

To the Question on Study of English for Foreign Students (on the Sample of Technical Universities)

UDC 378.147:811.111

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15421/1726141>**Hasanov Elnur**Senior Specialist, <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6358-593X>, lnurh273@gmail.com*Ganja Branch of Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences (Ganja, Azerbaijan)***Abstract.**

Relevance. Engineering is a highly globalized field in which cross-border collaboration, international conferences, research, and professional communication make English a universal working language.

The purpose. The article examines the importance of English-language proficiency for engineering students and the role of English in their academic, professional, and personal development.

Results. English proficiency expands access to scientific and technical resources, supports effective communication with peers, instructors, and professionals, strengthens international networking, and improves competitiveness in the global employment market. It also enables engineering students to participate more effectively in multinational teams and international academic and professional environments.

Conclusions. For engineering students, English is not merely an elective skill but an essential component of academic success, professional communication, access to global knowledge, and future career development.

Keywords: English, engineering, global language, ELT, ESP, CLIL

До питання щодо вивчення англійської мови для іноземних студентів (на прикладі технічних університетів)

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Актуальність. Інженерія – це високоглобалізована галузь, у якій транскордонне співробітництво, міжнародні конференції, дослідження та професійне спілкування роблять англійську мову універсальною робочою мовою.

Мета. У статті розглядається важливість володіння англійською мовою для студентів-інженерів та її роль у їхньому академічному, професійному та особистісному розвитку.

Результати. Володіння англійською мовою розширює доступ до науково-технічних ресурсів, підтримує ефективне спілкування з колегами, викладачами та фахівцями, зміцнює міжнародні мережі та підвищує конкурентоспроможність на світовому ринку праці. Це також дозволяє студентам-інженерам ефективніше брати участь у роботі багатонаціональних команд та міжнародного академічного та професійного середовища.

Висновки. Для студентів-інженерів англійська мова – це не просто вибіркова навичка, а важливий компонент академічного успіху, професійного спілкування, доступу до глобальних знань та майбутнього кар'єрного розвитку.

Ключові слова: англійська мова, інженерія, глобальна мова, ELT, ESP, CLIL

Introduction.

In the contemporary globalised academic environment, English language teaching in Azerbaijani higher education institutions is undergoing constant modification to satisfy the evolving demands of students. By emphasising academic English in the pedagogical teaching process, utilising contemporary teaching methods, and addressing issues such as varying qualification levels and teacher training, higher education institutions in Azerbaijan can further enhance their students' English language proficiency, enabling them to thrive in both domestic and international contexts. The English language instruction (ELT) for engineering students necessitates a personalised strategy that emphasises both general language skills and the specific language required for academic and professional fields. The need for engineering students to be proficient in English is twofold: firstly, in order to participate in international research and development, and secondly, to understand technical materials and communicate successfully in global work environments. In addition, engineering students need to be familiar with a wide range of technical jargon used in various engineering disciplines, such as computer, mechanical, electrical, and civil engineering. This encompasses both general academic jargon and specialised terms unique to specific subjects. Engineering students are frequently tasked with producing research papers, reports, and technical documents, necessitating the development of academic writing skills such as article writing, summarising research, citing sources, and presenting ideas in a logical manner.

Students studying engineering must be able to read and comprehend complex technical texts, including research papers, textbooks, guidelines, and manuals. This involves learning to understand complex explanations, diagrams, and diagrams. Engineers often collaborate in groups, communicate with clients or colleagues in English, and present ideas. Speaking and presentation skills, especially the ability to explain technical concepts concisely and clearly, are therefore essential (Harmer, 2001, pp. 39).

Results of the Study.

A variety of methods and techniques are employed in English language teaching (ELT) in Azerbaijani universities to assist students in developing proficiency in speaking, listening, reading and writing. The following methods and techniques are of particular significance in the context of English language teaching in higher education institutions:

1. Communicative Language Instruction (CLI): this is a pedagogical approach that emphasises communication-based English language instruction. It prioritizes real-life interactions and context over rote memorization of rules. Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) involves problem-solving or conversations that require the use of language in authentic situations in English.

