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**CHALLENGES OF TEACHING ENGLISH TO NON-ENGLISH  
MAJORS IN HIGHER EDUCATION  
SUMMARY**

This article explores the major challenges of teaching English to non-English majors in higher education, with particular focus on the Azerbaijani context. It identifies key issues such as low student motivation, limited instructional hours, mixed-ability classrooms, and the continued use of traditional teaching methods. The paper emphasizes the importance of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and communicative language teaching (CLT) as effective approaches to enhance learning outcomes. This study also considers the broader institutional and pedagogical factors that influence the effectiveness of English language instruction in non-language disciplines. It highlights that insufficient alignment between curriculum design and students' real-world needs often leads to superficial language acquisition rather than meaningful competence. The article underlines the role of teachers' professional development in adapting innovative teaching practices and responding to diverse learner needs.

**Key words:** *English for Specific Purposes, higher education, non-English majors, communicative competence, motivation, Azerbaijan*

**Introduction and Problem Statement**

The rapid expansion of globalization and international cooperation has significantly increased the demand for English language proficiency worldwide. In the modern academic and professional environment, English serves as a key medium of communication, research, and knowledge exchange. In countries like Azerbaijan, English has become an integral part of higher education curricula, even for students whose primary specialization is not related to languages. However, despite its importance, the effectiveness of English language instruction for non-English majors remains limited. The core problem lies in the mismatch between institutional expectations and actual learning outcomes. While universities aim to equip students with functional communicative competence, many graduates still lack the ability to use English effectively in real-life and professional contexts. This gap is caused by a combination of pedagogical, institutional, and learner-related factors. Among them are low *student motivation, insufficient instructional time, mixed-ability*

***classrooms, outdated teaching methodologies, lack of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) integration, and limited use of modern technologies.***

***Low student motivation.*** One of the most significant challenges in teaching English to non-English majors is the lack of student motivation. Many students perceive English as a compulsory subject rather than a useful tool for their future careers. This perception reduces their engagement and willingness to participate actively in classroom activities. Research highlights that motivation plays a central role in language acquisition, influencing both the learning process and outcomes [8]. When students fail to see the relevance of English to their academic or professional goals, their learning becomes superficial. In Azerbaijan, this issue is particularly evident among students in technical and scientific fields, who tend to prioritize their core subjects over language learning. In addition, and equally important is the issue of *supportive learning environment* which emphasizes the fact that a positive and supportive classroom environment is essential for effective language learning. Students need to feel confident and comfortable to participate actively and express their ideas.

Psychological factors such as anxiety and fear of making mistakes can hinder language acquisition. Creating a safe and inclusive environment encourages students to take risks and engage in communication [5]. To address this problem, it is essential to connect English instruction with students' specific disciplines. ESP-based teaching increases the perceived value of language learning and enhances motivation [1].

***Limited Instructional Hours with Mixed-Ability Classrooms.*** Another critical issue is the limited number of instructional hours allocated to English courses. Typically, students receive only a few hours of English instruction per week, which is insufficient for developing all four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Language acquisition requires continuous exposure and practice. However, restricted classroom time limits opportunities for meaningful interaction and skill development. As a result, students often fail to achieve the desired level of communicative competence. This issue is compounded by the lack of extracurricular activities that could reinforce classroom learning.

The diversity of student proficiency levels within a single classroom presents another major challenge. Students may range from beginner to intermediate or even advanced levels, making it difficult for instructors to design lessons that meet all learners' needs simultaneously.

Such heterogeneity affects both teaching effectiveness and student engagement. Stronger students may feel bored, while weaker students may struggle to keep up. Research indicates that differentiated instruction and flexible grouping strategies can

help address this issue [10]. However, implementing these strategies requires additional training and resources.

***Outdated Teaching Methods, Lack of ESP-Oriented Materials.*** Traditional teaching methods, particularly the grammar-translation approach, continue to dominate many English classrooms in higher education. These methods focus primarily on theoretical knowledge, such as grammar rules and translation exercises, rather than practical communication skills.

Modern language teaching emphasizes communicative competence, which involves the ability to use language effectively in real-life situations. According to communicative language teaching (CLT) principles, students learn best through interaction and meaningful communication [3]. However, persistence of teacher-centered approaches limits opportunities for active language use and reduces learning effectiveness.

The absence of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) materials tailored to students' academic disciplines is another significant challenge. Many textbooks used in universities are based on general English and do not address the specific linguistic needs of different fields. Hutchinson and Waters argue that language teaching should be designed according to learners' specific needs and professional contexts [1]. Without ESP-oriented content, students fail to acquire relevant vocabulary and communication skills necessary for their future careers. This results in a gap between academic learning and workplace requirements.

***Insufficient Assessment Strategies with Limited Opportunities for Language Practice.*** Assessment practices in many institutions rely heavily on summative evaluation methods, such as midterm and final exams. These methods do not provide continuous feedback or reflect students' actual progress. Formative assessment, including peer evaluation, self-assessment, and regular feedback, has been shown to improve learning outcomes and student engagement [2]. However, its implementation remains limited. Without continuous assessment, students are unable to identify their weaknesses and improve systematically.

The collaboration between subject specialists and language instructors has become increasingly important in enhancing the effectiveness of English language teaching for non-English majors. One of the most effective approaches in this regard is **Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)**, which enables students to acquire both subject knowledge and language skills simultaneously. This method makes learning more meaningful by directly connecting language use with students' academic and professional contexts. Considering the fact that collaboration between subject specialists and language instructors can enhance the relevance of English instruction, the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach allows students to learn both subject content and language simultaneously. This

interdisciplinary method bridges the gap between language learning and professional application, making education more meaningful and effective [6].

