

USE OF RESOURCES AND ACTIVITIES FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING BEYOND THE CLASSROOM BY ENGLISH-MAJORED STUDENTS AT A UNIVERSITY IN VIETNAM

Nguyen Vu Khanh*¹, Truong Bach Le¹, Duong Anh Chien²

1. Faculty of English, University of Foreign Languages, Hue University,
57 Nguyen Khoa Chiem, An Cuu Ward, Hue City, Vietnam

2. Faculty of English Language Teacher Education, VNU University of Languages and International Studies,
Pham Van Dong, Cau Giay, Ha Noi, Vietnam

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Abstract: This paper was part of a large-scale research into the use of resources and activities for English language learning after class time by English-majored students at a university in Vietnam. To explore the range of resources and activities frequently used by the researched students, a survey questionnaire was delivered online to 200 respondents via Google Form. The results revealed that *online/computer-based/mobile-based* and *traditional broadcast materials* were the most preferred resources for English language learning outside the classroom, whereas *Watch YouTube, Listen to songs, Surf the Internet, and Use social media* were the activities with the highest frequency of use. In addition, the *self-directed naturalistic language learning* activities were prevalent among the subjects, followed by *self-instruction* ones. By contrast, the studied participants tended to avoid taking part in activities that involved *naturalistic language learning*.

Keywords: language learning beyond the classroom, resources, activities, tertiary English-majored students

1. Introduction

The exponential growth of the Internet, streaming media, networking tools and channels for learning English, as well as interactive social networks in today's century, in fact, supplies language learners with numerous resources for practical and accurate language use outside the classroom. It is generally believed that these learning experiences are more immersive, social, and multimodal than boring and obsolete English textbooks. Using the afore-

mentioned platforms and tools, learners can converse in English with individuals throughout the world. Specifically, English learners can communicate with other language learners or native speakers in their own time with the help of a chat room. Besides, they can either watch an English-language TV show or movie with captions/subtitles if appropriate or utilize gaming sites to find games that enable them to use English. In addition, customized applications featuring various language learning aspects are available for download

* Corresponding author.

Email address: nvkhanh.dhnn@hueuni.edu.vn
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and use at any time and anywhere. In non-English speaking countries like Vietnam where learners' contact with English happens mostly in the classroom, the concept of language learning beyond the classroom (LLBC) provides a viable solution for overcoming some of the pitfalls of conventional classroom-based learning. LLBC, therefore, emerges as a field ripe for the development of new research agendas (Nunan & Richards, 2015).

In view of the growing range of affordances and resources available to support LLBC, this paper aimed to explore the range of LLBC resources and activities frequently used by English-majored students at the university under study.

Question 1: What are the LLBC resources frequently used by English-majored students at the university under study?

Question 2: What are the LLBC activities frequently used by English-majored students at the university under study?

2. Literature Review

Benson (2011) noted that classroom learning is merely one of several forms of learners' engagement with language. In fact, consistent findings from research have shown that most learners attribute their language achievements to active use of resources and activities for language learning outside the classroom. Since then, educators have called for further research to better understand how learners' encounters with different resources and settings may enhance coherent sense making. The seminal and timely contribution *Language learning beyond the classroom* (Nunan & Richards, 2015), fortunately, sheds light on the topic of LLBC by promoting autonomous learning as a feasible way of exploring and expanding our understanding of LLBC.

2.1. LLBC Resources

In her study on English learning strategies of Vietnamese tertiary students, Nguyen (2013) put forward the Regulating category based on the Meta-cognitive category in Oxford's (1990) well-known Strategy Inventory for Language Learning and the Management category in Wen's (1996) English Learning Strategies. In this category, she suggested strategies for manipulating diverse resources to create learning opportunities in the target language. Six main types of learning resource that she found available for learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) in Vietnam are:

1. Academic print materials (textbooks, reference books, lesson notes)
2. Non-academic print materials (newspapers, journals, novels, stories)
3. Traditional broadcast materials (shows/movies on TV, radio programs)
4. Recorded materials (audio/video tapes, CDs)
5. Online/computer-based materials (e-books/journals, software, webcast)
6. Monolingual (English-English)/Bilingual (English-Vietnamese) dictionary

These resources, as a matter of fact, can also be used for LLBC. What truly matters lies in how EFL learners exploit such resources to create learning opportunities for LLBC activities. Besides, with the rapid development of materials and applications for language learning on mobile devices (e.g., mobile phone, tablets, etc.), mobile-based materials were added to *Online/computer-based materials* in order to suit the current situation.

