

## **An ESP Study of EFL Students at Al-Noor University: Difficulties in Learning English Sports Terms and Their Meaning among Physical Education Department Students**

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### **Abstract**

University students require subject-specific vocabulary for both their academic and practical undertakings. English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is crucial in this situation.

English sports terminology in physical education class is crucial, as students are required to understand all movement- and training-related terms, rules, tools/equipment used, and classroom instruction.

This study investigates the challenges encountered by first- and second-year students at Al-Noor University in Mosul, Iraq, as they acquire English

sports terminology as part of an ESP course.

The main goal here is to understand the challenges of students, the reasons for these problems, and their impact on academic learning and practical class performance.

A quantitative methodology was used for this purpose, and a questionnaire with closed questions was applied to about 120 undergraduate students in the Department of Physical Education. The questionnaire was built around three main topics: how hard it is for students to learn English sports terms, what makes these problems happen, and how these

problems affect learning and success. Data was analyzed using simple descriptive methods i.e., mean scores. The findings reveal that several students are still struggling with understanding, remembering and using English sports vocabulary. This is even more evident during practical sessions when students are required to adhere to instructions in English. The results also show that these challenges are mainly associated with students' low levels of English proficiency, infrequent practice, heavy use of rote memorisation, and difficulty understanding technical terms. So, in light of these results, employing simpler language may potentially make it easier for students to learn. Incorporating some audio-visual aids and interactive teaching approaches can also help to some extent.

**Keywords:** English sports terminology, physical education students, English for Specific Purposes, ESP vocabulary learning, sports vocabulary, Iraq

#### \* **Introduction**

The importance of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in higher education is growing, since many college students require English not just as a general language but also as a tool to comprehend the academic language of their field. ESP pertains

to needs-based training, discipline-specific terminology, and the pragmatic application of language in academic or professional settings. Hyland (2022) says that ESP is closely linked to the communication needs of learners in certain fields and the needs of learners in those fields. Likewise, Umar and Basuki (2023) refer to ESP as a responsive field of study to academic and professional need. At the level of tertiary education, it is necessary to relate English courses with students' real language needs in their disciplines (Shanavas et al., 2024).

An essential part of the ESP is vocabulary; Students that are studying for a specific subject need to learn terminology that is not necessarily in general English courses. Knowing the right words helps understand texts, communicate well with others, and do better in school — it is especially essential at a time when pupils may need to read explanations, listen to instructions and apply any technical language they hear during classroom activities. As Nation (2001; 2022) argues, vocabulary acquisition is not merely about knowing word meanings but also understanding form, use, collocation, and context. This makes this point very relevant for ESP learners, since most technical

vocabulary relates to specific tasks or contexts. As Wen and Naim (2023) also point out, strategies on vocabulary learning can impact the effectiveness of new words in second language contexts.

One of those areas where the subject-specific vocabulary is intimately connected with actual performance is physical education. You have to be literate in terms of sports, body motions, equipment, training and rules as well as exercise techniques and classroom instructions so students need to understand these English terms. These are not just theoretical designations these terms come up in practice when demonstrations, drills and simulations take place. This terminological specificity has been noted in the context of physical education with research indicating that lexical selection can be challenging for undergraduate students since sports terms differ in meaning to everyday usage (Velickovic & Janic, 2023). Research on terminology in physical education and sports similarly demonstrates that language within the field evolves historically over time, thus necessitating attention to changing word usages in teaching and learning contexts (Tsybanyuk et al., 2023).

Vocabulary is central to ESP Learning but confusion surrounds its teaching process, in particular when students of physical education would manage to read and understand English sports terminology. Such challenges arise when students are asked to Memorise technical vocabulary, pronounce without knowing the right way of saying the word, correlate it with a physical action in the lab or follow instructions in English during practical classes. Research in ESP settings has reported that students generally require more targeted assistance to learn jargon related to their subject area (Kongcharoen, 2023; Fakourian & Ghalibafan, 2024). Moreover, lack of English proficiency (inability to interact frequently), and ineffective strategies to learning can hinder students' ability to utilize subject-specific vocabulary appropriately (Al Zahrani & Chaudhary, 2022; Le & Trinh, 2024; My, 2022).

