



## ORIGINAL PAPER

# Classical Legacy vs. Modern Dissemination in Teaching English for Psychology Students: From Freud and Jung to Jordan Peterson

Maria-Magdalena Lăpădat<sup>1)</sup>

### Abstract:

This paper examines the pedagogical value of integrating both classical and contemporary psychological figures in teaching English for Psychology students within an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) framework. Classical theorists such as Sigmund Freud and Carl Gustav Jung represent foundational pillars of modern psychology, whose theories on the unconscious, personality, and archetypes continue to influence psychological discourse and academic terminology. Their work provides reliable conceptual frameworks and specialized vocabulary essential for psychology students' academic literacy. In contrast, contemporary psychologists such as Jordan Peterson reach wider modern audiences through digital media, public lectures, and popular publications, demonstrating new forms of psychological dissemination and communication. By combining classical theoretical sources with modern communicative models, ESP courses can expose students both to traditional academic discourse and to contemporary forms of psychological communication. This approach supports the development of specialized vocabulary, critical thinking, and academic communication skills while also illustrating how psychological ideas evolve and circulate in modern public discourse.

**Keywords:** *English for Specific Purposes (ESP); psychology education; Freud; Jung; Jordan Peterson.*

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<sup>1)</sup> Assistant Professor, Ph.D, University of Craiova, Faculty of Letters, Department of Applied Modern Languages, Craiova, Romania, Phone: 0040731297911, Email: magda\_faurar@yahoo.com. ORCID ID: 0000-0003-2299-4977.

### **English for Psychology as Disciplinary and Communicative Training**

English for Psychology should not be understood simply as general English supplemented with a list of psychological terms. English for Specific Purposes is organized around the purposes for which a particular group of learners needs the language. Hutchinson and Waters consequently conceptualize ESP as an approach in which the selection of content and methodology follows from the learner's reason for learning the language (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, p. 19). For psychology students, those reasons include reading journal articles, understanding theoretical texts, discussing research, describing psychological processes, interpreting data, giving presentations, writing reports, interviewing clients, and communicating specialist concepts to non-specialists.

Psychology also has recognizable linguistic characteristics. Psychological writing depends heavily on technical terminology, operational definitions, descriptions of evidence, statistical formulations, abstract nouns, and nominalized structures. Recent needs analysis involving psychology students emphasizes precisely this combination of terminology, empirical claims, argumentation, and genre-specific language (Aslam & Irshad, 2025, p. 482). Consequently, an effective ESP course should teach students not only what repression, archetype, cognitive bias, trait, or attachment mean, but how psychologists define concepts, qualify claims, formulate hypotheses, distinguish observation from interpretation, and move between professional and public registers.

This distinction creates a strong rationale for placing classical and contemporary psychological discourse side by side. Freud and Jung represent the historical formation of a substantial part of psychological vocabulary. Their terminology entered psychology, psychiatry, literary criticism, cultural studies, and everyday language. Expressions such as the unconscious, repression, ego, complex, projection, archetype, and persona now circulate far beyond the original theoretical systems in which they were formulated. Students therefore need to recognize both the technical histories of these words and their semantic transformations.

Peterson creates a complementary pedagogical opportunity. His psychological discourse is encountered not primarily through difficult historical treatises but through contemporary books, recorded lectures, interviews, podcasts, online clips, and public debates. Students can thus study a movement from specialist knowledge toward mass communication. The linguistic question becomes not merely "What does this psychological term mean?" but "How is this concept reformulated when the audience changes?" That question is particularly relevant for future psychologists, who may need to move between research articles, professional conferences, clinical communication, teaching, public education, and digital communication.

The proposed curriculum should therefore distinguish three levels of competence. The first is terminological competence, or the accurate comprehension and production of discipline-specific vocabulary. The second is genre competence, meaning the ability to recognize how a research article, theoretical essay, clinical exchange, lecture, podcast, and public interview organize knowledge differently. The third is critical communicative competence, which requires students to assess whether linguistic confidence, persuasive rhetoric, and accessibility are supported by appropriate evidence. The transition from Freud and Jung to Peterson is pedagogically valuable precisely because it allows all three competencies to be practiced.

