

ENHANCING MOTIVATION IN TEACHING ENGLISH TO NON-LANGUAGE MAJORS: CHALLENGES AND EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES

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Abstract. English has become an essential tool for academic, professional, and international communication. However, teaching English to students whose major fields are not related to languages presents numerous challenges. Many non-language major students consider English a secondary subject and often demonstrate low motivation toward learning it. This article examines the major difficulties encountered in teaching English to non-language majors and explores effective strategies for increasing learners' motivation.

Keywords: English language teaching, non-language majors, motivation, higher education, language learning challenges, student engagement, teaching strategies.

In today's globalized world, English serves as an international language in education, science, technology, and business. As a result, universities increasingly include English courses in the curricula of non-language specialties such as engineering, medicine, economics, agriculture, and information technology. Despite its importance, many students outside language-related fields show limited interest in learning English. They often perceive it as an additional requirement rather than a useful skill for their future careers.

Motivation is one of the most significant factors influencing language learning success. Students who are motivated tend to participate actively, invest more effort, and achieve better results. Conversely, a lack of motivation can hinder language development regardless of teaching quality. Therefore, understanding motivational factors and addressing learning difficulties are crucial for improving English language education among non-language majors.

One of the primary challenges is that students frequently fail to recognize the connection between English and their future professions. Engineering or medical students, for example, may focus mainly on technical subjects and underestimate the role of English in accessing international research, professional communication, and career advancement.

When learners do not perceive practical value in language learning, they are less likely to invest time and effort. Consequently, classroom participation decreases, and academic performance may suffer.

Non-language major students often have demanding academic schedules filled with specialized courses. English classes usually receive fewer contact hours than major subjects, reducing opportunities for language practice and development. Insufficient exposure to English makes it difficult for students to improve their communication skills effectively.

University classrooms often contain students with different educational backgrounds and varying levels of English proficiency. Some students possess strong language foundations, while others struggle with basic grammar and vocabulary. Such diversity creates challenges for teachers attempting to meet all learners' needs simultaneously.

Many students experience anxiety when speaking English in front of others. Fear of making grammatical errors or being judged by classmates can discourage participation. This psychological barrier negatively affects confidence and reduces opportunities for meaningful language practice.

In some educational contexts, English instruction remains heavily focused on grammar rules, translation exercises, and memorization. Although these methods may improve theoretical knowledge, they often fail to develop communicative competence. Students may become bored or frustrated when classroom activities lack interaction and practical application.

Motivation can be defined as the internal or external drive that encourages individuals to achieve specific goals. In language education, motivation influences learners' attitudes, persistence, and overall achievement.

Researchers commonly distinguish between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation originates from personal interest, enjoyment, or satisfaction derived from learning. Students who genuinely enjoy English are more likely to engage actively in learning activities.

Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, is driven by external rewards such as grades, scholarships, employment opportunities, or academic requirements. While extrinsic factors can encourage participation, long-term success often depends on developing intrinsic interest in the language.

For non-language majors, both forms of motivation are important. Teachers should demonstrate the practical benefits of English while also creating enjoyable and meaningful learning experiences.

Strategies for Enhancing Student Motivation

One effective strategy is to relate English learning to students' future careers. Teachers can incorporate profession-specific materials, including technical articles, case studies, presentations, and workplace communication scenarios.

For instance, engineering students may analyze technical manuals, while business students can practice negotiating or writing professional emails. Such activities help learners understand the practical relevance of English and increase their willingness to learn.

Interactive learning promotes active participation and reduces classroom monotony. Group discussions, role-plays, debates, problem-solving tasks, and project-based learning encourage students to use English in meaningful contexts.

These methods shift the focus from passive knowledge reception to active communication, helping students develop confidence and improve language skills simultaneously.

Modern technologies provide numerous opportunities for motivating learners. Educational applications, online platforms, interactive quizzes, and multimedia resources make language learning more engaging and accessible.

Videos, podcasts, virtual discussions, and language-learning applications allow students to practice English beyond the classroom. Technology also supports individualized learning, enabling students to progress at their own pace.

A positive classroom atmosphere is essential for reducing language anxiety. Teachers should encourage students to express their ideas without fear of criticism and view mistakes as natural components of the learning process.

Constructive feedback, positive reinforcement, and respectful communication contribute to higher self-confidence and stronger motivation. Students who feel supported are more likely to participate actively and take risks in language use.

Clear and realistic learning objectives help students monitor their progress and maintain motivation. Large tasks can be divided into smaller, manageable goals that provide regular opportunities for success.

When students observe tangible improvements in their abilities, they develop greater confidence and become more committed to continued learning.

The challenges faced by non-language major students are complex and interconnected. Low motivation often results from limited relevance, insufficient practice opportunities, and negative learning experiences. However, these obstacles can be addressed through thoughtful instructional design.

Teachers play a critical role in shaping students' attitudes toward English. By connecting language learning to professional development, implementing interactive methodologies, and fostering supportive environments, educators can transform English from a compulsory subject into a valuable and meaningful skill.

Furthermore, universities should support English language programs by providing modern resources, professional development opportunities for instructors, and curricula that reflect students' academic and professional needs.

Teaching English to non-language majors requires a balanced approach that addresses both linguistic and motivational factors. Although students may initially demonstrate limited interest in English, effective teaching strategies can significantly increase engagement and learning outcomes. Relevance to professional goals, interactive classroom activities, technology integration, and positive teacher-student relationships are among the most influential factors in enhancing motivation.

As English continues to play an increasingly important role in global communication, improving motivation among non-language major students remains a priority for higher education institutions. Future efforts should focus on creating learner-centered environments that inspire students to view English not merely as an academic requirement but as a valuable tool for personal and professional growth.

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