Although the interest in ESP and vocabulary learning is slowly increasing, there are still not enough classroom-based studies focusing directly on physical education students and their experience learning English sports words. A large share of the prior research focused on ESP as a concept or vocabulary learning among college learners without

specific contexts. Less research investigates the understanding of sports terms by physical education students, their reasons for poor comprehension and practical performance in professional learning contexts. There is also a shift that occurs here because many local university students undertake English learning as part of their internal physical education program rather than within a wholly English-medium based curriculum.

This study attempts to address this gap by exploring the difficulties experienced by physical education students in their first and second year at Al-Noor University in Mosul (Iraq). It is based on a topic of English sports terminology in the context of an ESP learning. The study seeks to identify the primary challenges students encounter with supporting questionnaire data from about 120 students, find potential reasons for these challenges and discuss their impact on student comprehension, classroom participation, confidence as well as practical class performance. The study is anticipated to provide a contribution to ESP teaching in physical education with evidence in light of the real-classroom context data and practical recommendations on how to promote vocabulary learning for students.

### **\* Research Problem**

English is taught as one of the subjects for physical education students at the university level, but many students find that English is difficult to learn and use sports terms even if they know them. In physical education, vocabulary is inseparable from classroom performance. Students will need to identify terms, understand instructions, associate words through actions and apply terms during theory and practicals. When they are not familiar with some of the essential vocabulary used here then, they misinterpret what is being explained, shy away from asking during practice or lose confidence when they are in class.

First- and second-year physical education students stand out for this problem because they are still developing their academic language, as well as the professional vocabulary of their discipline. As a result, they may know general English words but still struggle with the technical terms that are linked with training, rules, sports equipment, body movement and how to practice. These problems can arise from various factors including limited proficiency in English, insufficient exposure and practice opportunities, too much reliance on rote learning, inability to explain vocabulary clearly enough, or

teaching methods that do not tie together the words we are trying to teach with actual physical activities.

Research has shown that ESP learners need relevant, discipline-specific support in the areas of language (Hyland, 2022; Shanavas et al., 2024). Research on vocabulary learning indicates that students require meaningful input, the practice of new terms and their strategies to acquire language (Nation, 2001, 2022; Wen & Naim, 2023). Nonetheless, little research has focused on the issues of undergraduate students in physical education at universities in Iraq. Hence, the present study aimed to investigate physical education students' principal challenges in learning English sports terminology at Al-Noor University, the reasons for these difficulties as well as their implications on academic and practical learning.

#### **\* Objectives of the Study**

The aim of this study is to discover the problem areas that Al-Noor University students of physical education, both first- and second-year, encounter when they learn English sports terms in an English for specific Purposes context. To be more specific, the study sets out to: -  
determine the primary challenges physical education

students face with respect to comprehending, retrieving, articulating and implementing English sports vocabulary;

investigate some possible reasons for these difficulties, such as the more limited opportunity to learn English, in terms of proficiency & learning strategies/ practice opportunities and teaching methods.

Examine how these difficulties affect students' academic comprehension, classroom engagement, self-assurance and performance in physical education classes.

#### **\* Research Questions**

This study follows the corresponding research questions: -

- 1- What are the Main Problems in Teaching and Learning English Sports Terminology of Physical Education Students?
- 2- What are the reasons behind these struggles?
- 3- What is the impact of such learning challenges on academic engagement, confidence and performance?

#### **\* Significance of the Study**

The importance of this study lies in the fact that it deals with a practical language problem faced by PE students (in an ESP context). English is required not only for communication in everyday life, but also because of the nature of physical

education itself, for physical education students need English terminology directly related to sports, movement and training classroom practices. Having an understanding of sports terminology can lead to more success with following directions, engaging in activities, and linking theoretical explanations with real-life implementation and performance.

