

РОЗДІЛ 2. ТЕОРІЯ ТА МЕТОДИКА НАВЧАННЯ (З ГАЛУЗЕЙ ЗНАНЬ)

CHALLENGES IN ESP LEARNING FOR NON-LANGUAGE MAJORS: STUDENT PERSPECTIVES AND PEDAGOGICAL SOLUTIONS

ПЕРЕШКОДИ У ВИВЧЕННІ ESP СТУДЕНТАМИ НЕФІЛОЛОГІЧНИХ СПЕЦІАЛЬНОСТЕЙ: ПЕРСПЕКТИВИ ТА РІШЕННЯ

The study examines barriers that hinder the acquisition of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) among non-linguistic students at Berdiansk State Pedagogical University. Employing a qualitative methodology combining anonymous questionnaires and pedagogical intervention workshops, the research investigates learning obstacles faced by thirty participants representing six professional programs: Secondary Education (Physical Culture), Physical Culture and Sport, Secondary Education (Biology and Human Health), Preschool Education, Special Education (Speech Therapy), and Social Work and Counselling. Thematic analysis of student responses A1–B1 proficiency levels, May 2025) revealed five main categories of obstacles: time constraints (60%), motivational challenges (47%), psychological barriers (33%), pedagogical-systemic issues (20%), and personal circumstances (10%). Cross-speciality analysis demonstrated qualitatively distinct manifestations of these barriers depending on professional context. The study proposes five pedagogical interventions: microlearning integration, authentic task design, SMART goal frameworks, low-stakes practice environments, and flexible learning pathways. Post-workshop feedback confirmed the preliminary effectiveness of these approaches, highlighting the usefulness of metacognitive strategies, enhanced resource awareness, and a mindset shift from perfectionism toward functional pragmatism. This research addresses a noticeable gap in ESP literature by foregrounding learner perspectives from professional programs and offering practical pedagogical insights for ESP instructors working with non-language majors.

Key words: English for Specific Purposes, non-linguistic students, learning barriers, needs analysis, professional education, discipline-specific pedagogy, pedagogical interventions, student perspectives.

У дослідженні проаналізовано бар'єри, що перешкоджають засвоєнню англій-

ської мови за професійним спрямуванням (ESP) студентами нефілологічних спеціальностей Бердянського державного педагогічного університету. Використовуючи якісну методологію – анонімні опитувальники та педагогічні інтервенційні семінари, – ми досліджуємо та аналізуємо труднощі навчання 30 учасників із шести освітніх програм: Середня освіта (Фізична культура), Фізична культура і спорт, Середня освіта (Біологія та здоров'я людини), Дошкільна освіта, Спеціальна освіта (Логопедія) та Соціальна робота і консультування. Тематичний аналіз відповідей студентів із рівнями англійської A1–B1 (травень 2025 р.) дозволив виокремити п'ять основних категорій бар'єрів: часові обмеження (60%), мотиваційні виклики (47%), психологічні труднощі (33%), педагогічно-системні проблеми (20%) та особисті обставини (10%). Міжспеціальний аналіз показав якісно відмінні прояви цих перешкод залежно від професійного контексту. Запропоновано п'ять педагогічних рішень: мікронавчання, автентичний дизайн завдань, використання SMART-цілей, середовища практики з низьким рівнем тривожності та гнучкі освітні траєкторії. Зворотний зв'язок після семінару підтвердив ефективність запропонованих підходів, зокрема розвиток метакогнітивних стратегій та зміну мислення від перфекцізму до функціонального прагматизму. Дослідження доповнює сучасну ESP-літературу, висвітлюючи голоси здобувачів нефілологічних спеціальностей і пропонуючи практичні орієнтири для викладачів англійської мови за професійним спрямуванням.

Ключові слова: англійська мова за професійним спрямуванням, нефілологічні спеціальності, бар'єри навчання, аналіз потреб, професійна освіта, дисциплінарно-специфічна педагогіка, педагогічні інтервенції, студентські перспективи.