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### **Freud and Jung: Classical Psychological Discourse as a Source of Specialized Language**

Freud provides an unusually productive starting point for an English for Psychology syllabus because psychoanalysis generated an extensive technical lexicon that has survived even where specific Freudian propositions are disputed. Terms such as unconscious, repression, libido, wish fulfilment, latent content, manifest content, dream-work, displacement, condensation, defence mechanism, and Oedipus complex enable students to investigate relationships between vocabulary and theoretical systems.

Dream interpretation provides a particularly suitable textual unit. Freud's account distinguishes between the remembered or manifest dream and psychological meanings that remain latent, while treating dreams as symbolic formations related to unconscious processes. Dumitrescu's discussion of *The Interpretation of Dreams* situates this terminology directly within Freud's attempt to explain repression, desire, symbolism, and the structure of unconscious mental activity (Dumitrescu, 2019, p. 147). An ESP exercise can therefore ask students to distinguish dream, dream content, dream interpretation, symbol, repressed desire, and unconscious process, and then reformulate a theoretical explanation first for an academic audience and afterwards for a patient or general reader.

Freud's own formulation can reinforce this terminological discussion while exposing students directly to a foundational psychological text. Near the conclusion of *The Interpretation of Dreams*, he famously states that "the interpretation of dreams is the royal road to a knowledge of the unconscious activities of the mind" (Freud, 1900/1953, p. 608). The quotation is particularly productive in an ESP context because it brings together several terms central to psychoanalytic discourse, including dream interpretation, unconscious, and mental activity. Students can examine both the metaphorical force of the expression royal road and the way in which Freud presents dream analysis as a method of gaining access to psychological processes that are not directly available to consciousness. The passage can subsequently be paraphrased in contemporary academic English, allowing students to distinguish between the rhetorical style of a foundational theoretical text and the more cautious formulations expected in present-day empirical psychology.

Freud is also useful because students encounter historical and translated discourse. English terms such as ego and id do not transparently reproduce the ordinary character of Freud's German *Ich* and *Es*. This creates opportunities for discussing translation, terminological standardization, Latinization, and the authority that specialist vocabulary can acquire in translation. Students may compare a technical noun with a plain-English explanation and ask what semantic precision is gained or lost. Such exercises encourage them to see psychological vocabulary not as an inventory of fixed labels but as a historically developed linguistic system.

Jung expands the lexical field in a different direction. His work introduces collective unconscious, archetype, persona, shadow, anima, animus, Self, complex, and individuation. These terms are particularly effective for ESP teaching because many have both specialist and ordinary meanings. A persona can describe an everyday social image, for example, while Jungian psychology gives the term a more specific theoretical function. Similarly, shadow can be a physical phenomenon, a literary metaphor, an everyday description of an unwanted aspect of personality, or a technical Jungian construct. Students must therefore infer meaning from disciplinary context rather than from dictionary equivalence alone.

The concept of the collective unconscious provides an especially clear example of the relationship between specialized terminology and theoretical definition. Jung proposes that, in addition to personal consciousness and the personal unconscious, there exists "a second psychic system of a collective, universal, and impersonal nature which is identical in all individuals" (Jung, 1969, p. 43). He associates this deeper level of the psyche with inherited archetypal structures rather than with experiences acquired exclusively during an individual lifetime. From an ESP perspective, the passage is valuable because students can analyze the lexical opposition between personal and collective, as well as the semantic relationship among universal, impersonal, individual, and inherited. They can then reformulate Jung's theoretical proposition through contemporary academic reporting structures such as Jung proposes that, Jung conceptualizes the collective unconscious as, and within Jungian theory. Such formulations are important because they allow students to describe an influential historical theory accurately without presenting its propositions automatically as established contemporary scientific fact.

The conceptual relationship between archetype and collective unconscious can be used to teach hierarchical definition. Laughlin and Tiberia explain that Jung progressively developed the archetype as an inherited or transpersonal psychological structure and described their totality in relation to the collective unconscious (Laughlin & Tiberia, 2012, p. 131). Students can convert such theoretical exposition into definition patterns: "X refers to..."; "X differs from Y in that..."; "X is manifested through..."; "X should not be confused with...". Such patterns are transferable to contemporary academic psychology, where definitional precision is indispensable.

