Strategic perspectives on the importance of English in the 21st century: Insights from first-year students

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Abstract

Proficiency in English is increasingly recognized as a crucial skill for academic and professional success in today's globalized world. This study explores the experiences and perspectives of first-year university students regarding their English language learning, focusing on motivation, reasons for learning, perceived importance, and challenges. The purpose of the research is to analyze and understand these factors, which are pivotal for developing effective language learning strategies. The study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to gather comprehensive insights into students' attitudes and experiences. Data were collected from 150 first-year university students across multiple institutions, ensuring a representative sample. The analysis reveals key trends in students' motivation and highlights the specific challenges they face in mastering English as a second language. The findings indicate that students view English proficiency as essential for career opportunities, academic achievements, and global communication. However, significant barriers, such as limited access to resources and varying levels of prior preparation, hinder their progress. These insights underscore the need for tailored educational strategies, including interactive and career-oriented language instruction, as well as resources to address specific barriers. The study concludes that addressing these challenges through targeted interventions and fostering a supportive learning environment can significantly improve students' language acquisition outcomes. Practical implications include recommendations for curriculum design, resource allocation, and motivational strategies that align with students' needs and aspirations. This research contributes to the development of strategic approaches for improving language education, ensuring students are better prepared for success in an interconnected, competitive world.

Keywords: Career relevance, English language learning, English learning strategies, Challenges, First-year students, Strategic approaches.

1. Introduction

In today's interconnected world, proficiency in English is a crucial skill that significantly impacts academic and professional success. As the global lingua franca, English facilitates access to a wealth of knowledge, fosters international collaboration, and enhances career prospects across diverse fields. For first-year university students, mastering English is not just a subject requirement but a gateway to broader opportunities and personal development [1]. This study holds critical relevance not only for local educational contexts but also for the global academic and professional landscape. Recent literature underscores the importance of strategic and innovative approaches to English language learning, especially during challenging periods such as wartime [2]. As English continues to solidify its role as the lingua franca of international communication, understanding the motivations and challenges of first-year students offers valuable insights for shaping language education strategies worldwide. These findings can inform policies and practices that prepare learners to navigate the demands of a globalized economy and multicultural societies.

The study aims to explore various aspects of English language learning among first-year students, focusing on their motivation levels, underlying reasons for learning, perceived importance of English for future careers, and the challenges they encounter. Understanding these dimensions is vital for educators and policymakers to design and implement effective instructional strategies that can address the specific needs and aspirations of students. The survey conducted in this study encompasses responses from a diverse group of first-year students, providing a comprehensive overview of their experiences and attitudes towards learning English. By analyzing the distribution of motivation levels, this research sheds light on the factors that drive or hinder students' enthusiasm for language learning. Additionally, the study delves into the primary reasons why students choose to learn English, ranging from professional development and personal interest to travel and cultural communication, thereby highlighting the multifaceted nature of language learning motivations.

The perceived importance of English for future careers is another critical aspect examined in this research. The findings underscore the necessity for educational institutions to prioritize English language instruction, aligning it with students' career aspirations and the demands of the global job market. Furthermore, the study identifies common challenges faced by students in their language learning journey, such as difficulties with grammar, time constraints, limited exposure to English-speaking environments, and lack of resources. By addressing these challenges through targeted interventions and support mechanisms, educational institutions can create a more supportive and effective learning environment. This research not only contributes to a better understanding of first-year students' motivations and challenges in learning English but also provides practical insights for enhancing language education programs. Ultimately, the goal is to empower students to achieve language proficiency, thereby equipping them with the skills needed to succeed in an increasingly globalized world.

The subsequent sections of this paper will address several critical dimensions of the role of English in the 21st century. The first section examines the motivations of first-year university students for learning English, focusing on their aspirations and the factors driving their engagement. The second section explores the reasons for learning English, including professional, personal, and cultural objectives. The third section analyzes the perceived importance of English language skills for students' future careers, highlighting its role in professional development and global opportunities. The fourth section discusses the challenges faced by students in mastering English, such as grammar difficulties, time constraints, and limited exposure to English-speaking environments. Finally, the conclusion synthesizes the findings and offers practical recommendations for educators and policymakers to enhance English language education and support students in achieving their linguistic and professional goals.