2.2. LLBC Activities

According to Benson (2011), LLBC has been broadly defined as "any kind of learning that takes place outside the classroom and involves self-instruction,

naturalistic learning or self-directed categorization of LLBC activities is naturalistic learning” (p. 62). His illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1

Categorization of LLBC Activities

Category	Definition	Example
<i>Self-instruction</i>	Learners deliberately plan to improve the target language and search out resources to help them do this.	Using self-study grammar books to improve their grammar
<i>Naturalistic language learning</i>	Learners learn mainly unintentionally through communication and interaction with the target language group.	Engaging in discussions with English speaking classmates or colleagues.
<i>Self-directed naturalistic language learning</i>	Learners create or seek out a language learning situation but may not focus directly on learning the language while they are in that situation.	Subscribing to an English newspaper everyday with the underlying aim of improving their vocabulary but may read it mainly for the news without undertaking any specific learning activities.

Based on Benson’s categories as shown in Table 1, the following section will examine types of LLBC activities in greater detail.

2.2.1. Self-Instruction

a. Self-study

It has been revealed from previous studies that learners engaged in a variety of activities as part of their habit of seeking chances to use English outside the classroom (Pickard, 1996). These activities ranged from reading and listening to second language (L2) authentic materials, such as reading English newspapers, novels, magazines, poems, and letters, reading signs and instructions, reading advertisements, reading and writing personal letters, reading and filling out forms, reading and writing notes to friends or workers; listen to music, listening to the radio or tapes, listening to a conversation between other speakers, listening to announcements and requesting information in public places, watching English television programs; and attending theaters, lectures, and films, to writing and speaking in L2.

b. Learning through technology

It is undeniable that new generations of students, especially those living in developing and developed countries, are becoming more and more comfortable infusing technology into their daily lives for a variety of purposes, one of which is language learning through technology, or the use of new technology as support in the process of teaching and learning L2 (Nomass, 2013). Therefore, EFL language learners seeking opportunities to improve their English proficiency outside the classroom, in turn, can benefit from learning through technology such as CD-players, tape-recorders, computers, broadcasting, etc.

c. Learning through television

Television is frequently cited as a powerful learning environment by successful language learners Television viewing, therefore, has long been recognized by language learners as a valuable resource for LLBC (Nunan & Richards, 2015). The biggest benefits of television viewing lies in its capacity to provide a massive quantity of L2 spoken input, which makes a contribution

to the development of vocabulary, listening comprehension, as well as other elements of L2 learning (Webb, 2014). Besides, viewing L2 movies and other television programmes may assist language learners in meeting their demands for a greater amount of L2 input.

2.2.2. Naturalistic Language Learning

a. Interacting with native speakers of the target language

Interacting with a ‘native speaker’, or a monolingual individual who still speaks the language learnt in childhood, is hence considered one of the essentials of the process of learning a foreign language. In reality, there are numerous activities providing chances for EFL learners to develop their English language proficiency through face-to-face interaction with native speakers outside the classroom. The most popular ones include finding native speakers of English to practice conversations, finding a pen pal for writing to each other in English, or visiting English-speaking countries (Pickard, 1996). In addition, EFL learners now have a variety of ways to engage with native speakers thanks to the availability of various platforms enabled by modern technology. Electronic mail, a method of creating and delivering messages through the Internet, is often regarded as a very efficient way to enhance one's writing skills. Another way for EFL learners to engage in real communication with target language speakers is through virtual contacts informally established via ‘social media’. Since social media sites, such as Facebook or Twitter, play an important role in daily lives of most people including language learners, there is great potential for using them as facilitating tools for language learning. In fact, social media has been adapted to enrich language learning experiences for EFL learners, especially those living in monolingual communities where the cost associated with having a

target-language teacher in the classroom is prohibitive and the presence of native speakers outside the classroom is rare (Nunan & Richards, 2015).

b. Interacting with other L2 learners

In particular, using English in social contexts with other L2 learners is another important way for learners to maintain and increase their language proficiency, apart from communicating with native speakers. As a matter of fact, there is a variety of activities that involve social interaction available for EFL learners who seek to enhance their language proficiency, including participating in a conversation with one or more speakers of L2 outside the classroom (i.e. friends or/and teachers at school or family members at home), writing letters to friends with 10 deliberate mistakes and asking them to underline the mistakes, recording a dialogue together, practicing a scene together, trying to work out a foreign language text together. Additionally, Hyland's (2004) study conducted at a university in Hong Kong revealed that participating in an English club was preferred by EFL students in an attempt to immerse themselves in an English-speaking environment. In addition to providing opportunities for participants to develop their social interests and skills, English club activities also allow members to learn how to act as a part of a group, thus are generally believed to be crucial in developing interpersonal skills, perseverance as well as leadership qualities.