Jungian material also trains students to distinguish an abstract construct from its representation. Archetypes are discussed through their manifestations in dreams, myths, fantasies, art, and culturally variable imagery, rather than as directly observable objects. Their manifestations can therefore differ substantially across individuals and cultures (Laughlin & Tiberia, 2012, p. 134). This distinction can generate sophisticated language work with verbs such as represent, manifest, symbolize, indicate, interpret, suggest, and demonstrate. These verbs differ importantly in evidential strength. A dream image may be interpreted as expressing a pattern without demonstrating its existence. Teaching such differences helps students develop epistemic caution.

Classical material must, however, be historically framed. An ESP class should not teach Freud and Jung as if every element of psychoanalytic or analytical psychology represented current empirical consensus. The objective is linguistic and disciplinary literacy. Students should learn to distinguish formulations such as "Freud proposed," "Jung interpreted," "subsequent research has examined," and "current evidence supports." Reporting verbs thereby become instruments of intellectual accuracy.

The classical component ultimately teaches slow reading. Students must unpack abstraction, identify specialized definitions, follow extended arguments, recognize metaphorical language, and paraphrase without distorting the original concept. Such skills remain essential when they later read contemporary psychological research. Freud and Jung are valuable, therefore, not only because of their historical influence but because their texts compel students to negotiate the relationship between language and conceptual complexity.

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### **Jordan Peterson and the Modern Dissemination of Psychological Discourse**

Jordan Peterson provides a markedly different type of ESP material. His discourse combines clinical psychology, personality research, mythology, religion, evolutionary arguments, self-help, literary interpretation, and cultural commentary. This hybridity makes his work controversial as a source of psychological knowledge, but especially valuable as a source for discourse analysis. Students can observe what happens when psychological concepts leave a specialized academic environment and enter a media ecosystem structured by lectures, bestselling books, podcasts, interviews, short video clips, and online discussion.

Peterson's *Maps of Meaning* is particularly useful for examining the transition between academic terminology and philosophical or mythological assertion. Near the conclusion of the book he states, "Meaning is the most profound manifestation of instinct" (Peterson, 1999, p. 362). The sentence is linguistically simple but conceptually dense. Meaning, manifestation, and instinct are abstract nouns with different intellectual histories, while the copular structure presents their relationship with strong declarative certainty. An ESP classroom can use a sentence of this kind to teach students to separate grammatical simplicity from conceptual simplicity. Students can be asked what evidence would be necessary to transform the statement into a testable psychological hypothesis, how its modality might be reduced through *may*, *might*, or *can* be interpreted as, and whether the term *instinct* is being used in a technical, metaphorical, or hybrid sense.

A second example appears in *12 Rules for Life*, where Peterson writes that "dominance hierarchies have been an essentially permanent feature of the environment" (Peterson, 2018, p. 11). Linguistically, the sentence offers rich material. The present perfect have been creates continuity between evolutionary history and the present; essentially operates as a qualifying adverb; permanent intensifies the proposition; and the technical-sounding noun phrase dominance hierarchies compresses a much larger claim. Students can examine how scientific vocabulary and temporal generalization contribute to rhetorical authority. They can then locate the sources underlying such an argument and evaluate whether the evidence warrants the breadth of the claim. This exercise joins vocabulary instruction to information literacy.

Peterson's importance for an ESP course becomes even clearer at the level of dissemination. Van de Ven and van Gemert characterize him as a public intellectual who communicates through uploaded psychology lectures, podcasts, television appearances, and other digital formats, making complex material accessible to large non-specialist audiences (van de Ven & van Gemert, 2020, p. 291). Their analysis also raises questions about selectivity, filtering, interpretation, and the potential for misinformation. This critical dimension is pedagogically essential. Peterson should not be used merely because he is popular, nor should popularity be treated as evidence of scientific authority. His value lies partly in making the distinction between academic credibility and communicative reach visible.