In addition, the study is significant for ESP teaching as it offers evidence from a particular academic discipline. In this regard, ESP also calls for English to be taught based on the real needs of the learners (Hyland, 2022; Feak & Chan, 2025). Focusing on students in physical education allows the current study to narrow down this research gap related to vocabulary support specific to this domain. It also gives information to guide teachers in choosing more appropriate methods, such as visual support, demonstration, communicative practice and task-based activities.

The study also has implications for local research in Iraq, and regional contexts. Students in such contexts often do English as a subject for their course, but may not get enough exposure to subject-specific vocabulary. The results are useful to help teachers and

curriculum designers design more relevant materials for students whose academic needs align with their practical learning needs. Third, the results can also help students by presenting major determinants of their vocabulary acquisition and encouraging relevant effective strategy use.

#### **\* Literature Review**

#### **\* Types of English for Specific Purposes and Disciplinary Requirements**

ESP stands for English for Specific Purposes. It is an approach to language teaching in which the content and method are determined by the specific needs of learners. In contrast to general English, ESP is generally linked with a particular profession in terms of the language, genres, vocabulary, and communicative tasks used. According to Hyland (2022), ESP is constantly evolving, as the specific language demands created by various academic and professional fields have generated new challenges. When it comes to higher education, this means that any English course taken should be one that enables learners to understand and use the language of their particular discipline.

Recent studies on ESP teaching stress the difficulties of

teaching ESP in a tertiary context. Shanavas et al. (2024) claim that ESP teachers need to navigate between developing the language, assessment and real communicative needs of certain academic programs. Also, as suggested by Umar and Basuki (2023), ESP has some problems related to materials, teacher preparation, and learner needs. Realization of these ideas is necessary for physical education because students actually need vocabulary that relates to the academic study of sports, and how they practice this in their classroom.

Moreover, ESP has also laid emphasis on speaking and oral classroom interaction. The nature of ESP speaking is influenced by academic or disciplinary and also by professional expectations, as pointed out by Feak and Chan (2025). In physical education language includes listening to oral instructions, asking questions concerning exercises, naming movements and communicating during practice. Thus, ESP for physical education should not be limited to written lists of vocabulary. They should actually aid the students in understanding and producing sports language with real-life classroom situations.

### **\* English Sports Vocabulary in Physical Education**

Sports terminology plays an important role in physical education communication. This vocabulary includes names of sports, rules, equipment, body movements, training methods, techniques, performance-related terms, and classroom instructions. Since physical education is both theoretical and practical, the students must relate words to movements. A learner may understand the meaning of a word, but still may not be able to put it into practice in a drill or task.

Research on sports terminology emphasizes the importance of lexical knowledge in physical education. In addition, (Veličković and Janić 2023), in a study focused on the lexical selection of sports terminology among undergraduates studying sports and physical education, provided evidence that students may find it difficult to choose or use appropriate terms. (Tsybanyuk et al. 2023) also highlights that language of sports is contextual and focuses on the evolution and development of terminologies in physical education and sports. They demonstrate that vocabulary used in the context of sports is contextual, rather than merely word-list memorization.

In fact, physical education is probably one of the most learning-centered areas. Mainsbridge et al. (2025) show that physical education involves pedagogy, learning, and educational outcomes, not only physical activity are not just mutually exclusive but also pedagogy, learning and outcomes of a quality educational system (2025). This matters because students that struggle with the language will also struggle to understand physical education content. Students who do not understand the technical language used in lessons may be less able to follow explanations and instructions they need to carry out practical work.

#### **\* Vocabulary Learning and Vocabulary Learning Strategies**

Vocabulary Learning is an important aspect of second language development (L2) and English for Specific Purposes learning. According to Nation (2001), knowing a word means knowing its form, meaning and use. Students need to be familiar with the sound of the word, its written form in text, and what it means as well as understand how the word is used. Also, Nation (2022) notes that teaching and learning words need multiple exposures, purposeful engagement and instructions related to various components of word knowledge.

