

Bringing ESMP to Operationally Committed Troops: An Interaction-Equivalency Framework for Hybrid Military Language Training

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ABSTRACT

The armed forces must maintain continuous operational readiness, yet the same duty commitments can prevent troops from attending residential courses that develop communication and other professional skills. This questionnaire-led feasibility study examined whether hybrid English for Specific Military Purposes (ESMP) could reach serving troops without repeatedly withdrawing them from distant operational areas for training at a Human Resource Development Centre (HRDC). Questionnaires were completed voluntarily by 30 mixed-rank troops serving in different units and 30 Army Education Corps officers serving at HRDCs and training institutions across Pakistan. Selected troop respondents whose questionnaire responses were ambiguous were contacted by telephone for clarification. Troops reported strong willingness to learn during duty hours ($M = 4.20$), support for digitally supported learning aligned with military needs ($M = 4.10$), and preference for hybrid delivery ($M = 4.00$), although recognition of English as essential was less consistent ($M = 3.20$). Officers supported combining remote and face-to-face instruction ($M = 4.73$) and using digital resources ($M = 4.30$), while low ratings for existing ESMP activities ($M = 1.67$) exposed an instructional-design deficit. Interpreted through Anderson's Interaction Equivalency Theorem, the findings support a secure, service-controlled model in which learner-content interaction is primary, learner-teacher interaction provides secondary guidance and feedback, and learner-learner interaction is activated when security, release, funding, and logistics permit. Feasibility therefore depends not on unrestricted public connectivity but on a secure institutional learning-management system, offline-capable content, protected learning time, and HRDC coordination. The study advances operational continuity without educational discontinuity as a design principle for resource-constrained and geographically dispersed military training.

Keywords: English for Specific Military Purposes; interaction equivalency; autonomous learning; operational deployment; secure military LMS

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary multinational military operations, English functions not merely as a communication tool but as an operational medium through which coordination, procedural accuracy, institutional legitimacy, and intercultural interaction are negotiated. Peacekeeping communication is shaped by urgency, hierarchy, compressed message forms, procedural routines, and unequal linguistic repertoires. A failure to understand, clarify, or report can therefore affect more than linguistic performance: it can weaken situational awareness, coordination, and safety (Crossey, 2008; Footitt & Kelly, 2012; Siegel et al., 2025). Military language education must consequently be evaluated against the communicative practices through which missions are performed, not only against general measures of grammatical knowledge.

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) provides the needs-responsive foundation for such an approach (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). A broad label such as English for Military Purposes

(EMP), however, can conceal differences between administrative, instructional, technical, and field-level communication. English for Specific Military Purposes (ESMP) narrows the pedagogical unit to the tasks, roles, genres, and interactional pressures faced by identifiable personnel. These may include radio exchanges, checkpoint interaction, briefings, handovers, incident reporting, clarification, and coordination with multinational partners (Hao & Song, 2020). ESMP is therefore treated as operational discourse competence rather than as military vocabulary added to general English.

The central access problem is not confined to one rank. Mixed-rank troops serving in geographically dispersed and operationally sensitive areas may be unable to leave their units for a residential English course. Units remain responsible for round-the-clock duties and may lack the manpower, travel funds, transport, accommodation, and logistical flexibility required for repeated release. An unstable security situation may restrict movement itself. Communication and academic development are then postponed as “peacetime” skills, even though they become essential in multinational assignments and future professional responsibilities.

A classroom-only model makes the learner travel to instruction; the proposed model makes instruction travel securely to the learner. Public social media and ordinary internet connectivity may be prohibited or unreliable in operational locations, so feasibility cannot be inferred from personal device ownership. The viable alternative is a service-controlled learning-management system or intranet capable of delivering downloadable or offline ESMP content under institutional security rules. Anderson’s (2003) Interaction Equivalency Theorem supplies the organising rationale: sustained learning need not depend on continuous co-location when one interaction mode is deliberately provided at a high level, and the others are strategically supported.

The study contributes in four ways. Contextually, it examines the training-access problem faced by operationally committed, geographically dispersed troops. Conceptually, it frames the dilemma as a conflict between operational continuity and educational continuity. Theoretically, it configures learner-content interaction as the primary mode, learner-teacher interaction as secondary support, and learner-learner interaction as a conditional mode activated when release and logistics permit. Pedagogically, it positions HRDCs as coordinating, quality-assurance, and periodic-contact hubs rather than compulsory full-time venues. The study assesses perceived feasibility; it does not claim that the proposed model has already improved language performance.