2. Literature Review

Understanding the factors influencing motivation and effective strategies in language learning is crucial for educators and policymakers alike. Recent studies have shed light on various aspects of this complex phenomenon, providing insights into the nuanced interplay between individual characteristics, educational environments, and pedagogical approaches. The motivation to learn a second language has been extensively studied, with seminal works introducing the concepts of integrative and instrumental motivation [3]. Contemporary research highlights the role of tailored learning strategies in enhancing motivation, particularly when they align with learners' aspirations and contexts [4]. Teaching methods that integrate interactive tools and real-life applications significantly enhance students' engagement and outcomes [5]. Contemporary research highlights the role of tailored learning strategies in enhancing motivation, particularly when they align with learners' aspirations and contexts [6]. For example, incorporating innovative methodologies and real-life applications significantly boosts student engagement and outcomes. The strategic deployment of interactive tools, such as

gamified platforms and collaborative learning environments, has been shown to improve communicative competence and maintain high levels of motivation [7].

Using a large-scale survey across multiple countries, the study of Dörnyei and Csizér [8] investigates the motivational profiles of language learners, and its findings highlight the complexity of motivation, identifying various factors such as attitudes towards the learning environment, self-confidence, and the perceived value of the language. However, the cross-sectional nature of the study does not capture the dynamic changes in motivation over time. Key principles derived from contemporary theories of motivation, such as Self-Determination Theory (SDT) [9] and Expectancy-Value Theory (EVT) [10], underscore the importance of intrinsic motivation, perceived relevance, and goal orientation in driving language learning endeavors. These theories posit that individuals are more likely to engage in sustained effort and achieve greater proficiency when they perceive language learning as personally meaningful, attainable, and aligned with their aspirations. The use of a mixed-method approach enables Noels, et al. [11] to find that learners with higher motivation employ more effective learning strategies and demonstrate better language proficiency, though the study's reliance on self-reported data may introduce biases related to social desirability and accuracy of responses. The study by Malykhin, et al. [12] involves a strategic analysis of enhancing communicative competence in English learning through both quantitative and qualitative approaches, where the researchers find that strategic interventions, such as targeted language practice and the use of interactive learning tools, significantly improve students' communicative competence in English. Although we believe that the study is conducted within a specific educational context, which may limit its applicability to other settings, Malykhin and Bondarchuk focus primarily on theoretical perspectives, with limited empirical validation [13]. The authors conduct a comprehensive review of the conceptual and categorical field of strategizing foreign language preparation for higher education students, and their findings emphasize the need for a structured and strategic approach to foreign language education, highlighting the importance of tailored educational strategies to meet diverse student needs. Malykhin and Aristova perform a comparative analysis of the motivation for learning English as a second language in higher education over different periods, using both qualitative and quantitative data [14]. This analysis reveals shifts in motivational trends, with current students showing a higher tendency towards instrumental motivation compared to earlier cohorts who display stronger integrative motivation. However, there are limitations; the diachronic approach provides valuable insights but may be influenced by contextual changes over time, making direct comparisons challenging.

Collaborative efforts between educators, policymakers, and researchers are needed to design inclusive curricula that cater to diverse motivational profiles and learning contexts [15]. The general consensus across these studies indicates that motivation is a multifaceted construct that significantly influences language learning success. High motivation levels are associated with increased effort, persistence, and the use of effective learning strategies. Intrinsic motivation, characterized by personal interest and enjoyment, tends to yield more sustained engagement compared to extrinsic motivation driven by external rewards. Despite the extensive research on motivation, several gaps remain. Firstly, there is a need for longitudinal studies that track changes in motivation over time, providing a more dynamic understanding of how motivation evolves during the language learning process. Additionally, more research is needed to explore the interplay between motivation and other individual differences, such as personality traits, learning styles, and cultural background. Moreover, the impact of technological advancements on language learning motivation has not been sufficiently explored. With the increasing use of digital tools and online platforms in education, understanding how these technologies influence motivation can offer valuable insights for modern language teaching practices.

The current study aims to fill some of these gaps by providing a comprehensive analysis of first-year university students' motivation to learn English, their reasons for learning, and the challenges they face. By using a detailed survey methodology, this research seeks to capture a broad spectrum of motives and their impact on language learning outcomes. Building on previous literature, this study examines how different motivational profiles correlate with students' perceptions of the importance of English for their future careers. Additionally, the research explores the specific challenges faced by students, offering practical recommendations for educational institutions to enhance their language programs. By addressing the gaps identified in the literature and providing a nuanced understanding of first-year students' motivation and challenges, this study aims to contribute to the development of more effective and targeted language learning strategies. This, in turn, can help create supportive learning environments that enhance students' English proficiency and prepare them for success in an increasingly globalized world.

