Potential Factors (De)Motivating English Majors' Autonomous Language Learning beyond the Classroom at a Public Higher Education Institution in Vietnam

by

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Abstract

This study explores factors that might motivate or demotivate English majors' autonomous language learning beyond the classroom (ALLBC) at a Vietnamese public higher education institution (HEI) from the perspectives of both students and their instructors. Purposive sampling was used, and data were obtained using three tools: a survey using Google Forms (with students and staff), student-solicited diaries, and semi-structured interviews conducted in Vietnamese by the researcher with six staff and four students. Interviews were conducted by audio call on a social medium, recorded, transcribed verbatim, translated into English by the researcher, and then verified by an EFL Vietnamese instructor and doctoral graduate from the University of Alberta.

The study uses an interpretative multimethod research design with sequential data gathering. Four theoretical lenses are used to interpret the data: self-determination theory (SDT), self-determined learning theory (SDLT), sociocultural theory (SCT), and the L2 motivational self system (The L2MSS). Students' engagement in ALLBC is studied considering the following factors: learners' self-awareness; availability of and access to technological tools; students' involvement in selecting their program of study; matters of assessment; learners' perceptions of their imaginary future; as well as other personal and contextual factors. Students' recommendations with respect to ways to increase their ALLBC, including boosting their excitement and self-confidence, are also analyzed.

The interview data from students is also compared to those from the staff, revealing similarities and differences regarding reasons for (dis)engagement in ALLBC, factors (de)motivating ALLBC. A particular attention is paid to the roles of the instructors in the teaching and learning process.

The findings contribute to the growing field of ALLBC research by providing some insights into this topic in the Vietnamese context. The findings and implications recommend professional development training for instructors on ALLBC, institutional changes and/or educational policies that might enhance the quality of English language education in HEIs in this area, and might have value for other Asian contexts.

Keywords: (de)motivation, learner autonomy, learner autonomy beyond the classroom, learners' autonomous learning beyond the classroom, EFL, Vietnam

Preface

This dissertation is an original work by Duy Thanh Anh Phan. The research project, of which this dissertation is a part, received research ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board, Project Name "Potential factors (de)motivating English majors' autonomous learning beyond the classroom in higher education institution in Vietnam", No. Pro00104373, May 7, 2021. Of course, as is usual, all errors and oversights are entirely my own.

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List of abbreviations

AL	autonomous learning
ALLBC	autonomous language learning beyond the classroom
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
EFL	English as a foreign language
HEI	higher educational institution
LA	learner autonomy
PAH	pedagogy-andragogy-heutagogy

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Learner autonomy (LA) has been the subject of debate in research circles around the world for several decades. After devoting many years to discussing the conceptualization of LA and searching for different ways to promote LA in foreign and/or second language education in and/or out-of-class settings (Teng, 2019), LA researchers have recently shifted their attention to exploring the complex reality of learners' autonomous language learning beyond the classroom (Benson & Reinders, 2011; Teng, 2019). Still, little is known about this practice in the Vietnamese context.

There are several reasons to consider autonomous English language learning in Vietnam. Traditional English language teaching in Vietnam has been criticised for being too teacher-centered, passive, and grammar-oriented, and does not foster the development of communicative competence and learner autonomy (Dang, 2010; Duong, 2021). The current English language curriculum in Vietnam aims to promote learner autonomy as one of the core competencies for students, along with critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity (Duong, 2021). The rapid development of information and communication technology has provided learners with more opportunities and resources to access and use English outside the classroom, enabling and even requiring them to be more autonomous and responsible for their own learning (Duong, 2021). It is important to investigate how Vietnamese EFL students practise autonomous English language learning, and what factors may facilitate or hinder their autonomy. This could help instructors, curriculum designers, and policy makers provide more effective support and guidance as learners strive to achieve their learning goals and reach their potentials.

Given the promise of autonomous learning (AL) to help learners develop their language proficiency in English as a foreign language (EFL) settings in Vietnam and beyond and the dearth of professional literature, some insights into the experiences of learners' autonomous language learning in out-of-class surroundings could be of value. Furthermore, as both an EFL learner and teacher in Vietnam, I am personally interested in the evidence of the successful application of AL beyond the classroom in language education in higher education institutions (HEI). Hence, the purpose of this study is to explore factors which motivate or demotivate English majors' autonomous leaning in out-of-class settings in English language education at a public HEI in Vietnam. Additionally, the current research could be one of the first investigations of autonomous learning in the Vietnamese context to utilise heutagogy or self-determined learning theory (Hase & Kenyon, 2000) as a theoretical framework to explore the why, how and what of language learners' AL beyond the classroom.

Locating myself

The story of how I became inspired to study factors that (de)motivate language learners' AL in out-of-class settings in English language education in Vietnam originates in memories of my childhood, my experiences as an EFL learner and my observations as an instructor of English at the higher education level in Vietnam for more than sixteen years.

Curiosity from childhood

I was born in a small rural town in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam. When I was a child, I sometimes saw some big, tall and white foreigners, riding their motorbikes into my town because they were lost and sought directions as to how to return to the city. Many children, including me, gathered around these strangers listening and attempting to understand what they were saying, but we only heard strange sounds. I always wished that I could have known the language they

were speaking so that I could communicate with them and help them out. I also found it admirable that a Vietnamese individual could converse with Westerners at that specific moment. I did not know that there was a foreign language called English back then.

Some years later, English was introduced to our town and it was taught by the only teacher who could speak English because he was said to be trained as an interpreter for American officials during what the Americans called the Vietnam war. Such night-time classes did not last long because learners gradually dropped out for a variety of unknown reasons. Thus, due to this shortage of English teachers, I was not able to study English until I was a tenth grader at a local senior high school. My intrinsic motivation and curiosity may have been the trigger for my interest in English as a subject and why I became somewhat successful at it. I only learned grammar, vocabulary, reading comprehension and sentence building (no listening or speaking at all). At the end of Grade 12, my family suggested that I study English and become an English teacher because of the shortage of English teachers at junior and senior high schools in my rural area at that time and the job security that English could provide. Luckily, I passed the entrance examination to become an English major (English Teaching) at a HEI in the Mekong Delta.

Efforts to improve English proficiency at the HEI

My first English course at the HEI - Pronunciation Practice – was a nightmare for me because I did not understand what my English teacher from Belgium was talking about during the two-period (90-minute) sessions. I noticed that many classmates who lived and studied in the city had been learning English at junior and senior high schools and had private classes and thus seemed to enjoy the lessons. To some extent, I felt ashamed of my English proficiency at that time, as I compared it to that of my classmates. I was enthralled by the imagery of a language learner who could speak English proficiently. Therefore, I continued to attend another similar

class also taught by that foreign teacher and after another 90 minutes, I only guessed that she was talking about her country - Belgium. Then, I lost confidence in my English ability in Listening and Speaking class because not only could I not understand what the speakers from the audiotape were talking about but I also had no ideas to share. So I sat in class silently and sadly. I told myself to try my best to be able to pass all of the courses in particular and to improve my English in general. As such, since I had only studied English for three years at senior high school, as compared to my classmates' who had studied it for seven years, I tried to attend other same-syllabus grammar courses taught by different teachers to do more exercises and to collect more useful grammatical materials to improve my English. It worked because not only did I increase my English grammatical knowledge, but I also passed all English grammar tests with ease and I later felt more confident to discuss grammatical issues with my classmates. Furthermore, to improve my speaking skills, I frequently studied in groups with my classmates in out-of-class settings to learn the vocabulary, and the language function and also to share ideas about the discussion questions suggested by the teachers to prepare for the next class. I also joined an English-speaking club organized by the Youth Union of the HEI every Sunday. In addition, to enhance my listening skills, I tried listening to English songs, bought listening books to practise at home and listened to VOA Special English on the radio at night. I promised myself that I had to graduate at the same time as my classmates did. Moreover, when I was a senior student, I learned that there was a television in the library, which played the US-based CNN channel so I went there weekly in the hopes of improving my listening and speaking skills more quickly.   It was not as easy as I expected. I was so immensely enthusiastic that I can still recall the images of the US presidential election in 2001 and the moment Al Gore confessed his failure to George Walker Bush. What is more, to better my pronunciation, I tried reading aloud for fifteen minutes

every day and when my mouth seemed tired, I attempted to overcome the feeling by lengthening the practice time because I thought this was an excellent approach for improvement of pronunciation). This outside-of-class L2 learning experience was quite valuable to me in many ways. From today's perspective, I see that my autonomous learning outside the class seemed to work effectively, and I regained my confidence to communicate in English with others and no longer felt nervous in any English classes. My classmates and I eventually graduated simultaneously to be qualified to work as teachers of English.

Experiences of autonomous learning as a teacher of English

The internet was not ubiquitous during my years at HEI so instead we enjoyed studying in groups after the class to help each other answer the discussion questions suggested by our instructors. However, the internet was somewhat popular in 2001 when I commenced teaching English at a HEI near the capital of a Mekong Delta-based province in Vietnam. I quickly realized that should the internet have been popular when I was at an HEI, my English would have been much better because I could have accessed numerous resources to practise by myself. Besides, I felt a compelling need to perfect my English so that I could have the full confidence to work with my student teachers who were trained to work at primary and junior high schools. Thus, I was striving to daily watch or listen to free online news clips on YouTube such as ABC News Live, Sky News Live, and DW News Livestream, to name just a few. This worked for me, so I always suggest my students utilise those resources to improve their own English since the time of formal class is undeniably insufficient for EFL learners to master the English language. Nevertheless, I never knew at the time that these things I had been doing outside the class would be considered autonomous language learning beyond the classroom.

Observation of an EFL teacher

Working as a teacher of English at a HEI, I always introduce and briefly instruct my students on how to employ useful online resources to practise their English skills outside the class. Nonetheless, I was regularly disappointed by my students' performance in Listening courses since no one seemed to heed my suggestions. Much to my surprise, I further learned that none of the students ever practised listening at home despite having access to computers or laptops or smartphones and audio files which I was willing to share. Their listening skills were poor. Likewise, in Speaking courses, although the discussion questions were printed in the course-books, my students did not attempt to search through the vast amount of online resources to answer the questions so that they could share their ideas with the class. Such meaningful practice is particularly valuable in EFL settings, where it is difficult for learners to find such places to practise speaking. I had wondered if the reason was laziness[1]. Still to this day, I long to understand the reasons why my English majors did not try to develop their English by themselves when resources were accessible and could help them.

From memories from my childhood, experiences as an EFL learner, and 16 years of observations as an EFL teacher, I was genuinely inspired to conduct a study on factors (de)motivating the AL of language learners beyond the classroom in English language education in the Vietnamese context. The question driving my curiosity is: "Why do students not engage in AL to better their English since the resources are available to them?"

The relevance of the topic for English language education

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[1] In Vietnamese culture, people describe themselves as "lazy" as an indication of not fulfilling their duties or complying with requests.

According to Teng (2019), autonomy has been a "hot topic" in English as a foreign language (EFL) education over the last few decades. Hence, the results of my study might assist Vietnamese and international researchers, Vietnamese educators and educational managers, and EFL lecturers at Vietnamese colleges and universities in numerous ways. First, the theoretical understanding provided might contribute to the literature on learner autonomy or autonomous learning research to help support and promote LA in English language education, provide more data about LA in the Vietnamese context, address a gap on factors (de)motivating language learners' autonomous learning beyond the classroom in English language education in Vietnam and identify some topics for further research on LA in Vietnam and Asia. Second, I intend to provide Vietnamese educators and educational managers with some data-based insights into the reality of Vietnamese students' autonomous learning beyond the classroom so that some institutional changes and/or educational policies might be pursued to improve the quality of both English teacher training and English language education in the Mekong Delta-based province. Third, the findings might inform local EFL lecturers of some factors helping/hindering the progress of English learners so that instructional innovations or learning strategies might be initiated to help resolve the low quality of English language learning at local HEIs.