2. Skills Development - Listening: The utilisation of audio resources, such as videos, songs, or podcasts, serves to facilitate students' comprehension of spoken English. Listening comprehension activities may encompass questions concerning terminology, features, or the main idea. Speaking: Group discussions or pair projects can be employed to encourage dialogue. Exercises such as role-playing, discussions, and storytelling can be beneficial. The focus is on developing students' academic listening skills, such as understanding lectures and discussions, as well as speaking skills, such as participating in group discussions, giving presentations, and participating in debates (Boran, 2010, pp. 8). Reading: The development of comprehension skills is facilitated by reading stories, articles, and subsequently posing questions or engaging in discussions. At this juncture, students should be encouraged to submit essays, emails, stories, or reports. The emphasis on writing in English, particularly academic writing, should be a significant focal point. Vocabulary: Focus on expanding students' vocabulary through context, word maps, and flashcard exercises. Students, especially those targeting international education or employment contexts, should also receive pronunciation training and become fluent (Ivanova & Denisov, 2024, p. 99-100).

3. Interactive Activities: This approach entails the utilisation of games, tests and group projects to enhance the appeal and engagement of the learning process.

Project-Based Learning: It encourages students to work on assignments that require research, planning, and presentation of results in English;

Music and Videos: These can improve pronunciation, teach new vocabulary, and improve listening skills. Peer feedback facilitates collaborative learning and reinforces topics by allowing students to correct and comment on each other's work. Frequent assignments, tests, and quizzes are employed to assess student progress. The provision of continuous feedback and other formative assessments enables educators to modify their pedagogical approach to align with the diverse needs of their students (Boran, 2010, pp. 8). Peer self-assessment is also encouraged. The overarching objective of English language education (ELT) in Azerbaijani higher education institutions is to equip students with the language skills necessary to effectively communicate in professional settings, in the classroom, and on an international level. For students in Azerbaijan, English is a vital language, especially in subjects such as international relations, business, science and technology. The subsequent discussion will present an overview of the approaches, challenges and prospects of ELT in Azerbaijani universities (Tabeikyna et al., 2021, p. 239-240).

A significant number of universities in Azerbaijan, notably Baku Engineering University (BEU), which provides international programmes, employ the communicative language teaching technique. For example, Baku Engineering University (BEU) offers various international programs related to communicative

language teaching techniques through partnerships and academic collaborations with global institutions. These programs typically focus on enhancing English language proficiency and communication skills in professional and academic settings. Some of these programs may include:

English Language and Literature Programs: BEU offers undergraduate and graduate programs in English language and literature, where students learn language teaching techniques, including communicative language teaching (CLT), which emphasizes interaction and practical language use in real-world contexts.

English for Specific Purposes (ESP): In some cases, BEU might provide ESP programs aimed at enhancing the communication skills of students in specific fields, such as business, engineering, or technology, with an emphasis on using English in professional settings (Harmer, 2001, pp. 39).

Exchange Programs and Joint Degree Programs: BEU may offer exchange opportunities with international universities where students can engage in courses focused on communicative language teaching and other language-related skills (Boran, 2010, p. 9-10).

Workshops and Training: BEU might organize workshops or seminars related to the communicative language teaching methodology, often inviting international experts or collaborating with global organizations that specialize in language education. This pedagogical approach emphasises the enhancement of students' communicative skills through the utilisation of authentic case studies, dialogues and interactive exercises. Additionally, TBLT is being adopted at Baku Engineering University with a view to encouraging students to perform tasks in English in practical situations. These tasks encompass conventional academic exercises, such as composing research papers, delivering presentations, and contributing to group discussions. In recent years, CLIL has been incorporated into the teaching process at Baku Engineering University, wherein students learn subject-related content in English and concurrently enhance their knowledge. CLIL stands for Content and Language Integrated Learning. It is an educational approach in which students learn a subject (such as science, engineering, or business) through a foreign language, typically English, rather than just learning the language itself in isolation. The idea behind CLIL is to integrate both content and language learning, so students improve their language skills while simultaneously gaining subject knowledge.