Because most words in PE are associated with bodily movement or skilled performance, vocabulary learning is made all the more complicated for our physical education students. For example, students may understand a word but still find it difficult to connect it with a movement or instruction. Yang (2026) states that meaningful learning provides the capability of students to associate new vocabulary with previously built schema or real-life scenarios. This further supports the claim in order to understand the different terminologies of sports, it is better learned through demonstrations and practices rather than rote learning.

The success of students learning English vocabulary depends also on vocabulary learning strategies. Wen, & Naim(2023) conducted a review on vocabulary learning strategies of second language acquisition and confirmed that learners employed different strategies to understand, process and implement new words. In ESP settings, Al Zahrani and Chaudhary (2022) argue that students will learn strategies suited to their unique learning needs in specialized contexts. Similar to Le and Trinh (2024) and My (2022), this finding provides insight into the use of

vocabulary learning strategies among ESP students, who indeed have different approaches to memorization and long-term retention. The current study specifically addresses those findings since a large portion of physical education students seem to rely on memorization rather than context.

Several studies have explored the needs for ESP vocabulary and language in physical education and sports science. Kongcharoen (2023) explored vocabulary for ESP classrooms with academic journals in physical education and sports science, indicating that language used in the field can support vocabulary selection. Fakourian and Ghalibafan (2024) addressed language needs in physical education and sports science students as well as implications of both the importance of designing ESP courses according to the specific language needs of the discipline. This evidence supports English courses designed for students of physical education.

Examining how or what to teach is the focus of a case study from Doan (2025), who investigates transdisciplinary ESP at a sport university, identifying that not only language learning but also field-specific use is crucial for effective sports-related ESP. Similarly,

Meirafoni et al. (2025) showed that English vocabulary mastery can affect the understanding and practice of sports students in following training instructions (2025). These results provide further support for the current study because they seem to indicate that language problems with vocabulary may affect not only academic understanding, but also correct execution of practical tasks in students.

The studies reviewed showed that ESP vocabulary in the physical education field should be selected, taught and practised on a need-based basis. The English sport vocabulary list is more than a set of words to memorize it is part of the communication system through which students process their lessons and engage in hands-on learning.

#### **\* Teaching Methods for Learning Sports Terminology**

The way we teach heavily influences how well students learn and remember technical terms. When learners are required to associate English terms with movements, equipment and practical activities, traditional explanation may not be sufficient. ESP vocabulary teaching strategies should enable the learners to comprehend the specialized terms in a meaningful way (Orasta, 2023). Communicative approaches to

teaching may provide students with benefits as well, encouraging them to use language actively. Ghafar et al. (2023) state that communicative language teaching promotes speaking and listening skills as students receive instructions in various physical education classes.

Visual and task-based approaches are most common for sports-oriented ESP contexts Yaroub et al. (2024). indicated that sports movies can be implemented as authentic material in ESP to make connections between vocabulary and actual sporting events. Research by Olsson and Tvena (2023) also highlights how physical activity can be linked with vocabulary learning through cross-curricular collaboration. These strategies seem to indicate students learn sports terminology in a context through seeing, hearing and using terminology. As such, demonstrations, films, images, glossaries and activities might be useful for filling the space between what is language and movement.

Additionally, task-based learning is relevant because it involves students using language to complete tasks that have significance in and of their own right. Liu and Song (2025) highlight the core concepts of active learning and

conducted repeated practice. Task-oriented activities prompt students to leave rote memorization of sports terms in the past and attempt to use them in classroom and practical contexts, a point which is very relevant in regard to this study.

#### **\* Research Gap**

According to the related literature, ESP, vocabulary learning and sports terminology are important areas of research. Nevertheless, further research on the real problems of physical education students learning English sports terminology in the context of local universities is still necessary. Some studies discuss ESP broadly, while others showcase vocabulary strategies among general university students. Few studies explore how first- and second-year physical education students are affected by of English sports terminology on understanding, participation, confidence and practical performance.