3. Data and Methodology

The study employs a mixed-methods research design, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of first-year students' motivation to learn English, their reasons for learning, and the challenges they encounter. This approach follows established methodologies but distinguishes itself by focusing on first-year students within a Ukrainian educational context, addressing a research gap in understanding how socio-cultural factors influence English learning motivations. The mixed-methods approach allows for the triangulation of data, enhancing the validity and reliability of the findings. The study population includes first-year university students from four Ukrainian universities: Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Kyiv National University of Technologies and Design, National University of "Kyiv-Mohyla Academy," and Volodymyr Vynnychenko Central Ukrainian State University. A total of 208 students participated in the study, selected through convenience sampling. Unlike previous studies, this research integrates qualitative insights to contextualize quantitative results, offering a nuanced perspective on the interplay of motivation, challenges, and learning strategies. Data were collected using an online survey developed by a team of researchers. The survey consisted of three main sections: motivation to learn English, reasons for learning English, and challenges in learning English. The survey was administered online, providing participants with a convenient and accessible means to complete it.

The link to the survey was distributed via email and university communication platforms, ensuring that all first-year students at the selected universities had the opportunity to participate. The survey was available for a period of one week, allowing students to respond.

Quantitative data from the survey were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques. The analysis included calculating frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations to summarize responses for each survey item. These descriptive statistics provided an overview of the participants' motivation levels, reasons for learning English, and challenges encountered. Qualitative data from open-ended survey responses were analyzed manually to identify recurring themes and patterns. This approach ensured a comprehensive examination of participants' insights and experiences, adding depth to the quantitative findings.

Ethical guidelines are followed throughout the research process to ensure the protection of participants' rights and confidentiality. Informed consent is obtained from all participants, and measures are implemented to maintain data privacy and anonymity. The study's findings may be limited by the self-report nature of the survey, which relies on participants' subjective perceptions and experiences. The sample may not be fully representative of the broader population of first-year students, limiting the generalizability of the findings. Cross-sectional data collection restricts the ability to examine longitudinal changes in motivation and proficiency levels over time.

This research contributes to the understanding of motivational factors and strategic approaches in English language learning among first-year students. The findings can inform the development of targeted interventions and support mechanisms to enhance language education outcomes and promote student success.

4. Findings and Discussion

Understanding the motivations and challenges of first-year students in learning English is essential for designing effective language education strategies. These insights not only inform institutional practices but also contribute to broader discussions on optimizing language education in diverse contexts. The findings in this section provide a detailed examination of motivation levels, reasons for learning, perceived career importance, and common obstacles, revealing patterns that can guide educators and policymakers in enhancing the effectiveness of English language programs. By addressing these aspects comprehensively, this study aims to support learners in achieving proficiency and preparing them for success in a globalized academic and professional landscape.

4.1. Overall Motivation to Learn English

The survey assessed the overall motivation of first-year students to learn English, using a scale from 1 to 5 (where 1 indicates very low motivation and 5 indicates very high motivation). The responses were distributed as follows:
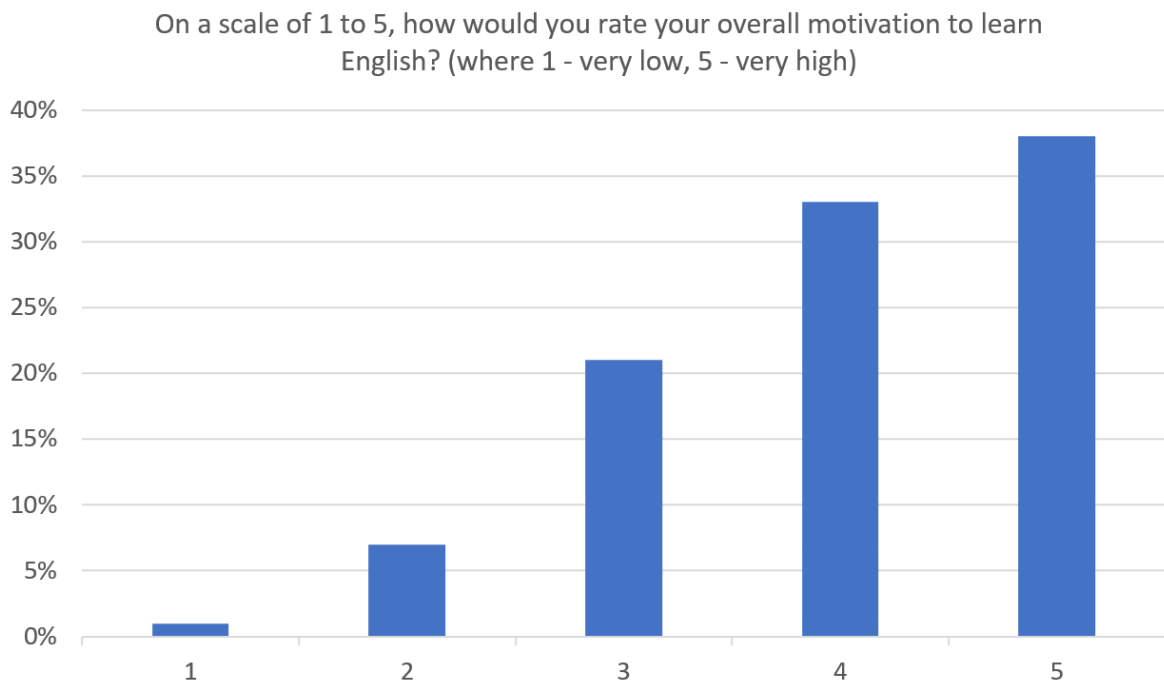