Research Questions

1. How do operational duties, geographic dispersion, security restrictions, funding, and logistics shape access to institutional ESMP training?
2. How do serving troops and AEC instructors perceive the relevance, readiness, and institutional feasibility of a hybrid ESMP model?
3. How can interaction modes be configured to sustain autonomous ESMP learning while troops remain at their places of duty?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Operational communication and the military discourse community

A discourse-community perspective shifts attention from “English ability” in the abstract to the recurrent communicative purposes, genres, lexis, participation roles, and standards through which professional groups accomplish work (Swales, 1990). Professional discourse is not merely technical terminology; it is the socially regulated use of language to perform institutional action (Bhatia, 2004). Military settings intensify these characteristics through hierarchical authority, procedural compression, security constraints, time pressure, and the possibility that misunderstanding will carry operational consequences. In multinational missions, English additionally operates as a lingua franca among participants whose accents, pragmatic conventions, and levels of proficiency vary. Competence must therefore include listening under pressure, clarification, confirmation, repair, concise reporting, and intercultural accommodation.

This perspective complicates the assumption that general proficiency automatically transfers to mission performance. General English may support foundational resources, but it does not necessarily prepare personnel

to recognise genre expectations, interpret elliptical radio messages, sequence an incident report, or manage interaction when comprehension fails. Operational language education must make these communicative practices visible and rehearse them under conditions approximating use. In this sense, the object of ESMP is participation in specialised military discourse, not mastery of decontextualised forms.

Operational commitment and the training-access problem

The growing operational importance of English coexists with restricted access to language-development opportunities. Armed forces operate continuously, and troops assigned to border security, internal security, field formations, and other demanding duties cannot always be released for residential courses. The problem becomes acute when training institutions are distant, relief personnel are unavailable, unit funds are limited, and movement involves transport, accommodation, and security arrangements. Conventional attendance requirements may therefore exclude the majority located away from HRDCs even when institutional leaders and learners value professional education.

This is an access contradiction rather than a simple motivational deficit. The organisation needs personnel to remain available for current duties, but future multinational and professional roles require communication competence that cannot be developed if training is indefinitely postponed. Previous work concerning Pakistani soldiers has identified a mismatch between general educational English and occupational requirements (Khudai & Sandaran, 2022). The present study addresses a different question: how specialised learning can continue without requiring routine withdrawal from the unit.

From EMP to operationally specific ESMP

ESP is defined by responsiveness to identifiable learner needs, target situations, and discourse practices (Belcher, 2006; Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998). EMP applies this principle to military domains, but the category can remain too broad when one curriculum is expected to serve diverse ranks, branches, appointments, and missions. Hao and Song (2020) distinguish general military provision from English for specific military purposes and demonstrate the value of designing around professional needs. The crucial movement is from military-themed content to task and genre alignment while allowing common learning pathways for mixed-rank troops. ESMP should therefore be differentiated from EMP on three dimensions. First, its needs analysis is role-sensitive: it identifies who communicates with whom, for what purpose, through which channel, and under what constraints. Second, its content is genre and task-based: briefings, handovers, radio exchanges, emergency messages, service encounters, and reports become units of curriculum design. Third, its assessment is performance-oriented: successful communication is judged through intelligibility, accuracy, completeness, repair, and task completion. Figure 1 represents this narrowing of pedagogical focus.

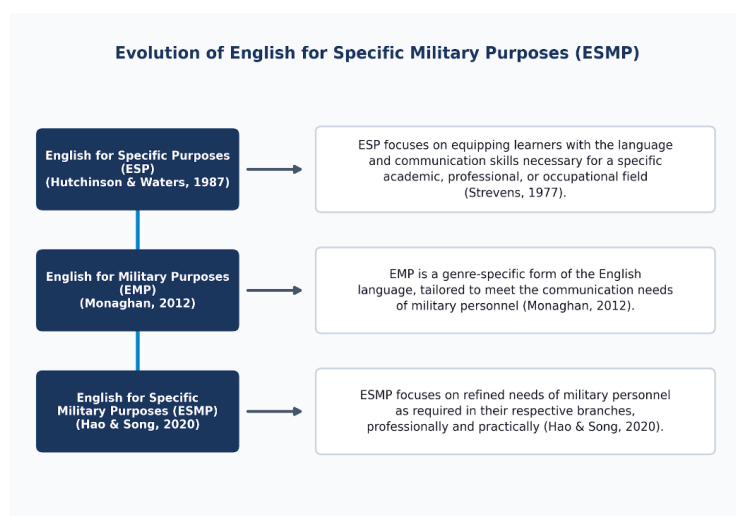


Figure 1: From ESP to operationally specific ESMP

Note. Adapted conceptually from Hutchinson and Waters (1987) and Hao and Song (2020).