Furthermore, the integration of modern technology into CLIL-based instruction provides additional opportunities for interactive and personalized learning. Digital tools and online platforms support communication, collaboration, and access to authentic materials, thereby significantly improving students' engagement and language development. Thus it is highly recommended that collaboration and CLIL approach be implemented with the integration of technology. Technology - enhanced instruction supports personalized learning and increases student engagement which are essential for developing practical language skills [7].

**Teacher Professional Development.** The professional development of teachers is another crucial factor influencing the effectiveness of English language instruction. Teachers need to continuously update their pedagogical knowledge and adopt innovative teaching methods that address diverse learner needs as long as they play a crucial role in the effectiveness of language instruction. However, many instructors lack access to continuous professional development programs that focus on modern teaching methodologies and technological tools. Studies indicate that teacher training programs focused on modern methodologies, digital tools, and learner-centered approaches can significantly improve teaching quality [4]. Therefore, universities should invest in professional development programs that equip teachers with innovative and learner-centered approaches. As without ongoing professional development, instructors may rely on outdated methods that fail to engage students effectively.

### Conclusion

Teaching English to non-English majors in higher education presents multiple interconnected challenges, including low motivation, limited instructional time, mixed-ability classrooms, outdated methodologies, and lack of ESP integration. However, these challenges can be addressed through a comprehensive and flexible approach. The implementation of ESP-based curricula, communicative teaching methods, formative assessment strategies, and technology-enhanced instruction can significantly improve learning outcomes. Additionally, teacher professional development and institutional support are essential for sustainable improvement. By adopting these strategies, higher education institutions in Azerbaijan and beyond can better prepare students for academic success and participation in the global workforce.

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**GÜLŞƏN ƏLİYEVƏ**  
**ALİ TƏHSİLDƏ İNGİLİS DİLİNİN QEYRİ-İNGİLİS İXTİSASLARINA**  
**TƏDRİSİNİN ÇƏTİNLİKLƏRİ**  
**XÜLASƏ**

Bu məqalə Azərbaycan reallığı nəzərə alınmaqla ali təhsil müəssisələrində qeyri-İngilis dili ixtisaslarında oxuyan tələbələrə İngilis dilinin öyrədilməsi zamanı qarşıya çıxan əsas çətinlikləri təhlil edir. Araşdırmada tələbələrin motivasiyasının aşağı olması, dərslər saatlarının məhdudluğu, tələbələrin dil səviyyələrinin fərqli olması və ənənəvi tədris üsullarından davamlı istifadə kimi problemlər ön plana çəkilir. Eyni zamanda, məqalədə Xüsusi Məqsədli İngilis Dili (ESP) və kommunikativ yanaşmanın (CLT) effektiv tədris üsulları kimi əhəmiyyəti vurğulanır. Qeyd edilir ki, praktik ünsiyyət tapşırıqlarının tətbiqi, müasir texnologiyalardan istifadə və tələbəyönümlü yanaşmaların dərslər prosesinə daxil edilməsi qeyri-dil ixtisaslarında İngilis dilinin tədrisinin səmərəliliyini əhəmiyyətli dərəcədə yüksəldə bilər. Burada qeyd olunur ki, tədris proqramı ilə tələbələrin praktik həyat və peşə ehtiyacları arasında kifayət qədər uyğunluq olmadıqda, nəticədə dərin və funksional dil bacarıqları deyil, daha çox səthi biliklər formalaşır. Məqalədə müəllimlərin peşəkar inkişafının əhəmiyyəti xüsusi vurğulanır; qeyd edilir ki, müəllimlər yeni və effektiv tədris üsullarını mənimsəməli və müxtəlif səviyyəli tələbələrin ehtiyaclarına uyğunlaşma bacarığına sahib olmalıdırlar.

**Açar sözlər:** *Xüsusi Məqsədlər üçün İngilis dili, ali təhsil, qeyri-İngilis dili ixtisas tələbələri, ünsiyyət bacarıqları, motivasiya, Azərbaycan*

**ГУЛЬШАН АЛИЕВА**  
**ТРУДНОСТИ ПРЕПОДАВАНИЯ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА**  
**СТУДЕНТАМ НЕАНГЛИЙСКИХ СПЕЦИАЛЬНОСТЕЙ В ВЫСШИХ**  
**УЧЕБНЫХ ЗАВЕДЕНИЯХ**  
**РЕЗЮМЕ**

В данной статье рассматриваются основные проблемы преподавания английского языка студентам неязыковых специальностей в высшем образовании, с особым акцентом на азербайджанский контекст. Выявляются ключевые проблемы, такие как низкая мотивация студентов, ограниченное количество учебных часов, смешанные по уровню подготовки классы и продолжающееся использование традиционных методов обучения. В статье подчеркивается важность английского языка для специальных целей (ESP) и коммуникативного подхода к обучению языку (CLT) как эффективных подходов к повышению результатов обучения. В статье подчеркивается роль профессионального развития учителей в адаптации инновационных методов обучения и реагировании на разнообразные потребности учащихся. Более того, предлагается сотрудничество специалистами-предметниками и преподавателями языка как способ создания более актуальных и увлекательных учебных материалов.

**Ключевые слова:** *Английский язык для специальных целей, высшее образование, студенты неанглоязычных специальностей, коммуникативная компетентность, мотивация, Азербайджан*

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