

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Demotivating Factors in English Language Learning Among Non-Philological Students and Re-Motivation Strategies

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VOLUME: Vol.06 Issue06 2026

PAGE: 77-80

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Abstract

The article analyses major demotivating factors in English language learning among non-philological university students and proposes a context-sensitive re-motivation framework. Demotivation is interpreted as a dynamic reduction of previously existing willingness to learn rather than a simple absence of motivation. An analytical synthesis of international, Russian-language and Uzbekistan-based studies identifies five clusters: perceived professional irrelevance, reduced self-efficacy and anxiety, teacher/instructional factors, assessment-related failure, and learning-environment or workload constraints. A five-stage re-motivation cycle - diagnosis, relevance reconstruction, attainable success, autonomy-supportive engagement and reflective consolidation - is proposed for non-philological EFL courses.

KEY WORDS

Demotivation, re-motivation, non-philological students, EFL, self-efficacy, professional relevance, motivational strategies.

INTRODUCTION

For students outside language majors, English is usually a supporting subject rather than the central component of professional training. This position creates a specific motivational risk: learners may acknowledge the general value of English but fail to see why a particular course or task matters for their future profession. Uzbekistan-based research on non-linguistic faculties similarly links sustained foreign-language motivation with professional meaning and future-oriented goals.

Demotivation should be distinguished from a stable lack of motivation. Contemporary L2 motivation theory treats motivation as dynamic and sensitive to classroom experience, self-perception and context. A learner may therefore value English and still withdraw because of repeated failure, anxiety, irrelevant content, excessive control or assessment pressure. Toshmatova's earlier research highlights self-determination,

goal setting and self-efficacy as important motivational resources, while her work with non-philological students stresses professionally meaningful and task-based learning. The present study develops this line by focusing on motivational decline and recovery.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Sakai and Kikuchi identified learning contents and materials, teachers' competence and teaching styles, inadequate facilities, lack of intrinsic motivation and test scores as major EFL demotivators. Kikuchi's later synthesis demonstrates that demotivation is rarely caused by a single variable; it emerges through the interaction of learner beliefs, previous achievement and the instructional environment. Falout and Maruyama also showed that proficiency and negative learning histories influence the intensity and persistence of demotivation.

Research on recovery is equally important. Trang and Baldauf found that Vietnamese university students could overcome demotivating experiences when they recognised the importance of English and developed determination to continue. Russian-language scholarship likewise approaches demotivation as a pedagogically manageable phenomenon. Flerov points to mismatches between learner expectations and local outcomes, information overload and the perceived substitutability of language knowledge by digital translation tools, arguing for methodological redesign rather than learner blame.

Evidence from Uzbekistan supports a contextual approach. Mamadaminova and Khadjikhanova report substantial influence of teachers, personal attitudes and peers on English-learning motivation. Alimov emphasises professional motivation among non-linguistic students, while Toshmatova's recent work indicates that digital platforms can support engagement when they are integrated into purposeful learning rather than used as isolated entertainment.

METHODS

This is a conceptual-analytical study. Verified international, Russian-language and Uzbekistan-based sources were compared to identify recurrent demotivators, merge overlapping factors into broader categories and map each category to a pedagogically plausible re-motivation response. No experimental percentages or invented learner data are reported. The proposed model is intended for subsequent

empirical validation through questionnaires, interviews, classroom observation and pre-/post-intervention comparison.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Five interrelated clusters are especially relevant to non-philological students. First, perceived professional irrelevance arises when generic topics and decontextualised grammar tasks are weakly connected to the learner's field. Re-motivation requires authentic professional texts, cases and communication scenarios. Second, reduced self-efficacy and anxiety develop through repeated low marks, fear of public error and comparison with stronger peers. Here the priority is graded difficulty, psychologically safe participation and visible evidence of progress.

Third, teacher and instructional factors include monotonous lesson patterns, excessive control, unclear explanations, limited feedback and methods that privilege reproduction over meaningful communication. Fourth, assessment-related demotivation appears when tests repeatedly communicate failure, criteria are unclear or classroom activities and examinations measure different abilities. Formative feedback, transparent rubrics and opportunities for revision can convert assessment from a threat into information for improvement. Fifth, workload and learning-environment constraints - limited contact hours, large groups, competing major-specific assignments and poorly designed digital tasks - weaken continuity even when initial motivation is adequate.

Table 1. Demotivating factors and priority re-motivation responses

Demotivating cluster	Typical manifestation	Priority response
Professional irrelevance	Low perceived task value	ESP-oriented authentic tasks; future-self goals
Low self-efficacy/anxiety	Avoidance; fear of error	Graded challenge; safe feedback; visible progress
Instructional factors	Boredom; passivity	Varied interaction; differentiated tasks; autonomy support
Assessment failure	Score fixation; helplessness	Transparent rubrics; formative feedback; revision
Workload/environment	Irregular practice; overload	Focused micro-learning; realistic digital support

FIVE-STAGE RE-MOTIVATION STRATEGY

Re-motivation should not be reduced to rewards, games or inspirational messages. The first stage is diagnosis: the teacher determines whether disengagement is driven mainly by irrelevance, low confidence, instruction, assessment or

workload. The second stage is relevance reconstruction: tasks are connected with realistic professional purposes such as reading field-specific sources, interpreting data, presenting a project or communicating in a future workplace. The central question becomes not merely 'Why is English important?' but

'Why is this English task useful for the professional I intend to become?'.
'

The third stage is attainable success. Tasks should move from manageable to challenging, with explicit criteria and feedback that identifies a controllable next step. The fourth stage is autonomy-supportive engagement: students receive bounded choices of topic, resource, role or product, while pair, group and task-based formats reduce communication pressure. Digital tools are useful when they provide purposeful feedback, repetition or collaboration. Toshmatova's digital-technology study supports this principle of pedagogically integrated technology.

The fifth stage is reflective consolidation. Learners compare earlier and later performance, review goals and identify strategies that produced improvement. Progress should be visible in concrete language behaviour - longer speaking turns, better comprehension, fewer recurring writing errors or successful completion of a professional task. Reflection helps transform externally supported recovery into a more self-regulated motivational pattern.

PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

The framework implies that teachers should interpret persistent silence, incomplete work or low participation as diagnostic signals rather than evidence of laziness. Course objectives, learning tasks and assessment should communicate the same professional and communicative purpose. Interventions should also be differentiated: a relevance problem requires a different response from anxiety or overload. For future research, the five clusters can be operationalised as questionnaire subscales and validated through learner narratives, observation and teacher interviews. Such a design would extend existing motivation research by examining not only whether motivation increases, but how it declines and through which mechanisms it can be restored.

CONCLUSION

Demotivation among non-philological students is a multidimensional and potentially reversible process. The most salient clusters are professional irrelevance, reduced self-efficacy and anxiety, instructional factors, assessment-related failure, and workload or environmental constraints. A systematic re-motivation process should therefore move from diagnosis to relevance reconstruction, attainable success, autonomy-supportive engagement and reflective

consolidation. This model provides a theoretically grounded basis for improving English instruction in non-philological higher education and for subsequent empirical testing in the Uzbek context.

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