructed, and communicated. Within English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) frameworks, this supports the argument that language programs must be grounded in systematic needs analysis and aligned with disciplinary practices (Basturkmen, 2019; Hyland, 2018). In this context, the study further shows that academic English proficiency operates as a gatekeeping mechanism influencing both academic success and professional readiness in policing and security education.

Despite this general agreement, a significant divergence emerged between teachers' and students' perceptions, particularly regarding academic reading and writing. Teachers rated these skills as critically important, whereas students assigned them comparatively lower value. This discrepancy reflects a deeper gap between institutional expectations and students' academic socialization. Consistent with EAP research, novice learners often prioritize immediate communicative skills over less visible but cognitively demanding literacy practices (Wingate, 2015; 2022). The findings therefore reinforce the view that academic literacy is not a neutral or transferable skill but a socially situated practice that must be explicitly taught and contextualized within disciplines (Hyland, 2018).

In contrast, both groups strongly emphasized the importance of academic listening and speaking, particularly in relation to lecture comprehension, interaction, and oral communication. This alignment suggests that students are more attuned to the immediate and performative aspects of academic communication than to critical reading and writing. While this reflects socio-constructivist perspectives that emphasize interaction in learning, it also indicates a potential imbalance in academic literacy development, which may limit students' ability to critically engage with and produce disciplinary knowledge.

Grammar and vocabulary were also highly valued, highlighting their foundational role in supporting all language skills. However, their importance should be understood in relation to meaning-making practices. Effective instruction should integrate linguistic form with disciplinary communication, ensuring that grammar and vocabulary function as tools for constructing academic meaning rather than as isolated components.

Overall, the study confirms the central role of English proficiency in academic success, while also revealing a critical misalignment between students' perceptions and actual academic demands. This has important pedagogical implications. Needs-based curriculum design should not only identify required skills but also reshape students' awareness of academic literacy practices. In this sense, needs analysis should be viewed as both a diagnostic and transformative framework supporting students' academic development.

This study contributes to the EAP literature by extending needs analysis research to the under-explored context of policing and security education, offering insights into discipline-specific literacy demands. However, the study is limited to a single institutional setting and relies on self-reported data, which may affect generalizability and overlook actual classroom practices.

Future research should adopt more diverse methodologies, including classroom observation, discourse analysis, and corpus-based studies of student writing. Such approaches would provide deeper insight into how academic literacy is enacted and how

instructional strategies can better bridge the gap between perception and performance in EAP contexts.

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