At Baku Engineering University (BEU), the incorporation of CLIL into the teaching process means that students might study technical or academic subjects (such as engineering, mathematics, or business) in English. This helps students develop both their content knowledge and their ability to communicate effectively in a globalized academic or professional context. It supports the goal of preparing students for international careers where proficiency in English and subject expertise are both essential (Krilov, 2018, p. 78).

The development of academic vocabulary and language skills is facilitated by hybrid and blended learning methodologies. In a hybrid learning model at BEU, students would have the flexibility to attend either in-person or online sessions for a particular course. For example:

Course: Introduction to Electrical Engineering

In-person component: Students attend weekly classroom sessions where they engage in hands-on experiments in the lab, participate in group discussions, and listen to live lectures.

Online component: Outside of class, students access a learning management system (LMS) to view pre-recorded lectures, complete interactive quizzes, and watch instructional videos that supplement the in-person lessons. They can choose to attend the lectures virtually if they are unable to be present on campus, which allows for flexibility based on their schedule or location.

This hybrid model allows students to choose the method of learning (in-person or online) that best suits their needs, providing flexibility while ensuring that all students still receive the necessary content and interactions (Boran, 2010, pp. 8).

Blended Learning at BEU:

In a blended learning model, the in-person and online components are more integrated, where the online learning directly complements and extends the face-to-face experience. For example, **Course:** Business Communication in English.

In-person component: Students participate in weekly face-to-face seminars where they practice oral presentations, engage in role-playing scenarios, and receive real-time feedback from instructors and peers.

Online component: Students also complete weekly online modules that include exercises on grammar, vocabulary, and writing skills tailored to business communication. They might also participate in online forums, where they collaborate with classmates on discussion topics, and submit written assignments for peer review.

The online modules are designed to prepare students for the in-person class activities and assignments, and they are assessed regularly through online quizzes and assignments.

The blended learning approach here ensures a smooth integration of online activities that support and reinforce the face-to-face classroom work, creating a cohesive learning experience.

Both approaches at BEU would use digital tools such as video lectures, LMS platforms, and online collaboration tools to enhance student engagement, foster interaction, and provide flexible learning pathways, enabling students to manage their learning more effectively.

The integration of digital platforms and online resources into the Azerbaijani higher education sector is a recent development, with learning management systems now being adopted.

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In the Azerbaijani higher education sector, various digital platforms and online resources have been integrated to enhance learning, improve accessibility, and support academic collaboration. Here are some examples of how these tools are used:

1. Moodle (Learning Management System - LMS).

Example: Many Azerbaijani universities, including Baku Engineering University (BEU), use Moodle as their primary LMS to deliver courses, share educational

materials, and facilitate communication between students and professors. Moodle allows instructors to upload lecture notes, assign tasks, conduct quizzes, and grade assignments. Students can also interact through discussion forums and collaborate on group projects.

2. Microsoft Teams and Zoom.

Example: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the need for remote learning, Microsoft Teams and Zoom have become crucial in Azerbaijani higher education.

3. Coursera, edX, and Other MOOCs.

Example: Many Azerbaijani universities have begun offering courses in partnership with MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) like Coursera and edX. For example, students at BEU may take an online course on Artificial Intelligence from Coursera as part of their curriculum.

These platforms allow for the self-paced acquisition of additional skills and can help students stay competitive in the global job market.

4. Khan Academy.

Example: Khan Academy is widely used by students in Azerbaijan, including those at Baku Engineering University. It offers free courses on a variety of subjects, including math, science, and engineering. BEU students might use Khan Academy to review difficult concepts in calculus or physics before attending in-person lectures.

