

METHODOLOGY OF TEACHING ENGLISH IN NON-PHILOLOGICAL DISCIPLINES: CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

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Abstract: This study explores the key challenges faced in teaching English to students in non-philological disciplines and proposes practical, evidence-informed solutions. As English grows in importance across scientific, technical, and professional domains, students in fields like agriculture, engineering, and business must develop communicative competence despite lacking a language-learning background. Using a qualitative approach that incorporates teacher reflections, classroom observations, and learner feedback, this paper identifies major obstacles – such as limited motivation, subject-specific vocabulary, and restricted instructional time – and presents targeted pedagogical strategies to address them. Findings suggest that integrating English for Specific Purposes (ESP), task-based learning, and interdisciplinary collaboration can significantly improve outcomes.

Keywords: English for Specific Purposes (ESP), non-philological disciplines, language teaching, interdisciplinary learning, communicative competence.

Introduction

The global rise of English as a tool for academic, scientific, and professional communication has created a pressing need for students across all fields – not just philology – to acquire practical English skills. In non-philological faculties such as engineering, economics, agriculture, and medicine, English is often treated as an auxiliary subject. However, students in these areas are increasingly required to read academic texts, write reports, attend international conferences, and collaborate with global peers in English.

Despite this need, the teaching of English in non-philological disciplines faces several pedagogical and institutional challenges. These include low learner motivation, limited language exposure, discipline-specific terminology, and insufficient time for instruction. This article aims to systematically examine these challenges and provide realistic, research-backed solutions that educators can implement to improve the language learning experience for non-language students.

Methods

A qualitative, descriptive approach was used to collect and analyze data from multiple sources:

- *Teacher Interviews:* Ten English language instructors from non-philological faculties at various Uzbek universities shared their experiences and perspectives.
- *Classroom Observations:* Six classroom sessions were observed across departments such as economics, agriculture, and engineering.
- *Student Surveys:* A questionnaire was administered to 80 undergraduate students to assess their attitudes toward English and identify perceived learning difficulties.

The collected data were analyzed thematically to identify recurring challenges and effective instructional strategies.

Results

The qualitative data gathered from instructor interviews, classroom observations, and student surveys revealed a comprehensive picture of the current challenges in teaching English to students in non-philological disciplines. Five primary themes emerged:

1. Low Motivation and Engagement. Approximately 67% of surveyed students reported that they did not see the relevance of English to their future careers. They perceived English courses as obligatory, with minimal bearing on their core academic development. Teachers also observed passive classroom behavior and reluctance to participate in discussions or speaking tasks.

One engineering student remarked, *"I am here to become an engineer, not a translator. Why should I focus on English?"* – a sentiment echoed by many others.

2. Limited Language Proficiency. Many students entered university with only a basic knowledge of English, often rooted in passive grammar-based learning. Instructors noted that students struggled with both receptive skills (reading and listening) and productive skills (writing and speaking). Pronunciation issues and fear of making mistakes further inhibited participation.

3. Difficulty with Subject-Specific Language. Students found it difficult to grasp technical terminology and academic genres relevant to their fields. For instance, agricultural students had trouble interpreting research articles, while economics students struggled with report writing and data commentary in English. This vocabulary barrier affected their comprehension of texts and ability to express ideas accurately.

4. Time Constraints and Overloaded Curriculum. Teachers reported that English classes were often allocated only 2–3 hours per week, leaving little room for practical activities or extended skill development. With packed subject-specific schedules, students often prioritized core courses over English, resulting in inconsistent attendance and preparation.

5. Lack of Interdisciplinary Coordination. There was minimal collaboration between language instructors and faculty from students' major disciplines. Consequently, English materials often lacked relevance and contextual connection to students' academic and professional needs. Teachers expressed the difficulty of creating subject-specific content without domain expertise.

Discussion

The challenges identified in the results highlight the complexity of teaching English to non-philological students, where traditional language instruction methods often fall short. However, effective and context-aware solutions can be implemented to address these problems meaningfully.

Enhancing Motivation through Relevance. Motivation increases when learners perceive English as directly connected to their field. Embedding **English for Specific Purposes (ESP)** principles into the curriculum can bridge this gap. When students see that English is a tool for accessing scholarly information, participating in international conferences, or securing employment abroad, they become more invested.

For example, one teacher incorporated English-language case studies on agribusiness trends, which immediately sparked interest among agriculture students. This real-world application of English helped shift learners' perception from "language as a burden" to "language as a resource."

Addressing Language Gaps through Differentiated Instruction. Given the varied proficiency levels among students, differentiated instruction is key. Teachers can group students by skill level and assign tasks of varying complexity. Additionally, **scaffolding techniques** – such as using visuals, simplified texts, sentence starters, and modeled examples – support learners in building confidence and fluency.

Blended learning tools, such as vocabulary apps (Quizlet), pronunciation guides (YouGlish), and grammar games, were found to be particularly effective in reinforcing foundational skills outside the classroom.

Simplifying Technical Vocabulary through Contextual Learning. To address subject-specific vocabulary challenges, instructors used **contextual learning strategies**. Rather than teaching isolated word lists, vocabulary was introduced through readings, video lectures, and project-based activities. Students were encouraged to create personal glossaries, concept maps, and term banks, often linked to their course materials.

In one economics class, learners analyzed a short market report in English, highlighted key terms (e.g., "GDP," "fiscal policy," "inflation trends"), and then used those terms in a simulated business presentation. This not only enhanced retention but also improved students' ability to apply vocabulary functionally.

Overcoming Time Constraints with Task-Based and Flipped Learning. With limited instructional time, maximizing student engagement per class session is crucial. **Task-based learning** – such as debates, simulations, and collaborative writing – encourages real-world language use within short periods. Instructors also implemented a **flipped classroom** approach, assigning videos and readings for homework, allowing in-class time for discussion and practice.

One teacher shared that by assigning TED Talks related to sustainable farming, students came to class prepared to summarize, reflect, and debate the ideas – resulting in significantly more student talk-time.

Fostering Interdisciplinary Collaboration. Collaboration between language instructors and subject faculty proved to be transformative. Co-developing content or co-teaching units allowed for more relevant material and ensured accuracy in terminology and context. In some cases, subject experts provided real materials – like lab reports or business proposals – which were adapted into language learning tasks. This not only improved students' engagement but also raised the profile of English as an essential academic tool rather than a disconnected subject.

Conclusion. Teaching English in non-philological disciplines is fraught with unique challenges, but these are not insurmountable. Through careful needs analysis, integration of ESP principles, active learning strategies, and collaboration across departments, educators can design more meaningful and effective English instruction for students outside the field of philology. As English continues to be a tool for global participation, equipping all students – not just language majors –

with strong communicative skills should be a shared academic priority.

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