The current research addresses this gap by focusing on physical education students at Al-Noor University, Mosul in Iraq. Using a questionnaire, it is based on identifying the students' difficulties, their causes and effects in theoretical and practical learning. Thus, this research offers evidence that contributes to improving ESP

teaching practices for learners in the field of physical education.

**\* Methodology**

**\* Research Design**

This research used a quantitative descriptive research design. The design aimed to identify the primary problems faced by physical education students when learning English sports terminology, as well as the possible reasons for these difficulties and their impact. Since the objective of this study was to outline students' perceptions and experiences rather than to test an experimental treatment, a descriptive design was appropriate.

**\* Participants**

The participants were 120 first- and second-year undergraduate students from the Department of Physical Education at Al-Noor University, Mosul, Iraq. The sample included both male and female students, with more male students. Participants were chosen through convenience sampling as they were available in the context of a study carried out by the researcher's teaching. All participants were taking English as a part of their academic program in physical education.

**\* Instrument**

To this end, the primary instrument was a structured questionnaire. The purpose of this

questionnaire was to determine the problems that students face when learning English sports terminology investigate what they attribute those difficulties to and how such challenges affect their educational and practical performance. A questionnaire was deemed appropriate as it enabled the researcher to gather responses from a relatively broad section of the student body and distil their perceptions into more straightforward quantitative form.

The questionnaire consisted of three main components. The first section contained questions about difficulties in learning English sports terminology, include: understanding spelling and meaning of terms, remembering words or vocabulary, pronunciation of a word following instructions and confusion with technical words. In the second portion, we explored potential explanations for these challenges: limited English proficiency, challenging vocabulary, not practicing enough, poor explanation, and overreliance on memorization. In the third part, we explored how these challenges affected students in terms of their understanding of lessons, practical performance, participation and self-efficacy.

A five-point likert scale from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree was used in the questionnaire. Likert-scale questionnaires are frequently used in educational and social science research to assess attitudes, perceptions, and levels of agreement. Nemoto and Beglar (2014) point out that Likert-scale questionnaires must have clear items and response options. Kusmaryono and Wijayanti (2022) discuss response options, reliability, validity, and possible bias when using Likert scales or agreement levels on subjects based on Likert scales in education and social science research contexts. Ferrando et al. (2025) offer concrete tips to design, build and use Likert scales. These recommendations informed the structure of the questionnaire items and our interpretation of students' responses.

**\* Data Collection**

Data were collected in regular classes at Al-Noor University. Students were made aware of the aims and objectives behind the study, participation was voluntary; all responses would be treated as confidential and only used for research purposes.

**\* Data Analysis**

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the questionnaire responses. Mean scores for all items

were calculated, and the analysis of the three questionnaire sections was supported using SPSS.

**\* Results**

This section explains the questionnaire results in three areas, difficulties, causes and impact on learning and performance.

**Table 1. Difficulties in Learning English Sports Terminology**

Item	Mean	Interpretation
Understanding terminology	4.2	High difficulty
Remembering terms	4.0	High difficulty
Pronunciation	3.8	Moderate difficulty
Following instructions	4.1	High difficulty
Confusion with terms	4.3	High difficulty

Table 1 Sports vocabulary difficulty: Confusion with technical terms (M = 4.3) had the highest mean score, followed by understanding terminology (M = 4.2) and following instructions (M = 4.1). This indicates that terminology issues cause both comprehension and classroom performance. Pronunciation was more challenging (M = 3.8).

**Table 2. Causes of Difficulties**

Item	Mean	Interpretation
Low English level	4.4	Very high
Difficult vocabulary	4.2	High
Lack of practice	4.1	High
Unclear explanation	3.9	Moderate
Memorization only	4.0	High

The primary underlying factors of students' difficulties are summarized in Table 2. The mean score for low English level and learning English sports terms was 4.4, indicating that the students' general English proficiency is more important than their interest in learning English sport words/terms. Also, difficult vocabulary (M = 4.2) and lack of practice (M = 4.1) were reported as frequently disturbing factors with a high mean score. These results imply that the difficulty is not due to a single cause. Instead students struggle via language level; nature of technical vocabulary; features of language science second foreign tongue → perceivable low practice, dependence on memorization.