5. Google Classroom.

Example: Google Classroom is another platform integrated into Azerbaijani higher education institutions for efficient course management and communication. At BEU, Google Classroom could be used for online assignments and peer evaluations in technical courses.

6. Turnitin.

Example: Turnitin is commonly used by Azerbaijani universities, including BEU, for plagiarism detection and to ensure academic integrity. Turnitin helps students submit their research papers and assignments digitally, while instructors can easily check the originality of students' work. This is particularly relevant in research-focused programs where the quality of academic writing is essential.

7. YouTube.

Example: Engineering students at BEU, for example, might watch YouTube videos on complex engineering topics or 3D modeling tutorials to complement their learning (Ivanova & Denisov, 2024, pp. 101-102).

8. Virtual Labs and Simulation Software.

At BEU, students might use platforms like Labster (for virtual science labs) or engineering-specific simulation software such as AutoCAD or MATLAB to simulate experiments or design processes digitally.

9. Academic Databases (Google Scholar, JSTOR, IEEE Explore).

Example: Students and researchers in Azerbaijani higher education institutions frequently use academic databases like Google Scholar, JSTOR, or IEEE Xplore to access research papers, journal articles, and conference

proceedings (Boran, 2010, pp. 8). These resources help students conduct research, stay updated with advancements in their fields, and write academic papers with proper references (Coyle et al., 2010, p. 104).

10. Azerbaijani E-Learning Portal (e-learning.edu.az).

Example: The Azerbaijani Government's E-learning Portal (e-learning.edu.az) offers a wide range of online courses, resources, and digital tools to support students and educators across the country.

It is acknowledged that the majority of students entering Azerbaijani universities possess varying levels of English language proficiency. Some may lack fundamental language skills, which can hinder their ability to engage effectively in academic activities in English from the outset. To mitigate this challenge, it is imperative to establish a robust foundation. The fundamental criteria for this foundation are as follows:

- Pedagogical preparation: While many university teachers are fluent in English, some may not be fully trained in modern ELT techniques. It is imperative that professional development programmes are implemented to ensure that teachers are aware of the latest teaching tactics and technical tools:

- Cultural and language barriers: Students may encounter challenges in acquiring academic English due to shifts in cultural contexts and the nuances of academic language in contrast to standard English.

- Insufficient resources: Some universities may not have sufficient English-language materials and resources.

The mounting emphasis on internationalisation in Azerbaijani universities has given rise to a range of opportunities for enhancing English language instruction. Collaborations with international universities, exchange programmes, and the provision of a more extensive selection of courses taught in English have been identified as key factors contributing to enhancing students' language skills. The advent of e-learning has further augmented opportunities for students to hone their English skills beyond the confines of the traditional classroom. Online platforms have been shown to facilitate improvements in language skills, teaching, and the ability to articulate complex concepts in one's field of study by encouraging critical thinking, analysis, and discussion in English. In professional settings such as meetings, conferences, or classrooms, engineers require the ability to comprehend technical discourses, lectures, and presentations. The ability to comprehend technical discussions, trends, or news and updates relevant to a specific business domain can be integrated into listening exercises (Boran, 2010, pp. 9-10).

The English for Specific Purposes (ESP) programme has been meticulously designed to address the unique requirements of students across a diverse range of professional disciplines (Rustamov & Mamaziyyev, 2022, pp. 229). It is designed to assist engineering students in enhancing their language proficiency in

domains such as reading technical documents, preparing reports, and participating in technical discourse. The programme utilises task-based learning (TBL) to ensure the practical application of English in contexts such as project planning, problem solving, and writing technical reports (Tursunovich, 2022b, p. 150).