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Problem statement. English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has become integral to professional education, yet students in sports, healthcare, psychology, and education frequently struggle with ESP courses. Unlike language majors with intrinsic motivation, non-linguistic students perceive English as secondary to core professional studies [8]. Three critical challenges emerge: first, students prioritize discipline-specific coursework over language learning, viewing ESP as supplementary rather than instrumental; second, disconnection between classroom activities and authentic professional contexts undermines motivation [1]; third, psychological barriers including anxiety,

fear of errors, and low self-efficacy – common in foreign language learning [6] – intensify among students with weak foundational skills. Despite extensive ESP literature on curriculum design [4] and materials development [2], empirical research capturing student perspectives from professional programs remains limited. This study systematically investigates obstacles encountered by ESP learners from non-linguistic specialties, analyses discipline-specific manifestations of these challenges across sports science, healthcare, psychology, and education programs, and proposes evidence-based pedagogical interventions tailored to professional learning contexts.

Analysis of recent research and publications.

Foundational ESP scholarship established that effective instruction requires systematic needs analysis and content adaptation to professional contexts [8; 4], yet contemporary research disproportionately emphasises curriculum frameworks while neglecting empirical investigation of learner obstacles [2]. Second language acquisition literature documents multifaceted barriers: affective factors, including foreign language anxiety, diminish communicative willingness [6; 9], while non-linguistic students predominantly exhibit extrinsic “ought-to self” motivation characterised by external pressure rather than intrinsic interest [3]. Cognitive constraints from limited vocabulary and grammar knowledge compound comprehension difficulties [10], particularly among learners lacking metacognitive strategies for autonomous study. Contextual barriers, including time scarcity [12], restricted access to authentic materials, and teacher-centred pedagogies disconnected from professional reality [12], further impede learning outcomes. Despite robust documentation of general language barriers, empirical research examining ESP-specific challenges for students in health sciences, sports management, psychology, and education remains notably scarce. This study addresses this gap through a systematic investigation of student-reported obstacles across four professional disciplines, providing an empirical foundation for evidence-based pedagogical interventions tailored to non-linguistic learners' distinctive needs.

The purpose of the article. This study identifies and categorises obstacles encountered by ESP learners from non-linguistic professional programs, analyses discipline-specific challenge manifestations, and proposes evidence-based pedagogical interventions grounded in student perspectives. By foregrounding learner voices – conspicuously absent in existing ESP literature – this research informs instructional practices responsive to constraints characterising students whose primary academic focus lies outside linguistic disciplines.

Presentation of the main material. This study employed a qualitative exploratory approach to investigate ESP learning obstacles among non-linguistic students at Berdyansk State Pedagogical University. Thirty participants enrolled in ESP courses represented six professional programs: Secondary Education (Physical Culture) qualifying teachers of physical education (n=5), Physical Culture and Sport qualifying sports coaches and fitness trainers (n=5), Secondary Education (Biology and Human Health) qualifying biology and health basics teachers (n=5), Preschool Education including specialization in Preschool Education and Practical Psychology (n=5), Special Education (Speech Therapy) including Speech Therapy and Special Psychology (n=5), and Social Work and Counseling including Social Work

and Social Pedagogy and Socio-Pedagogical Support of Resilience programs (n=5).

Participants demonstrated A1-B1 English proficiency levels based on institutional placement assessment, reflecting heterogeneous foundational competencies characteristic of non-linguistic student populations. Data collection occurred through an anonymous online survey administered in May 2025, featuring the open-ended prompt: “*What stops you from learning new languages?*” This deliberately unstructured formulation encouraged authentic student perspectives unfiltered by researcher-imposed categorical frameworks. Following data collection, a pedagogical intervention workshop titled “How to Make English Learning Easier: Motivation, Practice, Resources” was conducted in May 2025, introducing evidence-based learning strategies including SMART goal-setting frameworks, curated digital resource repositories, and metacognitive self-regulation techniques. The researcher conducted thematic analysis of student responses, identifying recurring obstacle patterns and calculating frequency distributions to determine prevalence across the participant sample.

