STUDENT CHOICE AS A MOTIVATIONAL TOOL IN ENGLISH CLASSES FOR NON-PHILOLOGICAL STUDENTS

Toshmatova Sitora Azizbek qizi
Senior Lecturer, Afrasiab University
Independent Researcher, Chirchiq State Pedagogical University
ORCID: 0009-0000-4049-0815
DOI:https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.22836705

Abstract. The thesis examines student choice as a practical motivational tool in English classes for non-philological university students. It argues that limited and meaningful choice can strengthen autonomy, task value, responsibility and participation without reducing instructional structure. A four-stage classroom mechanism - choice, commitment, performance, reflection - is proposed. The approach is interpreted through Self-Determination Theory, L2 motivation research and recent findings on task relevance and engagement.

Keywords: student choice, autonomy, motivation, English language learning, non-philological students, engagement.

Introduction

Motivation in university English courses is not only an individual characteristic; it is also shaped by classroom conditions. Task design, teacher support and the degree of learner responsibility may strengthen or weaken engagement. This is especially important for non-philological students, for whom English is usually a supporting subject rather than the main field of study.

Self-Determination Theory links high-quality motivation with the satisfaction of autonomy, competence and relatedness.[1] In a language classroom, autonomy does not mean unlimited freedom. It means that learners experience a reasonable sense of ownership over learning. One practical way to support this need is to provide limited but meaningful choices within a structured lesson.

Dörnyei also emphasizes that motivational teaching should develop commitment, confidence and positive attitudes toward the learning process.[2] For students who perceive English as a compulsory subject, purposeful choice may make learning more personally relevant. Toshmatova's research on non-philological students similarly highlights learner-centered methods, authentic materials and meaningful tasks as important conditions for increasing motivation.[3]

Choice becomes pedagogically valuable when it changes the learner's relationship with a task. A student who selects a topic, role, resource or output format makes a small academic decision and accepts greater responsibility for the result. However, the value of choice depends on relevance. Hoi Vo found that task relevance was an even stronger predictor of L2 engagement than choice itself.[4] Therefore,

[1] Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). The "what" and "why" of goal pursuits. *Psychological Inquiry, 11*(4), 227-268.

[2] Dörnyei, Z. (2001). *Motivational Strategies in the Language Classroom*. Cambridge University Press.

[3] Toshmatova, S. (2026). Developing English language learning motivation among non-philological students. *Eurasian Journal of Academic Research, 6*(5), 259-267.

[4] Vo, H. (2023). Giving choices or making tasks relevant? *System, 116*, 103098.

© 2026 London International Monthly Conference on Multidisciplinary Research and Innovation. All Rights Reserved.

teachers should not offer options merely for variety; the options should connect with learners' interests, needs or future use of English.

For example, economics students may choose between explaining a price change, presenting a market trend or negotiating a service problem. Tourism students may select a guest complaint, an itinerary recommendation or a hotel-service dialogue. The linguistic objective can remain the same while the context is chosen by the learner.

Useful classroom choices can be grouped into four areas. **Topic choice** lets learners select content within a teacher-defined frame. **Role choice** allows students to select a function in pair or group work. **Product choice** gives options such as a short presentation, dialogue, written response or recorded explanation. **Challenge choice** offers two versions of the same task with different levels of linguistic support.

Such choices should be bounded. Too many alternatives may increase cognitive load and encourage students to select only the easiest option. The teacher therefore remains responsible for learning outcomes, assessment criteria and comparable task difficulty. Choice works best as structured autonomy rather than unrestricted freedom.

A simple mechanism for using student choice in English lessons can be presented as **choice - commitment - performance - reflection**.

At the **choice** stage, the teacher offers two or three academically equivalent options leading to the same language objective. At the **commitment** stage, the student briefly identifies the selected option and the intended result. This prevents choice from becoming superficial. A statement such as "I will choose the interview task because I need more speaking practice" turns selection into an intentional learning decision.

At the **performance** stage, students complete the task while the teacher provides limited scaffolding through vocabulary, sentence starters or models. Such support protects learners' sense of competence and helps them experience autonomy without losing structure.[5]

At the **reflection** stage, students evaluate whether their choice helped them complete the task and what they would change next time. A one-minute exit ticket - "My choice helped because… / Next time I will…" - is sufficient. Reflection transforms choice into self-regulation and helps learners understand their own learning preferences.

This mechanism is useful in heterogeneous non-philological groups because it allows the same English objective to be adapted to different interests. It also supports the connection between general English and learners' future academic or professional identity. Toshmatova's methodological work argues that motivation improves when language activities are purposeful and connected with authentic use rather than isolated exercises.[6]

Pedagogical Implications

Four principles should guide the use of student choice. First, **choice must be meaningful**: it should influence content, communication purpose, role or strategy. Second, **options should be equivalent in difficulty** so that selection reflects interest rather than avoidance of effort. Third, **choice should be gradual**, especially for students accustomed to teacher-directed instruction. Fourth, **choice should be**

[5] Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2020). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation from a self-determination theory perspective. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 61*, 101860.

[6] Toshmatova, S. (2026). Developing English language learning motivation among non-philological students. *Eurasian Journal of Academic Research, 6*(5), 259-267.

© 2026 London International Monthly Conference on Multidisciplinary Research and Innovation. All Rights Reserved.

followed by feedback and reflection so that learners can judge whether their decision supported learning.

Teachers should also evaluate whether choice actually increases engagement. L2 engagement is behavioral, cognitive, emotional and social, and different task conditions can affect these dimensions differently.[7] Therefore, the effectiveness of choice should be judged through participation, persistence, quality of interaction and learner reflection, not only through expressed preference.

Conclusion

Student choice can become a simple motivational tool in English classes for non-philological students when it is relevant, limited and pedagogically structured. The proposed **choice - commitment - performance - reflection** mechanism gives learners a degree of ownership while preserving clear learning objectives. It can support autonomy, responsibility and sustained engagement without weakening teacher guidance. Further empirical work may compare structured-choice and uniform-task groups to examine changes in motivation, participation and language performance.

References

1. Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). The “what” and “why” of goal pursuits. Psychological Inquiry, 11(4), 227-268.
2. Dörnyei, Z. (2001). Motivational Strategies in the Language Classroom. Cambridge University Press.
3. Toshmatova, S. (2026). Developing English language learning motivation among non-philological students: A methodological framework for enhancing reading and writing skills. Eurasian Journal of Academic Research, 6(5), 259-267. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20487398
4. Vo, H. (2023). Giving choices or making tasks relevant? Classroom practices that foster L2 learner engagement. System, 116, 103098. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2023.103098
5. Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2020). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation from a self-determination theory perspective. Contemporary Educational Psychology, 61, 101860.
6. Aubrey, S., & Philpott, A. (2023). Second language task engagement in face-to-face and synchronous video-based computer-mediated communication modes. System, 115, 103069. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2023.103069
7. Markova, A. K., Matis, T. A., & Orlov, A. B. (1990). Formirovanie motivatsii ucheniya. Prosveshchenie.

[7] Aubrey, S., & Philpott, A. (2023). Second language task engagement in face-to-face and synchronous video-based computer-mediated communication modes. *System, 115*, 103069.

© 2026 London International Monthly Conference on Multidisciplinary Research and Innovation. All Rights Reserved.