Research problem

Although English is a mandatory subject from general education (from primary to senior high schools) to the tertiary level, English language education in Vietnam faces serious problems directly influencing the quality of English teaching and learning at all levels in the country. The first problem is that although Vietnamese students take English as a mandatory subject throughout their general education, their scores on the English test on the annual national secondary school leaving examination are statistically low (Yen Anh, 2022). Additionally,

although it is stipulated by the Ministry of Education and Training that non-English majors at tertiary levels are supposed to achieve a B1 level of the CEFR-based National Six-level Proficiency Scale as a partial requirement for a Bachelor's degree, the majority have been struggling to achieve this standard (Anh Tu, 2022), even though they have studied English for at least seven years before attending college. In the same vein, it seems much harder for English majors to attain the C1 level. Hence, in discussing those problems, many diverse reasons for this dire situation have been voiced. They include a "lack of a well-articulated policy, qualified teachers and necessary resources, outdated teaching methodologies, classroom constraints, a mismatch between testing and teaching and inflexible management" (Hoang, 2010; Le, 2017). However, such factors as language learning motivation and autonomous learning outside the class have not been articulated. Vietnamese HEI graduates have also been said to "lack autonomous learning, communication skills, presentation skills, and foreign language skills" (Duong & Nguyen, 2018, p. 84). Another problem is that whilst teaching is oriented by the communicative approach, testing seems to focus on measuring students' lexico-grammatical knowledge (Hoang, 2010). The teaching and learning of English aim to develop learners' proficiency across all levels, but the assessment focuses on a single paper testing vocabulary, grammar, reading, and writing at the end of each semester. Vietnamese English learners face significant challenges in their listening, speaking, and pronunciation skills due to the lack of evaluation. I have been wondering if testing practice directly or indirectly affects students' motivation to improve their English skills outside the class autonomously. Some HEIs may adopt a Questions Bank policy in which each course is assessed based on a pre-approved list of questions. Students only need to concentrate on the items in the Questions Bank to comfortably pass their courses. Thus, I have been questioning if this approach of testing might discourage

students' AL. Finally, in Vietnamese culture, students are used to passive learning at the general education level; few students at HEIs have developed the habit of learning by themselves beyond the language classroom to improve their language proficiency. Does this culture-related phenomenon impact students' autonomous learning outside the class?

I have long desired to conduct a study on factors (de)motivating English majors' autonomous learning in out-of-class settings at a public HEI in Vietnam. The research is motivated by personal and professional interest in autonomous learning beyond the classroom and the lack of professional literature on language learning beyond the classroom in the Vietnamese context. The study might inform Vietnamese educators about autonomous learning and influence institutional changes and instructional innovation.

Research questions

As Reinders and Benson (2017) contended, exploring the learners' lives and learning beyond the classroom is "an excellent starting point" (p. 14) for language learning beyond classroom research. The purpose of this study was to look at Vietnamese English majors' AL experiences in out-of-class settings. The following research questions guided this investigation:

1) How do English majors at a Vietnamese public higher education institution engage in autonomous language learning outside the class?

2) How do they utilise the resources and affordances at their disposal in their environments and how do they associate those resources with their classroom learning?

3) Why do they engage or disengage in autonomous language learning outside the class?

4) What factors (de)motivate their autonomous language learning outside the class?

Definitions of terms

Teng (2019) argues that LA regarding language education seems to be "an elusive construct and difficult to delineate" (p. 2) and it is not surprising that numerous definitions have been voiced in the literature as follows:

1. "the ability to take charge of one's own learning" (Holec, 1981, cited in Teng, 2019, p. 2).

2. "*when the learner is willing to and capable of* taking charge of one's own learning" (Gathercole, 1990, cited in Teng, 2019, p. 3) [emphasis mine].

3. "a capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making, and independent action" (Little, 1991, p. 4).

4. "a teaching/learning dynamic in which learners plan, implement, monitor and evaluate their own learning" (Little, 2022, p. 64)

5. autonomy - a situation wherein the learner decides and implements whatever is involved with learning; "fully autonomous learners" study "independently of the classroom, teacher or textbook" (Nunan, 1997, p. 193).

6. three versions of LA in language learning: 1. "the act of learning on one's own and the technical ability to do so", 2. "the internal psychological capacity to self-direct one's own learning", and 3. "control over the content and processes of one's own learning" (Benson, 1997, p. 25).

7. autotomy is both "the capacity to take charge of one's own learning" (Benson, 2001, p. 47) and "a legitimate and desirable goal of language education" (Benson, 2003, p. 2).

8. terms utilised interchangeably with "autonomous learning" including "self-instruction" (Hughes, 1997, cited in Teng, 2019, p. 2), "independent learning" (White, 2008, cited in Teng, 2019, p. 2), and "self-directed learning" (Holec, 1996, cited in Teng, 2019, p. 2).

9. In the Vietnamese context, "learner's self-initiation plus the ability to self-regulate their own learning" (Nguyen, 2009, p. 50).

In the current study, the term student engagement in autonomous language learning beyond the classroom is of utility, so it is also critical to specify clear definitions of what form of student engagement is being discussed at the beginning of any research, work, or conversation relating to student engagement (Lowe, & El Hakim, 2020).

1. engagement equals motivation plus implementation (Dörnyei, 2018).

2. student engagement - the active participation and involvement of the students in school-related activities and academic tasks (Mercer & Dörnyei, 2020).

Thus, in the current study, autonomous language learning involves students completing school-related and academic tasks, as well as engaging in language practice activities beyond the classroom. In other words, student engagement in ALLBC entails students' motivation and active participation in both school-related/academic tasks and language enhancement activities beyond the classroom.

Additionally, according to Byram (2008), "foreign language education" differs from "foreign language learning" in terms of "social and political purposes reflected in the formalities of an educational institution and embodied more or less explicitly in the learning aims and objectives attributed to the institution by governments at local or national level" (pp. 6-7). Since education refers to either or both the teaching or learning process, especially in a school or HEI (Education, n.d.) and considering the educational practice in Vietnam, the terms "English

language education" and "English language teaching and learning" are used interchangeably in this study.

Organisation of the final dissertation

The overall structure of the study takes the form of seven chapters. Chapter one introduces the study. Chapter two describes the research context and literature review. Chapter three presents the methodology. The findings of the survey, the solicited diaries and semi-structured interviews are presented in chapters four, five and six respectively. Finally, chapter seven proceeds with a discussion of the findings and the results, the contribution to the field of the study, its practical implications, and limitations and recommendations for further research.

Summary

In this chapter, I located myself as a researcher and present the study's relevance, research problems, and research questions. This chapter also included definitions of terms and an outline of the structure of the final dissertation. The following chapter, focusing on the research context and literature review, provides the reader with an overview of education in Vietnam and the foundations that lead to the research questions.

CHAPTER TWO: RESEARCH CONTEXT AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

To understand the research context, this chapter begins with a description of the system of education in Vietnam. It is followed by a literature review that addresses autonomous learning (AL) in language education, language learning beyond the classroom, learners' AL beyond the classroom and AL research in the Vietnamese setting. The theoretical lenses utilised in this study will also be provided in this chapter.

Research context

Exploring English majors' reality of studying English beyond the language classroom autonomously requires an understanding of the Vietnamese educational context and the tertiary education system, wherein English language education is mandated from primary to tertiary education.

The Vietnamese education system is comprised of 12 years of schooling divided into three blocks including primary school (from grades 1 – 5 for children aged 6 to 11); secondary school (from grades 6 – 9 for children aged 11 – 15); and high school (from grades 10 – 12 for children aged 15 – 18), which is then followed by a four-year bachelor degree, a two-year master's degree, and a three- to four-year PhD (Hoang, 2010; Le, 2017). Being first introduced as a mandatory subject at high schools in Vietnam in 1982, English is now introduced as an option in kindergarten and grades 1 and 2 and as a compulsory subject from Grade 3 through to tertiary education (Evans et al., 2022; Hoang 2010; Prime Minister, 2017) Thus school students now pursue at least ten years of foreign language learning according to the newly introduced curriculum (Evans et al., 2022). At the end of Grade 12, students take a secondary school leaving examination (Le, 2017) wherein they are tested on four papers such as a foreign language

(typically English), mathematics, Vietnamese literature and social sciences (History, Geography, Civic Education) or natural sciences (Physics, Chemistry, Biology). Those who pass the secondary school leaving examination are eligible to utilise the scores of three of four papers or the scores of several subjects at Grade 12 to apply to different universities or alternatively do another test, which is said to be similar to the SAT (Scholastic Assessment Test) and TSA (Thinking Skills Assessment), designed and administered by Vietnam National University Ho Chi Minh City. They then can use the test results to apply to tertiary institutions which accept that score. To select applicants, different tertiary institutions have their admission scores and students can apply to different institutions before admissions standards are established (Le, 2017). Finally, those who fail to gain admission to their initial choice of institutions may apply to others should they still welcome new applicants.

There are three main types of tertiary institutions in Vietnam (Le, 2017). The first group consists of "multidisciplinary universities and senior colleges with a narrower specialization" (called Đại học and Trường Đại học) (p. 184). There is now a growing tendency to establish four-year colleges (now called trường đại học) within a "big" university (now called Đại học) throughout the country after amendments to the law on higher education were passed by the National Assembly in 2018. This organisation is somewhat similar to that of the University of Alberta in Edmonton, which consists of three colleges (College of Health Sciences, College of Natural and Applied Sciences, College of Social Sciences and Humanities). The second type is academies (Học viện), which "also have a narrow disciplinary focus, but with a specialized research orientation" (p. 184), and the last one refers to "junior three-year colleges (Trường Cao đẳng) offering associate bachelor degrees" (p. 184). Now, academies (Học viện) and four-year colleges (Trường đại học) of a university (Đại học) are classified into one group called Trường

đại học (National Assembly, 2018). In addition, research institutes only training doctoral students and two-year teacher-training schools also exist. According to Thuy Linh (2019), there are now 237 multidisciplinary universities, senior colleges and academics (172 public, 60 private, five internationally run universities), 37 research institutes, 31 three-year teacher-training colleges and two two-year training-teacher schools throughout the country. Such an army of educational institutions is supposed to train 1,499,200 students for the workforce of the country in the 2018-2019 academic year (Thanh Xuan & Duc Trung, 2018).

At the tertiary level, English is taught nationwide both as a discipline and as a subject (Hoang, 2010). In the former group, students are called English majors because they study English to obtain a BA degree in English. In the latter classification, students are called non-English majors, who only attend two or three English courses as part of their curriculum. Both English and non-English majors are supposed to attain a certificate of English proficiency as part of the fulfilment of their BA degrees. As such, English majors are expected to achieve the C1 level (Proficient) while non-English majors are expected to reach the B1 level (Intermediate) of the CEFR-based National Six-level Proficiency Scale (Prime Minister, 2014).

Vietnamese tertiary education students are reported to have such a low English proficiency level that almost all of them are classified as beginners, though they have studied English at secondary and high schools for seven years (Trinh & Mai, 2019). In addition, although English language teachers at high schools and the tertiary level are obliged to attain level 5/C1 (Prime Minister, 2014), Le (2017) reported that "according to the 2015 statistics, just more than half (61%) of the tested university teachers achieved the required level of proficiency". Hence, it is understandable that Mai and Pham (2019) point out that the quality of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacher training at the tertiary level is systemically taken into consideration

throughout the country. Additionally, according to a survey of 600 non-English majors at three large universities in Vietnam, namely The University of Social Sciences and Humanities Vietnam National University Ho Chi Minh City, The University of Social Sciences and Humanities Vietnam National University Ha Noi City and Vinh University, 57.5% of students reported that they have achieved B1 level (Intermediate) on the CEFR Scale, 5.8% B2, 17% A1 and 19.2% A2 (Phuong Mai, 2018). This means that 36.2% of university students do not achieve the required level of English proficiency, though they have been studying English for at least seven years and going to universities for one to three years (Le, 2017; Phuong Mai, 2018).

Vietnamese university and college students at large have faced the problem of developing English language proficiency for a long time. The seemingly slow development may be due to the status of English as a foreign language since learners have limited opportunities to practise beyond the classroom (Guo, 2011; Richards, 2015), Other factors that that may contribute include large class-size, a limited amount of weekly teaching and learning time, inappropriate/ineffective teaching materials, the English teachers' limited English proficiency, and an examination-driven curriculum (Richards, 2015). Benson (2017) maintains that social and educational development has shifted ever-increasing attention from a formal setting to a beyond-the-classroom learning environment. Advanced technology such as the internet, the media, and virtual social networks have furnished learners with more opportunities to communicate in the target language more meaningfully and authentically than in formal settings (Richards, 2015). Moreover, mobile inventions and the widespread availability and utilisation of streaming video and other real-life materials in the target language have created novel opportunities for autonomous language learning (Godwin-Jones, 2019). Hence, from an ecological perspective, language learning in both formal and informal settings emanates from the

interaction between people who are inclined to learn and environmental resources which are accessible to facilitate learning (Benson, 2017). Furthermore, learners' motivation and encouragement to learn autonomously beyond the classroom can be generated from their classmates and/or schoolmates and seek suitable occasions to partake within effective communication in the target language in meaningful surroundings, namely social networking (Reinders & Benson, 2017). Smith et al., (2018) also state that AL seems to be especially relevant in developing countries since a note of discord has crept into the relationship between what formal education provides and what numerous learners wish. Moreover, the speedy advancement of contemporary technologies has been continually offering novel approaches to access up-to-date knowledge daily but formal English language lessons "remain largely unchanged, dependent on the textbooks, assessments and the professionalism of their class teacher" (Smith et al., 2018, p. 11). Meanwhile, "almost by default, successful language learners in developing country contexts are autonomous learners who can exploit out-of-school resources" (Smith et al., 2018, p. 7). Moreover, since language learning is progressively shifting from formal to informal settings, both at individual and societal levels, learners are therefore possibly offered a selection of a wide variety of options, which, in turn, influences learners' determination and endeavours to undertake their chosen action (Chik, 2020). The availability of online language learning resources also allows learners to diversify or develop their formal language learning by utilising digitally advanced inventions (Chik, 2020). Lai (2017) also maintains that owing to the escalating rates of the advancement of information and communication technologies and their substantial impact on human lives, researchers have been taking heed of a strong affinity between technology and autonomous language learning. Language learning beyond the classroom is also assumed to help lessen learners' anxiety, instill

learners' confidence and engender learners' motivation (Reinders & Benson, 2017). Furthermore, one of the solutions proposed in the decision ratified by the government of Vietnam to stipulate a strategic plan to develop the educational sector in Vietnam in the period 2011-2020 is to revise the content of the syllabus, methods of instructions, testing or assessment and evaluation of education quality (Prime Minister, 2012). As such, renewed methods of instruction, testing or assessment are aimed at encouraging the volunteerism, creativity, and strenuous, active and autonomous learning of the learners (Prime Minister, 2012). Hence, this seems to be an opportune moment for reviewing the strategic plan concerning the AL of learners by exploring what the learners have been doing beyond the classroom to develop their English skills, identify both motivating and inhibiting factors, and propose potential solutions aiding the development of AL in the subsequent periods of the strategic plan, and why.

