

THE ROLE OF DEADLINES IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING: BETWEEN MOTIVATION, PROCRASTINATION, AND LEARNER SELF-REGULATION AMONG STUDENTS OF TECHNICAL SPECIALTIES

РОЛЬ ДЕДЛАЙНІВ У ВИВЧЕННІ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ: МІЖ МОТИВАЦІЄЮ, ПРОКРАСТИНАЦІЄЮ ТА САМОРЕГУЛЯЦІЄЮ СТУДЕНТІВ ТЕХНІЧНИХ СПЕЦІАЛЬНОСТЕЙ

The article considers the role of deadlines in English language learning among students of technical specialties in higher education. Contemporary pedagogical research increasingly focuses on the interaction between organisational aspects of learning and students' motivational and behavioural patterns. Particular attention is given to the relationship between deadlines, motivation, procrastination, and self-regulation in foreign language acquisition.

The study is based on survey data collected among the students of technical specialties at the National Technical University of Ukraine "Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute" within systematic course feedback in English language classes. The empirical material has been obtained through the questionnaire "The End of the Year Feedback. English," including closed and open-ended questions on deadlines, motivation, emotional responses, and academic behaviour.

The survey covers students' attitudes toward English language learning, perceived importance of English, participation in learning activities, and classroom interaction preferences. Special attention is given to deadline management, including emotional responses to approaching deadlines, task completion patterns, and factors influencing time organisation.

Deadlines are considered as structural elements of the learning process interacting with motivational and behavioural factors. The data reflect intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, use of reminders, perceived pressure, and individual approaches to self-regulation.

At the same time, student engagement in English language learning is considered, including participation in academic and extracurricular activities. The collected data allow description of behavioural tendencies related to deadlines and learning organisation.

Thus, the article presents an overview of student perceptions and behavioural patterns in English language learning, focusing on deadlines as an educational factor and emphasizing description rather than interpretation.

Key words: deadlines; English language learning; academic procrastination; motivation; self-regulated learning; learner engagement; higher education; technical students; online learning; educational psychology.

У статті розглядається роль дедлайнів у процесі вивчення англійської мови студентами технічних спеціальностей у закладах вищої освіти. Сучасні педагогічні дослідження все більше зосереджуються на вза-

ємодії організаційних аспектів навчання з мотиваційними та поведінковими характеристиками здобувачів освіти. Особлива увага приділяється взаємозв'язку між дедлайнами, мотивацією, прокрастинацією та саморегуляцією у процесі опанування іноземної мови.

Дослідження базується на анкетних даних, зібраних серед студентів технічних спеціальностей Національного технічного університету України «КПІ імені Ігоря Сікорського» у межах систематичного зворотного зв'язку з курсу англійської мови. Емпіричний матеріал було отримано за допомогою опитувального «The End of the Year Feedback. English», який включав закриті та відкриті запитання щодо дедлайнів, мотивації, емоційних реакцій та академічної поведінки.

Опитування охоплює ставлення студентів до вивчення англійської мови, сприйняття її значущості, участь у навчальній діяльності та переваги щодо форм організації навчального процесу. Окрему увагу приділено управлінню дедлайнами, зокрема емоційним реакціям на наближення термінів виконання завдань, моделям їх виконання та чинникам, що впливають на організацію навчального часу.

Дедлайни розглядаються як структурні елементи навчального процесу, що взаємодіють із мотиваційними та поведінковими факторами. Отримані дані відображають прояви внутрішньої та зовнішньої мотивації, використання нагадувань, відчуття навчального тиску та індивідуальні підходи до саморегуляції.

Водночас у дослідженні враховується навчальна залученість студентів у процес вивчення англійської мови, зокрема участь у навчальній та позааудиторній діяльності. Зібрані дані дозволяють описати поведінкові тенденції, пов'язані з дедлайнами та організацією навчальної діяльності.

Таким чином, у статті подано огляд сприйняття студентами та їхніх поведінкових моделей у процесі вивчення англійської мови з акцентом на дедлайни як елемент освітнього процесу, із наголосом на описовому, а не інтерпретаційному характері дослідження.

Ключові слова: дедлайни; вивчення англійської мови; академічна прокрастинація; мотивація; саморегульоване навчання; навчальна залученість; вища освіта; студенти технічних спеціальностей; дистанційне навчання; педагогічна психологія.

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Problem Statement. In the context of English language learning among students of technical specialties in higher education, meeting deadlines remains a persistent challenge for many learners. A considerable number of students tend to postpone task completion until the deadline becomes imminent,

often beginning their work only when time pressure intensifies. This pattern of behaviour suggests a strong link between external time constraints and students' engagement with learning tasks [1, p. 1–6].