Hybrid pedagogy under operational mobility

Hybrid learning combines planned face-to-face and digitally mediated activity rather than merely adding online materials to classroom teaching (Garrison & Vaughan, 2008; Hrastinski, 2019). Its value in military settings lies in continuity across fragmented schedules: asynchronous modules can support vocabulary, listening, procedural input, and repeated practice, while face-to-face sessions can concentrate on feedback, role-play, negotiation, and high-stakes speaking. The model is nevertheless conditional. Connectivity, security, device access, digital literacy, instructor workload, and protected learning time shape whether flexibility becomes meaningful participation or merely transferred responsibility.

This distinction also separates permanent instructional design from emergency remote teaching (Hodges et al., 2020). A viable hybrid ESMP curriculum must intentionally connect modes, sequence content, and specify where each interaction adds value. Low-bandwidth materials and offline access may be more relevant than sophisticated platforms. Equally, learner autonomy should not become institutional withdrawal: self-paced activity requires guidance, feedback, monitoring, and opportunities to rehearse communication with others.

Interaction Equivalency Theory and the proposed framework

Moore (1989) identified learner-content, learner-teacher, and learner-learner interaction as central forms of distance education. Anderson's (2003) Interaction Equivalency Theorem proposes that deep learning can be supported when at least one interaction is provided at a high level, while the others may be offered at lower levels without eliminating their value. In operationally mobile settings, the theorem reconceptualises learning as continuity of meaningful interaction rather than continuity of physical attendance. Learner-content interaction can carry stable, repeatable ESMP input; learner-teacher interaction can provide diagnosis and corrective feedback; learner-learner interaction can rehearse coordination and repair.

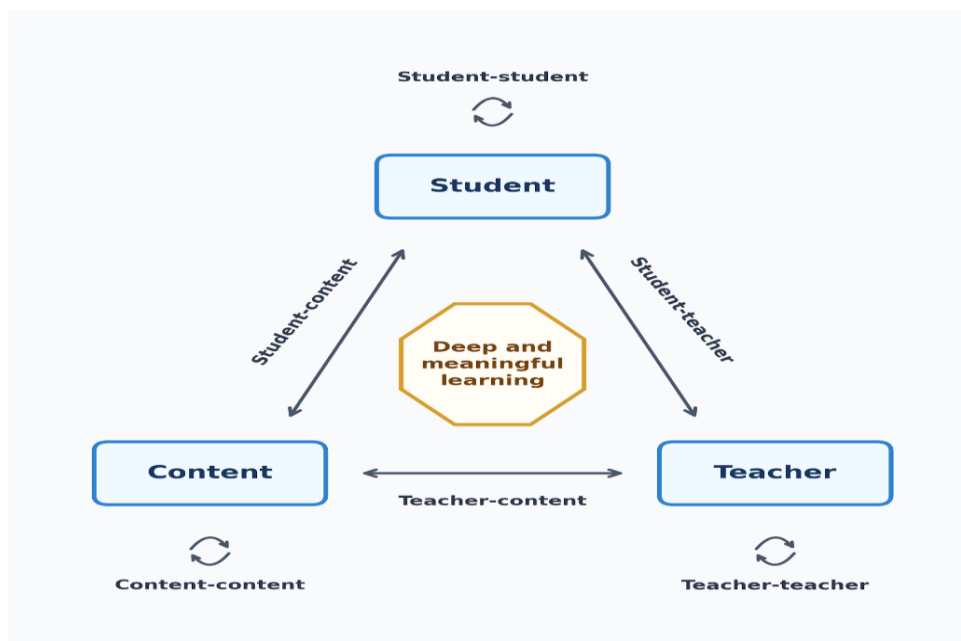


Figure 2: Interaction modes informing the hybrid ESMP model

Note. Adapted from Moore (1989) and Anderson (2003).