Thus, considering the possible reasons for students' low English fluency in an EFL learning environment in Vietnam, it would be beneficial to investigate whether students' AL beyond the language classroom significantly affects their learning outcome, and if so, to what extent it has an impact on their English competence. As Bui (2019) contends, further research into AL in English language education in Vietnam should be conducted to explore the best forms of improving the quality of English language education in the country and enhance student English proficiency. Thus, given Vietnam is an EFL setting wherein autonomous learning has been advocated in English language education in recent years, conducting a study on factors (de)motivating the English majors' AL in out-of-class settings in English language education in Vietnam seems timely.

Literature review

In this section, an overview of autonomous learning in language education is provided. In addition, studies on language learning beyond the classroom are discussed concerning its conceptualization, settings, themes, learners' autonomous learning in multiple contexts, and research in the Vietnamese context, focusing on autonomous learning and beyond-the-classroom autonomous language learning research.

Autonomous learning in language education

The notion of autonomy was first recorded in political science literature in approximately the fifth century BCE to espouse human freedom to control their lives (Lai, 2017; Rosich, 2019). It, then, was said to enter the field of language education through the Council of Europe's Modern Language Project in 1971 (Benson, 2001, 2016; Gremmo & Riley, 1995; Little, 2017; Raya & Vieira, 2021). The project led to the establishment of the Centre de Recherches et d'Applications en Langues (CRAPEL) at the University of Nancy, France, with Yves Châlon as its founder (Benson, 2001, 2016; Gremmo & Riley, 1995; Lai, 2017; Raya & Vieira, 2021). Benson (2001) affirmed that Yves Châlon is widely considered the father of autonomy in language learning.

When Châlon departed this life, the headship of CRAPEL passed to Henry Holec, whose report to the Council of Europe in 1981 was assumed to have been the main initial material on autonomy in language learned (Benson, 2001; Little, 2017; Raya & Vieira, 2021).

 Since the primary aim of the Council of Europe's Modern Language Project was to offer adults opportunities for lifelong learning, the orientation of CRAPEL was impacted by the discussion on adult self-directed learning wherein the learners are supposed to plan, implement and evaluate their learning progress (Benson, 2001, 2016; Little, 2007; Raya & Vieira, 2021).

One of the approaches the CRAPEL utilised to support self-directed learning was the provision of self-access centres and learner training (Benson, 2001, 2016; Lai, 2017; Little, 2007; Mynard, 2021). Initially deemed a means to uphold self-directed learning, self-access language learning centres have been so ubiquitous that "self-access language learning" was often used synonymously with self-directed or autonomous learning and self-access work is often assumed to generate autonomy without any strong explication (Benson, 2001). Since self-access centres were endowed with educational technologies, self-access learning was also treated as a synonym for technology-based learning (Benson, 2001). In addition, training learners to develop such skills as self-management, self-monitoring and self-assessment to implement self-directed learning effectively was suggested at CRAPEL (Benson, 2001; Mynard, 2021). This practice was so prevalent that more research on learning strategies by successful learners was conducted to hopefully help less successful ones become better language learners (Benson, 2001).

Accordingly, due to the success of various projects concerning autonomy and the efforts of autonomy advocators to popularize their ideas, autonomy has continually grown to be part of the mainstream study orientation in language education (Benson, 2001). Nonetheless, this evolution was also impacted by social and economic factors (Benson, 2001). As such, the global advancement of information technology, the growing number and mobility of international students, the commercialization of education and the popularization of educational technology have exerted a profound impact on language education (Benson, 2001; Palfreyman & Benson, 2019). Also, immigration, tourism and globalization of trade and education precipitated the diffusion of language education (Benson, 2001; Palfreyman & Benson, 2019). Hence, since evolution within language teaching and education sectors reflected the essential changes in the role of knowledge in societal and economic life, language learners are expected to actively gain

direct knowledge from the outer world to become competent citizens in contemporary society (Benson, 2001). Learners were seen as individuals who can not only teach and train themselves but also develop and adjust to novel challenging circumstances in the future (Palfreyman & Benson, 2019). Especially in the changing worldwide trends in language education, the notion of autonomy confirmed its key role in contributing to a novel learning form and increasing learners' interest (Palfreyman & Benson, 2019).

The concept of "learner autonomy" may have been taken into foreign language learning by Dörnyei (1994) in his discussion of motivation and motivating learners in the foreign language classroom. One of the suggestions put forward by Dörnyei (1994) to motivate second/foreign language learners in the classroom was facilitating learner autonomy by numerous strategies such as diminishing external pressure and control, namely threats or punishments, having learners organise learning process, design and prepare activities, and granting learners real power, to name just a few.

What does learner autonomy mean? Llaven-Nucamendi (2014) argued that numerous terms utilised together with the notion of "autonomy" in language learning such as individualization, self-instruction, self-direction, independent learning, and self-regulation, are all related but not the same. Benson (n.d.) warned that it was advisable to examine the real meanings of the terms employed in each context. Figure 2.1 summarises the literature discussion on this topic.

Figure 2.1

Different terms related to the notion of learner autonomy

a mode of instruction which contemplates the learners' diversity but "does not necessarily seek to develop autonomous learning capacities or allow learners to take control of their learning" (LlavenNucamendi, 2014, p. 27)

individualisation

a process wherein the learners accept the liability for devising, discharging and assessing the learning process supported by external agents or resources (Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991)

a form of learning in which learners study without the teacher's control or direction (Dickinson, 1987)

self-instruction

self-directed learning

self-directed learners are willing to seek learning opportunities, confident in their abilities, and use resources effectively to achieve learning objectives. They analyze and evaluate their learning outcomes to inform future learning opportunities (Gavriel, 2015)

learners are contingent upon their self-regulation to advance (Mithaug, 2007)

linked with aspects of capacity, control and ability to manage their learning and to identify locations for resources (Hase, 2014)

an independent learner is one whose learning is controlled by others (Little, 2011)

not synonymous — learner autonomy — synonymous

a process wherein "students manage their learning strategies, thoughts, and feelings in the learning context" (Lou et al., 2018, p. 215)

"at the lowest level of independence a learner might be willing and able to work unsupervised but in every other respect be dependent on a teacher or advisor for direction" (Sheerin, 1997, p.58)

independent learning

self-regulated learning

"the ways that learners systematically activate and sustain their cognitions, motivations, behaviours, and affects, toward the attainment of their goals" (Schunk & Greene, 2018, p. 1)

independent learners do things for themselves, not to be contingent upon others for external personal and emotional furtherance (Deci, 1996)

"implies reflective involvement in planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating learning" (Llaven-Nucamendi, 2014, p. 30)

autonomy and independence are different (Deci, 1996; Little, 2011)

As shown in Figure 2.1, learner autonomy and individualization in language learning are interconnected, as they cater to diverse individual learners. Individualized learning allows learners to set their demands and considers the diversity of the learners but does not necessarily foster autonomous learning capacities. Similarly, self-instruction is a learning method where learners study without a teacher's control, relying on their self-regulation for progress. However, self-instructional learning fails to achieve the autonomy and capacity of the learners, as decisions are made by the teacher. Likewise, autonomy and independence are distinct concepts. Independent learners do things independently, making decisions about their learning without relying on others for direction, not relying on others for external support. Independent learners may be willing to work unsupervised but still rely on a teacher or advisor.

On the contrary, self-directed learning is a learning process in which learners take responsibility for designing, performing, and assessing their learning, often with the assistance of others. This type of learning is associated with the capacity, control, and ability to manage learning (analyzing, evaluating, and reflecting on learning outcomes to inform future opportunities) and locate resources. In the same vein, self-regulated learning involves students

managing their learning strategies, thoughts, and feelings in the learning context. It involves systematically activating and sustaining cognitions, motivations, behaviours and affects towards achieving goals. Autonomous learning in education involves reflective involvement in planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating learning, making it a synonym for self-regulated learning.

It might, therefore, be argued that autonomous learning plays a pivotal role in language learning, especially in EFL settings where learners have limited access to English language resources, and few opportunities to communicate with native speakers of English to practise their English (Benson, 2013; Nakata, 2014). Since autonomy was thought to support effective learning and to develop autonomous learners, it was argued to have numerous purposes as a language learning tool, a behaviour for deep personal transformation, a human right or a fundamental characteristic of human beings (Llaven-Nucamendi, 2014). Hence, to be successful foreign language learners, students were required to take charge of their learning actively by setting objectives, identifying approaches and reflectively assessing their learning (Nakata, 2014; Nunan & Richards, 2015). Also, assuming that autonomy was a goal of language education, teachers and educational institutions may strive to foster learners' autonomous learning through numerous approaches to organizing teaching and learning processes to maximise the learners' capacity (Benson, 2001). Given a variety of conceptualizations of learner autonomy and Benson's (n.d.) precaution against different understandings of learner autonomy assigned by different researchers, the term autonomous learning (AL) is consistently employed in this study.

Although a large volume of published studies investigating diverse issues related to autonomous learning in language education had been reported, it seems that the majority concentrate on classroom settings since a list of themes in AL scholarship reviewed by Tanyeli

and Kuter (2013) comprised definitions of LA, characteristics of autonomous learners, the importance of LA, the ways of promoting autonomy, a causal relationship between motivation and autonomy, teachers' and learners' roles in an autonomous learning environment and teachers' and learners' beliefs about AL and to name just a few. Since the focus of this study is investigating factors which may (de)motivate language learners' AL beyond the classroom, it would be essential to briefly review the characteristics of autonomous learners as such factors can exert an impact upon the language learners' AL as learner's personality or characteristics, learning goals or purposes, the philosophy of the institution and the cultural context of the learning (Hsieh & Hsieh, 2019; Nunan, 1988).

Characteristics of autonomous learners. Holec's (1981) definition of autonomy as "the ability to take charge of one's own learning" was one of the first and the most cited conceptualizations in scholarship on autonomous learning (Benson, 2001). This involved making decisions about learning objectives, self-determination, content definition, methods selection, acquisition monitoring, and evaluation of gains (Benson, 2001). Autonomous learners are supposed to be capable of making all of the above-mentioned decisions regarding the learning process in which they wish to engage (Benson, 2001).

According to self-determination theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2017), motivation is of two types, namely intrinsic motivation, which is deemed an original form of autonomous motivation, and extrinsic motivation, which comprises different types categorized by the degree of autonomy including external regulation, introjection, identification and integration. According to Deci (1975), individuals were intrinsically motivated to engage in certain activities or behaviours owing to their need to feel competent and self-determined. When intrinsically motivated, learners actively and autonomously explore their learning environments

and take genuine pleasure in manipulating and experimenting with things in such environments to disclose novel insight, which was presumed to be "an extremely powerful engine of learning" (Deci & Ryan, 2016, p. 11). Individuals partook in intrinsically motivated activities or behaviours to earn internal rewards, namely the joy of participation or the satisfaction of their curiosity (Dörnyei, 1994). Hence, genuine autonomous learners are those who possess innate intrinsic motivation. Apart from intrinsic motivation, identified regulation and integrated regulation were two other mighty engines of benefits since the former is somewhat and the latter is highly autonomous (Deci & Ryan, 2016). Should a learner not have intrinsic motivation, possessing identified or integrated extrinsic motivation might be characterised as an autonomous learner, but ideally, fully integrated extrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2016) would be a practically desirable attribute most language learners are expected to have since intrinsic motivation is not inherent in all language learners.