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL): The inevitable process of integrating language and subject has already found its embodiment in the CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) approach. CLIL is an approach to bilingual education in which the content of the subject discipline and the foreign language are studied simultaneously (Krillov, 2018, pp. 78). CLIL enables engineering students to attain mastery of both language and subject matter (e.g. electrical circuits and thermodynamics) concurrently. This pedagogical approach has the potential to facilitate students' comprehension of complex technical content in English, a skill that is frequently essential in a global context. Students are engaged in extended projects that necessitate the utilisation of English for research and presentation purposes. Examples of such activities include composing proposals, conducting interviews, or delivering lectures on engineering subjects. Blended learning, a combination of in-person instruction with online resources, videos, and interactive activities, can provide students with more opportunities to improve their language skills. For instance, engineering students can participate in online chats, attend recorded lectures in English, or utilise e-learning tools to enhance their grammar and vocabulary skills. Reading scientific publications, technical textbooks, research papers, and manuals in English is also important to improve their skills in this area (Coyle et al., 2010, p. 104).

In addition, writing skills are developed through the use of appropriate academic English when preparing technical reports, research articles, and documents. In this regard, students are instructed in the composition of emails, project documents, and proposals in a professional context. Students have the opportunity to read articles from textbooks or engineering publications. Following this, students are encouraged to identify technical vocabulary, summarise sections, and lead class discussions about the material. Group work is also incorporated, with students assigned to teams to explore issues related to engineering innovations or obstacles. Consequently, emphasis is placed on the development of students' oral proficiency, argumentative skills, and the capacity to articulate their perspectives in English. Given English's status as the universal language of engineering, it provides students with a wider range of employment opportunities, including those in multinational corporations and overseas projects. To this end, students have access to a variety of language resources and can practise English in a range of settings using online resources, e-learning platforms, and virtual worlds. In conclusion, the development of both general language skills and domain-specific competencies should

be the primary goals of English language teaching for engineering students. To this end, the introduction of specialist terminology, the improvement of technical writing and speaking skills, and the encouragement of the use of English in authentic engineering contexts are recommended as means of better preparing students for international engineering employment (Rustamov & Mamaziyayev, 2022, p. 229-230). The efficacy of English language teaching (ELT) for engineering students hinges on its ability to focus on real-world application and integration with engineering materials. In order to address the unique needs of engineering students in Azerbaijani universities, English language instruction (ELT) should be tailored to include both general academic English and the specialist language required in the engineering field. In order to thrive in global research, partnerships and industry experiences, engineering students in Azerbaijan need to acquire good language skills, especially given the global nature of engineering and the increasing use of English in academic and professional contexts (Harmer, 2001, pp. 93).

To summarise the aforementioned points, it can be concluded that English proficiency is of paramount importance for engineering students for several reasons. Primarily, this is due to the fact that proficiency in English is associated with enhanced future employment prospects and academic success. The necessity for English proficiency among engineering students is progressively escalating. The reasons for this increase are manifold, and they indicate that English is essential for the development of engineering education and professional activities. The following reasons are listed below:

1. English is the primary language used for publishing scientific research and technical writing in the engineering field. English-language resources encompass a substantial collection of engineering books, articles, journals, scientific conferences, and other materials. The utilisation of these resources is contingent upon the mastery of English (Rustamov & Mamaziyayev, 2022, pp. 229-230).

2. Given that engineering is a global field, collaboration with professionals from other nations is imperative. The language employed in these collaborative endeavours is English. English is the primary language for effective communication in international projects, research, design, and engineering teams (Tursunovich, 2022b, pp. 220).

3. It is a prerequisite for employment in many multinational corporations, particularly those in the engineering sector, that their employees have strong English-speaking and writing skills. Consequently, engineers who speak English may encounter limited employment prospects and be deprived of global professional opportunities.

4. English is frequently employed to disseminate information regarding recent advancements, technological developments, and innovations within the engineering

discipline. The ability to communicate in English facilitates the comprehension of global advancements, thereby enabling expedited access to these achievements. Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that proficiency in English can facilitate the acceleration of career advancement for students.

