

The Current State of English Language Teaching in Uzbekistan's Private Universities, The Requirements of Global Integration, And the Potential of Neurodidactics

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ABSTRACT

The private university sector in Uzbekistan has grown quickly, and English is now not only a subject that is taught, but also a way for students to learn about other cultures and a sign that they are open to the world. This article examines the present condition of English language teaching (ELT) in private universities, interprets the requirements of "global integration" through the perspectives of national reform initiatives and evolving quality-assurance standards, and advocates for the practical significance of neurodidactics as an evidence-based framework for enhancing learning outcomes in diverse cohorts and English-medium instruction (EMI) environments. The paper asserts that the primary challenge lies in the shift from "English as access" (certificates, admission signaling, branding) to "English as participation" (sustained academic engagement in English through reading, writing, presenting, and collaboration). Drawing from current EMI research and neuroeducation-focused scholarship, a neurodidactic ELT model is introduced, highlighting attention management, working-memory limitations, consolidation via spaced retrieval, and affect-motivation regulation. The article concludes that private universities can more reliably meet global integration demands by establishing coherent EAP/ESP pathways, implementing assessments aligned with authentic academic tasks, and institutionalizing collaborative professional development for language and content faculty.

Keywords: Uzbekistan; private universities; English language teaching; English-medium instruction; academic English; EAP; ESP; global integration; quality assurance; neurodidactics.

INTRODUCTION

The higher education system in Uzbekistan has changed because institutions are growing faster, there are more market-oriented programs, and there is a stronger commitment to internationalization. In this setting, private universities compete with each other on the value of their education, the stories they tell about how likely their graduates are to get jobs, and how credible their degrees are. English is very important in all three areas. For applicants and their families, English is linked to job opportunities, moving around, and making more money. For universities, it sets them apart from other schools, and for employers, it shows that someone can work in international settings. Because of this, ELT in private universities becomes a core competency of the institution instead of a general-education subject on the side.

In private universities, English often has three functions that overlap. First, it is taught as a general skill, often in the context of CEFR levels and preparing for standardized tests. Second, it is becoming more and more common to teach in English, whether through full EMI programs or just a few English-taught modules in business, economics, information technology, medicine, and international relations. Third, English is the working language for institutional internationalization, which makes it possible for joint programs, visiting faculty, academic partnerships, and student mobility. These functions necessitate distinct pedagogical prerequisites: test-driven general English can facilitate short-term credential objectives, whereas English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) and international academic engagement demand academic literacy, enduring

productive skills, and discipline-sensitive discourse proficiency.

In higher education, global integration requirements hardly ever boil down to one number. They show up in the ability to compare programs around the world, make sure that learning outcomes are clear, keep assessment standards high, and make it easier for people to move around and work together. Integration necessitates that students possess the ability to read and critique disciplinary literature, compose coherent academic texts, articulate arguments to expert audiences, and collaborate efficiently across cultural and linguistic divides. These are competencies for participation. The difference between access-level proficiency (which is often focused on certificates) and participation-level competence (which is based on academic performance) is one of the biggest quality problems for private universities.

This problem is getting worse because more and more people are using EMI. International research on EMI indicates that receptive skills and vocabulary can enhance through increased exposure; however, productive skills and equity outcomes are significantly influenced by teacher preparation, curriculum design, and the availability of language and academic support. In systems where EMI grows faster than support capacity, English can become a gatekeeping barrier that makes inequality worse by giving an advantage to students who already have strong English skills or access to private tutoring. The strategic question for Uzbekistan's private universities, which often have a wide range of students and programs that change quickly, is not whether to expand English, but how to make it a learning system that leads to long-lasting academic success.

If you think of neurodidactics as evidence-based instructional design based on cognitive science instead of simple "brain-based" slogans, it can help you improve in a clear way. Neurodidactics, as examined in neuroeducation literature, seeks to integrate knowledge of learning mechanisms—such as attention, memory formation, cognitive load, and self-regulation—into classroom practices. These mechanisms are particularly pertinent in English Language Teaching (ELT) due to the cumulative, time-consuming nature of language acquisition, as well as its susceptibility to anxiety, feedback dynamics, and students' self-efficacy. To meet global integration requirements in a credible way, private universities need to move away from a certificate-based, episodic approach and

toward a more consistent, curriculum-wide approach that encourages students to stay in school for years at a time.