From a socio-cultural perspective, human learning as an experience might be dramatically impacted by potential individual, social, and cultural factors (Schoen, 2011). Thus, although such extrinsic motivators as controlling utilisation of rewards, competition, evaluations, threats, surveillance and to name just a few had been confirmed to be injurious to intrinsic motivation, autonomy, well-being, and learning, it was evident that extrinsic motivators tend to be less deleterious should the motivators be activated in an autonomy-supportive social setting, namely autonomy-supportive classrooms, self-access centres or homes (Deci & Ryan, 2016). From this perspective, those learners who are inhabiting and working in autonomy-supportive social/cultural environments should be portrayed as autonomous learners to some degree.

Autonomous learning in English language learning. Palfreyman and Benson (2019) contended that the goal of education systems was to promote personal autonomy - the

individuals' capacity to participate in their communities freely and critically. Meanwhile, learner autonomy refers to the individual's capacity to control his or her learning (Benson, 2011). Thus, the connection between learner autonomy and personal autonomy was active learning which was assumed to be useful to both the personal autonomy development and the learning process (Palfreyman & Benson, 2019). According to Palfreyman and Benson (2019), the foundations of the concept of "learner autonomy" emanated from the scholarship of learner-centred attention, adult self-directed learning and learning psychology. Since the first entrance into the field of language education through the Council of Europe's Modern Language Project in 1971 (Benson, 2001; Gremmo & Riley, 1995), learner autonomy has become a key notion in foreign language learning, which drew the attention of researchers in different parts of the world (Palfreyman & Benson, 2019).

The notion of autonomy in learning in the 1970s was connected to ideological attention to the value of personal experience and personal freedom (Gremmo & Riley, 1995). Additionally, social changes including mass migration, open international travelling and tourism, globalization of education, economy and advanced technology have also urged an education shift to emphasise the role of autonomous learning (Palfreyman & Benson, 2019). As such, learners were expected to be able to learn by themselves and be capable of effectively adapting to novel challenges (Palfreyman & Benson, 2019). Thus, researchers have strived to specify the role of autonomous learning in language education in general and foreign/second language education in particular. Accordingly, such issues as the impact of greater autonomy upon more effective language learning, effective ways of autonomy promotion, development of different forms of autonomous learning in diverse contexts have been explored by multiple investigators (Palfreyman & Benson, 2019).

Furthermore, although the concept of learner autonomy originates in Europe, it might be particularly relevant for "learners in developing countries, and specifically in less well-resourced contexts (Smith et al., 2018, p. 8). Smartphone technology and internet access in developing countries, where English is often learned as a foreign language, make it possible for language learners, particularly those at higher education levels, to access multiple English learning materials outside formal settings. Accordingly, further research on learning and autonomous learning beyond the classroom in developing countries was needed to provide implications for language learning, teaching and teacher education in those learning environments (Smith et al., 2018).

Language learning beyond the classroom.

Since language learning beyond the classroom as an area of inquiry seems irrefutably capacious (Benson, 2011), this section endeavours to present several dimensions in this area of research, including delimiting the field of inquiry, beyond-the-classroom language learning settings, and approaches to beyond-the-classroom language learning inquiry.

Delimiting the field of research. Apart from the effort to facilitate language education in formal or classroom-based research, another novel or developing area of inquiry recently explored was language learning in informal or beyond-the-classroom settings and its role in facilitating language learning (Benson, 2011; Dressman, 2020). A wide variety of terms referring to this phenomenon had been found in the literature such as out-of-class, out-of-school, after-school, extracurricular, extramural; non-formal, informal; self-instructed, non-instructed, naturalistic; independent, self-directed autonomous language learning (Benson, 2011). These different terms reflected four diverse angles of viewing language learning beyond the classroom: location, formality, pedagogy, and locus of control (Benson, 2011). Striving to resolve the

problem of the complex terminology and include all the terms in one conceptualisation, Benson

(2011) suggested the term "language learning beyond the classroom". Whatever terms might be

utilised interchangeably within beyond-the-classroom language learning research, an argument

employed in this study is language learning beyond the classroom is "not just a matter of

learning away from the classroom but is rather, in many cases, an extension of classroom

learning" (Reinders & Benson, 2017, p.14). The classroom is only one of the popular

destinations language learners habitually reach during their autonomous learning journey to the

Language Mastery Stronghold. Figure 2.2 summarises the discussion of the conceptualisation of

language learning beyond the classroom.

Figure 2.2

The conceptualisation of language learning beyond the classroom
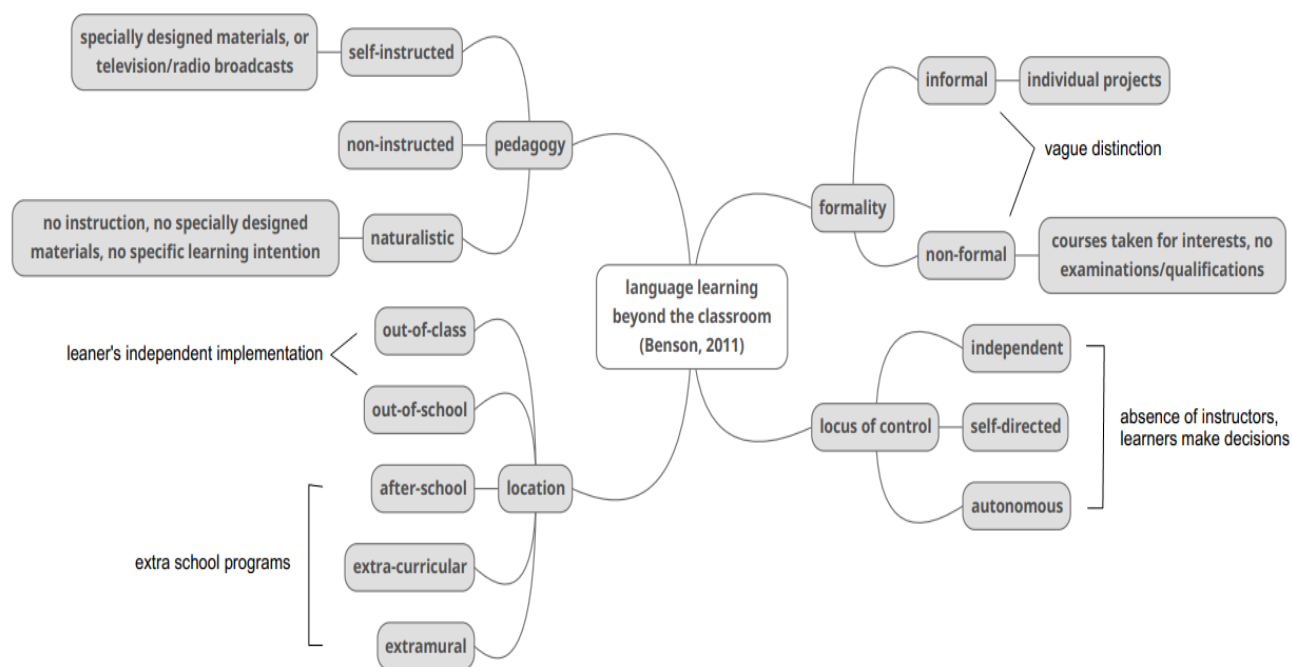
    Settings for language learning beyond the classroom. It is essential to gain insights

into which settings learners access language education beyond the classroom. This can be done

by recording those contexts for language education beyond the classroom as well as learners' usage of such surroundings (Reinders & Benson, 2017). An ecological perspective might be used to study this issue, as it considers the learning process, actions of instructors and learners, multi-layered interaction, language use, complexity, and interdependencies of all elements in the setting at social, physical, and symbolic levels (van Lier, 2004, 2010). From the ecological perspective, language education beyond the classroom did not eliminate the classroom setting but is associated with it (Reinders & Benson, 2017). For instance, classroom learners might partake in and employ classroom materials for language learning beyond the classroom and autonomous learners can also attend language courses within formal settings (Reinders & Benson, 2017). Learning languages beyond the classroom occurs outside of more traditional, more formalized classroom settings such as individuals learning languages at home, privately, in social contexts, or through online communities (Wang & Mercer, 2021). Learners in language learning environments outside the classroom were also typically required to be particularly proactive to fully benefit from the affordances available (Wang & Mercer, 2021). Hence, Reinders and Benson (2017) recommended that further research should investigate the affordances, which alluded to the relationship between a living entity (a language learner) and the setting which comprised "physical, social and symbolic affordances that provided grounds for activity" (van Lier, 2004, pp. 4-5), by exploring how learners use the resources at their disposal for gains in their surroundings and link those opportunities to formal learning in the classroom. It might be also particularly inspiring to explore learner engagement, what affects it and how learners develop their engagement within their language learning outside the classroom (Wang & Mercer, 2021).

Lamb (2004) found that adolescent EFL learners' learning occurred in private classes or the home at large, and their AL "is shaped by, and for, the local context" (p. 240). As such, the limited state provision of English language education and ambitious parents' encouragement might have led highly motivated learners to seek learning opportunities at private institutions, at home, or any location with available resources for autonomous English practice (Lamb, 2004). Meanwhile, a strong relationship with teachers also motivated junior high school students to attend English classes at the local school (Lamb, 2004).

Lai (2015) investigated how Hong Kong undergraduates assessed their English learning within formal and informal settings and how to connect their learning between the two learning environments. The author discovered that formal and informal learning ecologies were perceived to serve distinct educational functions, satisfying learners' expectations in each environment (Lai, 2015). As such, students attended classroom lessons for basic language knowledge and voluntarily participated in out-of-class learning experiences for authentic language usage (Lai, 2015). In this case, learning experiences are assumed to be impacted by the affordances, that is the relationships between a language learner and the setting-in the learning environments.

Themes in studies on language learning beyond the classroom. Learning beyond the classroom was considered a complementary aspect of language education, offering significant advantages over classroom-based learning (Nunan & Richards, 2015). Learning beyond the classroom offered learners the chance to overcome classroom limitations and gain authentic language use experience for effective communication (Nunan & Richards, 2015). Hence, it can aid language learners in the improvement of language and communication skills, confidence and motivation building, and personal and intercultural development (Nunan & Richards, 2015). Additionally, A combination of in- and out-of-classroom activities was recommended for

language learners to develop their proficiency by utilising digital tools and resources available in their daily lives, as these tools and resources were integral to their daily lives (Nunan, n.d.; Nunan & Richards, 2015). Language learning beyond the class currently also differentiated itself from learning opportunities (Dressman, 2020). Three decades ago, travelling was the only way to communicate with another language, but the digital age provides numerous opportunities for language use today (Dressman, 2020). Close interaction with native speakers of that language, foreign movies, use of iTunes (2003), Facebook (2004), Youtube (2005), Google Translate (2006), and Live Mocha (2007), to name just a few, as well as affordable air travel and migration had prompted learners to learn languages beyond the classroom to pursue their diverse interests (Dressman, 2020).

The literature on language learning beyond the classroom covered various themes, including theorizing it, engaging learners in beyond-the-classroom learning, utilising technology and the internet, learning through television, engaging in project-based learning, interacting with native speakers, and examining it in Asian settings (Dressman, 2020; Nunan & Richards, 2015).

Theorizing language learning beyond the classroom. Chik (2020) examined English language learning practices on Duolingo, an online platform, from an autoethnographic perspective, focusing on the impact of location, formality, pedagogy, locus of control, and trajectory on informal settings. The author suggested that the language app can create various motivational spaces in both informal and formal contexts by analyzing comments from various discussion threads or forums (Chik, 2020). As such, Online language-learning apps typically free in basic mode might be easily accessible and flexible, motivating learners to engage and creating learning environments that are tailored to their needs (Chik, 2020). Similarly, Duolingo's course completion certificate was not eligible for university admission, but it offered motivational

opportunities due to its lower cost compared to popular tests like IELTS and TOEFL (Chik, 2020). Additionally, the platform shared numerous employment opportunities stories on discussion forums (Chik, 2020). In the same vein, Duolingo users were motivated to ask and offer instructional comments on discussion forums, generating authentic language learning opportunities (Chik, 2020). They assumed full control of their learning on the app, as they downloaded and used it for their pursuits, allowing them to study English or other languages independently (Chik, 2020). Lastly, the progression timeline of a learning track can be a motivating factor for many learners, as diverse stories about the process, duration, and next steps are shared on discussion forums, thus proving that "persistence is most important to maintain the motivation to learn a language" (Chik, 2020, p. 24). The author concludes that "opportunities for self-motivation or other-motivation in informal language learning can depend on learners' attention, and this is still a relatively uncharted research area" (Chik, 2020, p. 25).