2.2.3. Self-Directed Naturalistic Language Learning

a. Extensive reading

Extensive reading, an instructional strategy that encourages language learners to read in huge quantity, has constantly grown in popularity and reputation in the realm of L2 reading pedagogy. Besides the main goal of extending background knowledge based

on what is read, the additional aims of extensive reading include developing language learners' reading habits, increasing their vocabulary and grammar, as well as instilling a passion for reading (Richards & Schmidt, 2002).

b. Extensive listening

Extensive listening, another effective instructional strategy for enhancing language learners' listening fluency and general listening abilities, includes all forms of listening practice that enables language learners to gain a large amount of comprehensible and enjoyable listening input (Renandya & Farrell, 2011). Instead of explicit learning, extensive listening aims at enhancing implicit learning of vocabulary and grammar through repeatedly listening to texts or news, and re-exposure to words and grammatical structures in specific contexts (Matsuo, 2016).

c. Extensive viewing

Extensive viewing, an activity that involves regular silent uninterrupted viewing of media both inside and outside the classroom, proves to be an effective method of improving vocabulary and listening comprehension (Webb, 2014). He further explained that language learners could enjoy the benefits in proportion with the viewing time, which means that their comprehension and vocabulary learning improve to a higher extent provided that the viewing time is extended. This is because when language learners watch extensively on a regular basis, the vocabulary development can occur through the acquisition of new words and the improvement of recognition of spoken forms of words, whereas comprehension can take place via the creation of glossaries that list key words, as well as materials that provide background information on the characters and storyline. Besides, repeated readings of the same text are proven to help enhance comprehension and vocabulary learning

(Webb & Chang, 2012). With the introduction of YouTube, a multidimensional resource that provides content in all fields of knowledge, language learning through EV has never been easier. Language learners now can access massive numbers of videos which serve as authentic material for the mastery of all four macro skills in English (Faizi, 2018).

d. Music and songs

With their appeal and ubiquitous presence in everyday lives of most people, music and songs meet all the criteria for being an excellent resource for language learning (Bokiev et al., 2018). To begin with, numerous research have demonstrated that music and songs play a facilitative role in fostering a low-anxiety non-threatening atmosphere that arouses positive emotions in language learners, which is a prerequisite for the successful acquisition of L2. Along with creating a positive learning environment, and increasing learners' motivation, music and songs provide a realistic context for the development of all the four language skills and are also helpful for teaching pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar (Abbott, 2002). Additionally, music and songs have been shown to improve retention and memory of words, phrases, and longer texts (Coyle & Gómez Gracia, 2014). Besides developing students' linguistic competence and memory, music and songs can also raise their cultural awareness, for they are accurate representation of the society from which they originate (Jones, 2008).

2.3. Previous Studies

Numerous studies have extended our knowledge of the variety of LLBC resources and activities, as well as their associated affordances and constraints for language learning. For example, Freeman's study (1999) found out that ESL/EFL language learners spent most of their time engaging in

a variety of LLBC settings in an active manner, hence demonstrating their strong preferences for LLBC activities over in-class ones. In addition, Pearson's survey (2003) with Chinese international students at a university in New Zealand revealed that most ESL/EFL learners utilized a variety of LLBC resources, such as magazines and newspapers, TV series, movies, the radio, the Internet, as well as the interaction with their classmates to improve their English proficiency. The students further reported that these LLBC brought them much more enjoyment in learning.

Consistent findings about EFL students' active participation in LLBC have been also reported by other studies. For instance, certain LLBC activities were found common among EFL learners at an Indonesian junior high school (Lamb, 2004a). At universities in various regions such as Hong Kong (Spratt et al., 2002) and Taiwan (Shen et al., 2005), in addition, EFL learners reported that they engaged in a similar range of LLBC resources and

Table 2

Dimensions of LLBC

Dimensions	Description	Example
<i>Location</i>	Where and when the learning takes place	out-of-class, after-class, extra-curricular, self-access, out-of-school, distance
<i>Formality</i>	The degree to which learning is linked to educational qualifications or structured by educational institutions	informal, non-formal, naturalistic
<i>Pedagogy</i>	The degree to which teaching is involved	non-instructed, self-instructed
<i>Locus of control</i>	How decisions are distributed between the learner and others	autonomous, independent, self-regulated

Table 2 shows that *location* is only one of several dimensions of LLBC, although LLBC essentially refers to location. After identifying the *location* in which learning occurs, it is possible to determine language learning as either 'informal' or 'formal', 'non-instructed' or 'instructed', 'self-directed' or 'other-directed'.

activities, regardless of small differences in frequency of use. These various accounts of different population groups from all over the world have shown that EFL learners are actively engaging in LLBC.