Furthermore, some students rely heavily on reminders, either self-imposed or provided by the

teacher, to initiate or complete assignments. Such dependence indicates potential difficulties with self-regulation, time management, and intrinsic motivation [9, p. 397; 13, p. 21–25]. Instead of serving as a structured support mechanism, deadlines may function merely as triggers for last-minute activity, which can negatively affect both the quality of learning and long-term skill development.

This raises an important pedagogical question: do deadlines in English language learning primarily act as a source of motivation that enhances student productivity, or do they reinforce procrastination habits and surface-level engagement? Addressing this issue is essential for understanding how to design more effective instructional strategies that foster consistent learning behaviours and deeper student involvement.

Analysis of recent research sources and publications. Recent research in applied linguistics and educational psychology consistently highlights academic procrastination as a widespread phenomenon among students, particularly in higher education contexts. Procrastination is defined in the dictionary as “the act of delaying something that must be done, often because it is unpleasant or boring” [9]. In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, procrastination has been identified as a recurring barrier that negatively affects writing tasks, assignment completion, and overall language achievement [14, p. 2]. In our context, it is the intentional delay of academic tasks despite expecting negative consequences, often resulting in last-minute completion under deadline pressure. Studies show that such behaviour is strongly associated with reduced academic performance, increased stress, and lower levels of self-regulated learning.

A significant body of recent research focuses on the relationship between procrastination, motivation, and self-regulation in language learning environments [6, p. 23]. Empirical findings suggest that students' ability to manage their learning time and respond to deadlines is linked to their motivational profiles and perceived competence in the learning process [8, p. 405].

Current studies also emphasise the role of deadlines as structural and psychological triggers in academic behaviour. On one hand, deadlines can serve as external motivators that encourage students to initiate and complete tasks within a defined timeframe [5, p 4–6]. On the other hand, they may reinforce procrastination patterns, especially among learners with low self-regulation skills, who tend to concentrate their work immediately before submission rather than engaging in continuous learning processes [2; 5, p. 3; 10, p. 9–11].

Evidence from PRISMA-based systematic reviews further indicates that intervention studies tend to focus on a narrow range of dimensions,

often neglecting emotional factors such as anxiety and self-esteem, which highlights a persistent gap between theoretical frameworks and their application in educational practice. In addition, systematic reviews and intervention studies suggest that structured learning environments, clear temporal organisation, and supportive feedback mechanisms can significantly reduce procrastination and promote earlier task engagement [3, p. 6]. However, the effectiveness of such interventions varies depending on task complexity, learner autonomy, and individual differences in time management skills [11, p. 11–12].

From a complementary perspective, empirical evidence from online learning environments suggests that students' response to deadlines cannot be fully explained by individual motivation alone. For example, findings from a study conducted within the scientific English club “English for Science” at the National Technical University of Ukraine ‘Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute’ indicate that students demonstrate considerably high levels of engagement and academic connectedness in distance learning conditions. Attendance patterns (41% regular participation; 33.7% partial participation) and survey data reflecting high satisfaction and perceived relevance of academic English point to sustained involvement in the learning process.

Notably, students' participation in collaborative and professionally oriented activities, such as academic discussions, conference presentations (27.6%), and writing tasks, suggests that engagement is supported by meaningful academic interaction rather than by deadlines alone [4, p. 24–25]. These findings imply that when the learners are embedded in an interactive academic environment, deadlines may function less as emergency triggers for last-minute effort and more as organisational reference points within an already active learning process.

Thus, the role of deadlines tends to be context-dependent: in low-engagement settings, they may reinforce procrastination, whereas in highly connected and interactive learning environments, they can support structured and consistent task completion. This perspective expands the traditional view of deadlines as purely external motivators and highlights the importance of social and academic connectedness as a factor influencing students' time-management behaviour.

Overall, recent research indicates that the relationship between deadlines, motivation, and procrastination is complex and context-dependent. While deadlines may enhance short-term task initiation and productivity, they can also contribute to avoidance behaviour when learners rely on them as the primary regulatory mechanism [7, p. 2; 12]. At the same time, evidence from studies on student engagement suggests that sustained academic participation and connectedness may support more

consistent learning patterns and reduce reliance on last-minute task completion [3, p. 5]. This interplay highlights the need to consider both individual self-regulation and learning context when examining how deadlines function in English language learning, thereby providing a foundation for further investigation into their dual role as either motivational or procrastination-inducing factors.

The aim of the article is to analyse the survey data on technical students' perceptions of deadlines in English language learning and to determine whether deadlines primarily enhance motivation or contribute to procrastination.

Presentation of the main research material.

The study is based on a survey conducted among students of technical specialties at the end of each semester since December 2021. The survey, titled "The End of the Year Feedback. English," was designed and distributed by the teacher through the anonymous Google Form to collect students' opinions about English language classes as part of their academic curriculum, as well as their attitudes toward learning, deadlines, motivation, and procrastination.