Engaging the learner in learning beyond the classroom. Studies on engaging learners beyond the classroom focus on facilitating learners' language proficiency concerning reading (Day and Robb, 2015), and communicative skills such as listening, writing, pronunciation and vocabulary building (Nunan & Richards, 2015). In this section, I will review studies in all of these areas.

Day and Robb (2015) argued that extensive reading in the target language enhances learners' reading comprehension, vocabulary, listening, speaking, and writing skills. They also noted that reading is a personal choice, providing an invaluable learning opportunity beyond the classroom, allowing learners to engage in reading at their convenience. Effective out-of-class extensive reading requires a variety of available, easy, interesting materials which are "well within a learner's reading competence in foreign language learning" (Day & Robb, 2015, p. 5).

Learners should have the freedom to choose their preferred reading time and materials for their enjoyment and learning (Day & Robb, 2015). Out-of-class extensive reading might benefit learners of all language levels, develop positive attitudes towards reading, and promote motivation to learn the target language, as suggested by Day & Robb (2015). Teachers and learners often faced challenges in obtaining appropriate reading selections, with graded readers being recommended due to their lexicon and grammatical structures designed to gratify learners at specific proficiency levels (Day & Robb, 2015). This might be especially true in contexts where English was an undesirable mandatory subject and learners lacked motivation and expected detailed instruction and follow-up action from teachers (Day & Robb, 2015). Thus, it could be said that factors such as accessibility, availability, enjoyment, motivation, and freedom motivate learners to engage in extensive reading beyond the classroom.

Gilliland (2015) suggested that language learners should not only listen to their favourite programs but also plan ways to develop their listening skills. Teachers can expedite out-of-class listening by providing access to appropriate resources and encouraging learners to reflect on their listening activities (Gilliland, 2015). Gilliland (2015) recommended learners maintain listening logs to document their participation in out-of-class activities and critically evaluate the impact on their listening abilities. To ensure the success of this approach, the following tenets concerning the what, how and why of learners' out-of-class listening should be considered (Gilliland, 2015). First, AL allows individuals to choose from a variety of authentic resources, making it an ideal time to engage in out-of-class activities related to their interests (Gilliland, 2015). Second, the principle of the "i minus one" level should be followed for maximum comprehension (Gilliland, 2015; Hulstijn, 2001, emphasis in original). As such, learners might interpret almost everything from listening texts without much effort (Vandergrift

& Goh, 2012). This might help generate motivation to continue listening at this level (Field, 2009; Gilliland, 2015). Third, learners were advised to regularly listen for a minimum duration and repeat certain listening texts multiple times (Gilliland, 2015). Repeated listening aided learners in internalizing speech vocabulary, and structure, and learning a new language, improving overall comprehension (Field, 2009; Vandergrift & Goh, 2012). Listening logs promoted autonomous learning in students, but they required teachers' support for online resource searching, metacognitive skill teaching, meaning-making, and breaking down repair strategies, as learners plan and implement these activities without teachers' guidance (Gilliland, 2015).

Kerekes (2015) highlighted the author's self-studying process for EFL beyond the classroom, which involved listening to English songs and lyrics, singing them, and translating them into their mother tongue, Hungarian. Utilising songs and lyrics to develop language learning is not new but Kerekes (2015) highlighted the significance of motivation in utilising songs and lyrics, stating that the author was self-motivated to improve her language skills while enjoying song translation. Kerekes' (2015) language skills development method encouraged learners to take responsibility for their out-of-class learning when the activities were enjoyable to them (Kerekes, 2015). Accordingly, this idea inspires further research to explore whether language learners are motivated to try this in different contexts and what criteria can be employed to describe the notion of "enjoyable" from the learners' perspectives.

Matsuda and Nouri (2020) suggested that classroom instruction can be improved by incorporating learners' language skills practice beyond the classroom. They emphasised the importance of informal writing practice, particularly in various situations like notes, signs, thank-you notes, messages in yearbooks, social media reviews, diaries, and journals, which can be used

for various purposes and enhance foreign language improvement. Informal writing is beneficial in foreign language settings where the target language is not the dominant one, as it promotes the meaning of writing activities (Matsuda & Nouri, 2020). Not only might Informal writing promote language and literacy development by offering learners diverse genres and objectives, but it also might impact communication with language class material (Matsuda & Nouri, 2020). So, it might be important to investigate if Vietnamese English learners can engage in similar activities independently to develop their English writing skills in an EFL context, as it might provide opportunities for general language and literacy development.

Instructors can enhance language learning beyond the classroom by having learners keep dialogue journals (Chiesa & Bailey, 2015). Dialogue journals are written communication between learners and instructors over a period of time (Peyton, 2000). The interaction between in-class and out-of-class learning allowed learners to express their feelings and ideas in a low-risk environment, receive feedback, produce output, and provide instructors with reflections on their lessons, thereby promoting their learning experience (Chiesa & Bailey, 2015). Dialogue journals were notable for their self-determination feature, where learners chose their topics of interest, allowing for efficient language skill development through learner-instructor collaboration, compared to learning alone (Chiesa & Bailey, 2015). The authors did not explicitly discuss the role of dialogue journals in facilitating language learning in out-of-class settings, so further investigation is needed to determine if this strategy promotes language learners' learning beyond the classroom in other EFL settings.

Long and Huang (2015) suggested that in mainland China, incorporating both in-class instruction and out-of-class pronunciation practice might lead to improved knowledge, motivation, and autonomy development for English learners, as classroom time might not be

sufficient for this purpose. They also suggested that instructors should gradually facilitate language learners' AL by teaching essential learning strategies, allowing them freedom, and encouraging peer assessment. Their study found that higher education level participants were not adequately prepared for out-of-class English pronunciation practice, despite being given the freedom to assess their classmates' pronunciation performance and assigned specific tasks for practice beyond the classroom, according to Long and Huang (2015). This, therefore, raises the question of whether higher education English learners in Vietnamese settings face (dis)similar problems and why such challenges are posed in Vietnamese settings.

Walters (2015) emphasised the effectiveness of promoting vocabulary notebook use among learners for effective learning and development in out-of-class settings. Although Fowle (2002) suggested that vocabulary notebooks can be of utility to promote language learner's AL since the learners can take charge or control their lexicon learning, several studies showed that this effect failed to be observed in their works (Vela & Rushidi, 2016; Walters & Bozkurt, 2009). One recent study on vocabulary notebooks in the Vietnamese context also reported no findings of a causal relationship, if any, between keeping vocabulary notebooks and promoting language learners' AL (Nguyen & Tran, 2019). One possible reason for this issue is that "some learners may not be motivated enough to keep and use a vocabulary notebook independently" (Walters, 2015, p. 30). Hence, it would be intriguing to investigate whether, why, what kinds and to what extent kinds of motivation can be plausible factors which can hamper language learners' vocabulary learning and if any, other aspects of language education beyond the classroom.

Utilising technology and the Internet. Researchers also explored the benefits of technology and the internet in enhancing language learning beyond the classroom, particularly in the context of English, as a widely used language on web-based platforms and learners "often

feel more comfortable using English than they do using it in the classroom" (Nunan & Richards, 2015, p. xiii). Furthermore, technology was widely favoured in language learning beyond the classroom as it might promote learners' ability to manage their learning (Lai, 2017). Technology might assist language learners with progress tracking, annotation tools for note-taking and thought documentation and pedagogical agents to provide them with language, culture, and strategy to learn the target language (Lai, 2017). Advanced technological inventions have redefined learners' autonomous learning capabilities in out-of-class settings, forcing them to make informed decisions based on valuable online resources, determine what to learn and use tools, and establish reciprocal relationships among available information for significant gain (Lai, 2017). Advanced technologies enhance autonomous language learning beyond the classroom by providing superior learning environments and redefining and introducing novel aspects of autonomous language learning (Lai, 2017). In the next section, I will critically review several studies on utilising advanced technological innovations to augment language learning beyond the classroom.

Coxhead and Bytheway (2015) advocated utilising TED Talks and large multiplayer online role-playing games (MMORPGs) to enhance learners' vocabulary outside the classroom. MMORPGs are online pleasure-oriented games where players simultaneously collaborate to accomplish cooperative missions and improve their game level (Chik, 2015; Coxhead & Bytheway, 2015). Thus, "gamers are motivated to learn the lexical items to advance their gameplay or enhance their gaming pleasure" (Chik, 2015, p. 81). TED videos and MMORPGs, while not specifically designed for language learning, offer constantly changing, highly motivating material (Coxhead & Bytheway, 2015). Both platforms are driven by listeners' or players' motivation, ensuring learners' attentiveness and commitment (Coxhead & Bytheway,

2015). Learners may be influenced by their addiction to games, deeming in-classroom vocabulary learning less meaningful than online engagement (Coxhead & Bytheway, 2015). The authors suggested that TED Talks and MMORPGs were highly motivated due to their opportunities for meaningful communication, and further research should explore the relationship between TED videos, language learners' AL, and language skills development.

Beatty (2015) argued that social media had significantly enhanced the language learning experience for foreign language learners in unilingual communities who could not directly interact with native speakers. do Carmo Righini (2015) highlighted the advantages of social media, such as blogs, voice-recording websites, and Facebook, in fostering authentic communication, promoting peer collaboration, and facilitating advanced learners' English language skills. do Carmo Righini's (2015) study on advanced English learners found that when learners were given autonomy, they could achieve genuine communication, cooperation, and autonomous learning, as demonstrated by five projects conducted over a year on blogs, Voxopop, and Facebook. Five projects reported different levels of autonomy, with some groups being teacher-created and others learner-initiated (do Carmo Righini, 2015). Successful projects involved more learners' communication and contribution, allowing them to determine the process, topics, and content produced (do Carmo Righini, 2015). Learners were provided with ample opportunities to enhance their English language communication skills in their chosen topics and their out-of-classroom settings (do Carmo Righini, 2015). Unsuccessful projects failed to develop advanced language learners' AL beyond the classroom due to technical issues or high task levels, which learners were not prepared for (do Carmo Righini, 2015). The author suggested that the success of social media in language education depended on both instructors' willingness to experiment with technology and learners' autonomy in controlling their

participation, as this will motivate them to actively participate in the projects. The projects involved advanced language learners, but further research might explore how other types of learners perceive this language improvement strategy, particularly in an era dominated by technology like WhatsApp, Facebook, Zalo, Viber, Twitter, and Instagram. Beatty (2015) also suggested exploring learners' perspectives on their desire to attend online language-learning programs and their reasons for their decision to do so.

The literature also revealed that social media, online language learning programs, and language exchange websites like Livemocha were recommended technological platforms for out-of-classroom learning (Kozar, 2015). Language exchange websites enable learners to connect with native or fluent speakers for authentic communication, promoting their language skills through real-life practice (Kozar, 2015). The author highlighted that while language exchange platforms might significantly facilitate language learning through meaningful interaction with language friends, some learners might lose motivation due to negative experiences they might have encountered on these digital platforms (Kozar, 2015). Further research should explore learners' perceptions of language exchange websites as a tool for target language development.

Email-mediated tandem language learning (e-mail tandem) was a learning strategy similar to language exchange websites (Sasaki, 2015). E-mail tandem was a web-based language learning initiative where two native speakers used their target language (L2) to discuss topics of their interest and provided assistance to the partner's L2 use by correcting errors and suggesting alternative expressions (Sasaki, 2015). Tandem partners potentially benefit both sides as they "bring their L1 knowledge and reciprocally support their partner's L2 learning" (Sasaki, 2015, p. 116). Although Sasaki (2015) argued that e-mail tandem is acknowledged to improve learners' AL, Appel and Mullen (2002) argued that as an effective tandem exchange requires the full

participation of both sides, it is vital to "have two highly motivated students paired together to maintain a successful exchange over time" (p. 200). Email tandem might promote learners' AL (Appel & Mullen, 2002; Sasaki, 2015), but successful tandem exchanges require full participation from both sides and highly motivated students (Appel & Mullen, 2002). Some tandem learning initiatives might lack the structure necessary to guide less autonomously motivated students towards AL, as noted by Appel & Mullen (2002). Considering AL in the sense of self-motivation and control over the learning process (Appel & Mullen, 2002), further research on tandem learning methods is needed to fully understand their potential in promoting language learning beyond the classroom.

Researchers are exploring the potential of digital games to assist in language education both within and beyond the classroom (Reinders, 2016). Knight et al, (2020) explored the potential of learner/player-directed activities in informal gaming spaces, which were gaming environments not directly tied to classroom achievement measures. They emphasised the connection between formal learning outcomes and learning environments beyond the classroom. The concept of informality was influenced by its final usage, not the original intent of game designers (Knight et al, 2020). For instance, The gaming space was formal if a game was used in a formal learning environment, while informal if it was designed for language learning and the player had complete control over its use (Knight et al, 2020). Informal gaming spaces are linked to learner-directedness, referring to the learner's ability to decide their place and actions within the gaming space (Knight et al, 2020). Few studies explored the impact of gameplay on language learning and its effects beyond the classroom, so it was crucial to consider learners' time spent communicating in the target language (Reinders, 2016). This may pose a question as to whether

Vietnamese learners of English engage in digital gaming for leisure and learning, and if so, how long and if it truly benefits them.