The proposed framework does not treat these modes as mechanically interchangeable. Military communication is interactive, and therefore peer and instructor contact cannot be removed without consequence. Instead, the theorem guides strategic allocation: high-quality learner-content interaction sustains access between contact periods; scheduled teacher interaction protects feedback and progression; and focused peer tasks preserve

collaborative discourse practice. Operational constraints, delivery modes, interactions, and expected outcomes are connected in Figure 3.

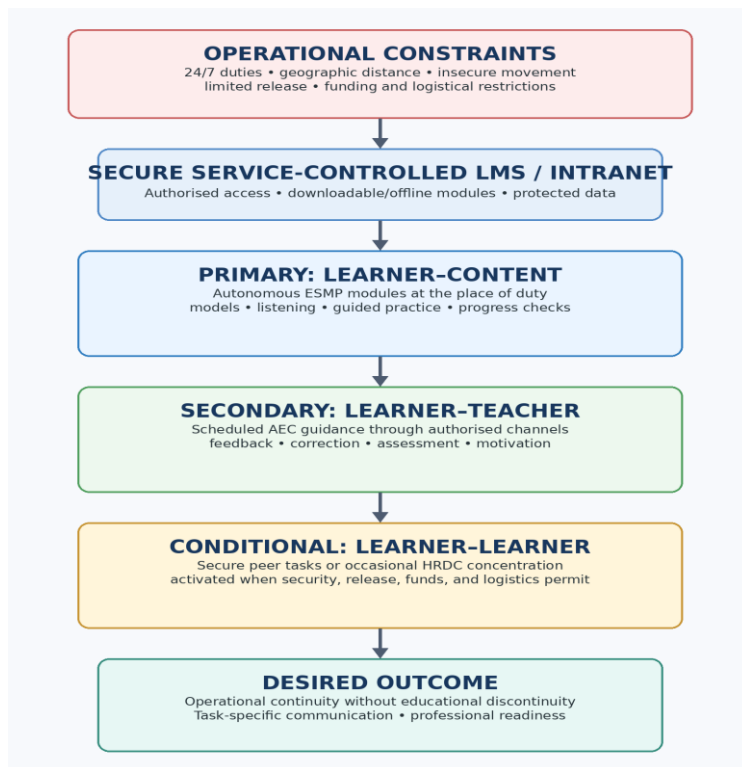


Figure 3: Interaction-equivalency framework for operationally committed troops

Note. Developed from ESMP principles and Anderson's (2003) Interaction Equivalency Theorem.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study used a questionnaire-led sequential explanatory feasibility design. Quantitative data established patterns in perceived relevance, access, willingness, and instructional suitability. After preliminary review of the questionnaires, selected troop respondents whose answers were ambiguous or internally unclear were contacted by telephone. These calls were used only to clarify the meaning of particular responses and contextualise the survey pattern; they did not constitute interviews with all 60 participants or a separately sampled qualitative phase. Integration occurred during interpretation by pairing quantitative indicators with the documented clarifications and their design implications (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). The study is exploratory and does not support population-level generalisation or causal claims.

Participants and Sampling

The study involved 60 voluntary participants recruited through criterion-based purposive access rather than location-bound or simple random sampling. The learner group comprised 30 mixed-rank serving troops from different units, including personnel located away from central training institutions and in operationally committed settings. Their precise rank distribution was not used to restrict participation. Contact depended on official permission, operational availability, and voluntary willingness. The instructional group comprised 30 serving Army Education Corps officers drawn from HRDCs and military training institutions across Pakistan. AEC membership and voluntary willingness were compulsory selection criteria because the officers were expected to judge language pedagogy, institutional delivery, and the feasibility of remote support.

Instruments and Procedure

Two purpose-built questionnaires were used: a 12-item troop instrument and a 14-item AEC officer instrument. Items addressed operational relevance, ESMP orientation, access, willingness, hybrid suitability, interaction, and institutional provision and were mapped to the research questions. Responses included demographic and yes/no items and five-point Likert statements (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree). Distribution and contact occurred only where permission and operational circumstances allowed. The troop questionnaire produced excellent internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = .932$), while the officer questionnaire produced acceptable consistency ($\alpha = .733$). These coefficients support score coherence but do not by themselves establish construct validity; interpretation is therefore confined to perceived feasibility.

Questionnaires were reviewed for ambiguous or apparently inconsistent troop responses. Those respondents were contacted telephonically, where feasible, and asked to clarify the intended meaning of the relevant answers. The procedure was deliberately targeted because researchers could not simply enter operational areas and because routine public connectivity may be restricted for security reasons. Clarifications were documented and used to explain the corresponding quantitative pattern. The clarification stage was intentionally narrow rather than a comprehensive qualitative interview phase, and telephone access was not assumed to be equal across all operational contexts.