This article employs an integrative analytical framework that amalgamates (1) policy-institutional analysis and (2) narrative synthesis of research from English Medium Instruction (EMI), applied linguistics (EAP/ESP), and neuroeducation-informed pedagogy. The policy-institutional component investigates the designation of foreign language proficiency as a national development priority and the implications of this priority for expectations placed on higher education institutions, including private providers. There is a lot of focus on the rise of coordination and governance structures that make learning a foreign language a system-level goal instead of just a personal choice. There is also a lot of talk about how public reforms link foreign language skills to the quality of education and the ability to compete internationally.

The research synthesis component amalgamates findings from EMI studies concerning skill development and learning conditions with cognitive and neurodidactic principles pertinent to language acquisition, academic writing enhancement, and performance in multilingual classrooms. In this context, neurodidactics is defined as a collection of actionable design principles: minimizing unnecessary cognitive load, arranging tasks from controlled to complex production, promoting consolidation via spaced practice and retrieval, and ensuring stable motivation and engagement through psychologically safe feedback and self-regulation mechanisms. The analysis employs these principles to pinpoint recurrent structural deficiencies in private university English Language Teaching (ELT) systems and to suggest a cohesive model that aligns with global integration standards.

The current state of English language teaching in Uzbekistan's private universities is that it is growing quickly but not in a consistent way. Many schools show a strong desire to do well by investing in programs taught in English, promoting international curricula, and hiring bilingual staff when they can. But just because you want to learn doesn't mean you will. In many private settings, English is still divided up: a first-year general English module might not be very related to later disciplinary assessment, and EMI courses might start without a strong bridge that gets students ready for academic work that requires a lot of reading and writing. This creates a pattern that is easy to see: students can pass tests or meet minimum requirements but still have trouble with academic tasks like

summarizing sources, making evidence-based arguments, and using discipline-specific language.

One of the main problems is that the groups are very different from each other. Private universities frequently enroll students from various educational backgrounds, resulting in significant disparities in listening fluency, reading speed, academic vocabulary, and writing conventions. When a single course design is used for groups with different levels of skill, students with lower skill levels have to do more mental work because they have to decode language, track meaning, and try to learn new material all at once. When learners are under this kind of pressure, they tend to use surface strategies like copying phrases, memorizing templates, avoiding speaking turns, and using translated materials. Students with higher proficiency levels may face diminished challenges and fewer opportunities for advanced academic output, thereby impeding the development of discipline-specific writing and argumentation skills. Without different pathways, institutional ELT is less fair and less effective.

Teacher capacity is another limitation that has a direct impact on the viability of EMI and the competence of participants. Language teachers at private universities might be very good at teaching English as a second language, but they might not have much training in EAP/ESP, evaluating academic writing, and designing curricula that focus on discourse. Content teachers may have a lot of knowledge about their subject, but they may not know how to teach English as a second language (EMI). They may be able to speak English well enough, but they may not know how to help students understand what they are reading, deal with language-sensitive tests, or help students improve their academic discourse. When this happens, EMI can turn into "content delivered in English" instead of "content learned through supported English." Tests may also become easier, which makes language less complex instead of more so.

The need for system-level solutions is made stronger by pressures for quality assurance and sustainability. Private universities are being watched more closely by regulators and the public, and many are expected to show that they have stable educational conditions, good infrastructure, and reliable learning outcomes. For schools that offer English-taught courses, the credibility of the whole academic program is tied to how well students do in English. If students can join EMI programs but can't write academic papers or defend their arguments in person, the

program's international claims become weaker and the competitiveness of graduates goes down. So, the quality of ELT is not just an educational issue; it is also a strategic and risk-management issue.

The need for global integration also affects the "currency" of English in higher education. Certificates and CEFR labels are still important because they are easy to understand. But just having certificates doesn't mean you can participate in academic activities. A student may possess a certificate while experiencing difficulties in discipline-specific reading, writing, and seminar engagement. The challenge of integration is not just reaching a certain level of English, but also being able to use English for academic purposes across subjects and over time. This transition—from English as access to English as participation—establishes the conceptual foundation for a neurodidactic ELT model.

A neurodidactic ELT model appropriate for private universities can be developed through four interrelated learning mechanisms: attention, working-memory load, consolidation, and affect-motivation regulation. First, attention is limited and fragile in multilingual classrooms, especially when students have to keep an eye on accuracy while trying to understand difficult material. Because of this, instructional design should make tasks and procedures as clear as possible. When students know exactly what success looks like, they focus on making meaning and having academic conversations instead of trying to guess what the teacher wants. In practice, this backs up clear rubrics, consistent task routines, modeling of the desired output, and structured cycles for speaking and writing.