**Table 3. Impact on Students**

Item	Mean	Interpretation
Understanding lessons	4.3	High impact
Practical performance	4.2	High impact
Participation	4.0	High impact
Confidence	4.1	High impact

As presented in Table 3, the challenges related to English sports terminology has a great influence on the students learning. The highest mean was for understanding lessons (M = 4.3), followed by practical performance (M = 4.2). This suggests that vocabulary difficulties can impact both conceptual knowledge and classroom performance. Engagement (M = 4.0) and confidence (M = 4.1) were less favorable, suggesting that students become less engaged or confident when they cannot decode sport vocabulary correctly.

The present finding clearly demonstrates that physical education students struggle to learn English sports vocabulary. The top challenges are technical terminology, understanding lingo and following English instructions. Among them, weak English fundamental skills; too difficult vocabulary; no sufficient practice; memorization. These challenges hamper students learning,

practical skills, engagement and confidence.

### \* Discussion

The results of this study reveal that first- and second-year physical education students at Al-Noor University face difficulties when learning English sports terminology. The biggest challenge presented was confusion about technical terms, followed by difficulty with terminology and instructions. The implications are that ESP vocabulary is not merely general English vocabulary — it is academic content and practical activity. This is consistent with the general perception presented by Hyland (2022) that ESP has strong links to learner disciplinary needs and with Kongcharoen (2023), who argues for targeted vocabulary selection in ESP/physical education and sports science classrooms.

Also, the challenge of comprehension and retention of terminology from sport also supports the importance that vocabulary knowledge exerts in language learning. According to Nation (2001, 2022) vocabulary knowledge consists of three components; form, meaning and use. While students can still translate a sports word, they may not be able to recognize it quickly in a practical session, or accurately

pronounce it and use the term to describe a movement. Learning terminology in physical education is more than memorizing terms – this is why. This takes persistence with repeatedly seeing the words, in context, practice and relating an action to a word(s). This view supports Yang (2026) who argues that learning should be meaningful and that the new vocabulary have connection to real life context.

It also finds that students' challenges in learning sports terminology have more to do with low English proficiency. This finding coincides with previous ESP literature that found students who needed to develop technical vocabulary out of their specialised field would struggle when the basis of English was insufficient (Fakourian & Ghalibafan, 2024; Shanavas et al., 2024). The English level of the students in this study was low, thus they might struggle to understand explanations, identify sporting terminology and follow instructions when completing practical lessons. This indicates that, the English courses for physical education students should combine both general language support and lecture-specific vocabulary instruction.

The second key observation is the lack of practice. Students reported

that they did not have enough opportunities to practice English sports vocabularies. This is in line with research on vocabulary learning that stresses the importance of repeated presentation and active use for retention (Nation, 2022; Wen & Naim, 2023). If students hear a word only once, or learn one definition for an exam, they may not be able to use it in real classroom contexts. For physical education students, practice should include verbal instructions, exercise-related terms, and links between the term and the visual demonstration of the movement. The result specific to memorization methodology is also significant. A lot of students rely on rote memorization of terms instead of using them contextually. This is in agreement with Le and Trinh (2024) and My (2022), who claimed that ESP students applied other vocabulary learning strategies or limited strategy use can lead to decreased learning effectiveness. Memorization can help students retrieve the meanings of words, but just for a limited time; it is not enough to develop long-term (and applied) understanding. They need tools like repetition, contextual learning, an anchor or example, a connection to visual stimuli and practice in the 'real world'.

One of the key findings from this study is that terminology difficulties impede understanding and practical performance. In other words, English sports language influences not only exercise education participation but also settled learning of languages. When students do not understand a term, they may misinterpret a task, perform an activity incorrectly, or be unwilling to engage. Additionally, Meirafoni et al. (2025) discovered that sports students' comprehension and application of training instructions was enhanced by their command of English terminology.