Data Analysis and Integration

SPSS Version 26 was used to calculate frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. Inferential tests were not used because the instruments contained group-specific items and the purpose was descriptive feasibility assessment rather than hypothesis testing. Telephone clarifications were organised by the survey issue they explained, including operational relevance, access restrictions, preferred interaction, and institutional support. The joint display in Table 5 pairs numerical patterns with clarification evidence and design implications; it does not treat the calls as an independently generalisable qualitative sample.

Ethical Considerations

Participation was voluntary, informed consent was obtained, and no service numbers, unit identities, operational locations, or other identifying information were reported. Contact and follow-up were undertaken only where institutional permission and operational circumstances allowed. Data were stored securely and used for research purposes under the access procedures applicable to the project. Reporting deliberately avoids identifying operational formations or locations.

RESULTS

Participant profiles

Table 1: Demographic and access profile of troops (N = 30)

Category	Frequency	Percentage
10 years of service	5	16.70%
11–15 years of service	25	83.30%
Matric education	20	66.70%
Intermediate education	10	33.30%
Served in UN mission	12	40.00%
Not served in UN mission	18	60.00%
Mobile/laptop access	30	100.00%
Mobile data	25	83.30%
Wi-Fi	5	16.70%

Note. Categories within service, education, UN experience, and connectivity are mutually exclusive; device access was reported separately.

The troop profile combines substantial service experience with relatively limited formal education. All participants reported access to a mobile device or laptop, and most reported mobile data in ordinary circumstances. This must not be misread as permission to use public internet or social media in operational areas, where connectivity may be prohibited or restricted for security. Personal device ownership supports familiarity with digital interfaces, but operational delivery would require a secure, service-controlled LMS or intranet, offline-capable modules, and locally authorised access windows.

Table 2: Troop perceptions of English learning and hybrid ESMP

Indicator	Mean	SD
Importance of English for troops	3.20	1.297
Desire to improve English	3.97	0.615
Willingness to learn during duty hours	4.20	0.761
Online study suits military routine	3.73	0.907
Confidence in online participation	3.67	0.959
Online learning supports military needs	4.10	0.548
Preference for hybrid approach	4.00	0.743

Note. Five-point scale: 1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree; N = 30.

The pattern is more significant than a simple statement of positive attitudes. Troops were willing to learn during duty hours and favoured hybrid provision, yet the importance assigned to English was lower and more variable. Willingness is therefore not the central obstacle. The principal difficulty is creating protected learning continuity while personnel remain committed to their units. Moderate ratings for online suitability and confidence also qualify the device-access figure: a secure institutional system, relevant content, orientation, and authorised study time are required before personal digital familiarity becomes educational access.

Table 3: Professional profile of officers (N = 30)

Category	Frequency	Percentage
11–15 years of service	14	46.7%
More than 15 years of service	16	53.3%
Taught an EMP course	21	70.0%
Had not taught EMP	9	30.0%
Served in a UN mission	11	36.7%
Had not served in a UN mission	19	63.3%
Taught online	19	63.3%
Had not taught online	11	36.7%
Observed communication challenges	18	60.0%
Had not observed such challenges	12	40.0%

Note. Percentages are based on N = 30.

The officer group brought extensive service and instructional experience. Seventy per cent had taught EMP, and nearly two-thirds had taught online. Their observation of troop communication difficulties, despite the group's more limited direct UN experience, suggests that the perceived gap is evident in routine institutional practice and is not confined to retrospective deployment accounts.

Table 4: Officer perceptions of ESMP and hybrid instruction

Indicator	Mean	SD
Introduction of ESMP	3.60	1.102
Suitability of hybrid approach	4.13	0.900
Use of online resources	4.30	0.794
IT provision for troops	3.63	0.490
Balance between EGP and ESMP	2.67	0.479
Balance between online and face-to-face modes	4.73	0.691
Suitability of existing ESMP activities	1.67	0.802
Online learning builds confidence	3.80	0.407
Online learning increases motivation	3.87	0.776

Note. Five-point scale: 1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree; N = 30.