Figure 1.
Overall motivation to learn English among online survey participants.

The majority of students rated their motivation to learn English as high or very high, with approximately 71% of the respondents indicating this. This suggests a generally strong motivation among first-year students to improve their English proficiency. Moderate motivation was reported by 21% of the students, while a small minority reported low or very low motivation. This finding aligns with previous studies that emphasize the need for differentiated educational approaches

tailored to diverse motivational levels [8]. This trend suggests that most students acknowledge the importance of English, but the variation in motivation levels requires differentiated approaches to sustain engagement.

Understanding the distribution of motivation levels is crucial for developing effective educational strategies. High motivation levels indicate that most students recognize the importance of English proficiency and are willing to invest effort in learning the language. However, the presence of students with low to moderate motivation suggests that there may be underlying factors hindering their enthusiasm and engagement, such as external pressures or a lack of perceived relevance in their studies.

Given the varying levels of motivation, it is important to implement strategies that cater to the entire spectrum. For students with high motivation, offering advanced and engaging learning opportunities can sustain and further enhance their interest. This could include participation in language clubs, advanced language courses, cultural exchange programs, and opportunities to use English in real-world contexts. Additionally, research suggests that incorporating mentorship programs where highly motivated students support peers with lower motivation can foster a collaborative learning environment and shared enthusiasm for English learning [11]. For those with moderate motivation, strategies should focus on increasing engagement and demonstrating the relevance of English to their academic and personal goals. Incorporating interactive and practical activities, such as group projects, presentations, and the use of multimedia resources, can make learning more appealing and relevant. For students with low motivation, it is essential to identify and address the specific barriers they face. Personalized support, such as one-on-one tutoring, motivational workshops, and counseling, can help address issues such as lack of confidence, fear of failure, or past negative experiences with language learning.

It is important to consider the interconnection between English proficiency levels and overall motivation. Students with higher proficiency may naturally exhibit higher motivation, while those with lower proficiency might struggle more. Tailoring motivational strategies to address both proficiency and motivation can lead to more effective outcomes. Regular assessment of students' motivation levels and feedback can help educators adapt their strategies to evolving needs. Encouraging a growth mindset, where students see improvement in English proficiency as achievable with effort and persistence, can also contribute to sustaining high motivation levels. As a consequence, the survey results indicate a generally high level of motivation to learn English among first-year students, with some variations that necessitate differentiated strategies.

4.2. Reasons for Learning English

The survey also explored the main reasons first-year students chose to learn English. The responses were as follows:
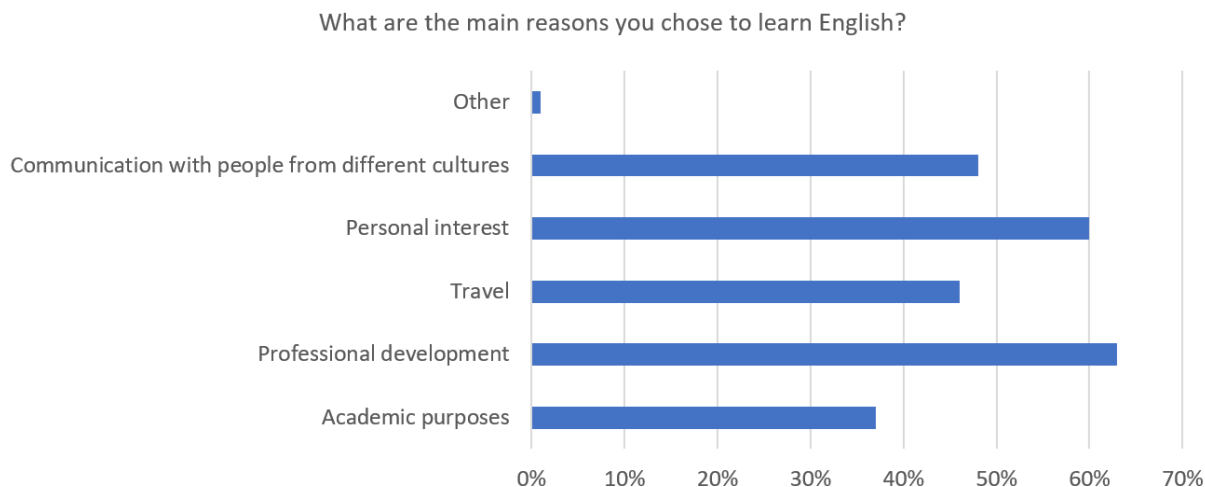