Vanderplank (2020) critically reviews the literature on captioned/subtitled videos and movies, which are widely recommended as input sources in informal language learning environments. Subtitled videos and movies translate the language of the video into an understandable language for the audience, while captioned ones use short textual pieces to represent the characters' words (Dressman, 2020). Both subtitled and captioned movies might aid language learning, but captioned videos were considered more effective (Vanderplank, 2020). Subtitles are useful when L2 captions are unavailable or learners are below their reading speed and knowledge threshold (Vanderplank, 2020). Captioned videos might facilitate phonological language learning by allowing foreign language viewers to follow and understand new non-subtitled programs and speakers, even if they do not fully understand them (Vanderplank, 2020). Few studies explored the effectiveness of video material for language learning beyond the classroom and how learners utilised audiovisual technologies in informal settings when they had a sense of control and selection (Vanderplank, 2020).

Ludke (2020) suggested that music and songs might help develop language skills in foreign language education, potentially promoting informal learning in various ways, based on a literature review and individual comments. Most learners enjoyed listening to music, and a hit single might trigger actions like searching the singer's profile, commenting on social media posts related to the song in a foreign language, repeatedly listening and singing the song, and disclosing the lyrics' meaning (Ludke, 2020). Repetitive activities in informal settings, driven by personal needs, might assist language learners in recognising and consolidating grammatical structures, as well as practicing the target language (Ludke, 2020). Further research is needed to

address unanswered questions about learners' motivation, engagement, plan, intent, and preferred music for language skills development (Ludke, 2020). This includes examining the types of music used by different learners in different settings and identifying the most effective methods for language skill development (Ludke, 2020).

Despite numerous studies providing valuable insights into how learners and teachers utilise technology for language learning beyond the classroom, researchers have not fully comprehended the impact of technological innovations on the type and quantity of learning they encourage (Reinders & Benson, 2017). Hence, further research is needed to explore how language learners employ technology and which dimension of their beyond-the-classroom learning they long to employ it for (Reinders & Benson, 2017).

Utilising television as an approach. Television was a popular technology strategy considered a practical approach for out-of-classroom learning (Curtis, 2015; Hanf, 2015; Lin & Siyanova-Chanturia, 2015; Nunan & Richards, 2015; Webb, 2015). Curtis (2015) provided a description of how the TV-animated movie series Pokémon can support young learners' learning beyond the classroom. Webb (2015) suggested that regular classroom-based viewings with instructor support might encourage language learners to pursue similar language learning methods beyond the classroom. The rise of smartphones, tablets, smart televisions, and internet TV enabled EFL learners to live in a language environment daily, with the ability to access internet television with just a few clicks on their digital devices. (Lin & Siyanova-Chanturia, 2015). Internet television is a unique learning activity that caters to learners of "*all* proficiency and motivation levels", unlike other learning activities beyond the classroom (Lin & Siyanova-Chanturia, 2015, p. 152, emphasis in original). Internet television and YouTube are widely available, but many learners may not know how to effectively use these resources for language

learning beyond the classroom, as noted by Lin & Siyanova-Chanturia (2015). Further research may explore whether EFL learners are motivated to use the positive features of YouTube to develop their language skills and justify their choices.

Learning via out-of-class projects. Another approach adopted to nurture language learning beyond the classroom is out-of-class project-based learning (Nunan & Richards, 2015). Grode and Stacy (2015) conducted a shadowing pronunciation exercise where learners transcribed, imitated, and reproduced native speech to match the original, with instructors and classmates providing feedback on their performance. This project emphasises a learner-centred approach, promoting AL by enabling learners to identify their specific issues and assess their progress (Grode & Stacy, 2015). Pontes and Shimazumi (2015) tasked higher-level learners with a collaborative project, requiring them to create a two-minute recording and upload it to their designated position on an online program called VoiceThread©. Instructors and classmates listened to recordings, record comments, reflections, and feedback, and uploaded them to a platform (Grode & Stacy, 2015). Learners then reproduced different versions based on these comments, incorporating relevant aspects from instructors and peers (Grode & Stacy, 2015). The out-of-classroom experience might be beneficial for learners who are willing to work autonomously and collaboratively, despite the negative comments they might receive during the project (Grode & Stacy, 2015). From a self-determination perspective and scrutinizing AL in the sense of self-motivation (Appel & Mullen, 2002), it is intriguing to inquire whether students are willing to participate in an out-of-class project.

Mercado (2015) introduced a new concept called literature-classroom and autonomous learning integration (CALI), aiming to combine classroom learning and AL. Mercado (2015) suggested that CALI might effectively support language learning when curriculum and

assessment systems prioritise student independence from classroom instruction. Instructors were required to engage learners in autonomous language learning projects, which might help develop their language skills and achieve their goals, but these projects might not be successful due to a lack of motivation (Mercado, 2015). In-class and out-of-class integration allowed for tasks to be completed by individuals or groups outside the classroom, but the final products had to be shared within the classroom environment to demonstrate learners' progress (Mercado, 2015). The implementation of CALI requires addressing criteria like curricula orientation, assessment approach, instructors' readiness, and learners' motivation, as these conditions are crucial for project success. This raises the question of whether these requirements influence language learners' AL beyond the classroom.

Miller and Hafner (2015) utilised a digital video project to integrate in-class and out-of-class learning in English science. Students recorded a ten-minute scientific experience and uploaded it to YouTube, with class discussions following each viewing (Miller & Hafner, 2015). The study indicated that allowing learners to create their digital scientific documentaries allowed them to spend significant time outside the classroom, fostering skills such as collaborative learning, autonomous learning, and language skills (Miller & Hafner, 2015). Learners were motivated to showcase their language skills, creativity, and overall outcomes in their videos, as they were aware that their videos would be viewed by real-life audiences who might share their comments publicly (Miller & Hafner, 2015). These learners seem to be extrinsically motivated to partake in this project, so whether or not extrinsic motivation is a potential factor influencing language learners' AL beyond the classroom.

Communicating with native speakers. Apart from out-of-class learning, technology use, and project-based learning, the literature also suggests that interacting with native speakers of the

target language might help develop language proficiency in learners. The literature suggests that strategies such as studying abroad, staying in language villages, trans-national educational experiences, talking to strangers, project-based learning, creating a target language community, and one-on-one tutoring can help learners promote their foreign language communicative competence beyond the classroom (Arnold & Fonseca-Mora, 2015; Barkhuizen, 2015; Cadd, 2015; Grau & Legutke, 2015; Macalister, 2015; Stanley, 2015; Thomson & Mori, 2015). These strategies provide learners with ample opportunities to communicate with native speakers and foster a target language community. Many EFL learners, particularly those from developing communities, find most of the methods mentioned above, except for communicating with strangers, infeasible due to financial, institutional, and possibly political factors. Thus, most EFL learners find interacting with strangers practical due to integrative motivation, which encourages them to seek opportunities to practice their target language outside the classroom (Stanley, 2015). Thus, it might be necessary to explore if integrative motivation is a potential factor encouraging learners to develop their language competence beyond the classroom in EFL contexts.

Language learning beyond the classroom in some Asian settings. Lai and Lyu (2020) studied informal language learning in Hong Kong, revealing that it was primarily other-initiated and examination-driven at the K-12 level, but self-initiated and interest-driven at higher education (Lai & Lyu, 2020). The learning process was amenable, pragmatic-oriented, and influenced by social power, particularly teachers, serving few societal functionalities (Lai & Lyu, 2020). For instance, watching English movies or engaging in authentic communication with international students on campus were more practical for learning English (Lai & Lyu, 2020). In Hong Kong, language learning beyond the classroom was significantly influenced by linguistic,

sociocultural, and educational settings, highlighting the dynamic relationship between learner agency, societal realities, and multilingual and multicultural environments (Lai & Lyu, 2020). This may pose a question as to whether or not this is the case in monolingual EFL (Lee, 2020) and mono-cultural contexts, namely Vietnam.

Lee (2020) explored the status of English in the Korean EFL context, the factors affecting English education, and the relationship between informal digital learning of English (IDLE) and learning outcomes. Lee (2020) highlighted that in Korea, a linguistically and ethnically homogenous society, English was learned in a monolingual environment with limited access beyond the classroom, resulting in collective behaviour. English was a compulsory subject for Korean learners to enter prestigious universities, aiming for a lucrative career and a higher social position after graduation (Lee, 2020). Korean parents were highly proud of their children's academic success, leading to a significant motivation among Korean EFL learners to study English for higher scores on high-stakes examinations in sociocultural environments (Lee, 2020). Ironically, despite significant government efforts, most learners exhibit poor communicative English skills, despite significant impact on English education throughout the country's development (Lee, 2020). Lee (2020) suggested that Korea's distinctive sociocultural and political aspects contributed to its low intrinsic motivation and proficiency in English among its learners. Despite the adoption of technology-based solutions to improve English language education in Korea, there was a lack of information on how Korean learners are using digital technology to study and practice English independently, thereby promoting their communicative competence (Lee, 2020). Given a somewhat similar scenario, similar research should be conducted in the Vietnamese context.

Learners' autonomous learning beyond the classroom

This topic of interest seems to draw the attention of multiple researchers in multiple settings, especially in Asian contexts including Hong Kong (Hyland, 2004; Lai, 2015; Yap, 1998), Indonesia (Lamb, 2004; Leatemia et al., 2016), Japan (Inomata, 2008), Taiwan (Chen, 2013; Guo, 2011; Hsieh & Hsieh, 2019), and Bangladesh (Ferdous, 2013). ALLBC is also being researched in Armenia (Sargsyan & Kurghinyan, 2016), Australia (Inaba, 2019) and Turkey (Haşimoğullar, 2017; Inozu et al., 2010; Orhon, 2018). Numerous methodological approaches including mixed-methods design (e.g. Hyland, 2004; Lamb, 2004; Leatemia et al., 2016; Sargsyan & Kurghinyan, 2016; Yap, 1998), ethnographic research (e.g. Inomata, 2008), quantitative research (e.g. Chen, 2013; Guo, 2011; Ferdous, 2013), and qualitative research (e.g. Hsieh & Hsieh, 2019; Lai, 2015) were of utility to collect data from various groups of participants including secondary school students (e.g. Yap, 1998), student teachers (e.g. Hyland, 2004), EFL undergraduates (e.g. Ferdous, 2013; Hsieh & Hsieh, 2019; Lai, 2015), and non-English majors (e.g. Chen, 2013; Leatemia et al., 2016).

Similar findings have been reported. Participants spent more time practicing receptive skills, such as listening and reading, than speaking (Hyland, 2004; Inozu et al., 2010; Yap, 1998). Factors such as enjoyment, usefulness, extrinsic motivation, a strong bond between teachers and students, and a sense of autonomy seemed to trigger learner engagement in out-of-class activities (Ferdous, 2013; Lamb, 2004; Yap, 1998). Factors such as nervousness, apprehension, negative attitude towards speaking English in public places, dislike of making mistakes, traditional teacher-centred approach, no native English speakers or English friends with whom to communicate, the difficulty of certain activities, limited opportunities to practise speaking within formal instruction, no idea how to practise speaking skills after the class, personal or personality

characteristics appeared to impede autonomous learning beyond the language classroom (Ferdous, 2013; Hyland, 2004; Orhon, 2018; Yap, 1998).

Autonomous learning research in the Vietnamese context

Attempting to seek published and/or accessible studies concentrating on AL in the Vietnamese context, 28 studies will be visually synthesised in Figures 2.3-2.9 and Table 2.1. As shown in Figure 2.3, among the AL studies in the Vietnamese context exploration focused on within-the-classroom AL, with five different approaches as classified by Benson (2001) and the majority concentrate on the learners, regarding the promotion of learners' AL in the classroom and understanding of learners' beliefs about AL. In comparing the preferred methodologies of these studies, mixed-methods and quantitative investigations seem to be preferred with only a small number of qualitative studies being found (see Figure 2.4). Regarding participants,[2] more English majors were invited than others since almost all Vietnamese AL researchers work as English instructors at higher education educational institutions throughout the country (see Figure 2.5). With reference to topics of interest, a variety of phenomena has been investigated. Learner-based research took more heed of learners' beliefs about AL and possible factors influencing learners' AL (see Figure 2.6). Classroom-based studies paid more attention to the understanding and facilitating of AL in the classroom (see Figure 2.7). Meanwhile, it seems justifiable that when more studies on teachers' understanding of AL were conducted in teacher-based AL inquiry (see Figure 2.8) and different phenomena were investigated in technology and

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[2] Both English and non-English majors study English at higher education level but non-English majors do not study much English in their official curriculum. Now, at the time of this writing, almost all of students are supposed to study from 7 to 10 credits, which can be divided into 2 or 3 courses designed in the 1st 2nd or 3rd semester of totally 8 terms (4 years). However, since almost all studies were conducted by Vietnamese researchers who are also English instructors at higher education institutions, it seems understandable they are more interested in English majors than non-English ones.

curriculum-based AL research, only a small number of studies would be reported in these areas (see Figure 2.9). Finally, with regard to the scale of the study, seven doctoral dissertations on AL, all of which were conducted by Vietnamese researchers whilst they were following overseas PhD programs, have been found (see Table 2.1).