Thematic analysis revealed five primary obstacle categories with distinct prevalence patterns: time-related constraints emerged most prominently (n=18, 60%), followed by motivational challenges (n=14, 47%), psychological barriers (n=10, 33%), pedagogical-systemic issues (n=6, 20%), and personal circumstances, including health limitations (n=3, 10%).

Time constraints manifested through explicit statements including «брак часу» (lack of time), «недостатня кількість часу для повноцінного вивчення» (insufficient time for comprehensive learning), and «lack of time and perseverance» with one student noting employment demands through the notation “business”. These temporal pressures derived not from insufficient effort but from legitimate competing academic demands: Physical Culture students balanced early morning training sessions with coursework and teaching practica, Biology students prioritised laboratory practicums requiring extended contact hours, while Social Work students managed fieldwork placements alongside theoretical coursework.

Motivational challenges surfaced through responses including «прокрастинація» (procrastination), «лінь» (laziness), «немає мотивації на вивчення» (no motivation to study), and compound formulations linking affect with behavioural patterns: «лінь і страх» (laziness and fear). Unlike language majors whose career selection reflects intrinsic linguistic orientation, these participants chose professions fundamentally unrelated to language – coaching, speech therapy, social work, early childhood education – resulting in instrumental motivation profiles characterised by external obligation rather than intrinsic interest.

Psychological barriers encompassed anxiety-related phenomena articulated as «страх зробити помилку» (fear of making mistakes), «бар'єри в голові» (mental barriers), and metacognitive awareness statements: «слабка самодисципліна, погано набуті навички в школі, брак часу» (weak self-discipline, poorly acquired school skills, lack of time). These responses indicate not merely performance anxiety but conscious recognition of foundational inadequacies undermining self-efficacy beliefs essential for sustained learning engagement. Pedagogical-systemic obstacles emerged through retrospective attributions to prior instruction: students identified «погано набуті навички в школі» (poorly acquired school skills) as causal factors, implicating teacher-centred methodologies, grammar-translation approaches, and insufficient communicative practice in secondary education contexts. Personal circumstances, including health limitations, appeared less frequently but represented genuine external constraints: one student articulated «іноді дуже лінуюсь, зупиняюсь дуже часто через стан здоров'я; не було можливості вчити» (sometimes very lazy, stop frequently due to health condition; no opportunity to study), revealing intersections between physical or mental health challenges and learning capacity. This typology demonstrates that obstacles extend beyond individual motivation or cognitive capacity to encompass structural, temporal, affective, and systemic dimensions requiring multifaceted pedagogical responses.

Cross-speciality comparison illuminated qualitatively distinct obstacle manifestations shaped by professional context. Physical Culture Education and Physical Culture and Sport students disproportionately reported time constraints from athletic training schedules (early morning conditioning, afternoon practice, competition participation), creating temporal conflicts with study demands, yet demonstrated heightened motivation when shown connections between English competence and international coaching certifications or multilingual athlete communication. Secondary Education (Biology and Human Health) students emphasised time pressures from laboratory coursework, compounded by psychological barriers related to intimidating scientific terminology requiring extensive specialised vocabulary acquisition. Preschool Education students exhibited pedagogical barrier awareness, attributing difficulties to inadequate secondary preparation alongside profession-specific anxiety about modelling erroneous language to young learners. Special Education (Speech Therapy) students articulated compound challenges linking foundational gaps with professional identity concerns: as future specialists addressing communicative disorders, they expressed sensitivity to linguistic imperfections potentially undermining professional credibility. Social Work and Counselling students emphasised motivational barriers reflecting

limited exposure to international career pathways, questioning ESP's practical utility given predominantly domestic professional trajectories. These patterns underscore the inadequacy of uniform ESP instruction, demonstrating that effective pedagogy must respond to distinctive temporal constraints, motivational profiles, anxiety triggers, and professional identity concerns characterising each speciality.