Figure 2.
The main reasons to learn English among online survey participants.

The data show various motives behind students' decisions to learn English, with professional development (63%) and personal interest (60%) being the most common reasons. Other significant motives include travel (46%), communication with people from different cultures (48%), and academic purposes (37%). These findings highlight the multifaceted nature of language learning motivations and reflect the diverse aspirations of students. This diversity in motives indicates that language education strategies must balance practical applications with activities that resonate with personal interests and cultural engagement, ensuring holistic learning experiences.

Understanding students' incentives to learn English can help educators tailor their instructional approaches to better align with students' goals. Different motives may require different teaching strategies. For the largest group of students (63%), learning English is primarily driven by career aspirations. Strategies for these students should emphasize practical language skills directly applicable to the workplace. This can include business English courses, resume writing workshops, interview preparation, and opportunities for internships or work placements where English is used. For learners (60%) motivated by personal interest, strategies should focus on making learning enjoyable and fulfilling. An integrated approach, combining both traditional teaching and digital tools like gamified apps, has been shown to enhance engagement for such learners [9]. Incorporating elements like English literature, films, music, and interactive activities can cater to their intrinsic motivation

and enhance their learning experience. Additionally, creating informal language learning spaces, such as book clubs or film nights, can reinforce personal interest while fostering social connections. Students motivated by travel (46%) might benefit from practical language skills and cultural knowledge. Programs that include travel-specific vocabulary, situational role-playing, and cultural awareness can help these students feel more prepared and confident when using English abroad. For those interested in communication across cultures (48%), strategies should emphasize intercultural communication skills, understanding cultural nuances, and fostering appreciation of global diversity. Activities could include intercultural exchange programs, online pen pal projects, and discussions on cultural topics. Students motivated by academic reasons (37%) need support in mastering academic English, including skills like essay writing, research, and presentations. Academic English courses, writing centers, and study groups can provide the necessary resources and support for these students to succeed academically.

For those who have multiple reasons for learning English, integrated approaches that blend various elements (e.g., professional development with personal interest activities) can provide a more holistic and engaging learning experience. Continuous feedback from students about their experiences and motives can help refine these strategies. Understanding how motivation might evolve over time and adapting teaching methods accordingly will ensure that educational programs remain relevant and effective. As demonstrated, the diverse reasons for learning English among first-year students highlight the need for varied and targeted instructional strategies.

4.3. Importance of English Language Skills for Future Careers

The survey asked first-year students to rate the importance of English language skills for their future careers. The responses were as follows:

How important do you consider English language skills for your future career?
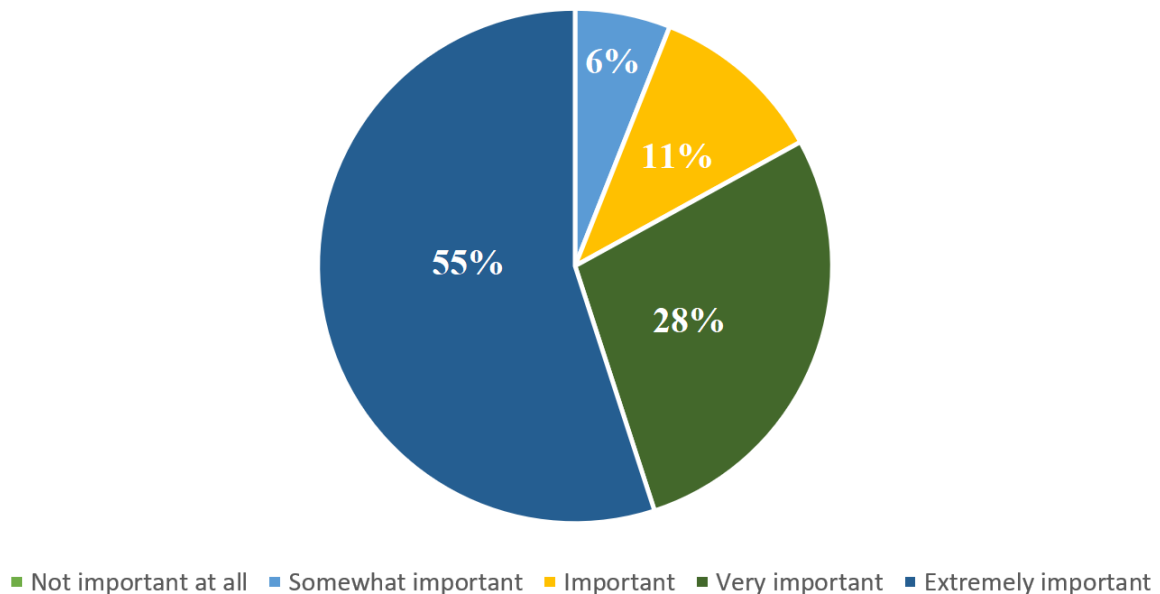

Figure 3.
The importance of English language skills for future careers among online survey participants.

The data indicates a strong recognition of the importance of English language skills for future careers among first-year students. A significant majority view English as either very important (28%) or extremely important (55%) for their career prospects. Only a small fraction (17%) consider it somewhat important, and none view it as unimportant. These results reflect a widespread understanding of English as a critical asset in the modern workforce. These findings are consistent with global trends that emphasize English proficiency as a key determinant of employability and career progression in various sectors, including technology, business, and healthcare [16].

The overwhelming perception of English as a crucial skill for future careers underscores the necessity for higher education institutions to prioritize English language instruction and support. This recognition aligns with global trends where English proficiency is often a key requirement for career advancement in various fields. Given the high importance placed on English for careers, curricula should be designed to incorporate practical and career-oriented language skills. This can include specialized courses in business English, technical writing, and professional communication. Collaboration between language departments and career services can provide students with resources like resume writing workshops, interview preparation sessions, and job placement services that emphasize English proficiency. Incorporating real-world success stories of professionals who have leveraged English skills for career growth can serve as inspiration for students. Providing opportunities for students to use English in real-world settings, such as internships, co-op programs, and partnerships with companies, can help them see the direct relevance of their language skills to their career goals. These experiential learning opportunities not only improve language proficiency but also build students' confidence and adaptability in professional

settings. Inviting industry professionals to speak about the role of English in their careers and offering workshops on industry-specific language skills can enhance students' understanding and motivation. Encouraging students to obtain recognized language proficiency certifications (e.g., TOEFL, IELTS) can further prepare them for the job market and add value to their resumes.

For the small number of students who view English as only somewhat important, it may be beneficial to provide targeted counseling and workshops that highlight the diverse career opportunities and advantages that come with English proficiency. Real-life success stories and case studies can help demonstrate the practical benefits of strong English skills. Higher education institutions should regularly assess students' perceptions of the importance of English and adapt their programs accordingly. Gathering feedback and tracking career outcomes of graduates can provide valuable insights for ongoing improvement of English language education. Consequently, the survey results clearly indicate that first-year students consider English language skills to be vital for their future careers. By implementing strategic approaches that align with this perception, higher education institutions can effectively support students in achieving their career goals and enhance their overall motivation to learn English.