Officers endorsed the delivery principle more strongly than the current pedagogical provision. Support for balancing online and face-to-face modes and for using online resources was high, whereas the suitability of existing ESMP activities was rated very low. The contrast locates the main weakness in curriculum and task design rather than in opposition to hybridisation. The low EGP-ESMP balance also indicates uncertainty about how foundational language support should connect with operational discourse practice.

Targeted telephone clarifications

Clarification calls showed that operational relevance governed perceived value. Troops distinguished general study from language required for radio communication, checkpoint security, briefings, reporting, and coordination. One respondent summarised the distinction: “We do not need to learn English for literature; we need to learn it to command, control, and coordinate in the field.” The point is not a rejection of general proficiency but a demand that instruction visibly connect language forms with professional action.

The calls also clarified that “online learning” could not refer to the unrestricted use of public social media or ordinary internet services in operational areas. Participants’ support was conditional on an authorised military system, secure access, downloadable or offline content, and schedules compatible with duty. Remote learner-content engagement was considered the most consistently available mode. Periodic instructor feedback was valued for guidance and correction, whereas peer or physical classroom interaction depended on release, the security situation, funds, transport, and logistics.

Table 5: Integrated joint display of feasibility evidence

Quantitative Pattern	Qualitative Explanation	Interpretation	Design Implication
High willingness; lower recognition of English importance	Value increased when linked to radio, checkpoint, reporting, and coordination tasks	Motivation rises when content is visibly occupational	Begin with mission genres and explicit task relevance
Device ownership; moderate remote-learning confidence	Public connectivity may be prohibited in operational areas	Personal access is not operationally authorised access	Use a secure military LMS/intranet with offline-capable modules
Strong support for hybrid balance	Troops cannot be released frequently; travel, funds, and logistics are constrained	Continuous residential attendance is structurally unrealistic	Make learner-content primary and remote teacher support secondary

Very low suitability rating for existing ESMP activities	AEC instructors require specialised materials and delivery preparation	Curriculum expertise is the principal readiness gap	Use HRDCs for design, quality assurance, feedback, and periodic contact
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Note. Integration pairs questionnaire patterns with targeted telephone clarification and design implications.

DISCUSSION

Feasibility is operational and institutional rather than merely technological

The evidence supports conditional feasibility. Participants did not resist hybrid ESMP, and personal device familiarity was widespread. Yet the access problem is created by continuous duty, geographic dispersion, security restrictions, limited unit funds, and the logistical cost of releasing and moving troops to an HRDC. Feasibility therefore cannot be defined by smartphone ownership or public internet availability. The relevant question is whether the institution can deliver authorised content and feedback without weakening unit operational availability. A secure military LMS or intranet is not an optional technical enhancement; it is the institutional bridge between security compliance and educational continuity.

Operational continuity without educational discontinuity

The central contradiction is temporal and organisational. Troops are needed continuously for present duties, but future peacekeeping, multinational, instructional, and professional responsibilities require communication skills that are easily deferred when classified as non-immediate. Residential training treats absence from the unit as the price of education. The proposed model rejects that binary: personnel should be able to remain operationally available while progressing through structured autonomous learning. HRDC attendance then becomes periodic and purposeful rather than the only gateway to instruction.

Treating the military as a discourse community explains why the remotely delivered content must remain specialised. Troops need to learn how communicative purposes are realised through recurrent genres and interactional norms. Radio exchanges privilege brevity, confirmation, and repair; incident reports require completeness, sequencing, and evidential clarity; checkpoint encounters require procedural language and intercultural control. ESMP becomes theoretically distinct when these practices-not a list of military words-organise needs analysis, materials, and assessment (Bhatia, 2004; Swales, 1990).

Reconfiguring interaction under operational constraints

The results extend Anderson's (2003) theorem by assigning each interaction mode an operationally realistic function. Learner-content interaction is primary because secure, downloadable, and offline-capable modules can sustain continuity even when movement and direct contact are restricted. Learner-teacher interaction is secondary but indispensable: AEC instructors can provide scheduled guidance, corrective feedback, assessment, and motivational support through authorised channels. Learner-learner interaction remains pedagogically valuable for turn-taking, clarification, and collaborative performance, but its intensity must reflect operational reality. It may occur through secure remote tasks where permitted or during occasional physical concentration at an HRDC when security, release, funds, and logistics allow.