In Vietnam, Vo's (2017) study into LLBC shed light on the correspondence between Vietnamese university students' perception of the helpfulness of LLBC activities with their actual practice in Vietnamese EFL contexts. That being said, the study was conducted with only 40 third-year English majors, which is quite small in scope within the purview of an EFL context. Hence, there is still a gap for a study on a larger scale into the range of LLBC resources and activities that are available to English-majored students at the university under study.

2.4. Theoretical Framework for the Study

Benson's (2011) model provides the basic theoretical framework for analyzing dimensions of LLBC in this study.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Instruments

A mixed method design which included both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods was employed in the large-scale study into LLBC. However,

within the scope of this paper, the quantitative approach was adopted to find out the range of LLBC resources and activities frequently used by English-majored students. For reasons of efficiency and convenience in coding and statistical analysis, a combination of closed-ended items, open-ended items, and 5-point Likert scale items was employed in the design of the questionnaire. There are 2 main sections in the questionnaire. The first component includes 3 closed-ended items on learner variables, such as gender, major and self-rated proficiency in four English skills. The

second part consists of 1 closed-ended item, 2 open-ended items, and 25 5-point Likert scale to find out the range of LLBC resources and activities frequently used by participants. In the questionnaire, the 5-point Likert scale items on the range of LLBC resources and activities used by English-majored students are respectively arranged according to the mediation and linguistic dimensions. Besides, the 5-point Likert scale items on LLBC activities can be categorized into self-instruction, naturalistic language learning, self-directed naturalistic language learning, as in Table 3.

Table 3

LLBC Activities in Category

Category	Number of items	Items
<i>Self-instruction</i>	5	I8, I9, I11, I13, I23
<i>Naturalistic language learning</i>	6	I16, I17, I18, I19, I20, I21,
<i>Self-directed naturalistic language learning</i>	6	I10, I12, I14, I15, I22, I24

3.2. Research Subjects

The population targeted in this study included English-majored students at the university under study, which was estimated by the Office of Student Affairs to reach 2718. Under the time constraints, however, the probability sampling, such as random sampling, could hardly be employed. Instead, non-probability sampling would best suit its purpose and the given circumstances. To be more specific, opportunity or convenience sampling was employed to recruit the participants for the quantitative phase of this study. As defined by Brady (2006), opportunity or convenience sampling is a technique for selecting data sources, where researchers “identify a sample, for example, using a researcher’s local knowledge of an area on which to base a study or using a researcher’s past experiences to contact participants” (p. 205). Approaching the most convenient

and easy-to-find members of the population, opportunity sampling or convenience sampling is considered the most common type of non-probability sampling (Weathington et al., 2010).

Subsequently, the sample size is considered a crucial factor from which certain inferences can be made about a population. With a view to achieving sufficient statistical power for this study, initial calculation of the sample was conducted, and it was determined that with a population of around 2718, a sample size of 183 was required at the confidence level of 95%. In practice, during the quantitative data collection process, 200 valid questionnaires were collected and this sample of 200 (>183) in the quantitative stage was considered statistically adequate to identify patterns of LLBC resources and activities used by students and substantial enough to capture significant association between variables.

In this study, 200 second-year English-majored students were chosen as respondents to be included in the sample. This was since they had an adequate amount of time to familiarize themselves with the EFL teaching and learning methods at university, thereby being aware that in-class language learning might not be sufficient to meet the increasing demands for English graduates. Besides, this study was taken at the time when second-year English language studies majors, accounting for most English-majored students at the university under study, were preparing to be placed in their specialized academic majors in the first semester of the third year based on the grades of their English skills. Hence, they were more motivated than others to take advantage of LLBC resources and activities to enhance their English proficiency in four macro skills.

The female respondents to the survey questionnaire in this study outnumbered their male counterparts. In particular, the percentage of female respondents (79.5%) quadrupled that of male respondents (20.5%). The involvement of both male and female participants in this research, however, is believed to allow for the generation of data that were non-gender biased among the targeted population. Besides, most participants (80%) majored in English language studies, whereas only 1/5 of them (20%) were English language teaching majors.