Students can consequently compare three versions of a psychological claim: a peer-reviewed article, a passage from a popular psychology book, and an interview or podcast segment. They can mark differences in citation practices, hedging, repetition, analogy, humor, personal narrative, audience address, rhetorical questions, and certainty. A journal article may use formulations such as *the results suggest*, *the association was statistically significant*, or *further research is required*. Public discourse frequently rewards shorter propositions, memorable metaphors, narratives, and confident formulations. Neither register is inherently linguistically superior. They perform different

communicative functions. The ESP task is to recognize those functions and understand their epistemological consequences.

Peterson also provides opportunities for teaching spoken English that Freud and Jung cannot supply in comparable audiovisual form. His recorded lectures enable work on stress, intonation, pauses, repair, discourse markers, spontaneous reformulation, emphasis, audience interaction, and extended monologue. Interviews add turn-taking, interruption, clarification, disagreement, challenge, and pragmatic negotiation. Students therefore move from the language of psychological concepts to the language of communicating and defending them.

Most importantly, Peterson allows English for Psychology to address a professional reality increasingly faced by graduates. Psychological information now circulates on YouTube, TikTok, podcasts, Instagram, online newspapers, and other platforms alongside scholarly publications. A competent psychologist must be able not only to understand scientific literature but also to recognize how psychological language is simplified, commercialized, politicized, or detached from its original evidence base. Peterson's prominence makes that contrast immediately observable.

### **Integrating Classical Reading and Digital Discourse in the ESP Classroom**

The pedagogical objective should not be to construct a chronological survey from Freud to Jung to Peterson. This need for methodological flexibility corresponds to Lăpădat's discussion of contemporary EFL pedagogy, which emphasizes the importance of selecting resources and teaching methodologies according to learners' specific contexts and communicative needs. Modern teaching resources can increase learner engagement and authenticity while supporting learner-centred instruction and communicative competence (Lăpădat, 2023, p. 253). This perspective is particularly relevant to English for Psychology, where students must engage both with the traditional theoretical discourse of the discipline and with contemporary forms of communication. The combination of classical psychological texts with lectures, interviews, podcasts, and other digital materials therefore allows ESP instruction to preserve disciplinary depth while responding to the communicative practices of present-day learners.

A more effective approach is to organize teaching around language functions and communicative transformations. The same concept can be followed across theoretical writing, scholarly commentary, public lectures, interviews, and popular books. This creates what might be called a terminological genealogy, in which students investigate not only what words mean but how meanings change across authors and contexts.

A unit on the unconscious, for example, could begin with Freud's distinction between conscious and unconscious mental activity, continue with Jung's extension toward a collective unconscious, and conclude with selected contemporary material in which unconscious processes are invoked in public psychological discourse. Students would construct a terminology matrix containing the term, author, definition, typical collocations, related concepts, oppositions, and current status. Unconscious might be connected with repression in a Freudian text, with archetype in Jung, and with automatic behavior or symbolic interpretation in contemporary discourse. The exercise prevents students from assuming that identical vocabulary implies identical theory.

Authentic audiovisual material is particularly useful at the contemporary stage. Research on video in ESP settings shows that teachers can exploit authentic recordings for technical terminology, phraseology, collocations, contextualized vocabulary, pragmatic competence, listening, and subsequent speaking activities (Jurkovič & Mertelj,

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2015, p. 22). A Peterson lecture or interview can therefore be used without requiring students to endorse its argument. Before watching, students predict specialized vocabulary. During viewing, they identify key terms, discourse markers, examples, analogies, and expressions of certainty. Afterwards, they reconstruct the argument and test it against a scholarly source.

A second task can focus on register transformation. Students receive a short theoretical passage concerning archetypes, personality, dreams, or motivation. First, they write a 150-word academic summary using appropriate reporting verbs and cautious modality. Next, they explain the same material orally to a non-specialist audience in ninety seconds. Finally, they produce a professional explanation suitable for a client. The three products require different lexical choices while preserving conceptual accuracy. This develops a skill future psychologists frequently need: simplification without falsification.