Interaction equivalency therefore guides prioritisation rather than declaring all interactions interchangeable. Autonomous learning is not abandonment. The institution must provide protected time, sequenced content, progress monitoring, feedback windows, and local facilitation. A viable design can use asynchronous learner-content engagement for input and repeated practice, targeted remote teacher contact for correction and progression, and periodic peer sessions for communicative rehearsal. This configuration makes educational continuity compatible with operational availability.

Contribution to ESP and professional language pedagogy

The study contributes to ESP by demonstrating that specificity operates at several levels: military domain, appointment, communicative genre, delivery channel, security condition, and operational availability. It contributes contextually by providing evidence from a non-NATO, resource-constrained, and geographically dispersed setting. It contributes theoretically by configuring interaction equivalency around the realities of service-controlled access. It contributes pedagogically by defining hybrid ESMP as an integrated system of secure content, autonomous progression, remote teacher support, and conditional peer contact rather than the public online delivery of an existing course. Finally, it contributes institutionally by repositioning HRDCs as curriculum, monitoring, assessment, and quality-assurance hubs capable of supporting learners who cannot attend continuously.

Pedagogical and Policy Implications

Curriculum development should begin with target-situation analysis across troop appointments and mission genres. A common core may address listening under varied accents, radio procedure, briefings, handovers, emergency messages, incident reporting, clarification, confirmation, and intercultural service encounters. Appointment-sensitive extensions can address specialised duties. Modules should be short, downloadable, usable offline after authentication, and designed for autonomous progression. Assessment should use secure performance tasks and transparent rubrics rather than relying exclusively on self-report.

The allocation of interaction should be functional. The military LMS should include model texts, listening exercises, vocabulary, guided practice, and progress records. AEC instructors should be assigned manageable cohorts and authorised feedback windows. Face-to-face concentration at an HRDC should be reserved for activities that benefit most from co-presence: diagnostic assessment, intensive speaking, collaborative simulations, and final performance evaluation. Policy must provide protected learning time within units, secure content governance, local coordination, instructor preparation, and realistic funding for occasional contact. These are prerequisites for piloting, not evidence that the model is already effective.

Limitations

Several limitations qualify the conclusions. The sample was small, voluntary, purposively accessed, and drawn from one national military system; the equal group sizes support descriptive comparison but not statistical generalisation. The mixed-rank troop sample was not analysed by precise rank or appointment. Measures were purpose-built and self-reported, so perceived feasibility cannot be treated as demonstrated competence or learning effectiveness. Telephone follow-up was restricted to accessible troops whose responses required clarification; it was not a comprehensive qualitative phase, and unequal access may have silenced personnel in the most restricted locations. Finally, the proposed secure LMS and interaction sequence were not implemented: no platform usage data, pretest-posttest, delayed assessment, or mission performance outcomes were collected. Future research should pilot the framework within security protocols, validate the instruments, compare interaction configurations, and test transfer to operational genres.

CONCLUSION

This study asked how operational conditions restrict access to ESMP, how troops and AEC instructors perceive a hybrid alternative, and how interaction can be organised while learners remain at their places of duty. The evidence indicates willingness and institutional support, but also exposes the inadequacy of equating personal device ownership with authorised operational connectivity. Feasibility depends on a secure, service-controlled LMS, offline-capable content, instructor capability, protected unit learning time, and realistic provision for occasional contact.

The central argument extends beyond delivery mode. Military language training cannot remain confined to generalised instruction detached from the discourse through which operations are coordinated. ESMP is best understood as operational discourse competence: the capacity to use, interpret, clarify, and repair language

within specialised genres, roles, and pressures. Hybrid pedagogy can support this competence when it deliberately distributes, rather than abandons, learner-content, learner-teacher, and learner-learner interaction.

By foregrounding mixed-rank troops dispersed across operational and geographically distant settings, the study makes visible a mismatch between continuous duty and residential training structures. Its contribution is the principle of operational continuity without educational discontinuity. The next empirical step is to implement a bounded, secure hybrid ESMP pilot and test whether primary learner-content interaction, secondary teacher support, and conditional peer contact produce measurable improvement in authentic operational communication.

Statements And Declarations

Author Contributions

Unaiza Khudai: conceptualisation, methodology, investigation, formal analysis, and original draft preparation. Shanti Chandran Sandaran: supervision, methodological guidance, review, and editing. M. Rab Nawaz Shad: research facilitation, participant access, contextual guidance, and support for data collection.

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Data Availability

The underlying data are not publicly available due to participant confidentiality and military access restrictions. Reasonable requests may be directed to the corresponding author and will remain subject to institutional approval.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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