The surveyed respondents were also asked to rate their four English skills, namely listening, reading, speaking, and writing on a four-level proficiency scale of “Limited”, “Fair”, “Good” and “Very good”. This four-level scale was chosen to match the current English proficiency level being adopted in the regular curriculum in Vietnam at various educational levels, including tertiary one. The familiarity with

this assessment scale was believed to produce more accurate judgement of their English proficiency among the respondents. Approximately half of the researched students rated themselves as “Fair” learners of English across the four skills. Specifically, “Fair” level was chosen by 52.0% of the respondents in reading skill, 46.0% in listening skill, 49.0% in writing skill, and 43.5% in speaking skill. “Fair” level accounted for the highest percentages in all four English skills of the studied participants. Another significant finding regarding self-rated English proficiency was that those participating in the research were least confident with their listening skills, with 36.0% indicating “Limited” level. In contrast, 28.5% of the respondents rated their speaking skills as “Very good”, accounting for the highest proportion in all four English skills.

4. Findings

4.1. Participants’ Reported Frequency of Overall LLBC Resources and Activities Use

As mentioned earlier, the frequency of LLBC resources and activities use was measured on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from “1 = Never (N)”, “2 = Rarely (R)”, “3 = Sometimes (S)”, “4 = Often (O)”, and “5 = Always (A)”.

To allow for a convenient synthesis of the findings at this stage, the frequency of LLBC resources and activities by participants was categorized as “low use” (mean frequency scores in the range of 1.00 to 2.49), “medium use” (mean frequency scores in the range of 2.50 to 3.49), and “high use” (mean frequency scores in the range of 3.50 to 5.00).

The overall mean frequency scores across all LLBC resources and activities reported by the 200 English-majored students at the university are illustrated in the following Table 4:

Table 4
Frequency of Overall LLBC Resources and Activities Use (n=200)

Category	Mean (M)
Overall	2.95
LLBC Resources	3.18
LLBC Activities	2.87

Table 5
Frequency of Individual LLBC Resource Use (n=200)

Resources	N	R	S	O	A	M	SD
I1. Academic print materials	2.0%	33.0%	46.0%	15.5%	3.5%	2.86	.829
I2. Non-academic print materials	3.0%	34.5%	52.0%	9.0%	1.5%	2.72	.732
I3. Traditional broadcast materials	1.0%	8.0%	30.0%	56.5%	4.5%	3.56	.748
I4. Recorded materials	3.0%	40.0%	45.0%	10.0%	2.0%	2.68	.775
I5. Online/computer/mobile-based materials	1.0%	7.5%	23.0%	37.0%	31.5%	3.91	.965
I6. Monolingual/Bilingual dictionary	2.5%	12.5%	46.0%	27.0%	12.0%	3.34	.931

As seen in Table 5, the individual mean scores showed that 4 out of 6 LLBC resources fell within the frequency level of medium use (Mean frequency scores in the range of 2.50 to 3.49). Specifically, the surveyed respondents are moderate users of the following LLBC resources:

- I1: Academic print materials;
- I2: Non-academic print materials;
- I4: Recorded materials;
- I6: Monolingual/Bilingual dictionary.

In addition, the findings suggested that the remaining two LLBC resources were employed with a frequency level of high use. Notably, the highest mean frequency scores were found with the two LLBC resources, including I5: *Online/computer/mobile-based* (M = 3.91, SD = .748) and I3: *Traditional broadcast* (M = 3.56, SD = .748).

The mean frequency of around 3 (“Sometimes”) indicated that the participants in the study reported a moderate frequency use of LLBC resources and activities, suggesting that the researched students were moderate users of LLBC resources and activities.

4.2. Participants’ Reported Frequency of Individual LLBC Resource Use

A closer look at the results in terms of percentages demonstrated that the majority of 68.5% and 61.0% of the survey students reported using these two LLBC resources respectively on an “often” or “always” basis.

4.3. Participants’ Reported Frequency of Individual LLBC Activity Use

There were totally 17 LLBC activities employed by participants to improve their English proficiency in four skills, namely listening (from I8 to I12), reading (from I13 to I15), speaking (from I16 to I19), writing (I20 and I21). Meanwhile, the remaining three LLBC activities (from I22 to I24) could be used to enhance different English skills, depending on how participants took advantage of the learning opportunities created by these activities.