Figure 2.3.

Classification of AL studies in the Vietnamese context according to approaches

Figure 2.4.

Classification of AL studies in the Vietnamese context according to the research methodology

Figure 2.5.

Classification of AL studies in the Vietnamese context according to participants

Participants

Category	Value
Teachers and students	4
Teachers	2
English majors	14
Non-English majors	4

Figure 2.6

Topics of interest in learner-based AL studies in the Vietnamese context

Learner-based approach

Category	Value
Learners' perceptions of AL	6
Factors impacting learners' AL	4
Factors predicting language learners' outcomes	1
Learners' AL practice	1
Project activating learners' AL	1
Strategies to facilitate leaners' AL	1

Figure 2.7

Topics of interest in classroom-based AL studies in the Vietnamese context

Classroom-based approach

Topic	Value
Relationship between AL and language learning outcomes	2
Interpretation of AL and AL facilitation	5

Figure 2.8

Topics of interest in teacher-based AL studies in the Vietnamese context

Teacher-based approach

Topic	Value
Teachers' beliefs of AL	3
Teachers' roles in AL facilitation	1
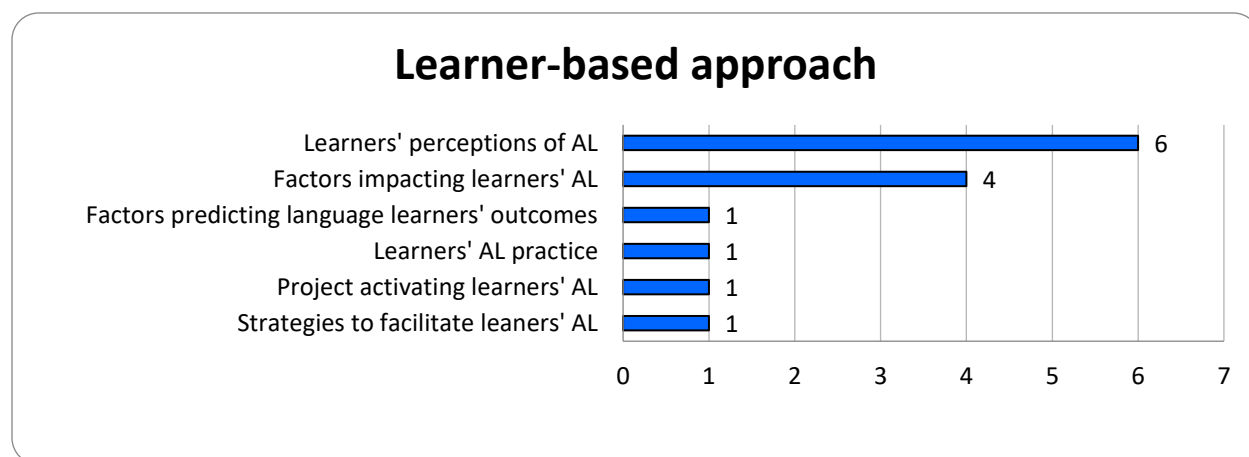
Figure 2.9

Topics of interest in technology and curriculum-based AL studies in the Vietnamese context

Technology and curriculum-based approaches

Table 2.1

Synthesis of accessible doctoral dissertations on AL in the Vietnamese context

	Methodology	Participants	Approaches*	Topics of interest
Trinh (2005)	Empirical experimental	9 EFL teachers and 100 English majors	Curriculum-based	EFL curriculum design to facilitate learners' AL
Nguyen (2009)	Mixed methods	656 English majors (interpreter, tour guide)	Classroom-based	Relationship between AL and language learning results
Dang (2012)	Mixed methods	562 non-English majors	Learner-based	Learners' perceptions of AL and their performance as autonomous learners
Le (2013)	Mixed methods	403 English majors	Learner-based	Learners' perceptions and practices of promoting AL in language learning
Nguyen (2014)	Mixed methods	202 EFL teachers	Teacher-based	Teachers' beliefs about AL and their actual instructional practice
Phan (2015)	Case study	115 English majors and 3 EFL teachers	Classroom-based	Interpretation of AL and appropriate pedagogy to foster AL in the classroom
Tran (2019)	Case study	3 EFL teachers and 16 non-English majors	Classroom-based	Potential factors in the assessment that facilitate or constrain the demonstration of learner autonomy

*(Benson, 2001)

Based on the abovementioned figures and table, it appears that Vietnamese researchers interested in autonomous learning focus their investigations on how to promote language learners' AL in classroom settings with diverse instructional techniques, and technologies.

Beyond-the-classroom autonomous learning research in the Vietnamese context

Vietnamese researchers have recently been exploring beyond-the-classroom AL research, focusing on the impact of assessment on learner autonomy, self-directed English listening skills, academic performance, students' beliefs and practices of learner autonomy, and how students study English both within and outside the classroom (Bui, 2016; Hoang et al., 2022; Nguyen & Stracke, 2021; Vu, 2015; Vu & Shah, 2016).

Their preliminary findings showed that assessment significantly influences students' learning (Vu, 2015), with some students not ready to self-direct their English listening skills (Vu & Shah, 2016). They require more teacher instruction to be self-directed (Vu & Shah, 2016). Other factors affecting self-study include lack of study time, guidance, a good learning environment, and appropriate materials (Bui, 2016). Students also lack motivation, attitude towards learning, and knowledge of selecting appropriate materials (Bui, 2016). For out-of-class learning, students actively create practice opportunities through part-time jobs, social activities, and hobbies, focusing on developing language skills rather than test scores (Nguyen & Stracke, 2021). Autonomous motivation was also found to sustain learning engagement beyond the classroom, transforming from external regulation to internal regulation (Hoang et al., 2022).

In general, almost all AL research undertaken in the Vietnamese setting appears to focus on AL promotion within the classroom. More information is needed about how, why and what Vietnamese learners of English have been doing beyond the classroom or what barriers they face in such engagements. Thus, a study on the factors (de)motivating English majors' AL

experiences beyond the language classroom in English language education in Vietnam may help us better understand this phenomenon. Results might allow for opportunities to introduce changes in instruction, assessment, and/or institutional policies to improve the quality of English language education in the country.

Theoretical-Interpretive Lens

In this section, four theoretical-interpretive lenses including self-determination theory, the L2 motivational system, self-determined learning theory and a sociocultural perspective are presented for the interpretation of the literature review and findings.

Self-determination theory

Liu, Wang and Ryan (2016) described the self-determination theory (SDT) as "a broad framework for the study of human motivation and personality" (p. 3). SDT is a theoretical framework that identifies intrinsic and extrinsic motivation sources and their roles in cognitive and social development, as well as individual differences (Liu et al., 2016). This framework is widely used to investigate factors influencing intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, psychological wellness, and other issues relevant to educational settings (Ryan & Deci, 2020).

Gao and Lamb (2011) emphasised the importance of motivation in autonomy research, suggesting that using SDT as a theoretical framework in autonomy research is relevant as it focuses on human motivation, development, and wellness (Krause et al., 2019). The literature indicates that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation suggest positive outcomes across a range of educational levels and cultural contexts (Ryan & Deci, 2020). SDT provides a solid theoretical foundation for understanding autonomous language learning beyond the classroom (Mynard & Shelton-Strong, 2022).

In SDT, motivation is classified according to the purposes or reasons for the actions (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000). There are two main categories of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2016; Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2017). Intrinsic motivation is a psychological concept that refers to people's motivation to act out of inherent interest or enjoyment (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2016; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Woodrow, 2017). Intrinsically motivated individuals also experience competence and self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2016). Intrinsic motivation is also called a state of self-motivation (Tanaka, 2017). For instance, a language learner puts her effort into learning since language acquisition is delightful "in and of itself" (Noels et al., 2019, p. 824).

Human actions are driven by organismic endeavours, where humans are active agents of their self-regulated and goal-directed actions to satisfy short- and long-term biological and psychological needs (Little et al., 2006; Wehmeyer & Little, 2013). Humans have a natural tendency to grow and learn by actively exploring and experimenting within their environments, which is elevated by manipulating things and uncovering new insights, deemed a power of learning (Deci & Ryan, 2016).

Hence, intrinsic motivation is crucial for education as it fosters high-quality learning and creativity, and identifying factors that demotivate it is essential (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Ryan and Deci (2000) noted that intrinsic motivation occurs when an individual engages in activities that evoke intrinsic interest, novelty, challenge, or aesthetic value. Play, exploration, and curiosity-driven activities are intrinsically motivated behaviours, offering doers satisfaction and joy without external constraints or external motives (Ryan & Deci, 2020). When students are intrinsically motivated, they might say, "That was fun"; "This was so interesting!"; or "I enjoyed

doing that" (Reeve et al., 2022). In sum, positive success, stimulating, and intellectual sentiments are the characteristics of intrinsic motivation (Davis, 2022).

Extrinsic motivation is driven by external factors such as pressures, rewards, outcomes, or separable consequences, rather than intrinsic satisfaction, such as learning a new language for employment purposes (Deci & Ryan, 2016; Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2020; Woodrow, 2017). External motivation is instrumental and indicates a willingness to engage in a task to achieve a goal (Woodrow, 2017).

In SDT, there are different types of extrinsic motivation categorised by the degree of autonomy including external regulation, introjection, identification and integration (Deci & Ryan, 2016; Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2020; Woodrow, 2017). External regulation is a form of extrinsic motivation that involves controlled actions to meet external requirements or achieve imposed outcomes, while introjected regulation refers to partially internalized behaviours or activities to enhance self-respect, value, or avoid shame or failure culpability. Both forms are less autonomous and non-autonomous (Deci & Ryan, 2016; Miquelon et al., 2017; Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2020). Introjected regulation refers to external impositions, such as national laws, that individuals observe to avoid guilt (Dörnyei, 2009). For instance, language learners often exhibit externally regulated behaviour, such as achieving course credits or receiving compliments (Noels et al., 1999). They may also exhibit introjected motivation, such as completing assignments to impress others with their proficiency or studying English vocabulary to avoid poor peer assessment, driven by introjected regulation (Noels et al., 1999; Tanaka, 2017).

A more autonomous or autonomously-enacted form of extrinsic motivation is identified regulation which refers to behaviours or activities performed because of their personal importance to the doers (Deci & Ryan, 2016; Miquelon et al., 2017; Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2020).

Identified regulation is connected to values an individual holds regarding an activity (Davis, 2022). Language learners' identified regulation, which is self-determined but "less so than integrated regulation", involves recognising the value of language learning (Noels et al., 2019, p. 823). Dörnyei (2009) argued that identified regulation occurs when people engage in activities like learning a language for hobbies or interest pursuits due to their value and usefulness. For example, language learners who appreciate cultural differences and the benefits of learning will persist in their language mastery, aiming to improve job performance or communication with target language speakers, as noted by Noels et al. (2019). Similarly, students in classrooms actively engage in lectures and assignments, as they believe these activities are crucial for their goals of attending college or pursuing a self-selected occupation (Brophy, 2004). In the literature on language learning motivation (L2 motivation), these learners may be described as instrumentally motivated (Dörnyei, 1990, 1994).

The most autonomous or the most self-determined form of extrinsic motivation is integrated regulation (Brophy, 2004; Dörnyei, 2009; Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2017, 2020). Integrated regulation occurs when motivation has been fully integrated within oneself (Anderson, 2017). Accordingly, self-examination involves understanding and assimilating external motivations into one's actions or behaviours, ensuring they align with personal beliefs, values, needs, and identity (Anderson, 2017; Dörnyei, 2009; Ryan & Deci, 2017). Individuals with high integrated motivation often perform actions based on their perceived value or as a part of their ego (Miquelon et al., 2017). For instance, a fluent language learner may inspire others by sharing their experiences, progress, and the personal, social, and professional benefits they have gained from language study (Levesque et al., 2010). Another learner may study English as English competence is part of an educated worldly-wise culture he/she has embraced (Dörnyei, 2009).

