

## Evaluating the Needs of PhD Students in Preparation of a Genre-Based English for Academic Purposes Course

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**Abstract :** Academic writing in the tertiary education has always been a challenge to EFL learners. This proposed study aims at investigating the academic English language needs for PhD students and candidates studying humanities and social sciences at Cairo University. The research problem arises from the fact that most of them study English as a Foreign Language (EFL) or for specific purposes (ESP) in their undergraduate years. They are hardly familiarized with the different academic genres, despite the fact that they use academic resources written in English, and they are required to publish a paper internationally. Upon understanding the conventions and constraints of academic writing, postgraduates will have the opportunity to interact with the international academic spheres conveniently. There is, thus, a need to be acquainted with the generally accepted features of the academic genres, such as academic papers and their part-genres, such as writing abstracts, in addition to other occluded genres, such as personal statements and recommendation letters. The lack of practicing many of these genres is caused by the fact that there are clear differences between the rhetoric and conventions of the students' native language, i.e., Arabic, and the target language they are learning in the academic context, i.e., English. Moreover, apart from the general culture represented ethno-linguistically, the learners' 'small' culture represented in a national setting like Cairo University is more defining than their general cultural affiliations that are associated with their nationality, race, or religion, for instance. The main research question of this proposed study is: What is the effect of teaching a genre-based EAP course on the research writing competence of PhD candidates? To reach an answer to this question, the study will attempt to answer the following sub-questions: 1. What are the Egyptian PhD candidates' EAP perceived needs? 2. What are the requisite academic research skills for Egyptian scholars? The study intends to assess the students' needs, as a step to design and evaluate an EAP course that is based on explaining and scrutinizing a variety of academic genres. Adopting a diagnostic approach, the needs assessment uses quantitative data collected through questionnaires, and qualitative data assembled from semi-structured interviews with the students and their teachers, in addition to non-participant observations of a convenience sample.

**Keywords :** course design, English for academic purposes, genre-based, needs assessment

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