5. English-language education is available at numerous prestigious institutions and research facilities. English language proficiency is a prerequisite for several levels of education (master's, doctoral, etc.). Language proficiency is a prerequisite for the majority of international scholarship programmes, which are also offered in English.

6. The English language is utilised in the mechanical engineering industry for the composition of numerous technical documents, project proposals, engineering calculations and project documentation. The ability to comprehend, analyse and compile such materials correctly is of paramount importance for engineering students.

7. English is the predominant language employed in international engineering conferences, seminars and training sessions. These gatherings offer invaluable opportunities to learn new things, connect with subject matter experts and exchange experiences (Rustamov & Mamaziyayev, 2022, pp. 229-230).

8. The ability to communicate, present and discuss in English is a prerequisite for employment in many engineering companies. This requirement is a key factor in ensuring the success of students in their future careers.

9. English is the primary language of many professional associations and certification bodies related to engineering (e.g. ASME, IEEE, ISO). Proficiency in English is a prerequisite for developing professional competencies in the relevant disciplines and for attaining these certifications (Harmer, 2001, p. 93).

Conclusions.

In conclusion, it is imperative to emphasise that English language proficiency is of paramount importance for engineering students' academic work, as well as for their future professional and career advancement. Consequently, the possession of robust English language competencies is identified as a pivotal factor for engineering students' success.

The following section outlines some successful ELT techniques and approaches that have been developed for engineering students in Azerbaijani universities. ESP is a method that focuses on the unique language requirements of students in a particular sector (Tursunovich, 2022b, p. 150). It entails the instruction of English language skills pertinent to the engineering discipline, encompassing the interpretation of technical documentation, the comprehension of specialized terminology, and the articulation of precise communication in engineering contexts. This pedagogical approach integrates online and in-person learning components. This pedagogical approach confers students with greater autonomy and

access to a more extensive array of resources, while concomitantly enhancing their technical and linguistic competencies.

The necessity for engineering students to be proficient in both academic English (for technical writing and research) and business English (for communicating with stakeholders, clients and colleagues) is paramount. The integration of these two components within the curriculum is instrumental in fostering a comprehensive and balanced linguistic proficiency. It is imperative that engineering students acquire a comprehensive vocabulary pertinent to their discipline. Vocabulary training should be a significant component of the curriculum, with a particular emphasis on technical terminology.

In particular, when producing research papers, reports and documents in English, it is vital that engineering students have proficient spelling skills. The instruction of students in particular styles and standards of technical writing is fundamental to their academic success. The continuous assessment and feedback process is instrumental in enhancing language proficiency. All written, oral, and project-based assignments must be incorporated into the assessment process, with a focus on both technical accuracy and linguistic competence (Tursunovich, 2022b, p. 220).

In order to effectively teach English to engineering students in Azerbaijani universities, it is vital to prioritise both general academic English and the specific language of the engineering sector. The implementation

of strategies such as ESP, CLIL, task-based learning, and project-based learning is recommended, with the objective of enabling students to acquire the English language skills required for both academic achievement and professional communication within the international engineering community. Personalised approaches, such as writing workshops, vocabulary training, and group projects, ensure that students acquire the language and technical skills necessary for success in the workplace. It is imperative that BEU students possess fluency in English to maintain currency with new developments in the field of engineering and to facilitate their learning of these technologies. This will equip them with the ability to master the latest trends and innovations in the field and enable them to adapt more quickly to future developments. For students at Baku Engineering University (BEU) English is not only a vital instrument for academic instruction, but also a crucial asset for future career development, participation in international projects, and achieving global success in the field of engineering. The ability to communicate in English enables students to broaden their educational horizons, establish connections with experts worldwide, and stay abreast of the latest technological developments in the field of engineering. Consequently, it is imperative for BEU students to possess a high level of English proficiency and to cultivate their competencies in this domain.

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