Second, working memory makes it hard for people to learn new skills. When you speak or write, you have to keep track of the content, the language form, and the rhetorical structure all at once. When tasks require too many new things at once, the output turns into silence, short phrases, or text that has been copied. So, neurodidactic design puts a lot of emphasis on increasing complexity over time. Students first learn how to make stable "chunks" of academic discourse, like summarizing a paragraph with the right reporting verbs and paraphrasing it correctly. Only then do they put these chunks together to make longer arguments that include evidence, counter-arguments, and a stance that is specific to the discipline. The goal is to automate lower-level tasks so that working memory can be used for reasoning and argumentation instead.

Third, consolidation is important for turning short-term success into long-term skill. Language learning often fails when it is confined to a single semester and subsequently regarded as "completed." In EMI contexts, however, linguistic demands escalate as students advance to more sophisticated disciplinary tasks, resulting in increased reading loads and heightened writing complexity. In order to focus on consolidation, ELT needs a long-term design. This means that students will go over the same core academic vocabulary and grammar patterns in different modules, and they will practice retrieving and using them in tasks that are similar to what they would do in a disciplinary assessment. This means that private universities should not limit serious language support to the first year. Instead, they should make a curriculum spine: general English leads to EAP, then to ESP and EMI support, and then to writing-intensive and presentation-intensive assignments in later years to help students remember what they learned.

Fourth, emotions and motivation affect how people participate, especially when it comes to speaking and writing. Language anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, and low self-efficacy inhibit output, and in the absence of output, enhancement of productive skills is constrained. Neurodidactic design considers psychological safety and formative feedback as essential prerequisites rather than optional enhancements. Students are more likely to participate, revise, and consolidate when errors are seen as a normal part of learning and feedback is focused, specific, and aimed at improvement. In private universities, where students may pay a lot of money for tuition and want quick results, the challenge is to find a balance between accountability and support. High standards must be paired with clear ways to improve.

Putting these mechanisms into practice at the institutional level has a number of effects on the system as a whole. The curriculum should make it clear how students will move from general English to EAP/ESP. The goals should be in line with real academic tasks like writing based on sources, seminar discussions, and presentations that are specific to a certain field. Placement and diagnostics should be utilized to distinguish pathways and to establish bridging options for students who fall below functional EMI thresholds. Bridging should incorporate language with study skills, encompassing academic integrity practices, reading strategies, and argumentation structure, as these competencies dictate engagement in global academic standards.

Teacher development should be formalized as collaborative capacity enhancement. Language teachers must possess proficiency in academic writing pedagogy and assessment literacy, encompassing the capability to assess the quality of arguments and linguistic precision without diminishing feedback to ambiguous impressions. When language ability and content demonstration meet, content teachers need EMI methodology, such as scaffolding strategies and fair assessment practices. Joint planning between language and content staff is especially important at private universities because programs change quickly. If they don't work together, students get different expectations in different classes, and the language curriculum doesn't prepare them for the demands of disciplinary discourse.

Assessment systems should be based on participation, not just on standardized formats. External tests are still useful as signals, but they should be used with valid performance-based assessments like reading-to-write tasks, structured essays with evidence integration, oral defenses, poster presentations, and written communication in specific subjects. When done with clear rubrics and moderation procedures, these kinds of tests give better signs of how ready someone is for global integration. They also help with neurodidactic consolidation because they make you remember and use what you've learned over time.

Digital infrastructure can enhance neurodidactic learning design when utilized for managing spaced practice, retrieval cycles, and personalized support. Learning platforms can plan cumulative quizzes, keep track of error patterns, and offer different kinds of practice for groups of students at different levels. Classroom time is saved for high-value interaction and production. But if you don't use learning design, digitalization just becomes a place to store things. The best way to do this is to include digital practice in the same kinds of tasks that make up the curriculum, making sure that online activities help students learn instead of getting in the way.

English language teaching (ELT) in Uzbekistan's private universities is becoming more important and more widespread. This is due to competition between institutions, more EMI use, and the larger goal of global integration. The main quality problem in the field is the change from access-level English, which is often defined by certificates and marketing claims, to participation-level English, which is defined by long-term academic performance in English across fields. This transition is

limited by diverse groups of students, a lack of teachers who are trained in EAP/ESP and EMI, and the need for reliable, outcome-based quality assurance.

Neurodidactics offers a solid framework for improvement when understood as evidence-based instructional design focused on attention management, working memory constraints, consolidation via spaced retrieval, and emotional conditions that facilitate engagement. Using a neurodidactic ELT model at private universities means that the curriculum will progress in a logical way (from General English to EAP to ESP/EMI support), that assessments will be based on real academic tasks, and that language and content faculty will work together to improve their skills. These measures enhance the durability of learning, promote equity in EMI participation, and bolster credible assertions of global integration through verifiable academic proficiency.

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