The questionnaire included both closed and open-ended questions and consisted of six parts. It first focused on students' general satisfaction with English language classes, where they rated the course on a 1–10 scale and indicated their attendance (Yes/No), with an optional question for reasons of non-attendance. The second part examined the perceived importance of English for academic and professional development and whether students felt their language level had improved after the course. The survey also explored learning preferences, asking students to choose their preferred classroom activities and suggest topics for future classes. In addition, it included questions on the use of artificial intelligence tools in learning and students' views on their appropriateness. Finally, students were invited to provide a short open-ended comment on their overall learning experience.

A key part of the survey focused on deadlines and student behaviour. Students were inquired how they usually feel when deadlines are approaching (for example: calm, stressed, confused, or ignoring tasks). They were also asked how often they complete tasks on time (always, usually, sometimes, rarely). Another question explored what helps students meet deadlines. Options included a clear schedule, reminders, teacher pressure, group work, personal motivation, fear of failure, and others.

The results in Fig.1 show that students experience different emotional responses when deadlines are approaching. The largest group of respondents (42.4%) reported feeling slightly stressed but still focused, which suggests that deadlines often create moderate pressure that helps students stay

engaged. A significant proportion (36.4%) stated that they feel calm and confident, indicating a high level of self-regulation and time management skills among part of the group. At the same time, 12.1% of students reported feeling worried and confused, which may reflect difficulties with planning or managing academic workload. A smaller number of respondents indicated that they ignore tasks until the last moment (about 6%), while only a small proportion selected other mixed emotional states (around 3%). Overall, the data suggest that deadlines can act as a motivating factor for most students, although a minority experience negative stress or procrastination-related behaviour.

The results in Fig.2 show mixed patterns in students' ability to complete tasks before deadlines. The largest groups of respondents reported that they complete assignments either always or usually on time (each 30.3%), which indicates that almost two-thirds of students demonstrate relatively strong time management skills. At the same time, 27.3% of students stated that they sometimes meet deadlines, suggesting inconsistent work habits and occasional procrastination. A smaller proportion (12.1%) indicated that they rarely complete tasks on time, which reflects a higher level of delay and possible difficulties with self-organisation. Overall, the data show that while many students are generally responsible with deadlines, a considerable part of the group still experiences irregularity in task completion, which supports the presence of procrastination tendencies in the learning process.

The vertical bar chart (Fig.3) presents responses to the question "What helps you meet deadlines?". Multiple answers were possible, so percentages exceed 100%.

The results show that internal motivation and self-regulation are the main factors helping students meet deadlines. The most common factor is personal motivation (69.7%), which shows that students mainly rely on their own internal drive. The second most frequent factor is reminders (66.7%), indicating the importance of external tools such as notifications and planners. Fear of failure is also significant (51.5%), suggesting that avoidance motivation plays an important role. In addition, having a clear schedule (45.5%) highlights the value of planning and time structure. External and social factors are less important. Teacher pressure (24.2%) and group work (21.2%) are relatively low, showing limited influence of institutional or peer pressure.

Students were also given the opportunity to add their own category. "Easy task" in different variations was mentioned by only 3% of respondents, indicating that this factor is rarely considered a direct influence on meeting deadlines.

Conclusions. The findings of the study indicate that students generally demonstrate a relatively high

level of engagement and responsibility in managing academic deadlines. Most respondents report either positive (calm, confident) or moderately activating (slightly stressed but focused) emotional states when approaching deadlines, suggesting that deadlines function as an effective motivational mechanism rather than a purely negative source of pressure.

At the same time, students' behavioural patterns reveal a degree of inconsistency. Although a majority complete tasks always or usually on time, a substantial proportion report only occasional adherence to deadlines, indicating the presence of procrastination tendencies and uneven self-regulation within the cohort.

The results further highlight the dominant role of intrinsic motivation and self-regulatory strategies in deadline management. Personal motivation, reminders, and structured scheduling emerge as the most influential factors, while external influences such as teacher pressure and group work play a comparatively limited role. Fear of failure also contributes to task completion, though it appears to function as a secondary, avoidance-based motivator.

Overall, the study suggests that effective deadline management is primarily driven by internal factors supported by organisational tools. These findings underline the importance of fostering students' self-regulated learning skills, time-management strategies, and the use of digital support systems. At the same time, the persistence of irregular task completion among a notable proportion of students indicates the need for targeted pedagogical interventions aimed at reducing procrastination and strengthening consistent study habits.

We see the prospects of further research in exploring the relationship between students' emotional responses to deadlines and their long-term academic performance, as well as in examining the impact of digital learning environments and assessment design on the sustainability of effective deadline management practices in higher education. Overall, the findings suggest that deadlines primarily enhance motivation rather than contribute to procrastination among the surveyed students.

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