Table 6*Frequency of Individual LLBC Activity Use (n=200)*

Activities	N	R	S	O	A	M	SD
I8. Watch TV programs	0.5%	23.0%	46.5%	23.5%	6.5%	3.13	.856
I9. Watch movies	0.5%	22.5%	44.0%	25.0%	8.0%	3.18	.888
I10. Watch YouTube	0.0%	1.5%	16.5%	54.5%	27.5%	4.08	.704
I11. Listen to the radio	6.5%	37.5%	44.5%	10.0%	1.5%	2.63	.811
I12. Listen to songs	0.0%	4.0%	27.0%	45.5%	23.5%	3.89	.809
I13. Read academic books and articles	2.5%	35.0%	49.5%	11.5%	1.5%	2.75	.750
I14. Read newspapers and magazines	3.5%	36.0%	48.5%	10.5%	1.5%	2.71	.762
I15. Read novels	10.5%	36.0%	44.0%	9.0%	0.5%	2.53	.820
I16. Participate in English clubs	13.5%	39.0%	38.5%	7.5%	1.5%	2.45	.872
I17. Speak with other colleagues/ fellow students in English	6.0%	31.5%	48.0%	11.5%	3.0%	2.74	.852
I18. Speak with family members in English	42.0%	42.0%	11.0%	3.0%	2.0%	1.81	.893
I19. Speak with foreigners	9.0%	44.5%	39.0%	5.5%	2.0%	2.47	.814
I20. Write emails	31.5%	43.5%	18.5%	6.5%	0.0%	2.00	.874
I21. Write to pen-pals	38.0%	41.5%	16.0%	4.5%	0.0%	1.87	.841
I22. Surf the Internet	1.5%	4.5%	19.5%	60.0%	14.5%	3.82	.790
I23. Use computer/mobile-based learning software	3.5%	12.5%	57.5%	19.0%	7.5%	3.15	.859
I24. Use social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)	4.0%	6.5%	29.0%	45.5%	15.0%	3.61	.955

The results related to the individual mean scores of the LLBC activities from Table 6 indicated that the researched respondents made use of a wide range of LLBC activities with a varying degree of frequency level. Among these LLBC activities, the four highest uses include *I10: Watch YouTube (M=4.08, SD=.704)*, *I12: Listen to songs (M=3.89, SD=.809)*, *I22: Surf the Internet (M= 3.82, SD=.790)*, and *I24: Use social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) (M=3.61, SD=.955)*. An examination of the percentages and counts revealed that these high use LLBC activities were reported to be often or always employed by a respective percentage of

82.0%, 69.0%, 74.5%, and 60.5% respondents. On the contrary, the lowest mean frequency scores were found with 5 LLBC activities, namely *I18: Speak with family members in English (M = 1.81, SD =.893)*, *I21: Write to pen-pals (M=1.87, SD=.841)*, *I20: Write emails (M=2.00, SD=.874)*, *I16: Participate in English clubs (M= 2.45, SD =.814)*, and *I19: Speak with foreigners (M=2.47, SD =.814)*. These low used LLBC activities were respectively reported to be never or rarely employed by the majority of 84.0%, 79.5%, 75.0%, 53.5% and 52.5% of the researched participants.

Specifically, the respondents were reported to be “moderate” to “high” users of

the LLBC activities that could assist them in honing their listening skills, including *I8: Watch TV programs; I9: Watch movies; I10: Watch YouTube; I11: Listen to the radio; and I12: Listen to songs*. Apart from that, LLBC activities related to reading also fell into the medium frequency range, namely *I13: Read academic books and articles; I14: Read newspapers and magazines; and I15: Read novels*. In contrast, 5 out of 6 LLBC activities related to productive skills (speaking and writing) were reported to be infrequently used by participants, except for only one LLBC speaking activity which was reported to be moderately used (*I17. Speak with other colleagues/ fellow students in*

English). Additionally, the open-ended item in the questionnaire also revealed that “playing games” was considered by two respondents (one male and one female) as the activity that they often conducted to improve their English proficiency outside the classroom.

4.4. Participants’ Reported Frequency of Individual LLBC Activity Use in Category

Table 7 showed the frequency of individual activity use in three categories, namely self-instruction, naturalistic language learning, and self-directed naturalistic language learning.