4.4. Challenges in Learning English

The survey also aimed to identify the challenges that first-year students face in learning English. The responses were as follows:
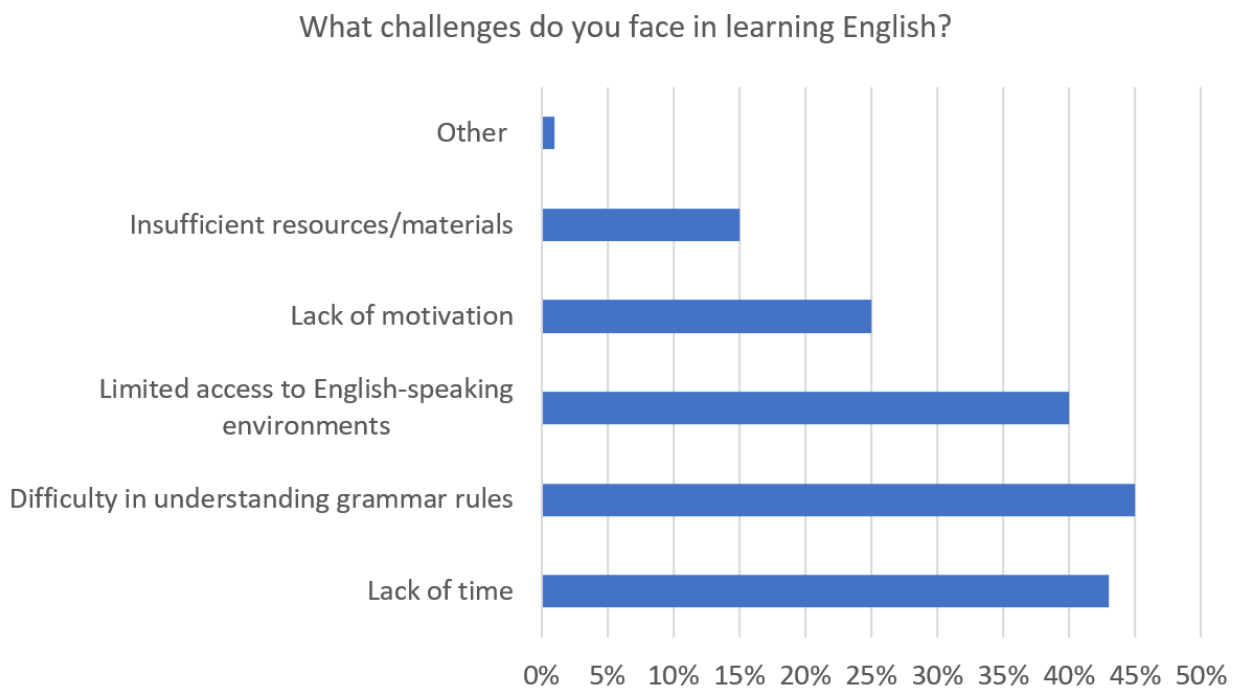

Figure 4.
Challenges in learning English among online survey participants.

The data reveal a range of challenges that first-year students encounter in their English language learning journey. The most commonly cited challenges include difficulty in understanding grammar rules (45%), followed closely by a lack of time (43%) and limited access to English-speaking environments (40%). A significant but smaller number of students also identified a lack of motivation (25%) and insufficient resources/materials (15%) as challenges. These findings highlight the need for targeted solutions to address specific obstacles. This aligns with previous research emphasizing that targeted support mechanisms, such as language labs and tailored feedback, are crucial for overcoming barriers like grammar difficulties and limited exposure to authentic language use [17].

Understanding the challenges students face is crucial for developing effective support mechanisms and interventions. Gardner and Lambert [3] emphasize that addressing motivational barriers is essential for fostering language acquisition. Their distinction between integrative and instrumental motivation highlights how external challenges, such as a lack of resources or limited exposure to English-speaking environments, can hinder students' progress. Similarly, Noels, et al. [11] argue that fostering a supportive and engaging learning environment is critical in maintaining student motivation and overcoming obstacles, such as difficulties with grammar or limited confidence. Given the high number of students struggling with grammar rules, targeted grammar instruction and practice exercises should be integrated into the curriculum. Providing clear explanations, examples, and interactive activities can help demystify complex grammar concepts. Gudu and Jesse [5] underscore the value of interactive and practical methods in addressing such challenges, suggesting that gamified lessons and group exercises can enhance understanding and retention.

Strategies to address time constraints may include offering flexible learning options, such as online courses or self-paced modules, that accommodate students' busy schedules. Time management workshops and goal-setting exercises can also help

students prioritize their English language learning. As Ryan and Vansteenkiste [9] emphasize, personalized support tailored to students' individual needs plays a crucial role in creating effective interventions. For instance, one-on-one tutoring or targeted small-group sessions could address specific challenges such as difficulties with prepositions. To overcome limited access to English-speaking environments, institutions can facilitate language exchange programs, conversation clubs, and cultural events where students can practice English in authentic contexts. Furthermore, online platforms with AI-driven language tutors can provide personalized learning experiences, effectively addressing gaps in resources and exposure. Online language exchange platforms can also provide opportunities for virtual immersion. Addressing a lack of motivation may involve fostering a supportive and engaging learning environment through interactive lessons, gamified learning activities, and personalized feedback. Connecting language learning to students' personal interests and goals can also reignite their enthusiasm. Ensuring access to a variety of resources and materials, including textbooks, multimedia resources, online exercises, and language learning apps, can help students overcome barriers related to insufficient materials. Investing in library resources and digital platforms can expand students' learning opportunities. For the student facing difficulties with prepositions, personalized tutoring or small-group sessions focusing on specific language challenges can provide targeted support tailored to their needs.