A third activity should explicitly teach source hierarchy. Students categorize material as primary theoretical work, empirical research, peer-reviewed commentary, textbook explanation, professional guidance, popular psychology, interview material, or social-media commentary. They then identify what kind of claim each source can responsibly support. A Peterson interview may be an excellent primary source for analyzing Peterson's rhetoric, for example, but it is not automatically adequate evidence for a general claim about clinical efficacy. A Freud text is authoritative evidence for what Freud argued, but its historical authority does not independently verify a contemporary empirical claim. Such distinctions teach academic integrity through practical language analysis.

Professional interaction should form another component. A case study on English materials for psychology students found a strong need for both reading and communicative speaking and proposed interactive therapist-patient simulations alongside psychology-specific vocabulary and academic reading tasks (Lubis et al., 2015, p. 57). Classroom simulations can therefore ask students to explain a term, request clarification, summarize a client's statement, avoid premature diagnosis, reformulate technical vocabulary, and respond empathetically in English. Classical and contemporary texts supply conceptual material, but the communicative task converts passive vocabulary into professional language.

Assessment can reflect this integration. A final portfolio might contain a terminology glossary, a 500-word comparison of two psychological texts, an annotated transcript from an interview, a critical source evaluation, and a five-minute presentation translating an academic concept for a public audience. An analytic rubric could allocate 30 percent to terminological accuracy, 25 percent to evidence and source use, 20 percent to genre and register control, 15 percent to oral clarity and interaction, and 10 percent to critical evaluation. Such assessment measures what an English for Psychology course is supposed to develop rather than rewarding grammatical accuracy in isolation.

The comparison between classical texts and digital discourse thus becomes methodological rather than merely historical. Freud and Jung train students to read slowly, define precisely, and interpret conceptual systems. Contemporary multimedia material trains them to listen, respond, evaluate rhetoric, and recognize adaptation to audiences. The strongest ESP curriculum combines both.

### **Pedagogical Implications and Conclusion**

Bringing Freud, Jung, and Peterson into the same English for Psychology course does not mean presenting them as equivalent representatives of psychological science. They occupy different historical, theoretical, institutional, and communicative positions. That difference is exactly what makes the combination educationally productive.

Freud allows students to investigate how a specialized psychological vocabulary develops and how technical terminology can subsequently enter ordinary language. Jung extends the exercise into symbolism, conceptual polysemy, abstraction, cultural interpretation, and metaphor. Peterson introduces a different question: what happens to psychological discourse when it is adapted to contemporary media and addressed to millions of non-specialists? His books, lectures, interviews, and podcasts make visible the processes of simplification, amplification, rhetorical framing, and audience engagement that increasingly shape public understandings of psychology.

This model also avoids two pedagogical extremes. An exclusively classical syllabus risks presenting English for Psychology as a museum of canonical terminology disconnected from the communicative environments students currently inhabit. An exclusively contemporary syllabus may sacrifice theoretical depth and historical understanding in favor of immediacy. Combining them allows students to move between conceptual history and present-day communication.

The most valuable outcome is therefore not familiarity with three individual thinkers. It is the acquisition of disciplinary judgment in English. Students learn that a term has a history, that a definition depends on theoretical context, that a confident sentence is not necessarily a demonstrated proposition, that accessibility is different from scientific validity, and that the same psychological concept must be communicated differently in a journal article, lecture, clinical conversation, interview, or public video.

Such training corresponds closely to the actual demands placed on future psychologists. They must read specialized research while navigating an information environment saturated with popular psychological claims. They must communicate accurately with colleagues but intelligibly with clients. They may need to interpret historical theories without treating them as contemporary consensus, and they must evaluate influential public speakers without confusing visibility with disciplinary authority.

A pedagogical movement from Freud and Jung to Peterson can therefore represent more than a chronological transition from classical to modern psychology. It can become a transition between forms of discourse: from foundational theoretical terminology to contemporary multimedia dissemination, from close textual interpretation to real-time spoken communication, and from learning psychological English to critically evaluating how psychological knowledge itself is communicated. Within an ESP framework, this combination equips Psychology students not simply to know English terminology but to participate more intelligently, accurately, and responsibly in the contemporary circulation of psychological knowledge. [

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