Table 7

Frequency of Individual Activity Use in Category (n=200)

Category	Number of items	Activities	M	SD
Self-instruction	5	I8. Watch TV programs	3.13	.856
		I9. Watch movies	3.18	.888
		I11. Listen to the radio	2.63	.811
		I13. Read academic books and articles	2.75	.750
		I23. Use computer/mobile-based learning software	3.15	.859
Mean of the category			2.96	.832
Naturalistic language learning	6	I16. Participate in English clubs	2.45	.872
		I17. Speak with other colleagues/ fellow students in English	2.74	.852
		I18. Speak with family members in English	1.81	.893
		I19. Speak with foreigners	2.47	.814
		I20. Write emails	2.00	.874
		I21. Write to pen-pals	1.87	.841
Mean of the category			2.22	.858
Self-directed naturalistic language learning	6	I10. Watch YouTube	4.08	.704
		I12. Listen to songs	3.89	.809
		I14. Read newspaper and magazines	2.71	.762
		I15. Read novels	2.53	.820

I22. Surf the Internet	3.82	.790
I24. Use social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)	3.61	.955
Mean of the category	3.44	.807

The self-instruction category consisted of five LLBC activities conducted by the researched students for the purpose of direct learning and practicing of English, including I8, I9, I11, I13 and I23. In addition, the naturalistic language learning category covered a total of six LLBC activities, which could be subdivided into two main subgroups in terms of the productive skills involved in the language learning, namely speaking (from I16, I17, I18, and I19) and writing (Q20 and Q21). Meanwhile, the self-directed naturalistic language learning category comprised of six LLBC activities, in which four LLBC activities involving the practice of receptive skills (I10, I12, I14, I15) whereas the remaining two (Q22 and Q24) could be used by participants to improve different English skills or language. Concerning the first category of LLBC activities, the results indicated that all LLBC activities in the self-instruction category were done with a medium frequency level (Mean frequency scores in the range of 2.50 to 3.49).

Regarding the second category of LLBC activities, it was important to note that 5 out of 6 LLBC activities fell into the frequency level of low use (Mean frequency scores in the range of 1.00 to 2.49). Specifically, two low use activities (I20 and I21) were related to enhancing writing skills via written exchange (letters or emails) with other L2 learners or pen friends. The other three low use LLBC activities were in relation to the learning and practicing of speaking skills through verbal exchange with members of an English club (I16), family members (I18) or native speakers (I19). By contrast, only one LLBC activity in this category was reported to be

moderately used by the students ($M=2.74$, $SD=.852$), which was I17: *Speak with other colleagues/fellow students in English*.

Respecting the third category of LLBC activities, the findings related to the individual mean scores indicated that the LLBC activities in this category were carried out with a frequency level of medium (Mean frequency scores in the range of 2.50 to 3.49) or high use (Mean frequency scores in the range of 3.50 to 5.00). This finding was highly indicative of the utilization of the self-directed naturalistic language learning category in English learning among participants in this study. Specifically, the respondents were reported to be moderate users of the two LLBC activities related to reading, including Q14 and Q15. Meanwhile, the other four LLBC activities that fell into the frequency level of high use were related to listening (I10 and I12) and various English skills (I22 and I24).

5. Discussion

In line with several research findings to date, the results of this study indicate that English-majored students at the university took part in a wide range of LLBC resources and activities. Interestingly, the findings of this study revealed that second-year English majors at the university under study used LLBC resources and activities only to a moderate extent. In the current EFL context of Vietnam, this could be attributed to the following factors. Firstly, the subjects were just in their second year of university and had not developed into autonomous language learners. Secondly, even though the researched students wanted to use LLBC resources and activities, they still had limited access to such things due to lack of

educational facilities and materials. Finally, the widespread of COVID-19 pandemic had changed the traditional way of teaching and learning EFL, causing students to spend most of their time participating in online classes and completing assignments given by teachers. Therefore, they had very little amount of leisure time to conduct LLBC.

Meanwhile, the LLBC resources frequently used by participants were *Online/computer/mobile-based materials*, and *Traditional broadcast materials*. The fact that the majority of researched students favored these two resources for LLBC reflects the current trend of integrating technology into teaching and learning English. Since students have recently been instilled with technology in their daily lives, the usage of various forms of technological tools such as the Internet, learning software, streaming movies and videos, as well as online music has become as common as the utilization of traditional textbooks.

In the meantime, the most common LLBC activities either belonged to the self-instruction categories or self-directed naturalistic language learning categories whereas participants tended to avoid LLBC activities that involved interaction with other L2 learners or native speakers. It can be due to the fact that the researched students are living in a non-English speaking country, which makes them hesitant to communicate in English. Moreover, some students do not feel comfortable to speak English owing to their language proficiency (Spratt et al., 2002), their personality (Pearson, 2003). To make matters worse, the alternatives given are not applicable for learners' everyday utilization. The reason may lie in the fact that talking with native speakers or writing to a pen pal is challenging, for learners do not have the chance to get in contact with them daily. Even among their peers, it can be difficult for students to find a companion to regularly speak English with. As a result, they feel that their time is being wasted since

anytime they speak English, their buddies would merely respond back in their native tongue. This could lend support to Hyland's finding (2004) which indicated the prevalence of activities in the private domain among students in Hong Kong. It can be argued, however, that the students in this study expressed their preferences for private activities over the 'public' ones largely due to the restricted availability of resources, which was worsen by the complicated developments of COVID-19 pandemic across Vietnam during the research period, rather than the negative social connotations associated with those using English in a Vietnamese-speaking community.