Encouraging a growth mindset that emphasizes perseverance and resilience in the face of challenges is essential. Gardner and Lambert's insights into motivational dynamics suggest that students with intrinsic motivation are better equipped to persist despite obstacles [3]. Providing encouragement, celebrating small victories, and highlighting progress can help students stay motivated and engaged despite obstacles. Regular assessment of students' challenges and feedback on the effectiveness of interventions is crucial for refining strategies and ensuring ongoing improvement in English language education. Thus, by addressing the identified challenges through targeted interventions and support mechanisms, first-year students can overcome obstacles and succeed in their English language learning endeavors.

5. Conclusions

This study provides a comprehensive analysis of first-year university students' motivations, reasons for learning, challenges encountered, and the importance of English language skills for their future careers. The findings reveal that a majority of students display high motivation levels towards learning English, recognizing its crucial role in academic and professional success. Their motivations vary widely, encompassing professional development, personal interest, travel, cultural communication, and academic pursuits, underscoring the need for tailored educational strategies. Moreover, the study highlights that most students perceive English proficiency as essential for their future careers, with a significant majority considering it either very important or extremely important. This strong perception emphasizes the necessity for educational institutions to prioritize English language instruction aligned with students' career aspirations and global job market demands. Despite these positive motivations, students face various challenges in their English language learning journey. These challenges include difficulties with grammar, time constraints, limited exposure to English-speaking environments, lack of motivation, and insufficient resources. Addressing these challenges through targeted interventions such as tutoring, flexible learning options, language exchange programs, and access to diverse learning resources is crucial for supporting students' language learning endeavors effectively.

In addition to addressing individual learning needs, fostering collaborative environments where students can share experiences and strategies may further enhance engagement and build a sense of community. Collaborative learning opportunities, such as peer-to-peer teaching or group projects, can simultaneously improve language skills and create supportive networks for students facing similar challenges. By incorporating innovative teaching tools and methods, institutions can also inspire students to actively participate in their learning journey and sustain motivation over time.

Educational strategies need to be tailored to meet the diverse motivations and challenges students encounter. For highly motivated students, advanced learning opportunities and real-world applications of English can sustain and enhance their interest. Conversely, strategies for students with moderate or low motivation should focus on increasing engagement and overcoming specific barriers to learning. Looking forward, future research should explore longitudinal studies to track changes in students' motivation and language proficiency over time. Additionally, investigating the interplay between motivation and individual differences such as personality traits, learning styles, and cultural backgrounds will provide deeper insights into effective language learning strategies. Understanding the impact of technological advancements on language learning motivation is also crucial for adapting modern teaching practices effectively. By addressing the universal challenges faced by English learners and tailoring strategies to diverse motivations, this research offers actionable solutions with global applicability. Its insights contribute to a deeper understanding of the strategic role of English in fostering international collaboration, bridging cultural divides, and equipping students with the linguistic tools necessary for success in an interconnected world.

While this study provides valuable insights, several limitations should be acknowledged. Firstly, the study relies on self-reported data from students, which may introduce biases such as social desirability and recall inaccuracies. Additionally, the sample consists of students from four Ukrainian universities, which, although diverse, may not be fully representative of first-year students in other educational and cultural contexts. The cross-sectional design of the study also limits the ability to track changes in motivation and language proficiency over time. Future studies should consider using longitudinal designs to capture these dynamics. Furthermore, while the mixed-methods approach provides depth, a more extensive qualitative analysis involving interviews or focus groups could yield richer insights into students' language learning experiences and challenges.

Given the findings and limitations of this study, several avenues for future research emerge. Longitudinal studies should be conducted to examine how students' motivations, challenges, and proficiency levels evolve over time. Additionally, comparative studies across different educational systems and cultural contexts could provide a broader understanding of language learning strategies and motivational factors. Future research could also explore the impact of emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence-based learning tools and virtual language immersion programs, on students' motivation and learning outcomes. Lastly, investigating the role of personality traits, learning styles, and socio-economic factors in shaping language learning experiences could offer deeper insights into personalized educational strategies.

Thus, this study underscores the critical role of motivation in language learning and advocates for tailored educational approaches that address students' motivations, challenges, and career aspirations. By fostering a supportive learning environment and aligning educational strategies with students' diverse motivations, institutions can enhance students' English proficiency and prepare them for success in a globalized world.

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