Empirical findings necessitate five evidence-based instructional adaptations responsive to documented obstacle patterns. First, addressing pervasive time scarcity requires microlearning integration, replacing traditional extended sessions with brief daily practice modules (1015 minutes) accessible through mobile platforms, alongside curricular integration embedding English within discipline-specific coursework rather than positioning language study as supplementary. For Physical Culture students, this entails analysing coaching methodology videos in English; for Biology students, reading international research articles; for Speech Therapy students, examining comparative phonological systems; for Social Work students, engaging with international social policy documents. Such integration transforms ESP from a peripheral requirement into an instrumental professional tool, enhancing perceived relevance. Second, motivating non-linguistic learners demands authentic task design featuring genuine professional scenarios: writing emails to international colleagues, analysing discipline-specific case studies, preparing conference presentations, and engaging in workplace interaction role-plays. SMART goal frameworks enable students to articulate personally meaningful, measurable objectives ("comprehend three research articles monthly", "deliver five-minute coaching philosophy presentation") rather than pursuing vague fluency aspirations. Third, mitigating psychological barriers requires establishing low-stakes practice environments through small group discussions preceding whole-class performance, alongside explicit reframing of errors as linguistic data informing developmental progression rather than indicators of inadequacy. Growth-oriented assessment emphasising communicative effectiveness over grammatical precision, portfolio documentation tracking incremental improvement, and scaffolded oral production beginning with scripted reading, progressing toward extemporaneous speech, reduces anxiety while building self-efficacy. Fourth, addressing pedagogical gaps stemming from inadequate secondary preparation necessitates flipped classroom models assigning foundational grammar instruction through video modules for asynchronous home study while reserving synchronous class time for communicative practice, differentiated instruction providing explicit scaffolding for A1-level students alongside enrichment for B1-level learners, and fluency-prioritised activities emphasising meaningful

message transmission over linguistic precision. Fifth, accommodating personal circumstances, including health challenges and socioeconomic constraints, demands flexible pathways: deadline extensions for documented emergencies, asynchronous learning options through recorded lectures and online discussion forums, and resource equity ensuring access to free digital tools and library subscriptions regardless of economic status.

Post-workshop feedback indicated intervention efficacy across multiple dimensions. Participants reported high utility of SMART goal-setting frameworks, noting that concrete, measurable objectives enabled action planning rather than perpetuating abstract aspirations. Many students expressed surprise at discovering freely accessible resources, including BBC Learning English, TED Talks with transcripts, discipline-specific podcasts, and mobile applications supporting autonomous vocabulary development, suggesting that resource awareness rather than availability constitutes a primary barrier. Most significantly, several participants articulated fundamental mindset shifts from perfectionist orientations toward functional pragmatism (*"I need workplace English adequate for essential tasks"*), indicating reduced anxiety and increased communicative willingness despite imperfect competence. One student's reflection encapsulated this transformation: *"I didn't know there were so many resources for self-study. Now I have a plan, not just guilt"*. These preliminary outcomes suggest that metacognitive strategy instruction, resource curation, and motivational framing constitute accessible interventions readily implementable within ESP courses serving non-linguistic students.

Conclusions. This empirical investigation of ESP learning obstacles among non-linguistic students reveals three principal findings with substantive pedagogical implications. First, obstacle prevalence demonstrates systematic patterns: time constraints (60%) emerge as the predominant barrier stemming from competing academic demands, followed by motivational challenges (47%) reflecting perceived disconnection between ESP instruction and professional practice, and psychological barriers (33%), including anxiety rooted in foundational skill inadequacies. Second, cross-speciality analysis illuminates qualitatively distinct manifestations: Physical Culture students prioritise temporal flexibility, accommodating training schedules, Biology students require specialised terminology scaffolding, Speech Therapy students experience professional identity anxiety regarding linguistic modelling, while Social Work students question international career relevance. Third, pedagogical interventions

including microlearning integration, authentic task design, SMART goal frameworks, and digital resource curation demonstrate preliminary efficacy, with post-workshop feedback indicating mindset shifts from perfectionist paralysis toward functional pragmatism.

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