6. Conclusions and Implications

6.1. Conclusions

It can be concluded that English-majored students at HU-UFL are generally medium users of LLBC resources and activities. Specifically, the LLBC resources with highest frequency of use are *Online/computer/mobile-based materials*, and *Traditional broadcast materials* while the most favorite LLBC activities include *Watch YouTube*, *Listen to songs*, *Surf the Internet*, and *Use social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)*.

Besides, LLBC activities belonging to the self-directed naturalistic language learning category are prevalent among English majors at the university, followed by those included in the self-instruction group. By contrast, the students tend to avoid taking part in LLBC activities that involve naturalistic language learning.

6.2. Implications

The positive feedback from the research participants have proven the importance and effectiveness of LLBC resources and activities in improving their English proficiency, which may carry the following implications for EFL students and teachers.

The findings indicated that English majors at the university under study were moderate users of LLBC resources and activities, with a tendency for frequent usage of a diverse variety of such resources and activities. However, given the prevalent usage of online/computer/mobile-based materials as LLBC resources and self-directed naturalistic language learning category as LLBC activities, it would be advisable for students to investigate and embrace more LLBC resources and activities. While each LLBC resource and activity is meant to serve a learning purpose, it is critical for students to develop an awareness of the appropriateness of all LLBC resources and activities. A thoughtful manipulation of the different LLBC resources and activities would benefit students' language learning process.

The study's findings shed insight on the low use of LLBC activities in naturalistic language learning category. It is suggested that students become more active and confident in their search for an English-rich environment outside the classroom by participating in more meaningful contacts with other L2 learners or native English speakers. Also, the results of this study revealed a preference among English-majored students at the university under study for online/computer/mobile-based materials as the primary LLBC resource. As a result, it would be recommendable for teachers to assist students in expanding their repertoire of newly formed LLBC affordances driven by technology advancement.

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NGUỒN HỌC LIỆU VÀ HOẠT ĐỘNG HỌC TẬP ĐỂ HỌC NGÔN NGỮ BÊN NGOÀI LỚP HỌC CỦA SINH VIÊN CHUYÊN NGỮ TIẾNG ANH TẠI MỘT TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC Ở VIỆT NAM

Nguyễn Vũ Khánh¹, Trương Bạch Lê¹, Dương Anh Chiến²

1. Khoa tiếng Anh, Trường Đại học Ngoại ngữ, Đại học Huế,
57 Nguyễn Khoa Chiêm, phường An Cựu, Tp. Huế, Việt Nam

2. Khoa Sư phạm tiếng Anh, Trường Đại học Ngoại ngữ, ĐHQGHN,
Phạm Văn Đồng, Cầu Giấy, Hà Nội, Việt Nam

Tóm tắt: Bài báo này là một phần của một nghiên cứu với quy mô lớn hơn được thực hiện nhằm tìm hiểu việc sử dụng các nguồn học liệu và hoạt động học tiếng Anh sau giờ lên lớp của sinh viên chuyên ngữ tiếng Anh tại một trường đại học ở Việt Nam. Để tìm ra những nguồn học liệu và hoạt động học tập thường được những sinh viên được khảo sát sử dụng, một bảng câu hỏi khảo sát đã được gửi theo hình thức trực tuyến đến 200 đối tượng điều tra thông qua ứng dụng Google Form. Kết quả cho thấy các tài liệu trực tuyến/trên máy tính/trên thiết bị điện tử và tài liệu truyền hình truyền thống là các nguồn học liệu được yêu thích nhất, trong khi đó Xem YouTube, Nghe nhạc, Lướt Internet, và Sử dụng mạng xã hội là những hoạt động học tập được sử dụng với tần suất cao nhất. Ngoài ra, các hoạt động học ngôn ngữ tự nhiên một cách có định hướng là phổ biến nhất đối với khách thể tham gia nghiên cứu, tiếp theo là các hoạt động tự nghiên cứu. Ngược lại, sinh viên tham gia nghiên cứu này có xu hướng tránh tham gia các hoạt động học ngôn ngữ tự nhiên.

Từ khóa: quá trình học ngôn ngữ bên ngoài lớp học, nguồn học liệu, hoạt động học tập, sinh viên chuyên ngữ tiếng Anh