The finding that technical vocabulary is a real issue in physical education is also supported by work of Veličković and Janić (2023), which shows that sports terminology can be problematic for undergraduate students.

This finding extends to an even more nuanced view of teaching methods being adapted into the ESP context. This type of explanation may fall short for students who need a link between English vocabulary and physical actions. Orasta (2023) highlights the significance of introducing vocabulary teaching methods in suitable ESP classes. On the other hand, communicative language teaching might aid students

in applying terminology actively by using speaking and listening tasks (Ghafar et al., 2023). Visual aid, sports films, and demonstrations also remind students that the terms have actions and contexts attached to them; they become part of task-based learning. Yaroub et al. (2024) show that sports films can be used as authentic materials in ESP learning. while Olsson and Tbena (2023) highlight the potential to combine physical activity and vocabulary acquisition. These methods are ideal for PE since the students learn through language and movement.

Finally, the study adds to the ESP literature by focusing on students attending a physical education department of an Iraqi university context. Many of the earlier studies have performed their investigations broadly on ESP as a whole, or vocabulary learning on larger groups of students. This study provides more specific evidence on students who acquire English sports terms in their physical education curriculum. Results indicate that these students require improved support, explicit instruction, additional practice and strategies that explicitly link vocabulary learning with sensory engagement.

## **\* Conclusion**

This study aimed at exploring the difficulties faced by first- and second-year physical education students learning English sports terms in an ESP setting at Al-Noor University. The results indicate that the students are faced with the most visible difficulties in understanding technical terms; in remembering vocabulary; in pronouncing terms, and in following instructions along with complications due to specialized vocabulary. These difficulties matter because sports vocabulary affects both academic learning and practical performance directly.

The findings also revealed that the key reasons for this include weak English proficiency, difficulty in vocabulary, limited practice, unclear explanation and over-reliance on memorization. Such factors indicate that the solution is not merely linguistic, but pedagogic. Students require vocabulary instruction that deepens understanding of words in context and contextualized word-use. The results also reveal, the students' difficulties in vocabulary are a barrier to comprehend lessons, practicing what they learn and participation and gaining self-esteem.

In conclusion, the study highlights ESP-based vocabulary teaching as an urgent necessity for

physical education students. The use of clear explanation, contextual utilization with examples, repetition through practice, visual support and opportunities for interaction are all crucial elements in teaching English sports vocabulary. This improvement makes it easier to understand sports vocabulary for students and gives them success in doing physical education, so that the teacher can explain better each lesson.

#### **\* Recommendations**

Based on the results of this study, some suggestions can be provided in order to improve the teaching and learning of English sports vocabulary for physical education students.

When introducing new sports vocabulary, teachers need to use simple and clear English (for beginner/first- and second-year students)

It means use more examples, illustrations, demonstration and short videos to explain sports terms so students can relate the vocabulary with real actions.

Regular practice for students to use terminology in oral instructions, classroom tasks and practical activities.

1- Students should be given a glossary of common English sports terms early in the course that can be

added to as more vocabulary is introduced.

2- Teachers must reduce reliance on memorisation and promote learning in context while incorporating repetition and active use of vocabulary.

3- Use of bilingual support where needed, particularly at the beginning of the course to assist students with difficult technical terms.

However, ESP materials for physical education students should be developed based on both their academic and professional needs.

#### **\* Limitations and Future Research Directions**

This study has some limitations. First, the sample was restricted to first-year and second-year physical education students at a single university. Thus, the results may not generalize to all physical education students in Iraq or elsewhere. Second, the study relied on self-reported questionnaire data for the study through a questionnaire. Interviews, classroom observations or tests of vocabulary knowledge might provide richer data in future research.

Similarly, future investigations may explore group differences between male and female students, undergraduate first- and second-year students with different English

proficiency levels. Future research in this area can also evaluate the impact of teaching delivery, with visual aids, task-based learning, glossary information, or sports videos being possible options to enhance how students learn and retain English sports vocabulary.

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