

25-november 2025

TEACHING ESP THROUGH THE LENS OF GLOBAL ISSUES

Razakova Munira Turaevna,

Senior teacher,

University of World Economy and Diplomacy

Tashkent, Uzbekistan,

mrzakova@uwed.uz

Abstract. In recent years, global issues are very important in English language education. Integrating these themes into ESP classes creates significant opportunities to develop students' global awareness and stimulate critical thinking. Engaging with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) topics such as unemployment, decent work and economic growth, and climate action can encourage students to become more actively involved in the learning process. Moreover, implementing these themes into the course syllabus can help students to improve and develop their language skills in context, enhance critical thinking, promote interdisciplinary learning, support the development of soft skills, and increase motivation for real-world communication.

Keywords: SDG, critical thinking, global issues, authentic content, simulation.

Teaching English especially within the framework of ESP requires flexible methodologies, innovative techniques, and a strong understanding of learners' specific needs. The effectiveness of instruction depends not only on the curriculum, but also on the teacher's expertise and active involvement in the learning process. English Language teachers not only deliver linguistic content and "teach the books", but they shape students' long-term perspectives and personal development through their teaching practices, values, and behavior,

25-november 2025

In 2015, global leaders endorsed the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), accompanied by 169 targets aimed at tackling worldwide challenges. These goals offer rich, meaningful content that extends beyond traditional language exercises. Incorporating SDG-related themes into English instruction can provide students who study diplomacy, political science, and contemporary global issues with a deeper sense of purpose in their language learning. Such topics also promote empathy, global awareness, and intellectual curiosity. Additionally, ESP classes naturally align with SDG discussions, as the subject area frequently involves negotiating, debating, presenting, and communicating about international policies and global concerns.

The benefits of implimanting SDG theme in the teaching and learning process. Firstly, including SDG-related themes in an English syllabus helps students develop their language skills in a meaningful and authentic context. Instead of practicing vocabulary and grammar through disconnected or artificial exercises, students engage with real-world issues, that require purposeful communication. This content-rich approach hepls students to acquire language naturally as they discuss, analyze, and present information about global challenges. As a result, vocabulary becomes more memorable, grammar structures are used more accurately, and overall communication skills improve because students are applying English to express ideas, justify arguments, and solve problems. Learning language in context not only strengthens proficiency, but also prepares students to use English effectively in academic, professional, and international settings.

Secondly, Integrating SDG topics into English classes can significantly enhance students' critical thinking. By using problem-based and project-based learning, students analyze real-world issues, propose solutions, and develop

25-november 2025

evidence-based arguments. Debates, structured discussions, and collaborative tasks foster logical reasoning, persuasive communication, and evaluation of diverse perspectives. Case studies, comparative analyses, and data interpretation strengthen analytical skills and the ability to synthesize information. Yoko Mochizuki(2010) highlights the important aspects of case studies in the teaching and learning process. Additionally, teaching critical reading, reflection, and argumentation frameworks encourages students to question assumptions, consider values, and make informed judgments, promoting both language development and global citizenship. During the classes teachers may provide short case studies on SDG topics from different countries. In my teaching practice, I observed that when students were given a case study on “Rural Unemployment in India,” they were prompted to consider solutions from economic, social, and policy perspectives. They drew on their background knowledge to evaluate government programmes, private-sector initiatives, and community-led efforts. This activity encouraged them to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of different approaches. Moreover, students actively shared their ideas on reducing unemployment and provided well-reasoned examples and practical solutions.

How to Implement SDG Topics in English Lessons. Integrating SDG topics into English classes can greatly enhance students’ language skills and deepen their understanding of global challenges. Below are effective strategies for implementing SDG in the lessons.

1. Problem-Based Learning (PBL) on SDG Challenges. Teachers may create tasks and place students in real-life problem scenarios taken from SDG issues like climate change, hunger or education. Additionally, present a case study on SDG topics where students identify the problem, causes, consequences, and possible solutions. Teachers may assess these tasks when students in groups

25-november 2025

present their solutions using diplomatic or academic language, or give them to write a problem and solution essay on the topic which they have discussed in the class. The benefit of Problem-Based Learning is to develop students' analytical skills, persuasive speaking, and problem-solving abilities. Students with diverse background knowledge may share their ideas, work in groups and develop team working.

2. Integrate SDG Data for Analytical Language Tasks. Using numbers, statistics, and reports in the class help students practice academic English skills such as describing trends and summarizing data. The benefit of this task helps to strengthen students' academic writing skills and data interpretation. Teachers may give students SDG statistics, poverty indicators, or development charts, ask them to write short summaries, describe graphs, or compare the countries.

3. Use SDGs as Authentic Content for Language Practice. When teachers apply SDG articles, UN reports, and short videos and authentic reading and listening material, it helps students practice their English through meaningful, relevant issues instead of traditional textbooks. Moreover they will learn vocabulary, grammar through real world materials, such as inequality, sustainable development, social protection, and global cooperation. Video materials will support listening comprehension of the students. Teaching collocations, formal terminology such as veto power, trusteeship, sustainable development and specialized structures enhance students' proficiency in English for International Relations. Listening tasks promote comprehension of authentic spoken English from international sources.

4. Role-Play and Simulations. Incorporating SDGs topics are used by teachers through diplomatic simulations and scenario-based speaking tasks. Students create a negotiation on water problem about the Aral sea in Uzbekistan,

25-november 2025

where they practice persuasive language, negotiations phrases and formal speaking skills. Accordingly, negotiations, role-plays, simulations of the UN members meetings promote creativity, fluency and professional English for International Relations. What is more, students learn how to work in pairs and in groups, despite their background knowledge. Teachers can assess not only students' language accuracy, but interactional competence.

5. Writing Tasks Based on SDG Contexts. Applying SDGs as topics for structured writing assignments improves students' academic writing, argumentation and genre awareness. Students may write problem and solution essay, opinion essay where they introduce their recommendations, resolutions addressing a specific SDG challenge.

Conclusion. Integrating SDG topics into English lessons, particularly within ESP contexts create active and significant learning environment, where English language instruction and global education support one another. The inclusion of authentic, real-world issues allows students to develop advanced linguistic competence, while also engaging with the social, political, and economic challenges. Such integration not only strengthens vocabulary acquisition, academic writing, and communicative performance, but also promotes higher-order thinking skills as students analyze cases, evaluate evidence, and propose reasonable solutions to the complex global problems.

References:

1. Mochizuki, Y. & Fadeeva, Z. (2010). Competences for sustainable development and sustainability: Significance and challenges for ESD.

25-november 2025

2. Razakova, M. (2024). "Incorporating global issues into teaching ESP for political science and international relations students." *Innovations in Foreign Language Teaching in the Era of Globalization and Sustainable Development*.
<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/388955881>
3. UNESCO, Education for Sustainable Development Goals: learning objectives UNESCO, 2017. Education for Sustainable Development Goals: learning objectives. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000247444>
4. Gilmore, A. (2007). Authentic materials and authenticity in foreign language learning. *Language Teaching*.
5. Barth, M., Godemann, J., Rieckmann, M. and Stoltenberg, U., (2007). "Developing key competencies for sustainable development in higher education", *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education*.