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## CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES IN TEACHING ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES: A FOCUS ON LANGUAGE AND SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTISE

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**Abstract.** *English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses pose significant challenges for teachers due to the specialized language and subject matter content involved. This paper explores the difficulties encountered by ESP instructors lacking expertise in their students' professional fields, resulting in the use of unfamiliar texts and complexities in syllabi design. Additionally, challenges arise in text selection and adaptation, requiring a balance of complexity to sustain student engagement. Limited collaboration between content lecturers and program designers exacerbates these issues. Nevertheless, effective teaching strategies such as maintaining a positive attitude towards ESP content and collaborating with subject experts offer potential solutions.*

**Keywords.** *English for Specific Purposes, language expertise, syllabus design, teaching strategies.*

ESP courses typically involve specialized language, particularly terminology, and subject matter content. However, ESP teachers often lack expertise in their students' professional fields, posing a challenge in mastering both language and subject matter. This results in teachers instructing with texts they may know little about. Furthermore, ESP teachers must design syllabi and select

teaching materials, despite not being specialists in the specific field, such as law. Consequently, determining syllabus topics and arranging them appropriately becomes difficult. It's crucial to ensure that ESP classes align with the sequence of topics covered in the specialized subjects to avoid confusion, as ESP teachers lack subject expertise. Learners are more motivated and confident to communicate when topics overlap with those covered in specialized subjects

Text selection and adaptation pose challenges for ESP teachers who lack specialization in specific areas. They struggle to determine how to modify texts to ensure essential subject matter remains intact. Balancing text difficulty is crucial; texts shouldn't be overly complex, given the limited professional knowledge of both teachers and students. However, overly simplified texts can lead to learners underestimating the language challenge. To maintain motivation, texts should offer challenges that engage students' professional knowledge.

Additionally, the lack of collaboration between content lecturers and program designers persists as a problem. Content lecturers should play a more active role in orienting and training students in their respective disciplines. Collaborating on homework assignments or oral exams with content experts could greatly benefit ESP teachers.

Furthermore, ESP studies commence in the third semester for students, with an expectation that they possess at least an intermediate level of proficiency in English. However, in reality, we encounter groups with varying levels of language and professional expertise. While some excel in English, others demonstrate strong skills in their respective fields but lack English proficiency. The former group often seeks to enhance their general English skills but may become disheartened by the technical nature of ESP, leading to a loss of motivation. Conversely, the latter group, confident in their professional domain, exhibits greater enthusiasm for ESP studies. However, those lacking in general English knowledge express a desire to focus more on grammar, including tense usage and articles.

If the English teacher lacks expertise in law and the learners are not competent in English and Law, effective communication throughout the teaching

and learning process becomes a challenge. How can an ESP teacher cope with the issues they encounter in their job? Kennedy and Bolitho (1990) suggest a solution. They argue that ESP teachers do not necessarily need to acquire specialist subject knowledge. Instead, they should possess three essential qualities: a positive attitude towards the ESP content, a grasp of the fundamental principles of the subject area, and an awareness of the knowledge they likely already possess.

In essence, the ESP teacher should not aim to become a teacher of the subject matter, but rather approach it as an interested student. However, some teachers may develop sufficient knowledge of a subject to confidently teach from subject-specific texts. Nonetheless, even the most dedicated ESP teacher acknowledges the limits of their subject knowledge and may feel the need for closer cooperation with subject teachers, perhaps considering a team-teaching approach.

Additional studies indicate that courses tailored to specific content are more beneficial and motivating for students. Barbara Gross Davis (1993) characterizes this subject-specific approach as particularly effective because it addresses students' individual needs for their future professional roles. Moreover, Davis suggests that students perform optimally when the level of English required slightly exceeds their current competence level in their field of study. Tasks that are too easy can lead to boredom and convey low expectations, while tasks that are overly challenging may be viewed as unachievable, undermining students' confidence and causing anxiety.

In conclusion, teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP) presents intricate challenges, particularly regarding the specialized language and subject matter content involved. ESP instructors often find themselves navigating a delicate balance between their own language proficiency and the subject expertise required in their students' fields. This dual challenge manifests in various aspects of ESP instruction, from selecting appropriate texts to designing syllabi that align with specialized subject sequences.

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## PROBLEMS IMPROVING THE LEVEL OF PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS

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**Annotation.** *The article discusses the content of normative model of teacher's competency, displaying scientifically based composition of professional knowledge and skills and here we can see pedagogical condition and developing level of professional competence of foreign languages teachers.*

**Keywords.** *Professional competence, information and communication technologies of the educational environment.*

The globalization of integration processes in the world, the deepening of international cooperation in the field of education and science, and the rapid development of information, communication and digital technologies further increase the need for learning a foreign language as a means of interaction. According to international experience, it is important to improve the knowledge, skills and qualifications of foreign language teachers and apply the latest achievements of science and technology in the educational process by introducing advanced teaching methods in the environment of information and communication technologies.