Integrated regulation, while sharing autonomous qualities with intrinsic motivation due to high volition, is extrinsic as actions are performed for the sake of presupposed instrumental value, with separate consequences (Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2020). That may explicate Dörnyei's (1994) argument that identified and integrated regulation can be categorised into instrumental language learning motivation. Learners, thus, may autonomously engage in learning since they view learning activities as gainful, even if unenjoyable (Ryan & Deci, 2020). In sum, learners are described as possessing "high-quality motivation when it is driven by intrinsic, integrated, or identified regulation and lower-quality motivation when it is driven by external or introjected regulation" (Guay et al., 2016, p. 84).

SDT identifies amotivation as a concept referring to a lack of intentionality or any form of motivation (Barkoukis et al., 2008; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, 2021; Ryan & Deci, 2020; Vallerand, 1997). Amotivation in classrooms can stem from a lack of perceived competence or a lack of value or interest (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Amotivated learners may seemingly have no specific aims and objectives for learning and indicate no intention to partake in a certain activity (Barkoukis et al., 2008; McInerney & Liem, 2022). Amotivated learners may be solely motivated by external expectations, leading to low-quality learning engagement and failure to overcome difficulties, as they may not be enthusiastically interested in learning (McInerney & Liem, 2022). Amotivation, also known as "learned helplessness," occurs when learners abandon their efforts due to beliefs of ineptitude and loss of management (Barkoukis et al., 2008, p. 40). Learned helplessness is a feeling where learners feel they cannot achieve their goals due to certain reasons, leading to a pessimistic and helpless feeling and they may question their reasons for doing something and question why they have to continue despite having good reasons for doing so (Dörnyei, 1994; Standage et al., 2003).

There are four types of amotivated demeanor; the perception of insufficient ability, the belief that planned activities will not yield desired results, the belief that the activity is too challenging, and the belief that substantial effort is insufficient (Barkoukis et al., 2008; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021; Vallerand, 1997). Amotivated learners are neither intrinsically nor extrinsically motivated, and their amotivation is a significant negative predictor of engagement, learning, and wellness (Ryan & Deci, 2020; Standage et al., 2003).

L2 motivation researchers have also explored demotivation, which refers to external forces that decrease the motivational basis of a behavioural intention or action (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). Although demotivation is related to amotivation, the two constructs may not be identical (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). Amotivation is linked to unrealistic expectations of outcomes, while demotivation is influenced by specific external factors (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). The external causes may concern either particular learning-related events and experiences such as performance anxiety, public humiliation, heavy work demands or poor test results or factors in the social learning environment such as the personality and attitude of the teacher or classroom countercultures and peer pressures (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). In other words, students have a certain level of motivation when they enter a classroom, but then something occurs that either temporarily or persistently diminishes these levels, which is a fundamental foundation for comprehending demotivation (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021). At the time of writing this dissertation, researchers (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021; Kikuchi, 2015) agree that demotivation is a negative process that decreases learners' motivation towards an action or behaviour, and demotivators can be internal or external.

Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) discussed the concept of "demotive," - the negative counterpart of motive, which increases an action tendency, while a demotive decreases it.

However, not all negative influences can be considered demotives. Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) offered three situations wherein three negative factors would not be considered demotives. The first one is a learner would rather watch a good film on TV than do his/her assignment (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). Watching a captivating movie can be a powerful distraction, but it does not necessarily diminish motivation towards the actions in progress, as it does not convey negative value (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). Second, a learner may lose his/her interest in a long-lasting, ongoing learning activity gradually (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). The gradual loss of interest in long-lasting, progressive performance is a gradual or unhurried event, not an incidental event (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). Third, a learner suddenly realizes that it is extremely expensive to attend a language course to improve communicative skills (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). Recognising the costs of activity differs from a proper demotivating incident as it may stem from internal thought rather than a specific external event (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). A learner's termination of a learning activity due to an external trigger, such as persuasion by an influential person, is considered a proper demotivating event (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). Demotivated individuals still have positive influences that motivate them, as some of these positive influences remain viable even after all negative ones have been eliminated (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). For instance, a learner who loses interest in Esperanto due to an insensitive teacher may still believe in Esperanto's significant role as a potential lingua franca globally (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). The concept of "pulling learners down" is crucial as not all negative factors necessarily have a negative effect and can be classified as demotivating (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021).

Motivation is crucial in second/foreign language learning, providing an initial incentive and helping maintain the long journey (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). Without strong motivation, learners may not achieve their long-term objectives, despite having outstanding abilities or

receiving proper instruction within an appropriate curriculum (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). High motivation can also be essential for those who lack natural aptitude or sufficient learning conditions, as it can be instrumental in helping them achieve their goals (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). Exploring language learners' learning both in and outside the classroom allows for a deeper examination of their authentic motivation to interpret their behaviours, aided by various tools like SDT.

In sum, SDT has been utilised as a theoretical framework in diverse domains of research such as education, work, leisure activities, and parenting, to name just a few (Vallerand et al., 2008). SDT is also a crucial motivational framework for various fields, including foreign and second language acquisition, focusing on why people do what they do and the energy they invest in it, as noted by Lou et al. (2018). Individuals who experience psychological freedom, autonomy, competence, affective and effective competence, closeness, love, and interaction with others are more motivated to actively grow and develop (Chiu, 2022; Kato, 2022). If their universal or inherent psychological needs are not met, they feel highly fragmented, isolated, and reactive (Chiu, 2022, p. S15). Ryan and Deci (2020) argued that more qualitative research using SDT is needed to provide a comprehensive understanding of experiences, practices, and motives, and to promote translational research for practical application. They also emphasised the need to situate SDT's application within the diverse forces affecting teachers and students both within and beyond the classroom. The current research explored how English majors engage in self-selected language learning activities outside the classroom, and why they may be (de)motivated to engage in these activities, using SDT as a suitable lens.

The L2 Motivational Self System

Dörnyei (2005) introduced The L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS) to explain language learners' motivation to study target languages, incorporating theories of self, identity, self-discrepancy, psychology, and L2 motivation (Csizér, 2019). The L2MSS is an L2 motivation notion made up of three components, namely the Ideal L2 Self, Ought-to L2 Self and L2 Learning Experience (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009; Woodrow, 2017). The Ideal L2 self refers to a language learner's motivation to study a language due to their imagination of becoming a fluent communicator (Csizér, 2019; Dörnyei, 2005, 2009; Woodrow, 2017). This motivator can be used to analyze language learners' motivation in various learning environments, particularly in EFL contexts where language is primarily taught in schools and centres (Dörnyei, 2005). The Ought-to L2 self refers to the qualities a language learner believes they should possess to meet external expectations, such as duties and obligations, and avoiding negative consequences (Csizér, 2019; Dörnyei, 2005, 2009; Woodrow, 2017). The L2 learning experience encompasses contextual motivators like instructors' influence, curriculum, peers' success experiences, and peer group pressure, which shape the immediate learning environment and experience (Csizér, 2019; Dörnyei, 2005, 2009; Woodrow, 2017).

Figure 2.10 illustrates a comprehensive overview of the various types of language learning motivation discussed previously.

Figure 2.10.

Different motivational representations of language learning

Self-determined learning theory or Heutagogy

Reinders and Benson (2017) suggested that research on language learning beyond the classroom emphasises the individual learner's role, so the current research advocated for heutagogy, a self-determined learning theory. Heutagogy (hyoo-tuh-goh-jee), a term derived from the Greek word heuriskein, was coined in 2000 by Hase and Kenyon to describe a student-centric instructional approach that places value on a learner's autonomy, capacity, and capability (Davis, 2018). According to Hase and Kenyon (2013), Kenyon "manipulated the Greek word for self, ηαυτος, and came up with the word heutagogy: the study of self-determined learning" (p. 21). Being developed from humanistic and constructivist perspectives and an extension to andragogy (teaching adult) (Ashton & Newman, 2006), heutagogy emphasises learners' responsibility for both how and what to learn, so learners are viewed as the principal contributor to the learning generated by their personal experiences (Agonács & Matos, 2019; Hase & Kenyon, 2000, 2007). Hence, heutagogy is an emerging holistic, learner-centred educational approach in both formal and informal settings, which is assumed to change and develop continuously (Agonács & Matos, 2019; Bhoyrub et al., 2010; Blaschke & Hase, 2016). Learners are at the heart of the learning process, which is the focus of self-determined learning (Hase, 2014). Learning is assumed to be inherent in the learners whilst instructors and numerous resources are only agents of the learning process as learners these days find it easy to access the available uncountable resources to enhance knowledge and sharpen skills in informal settings where most learning takes place (Hase, 2014).

Heutagogy is argued to be employed to explicate why, how and what the learners learn (Mithaug et al., 2003a). The *why* period of learning occurs as learners are occasioned by an incident intruding on their learning, which then ensues the *how* period wherein the learners

manipulate the incident by metamorphosing their anticipation, alternatives and actions, which entails the *what* period in which the learners adjust their conviction and criteria to respond to the incident (Mithaug et al., 2003a). As such, self-engagement is practised when learners find perfect opportunities to choose what to do and how to do it (Mithaug et al., 2003a). Learners are assumed to make different adjustments when they adjudge abnormal or unexpected circumstances "to be optimal for changing the situation in a desirable direction" (Mithaug, 2007, p. 8). The optimal opportunity to learn is presented when it is deemed *valuable* and *doable* by the learners (Mithaug, 2007, emphasis in original). It is valuable as the learners perceive that the desired outcome can be achieved by changing the situation and it is doable as the learners know how to carry out that transformation (Mithaug, 2007). Thus, it could be argued that the optimality of the opportunity to change unusual or unexpected events varies according to the learners' perceptions.

> When learners perceive them to be both valuable and doable, they are optimal for acting to produce a desirable result. But when learners perceive situations to be unimportant, difficult, or unimportant and difficult, they are suboptimal for taking action (Mithaug, 2007, p. 8).

Agonács and Matos (2019) reviewed the literature concentrating on the empirical findings of the implementation or application of heutagogy or self-determined learning in both formal and non-formal learning contexts and excluded theoretical writings, practical guides and research proposals. Some of their findings are visually presented in Figures 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17 below. It can be seen that although heutagogy is utilised in studies in diverse parts of the world, the number of studies conducted in Asian contexts seems rather limited (Figure 13). Regarding the context of the studies, the majority were conducted in a formal learning

environment and higher education educational institutions (Figures 14 and 15). Similarly, in terms of publication types, the majority of the reported studies were recorded in the format of articles or conference papers; PhD dissertations and MA theses on this topic seem scarce (Figure 16). In the same vein, few studies were conducted in the language learning area, although a diversity of research areas was reported (Figure 17). Thus, the current study attempts to fill in several gaps, concerning the geographic location (Vietnam), non-formal learning context (beyond the classroom), study context (higher education), publication types (dissertation), and scientific fields (English language education).

Figure 2.11

Geographic location of the reported studies
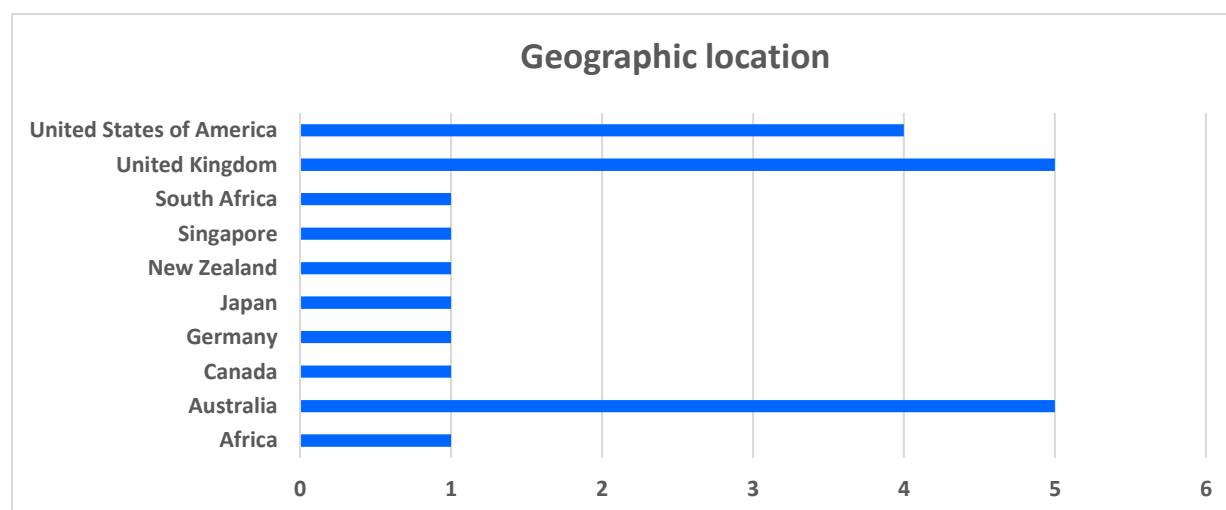
Figure 2.12

The learning environments of the reported studies

Learning contexts
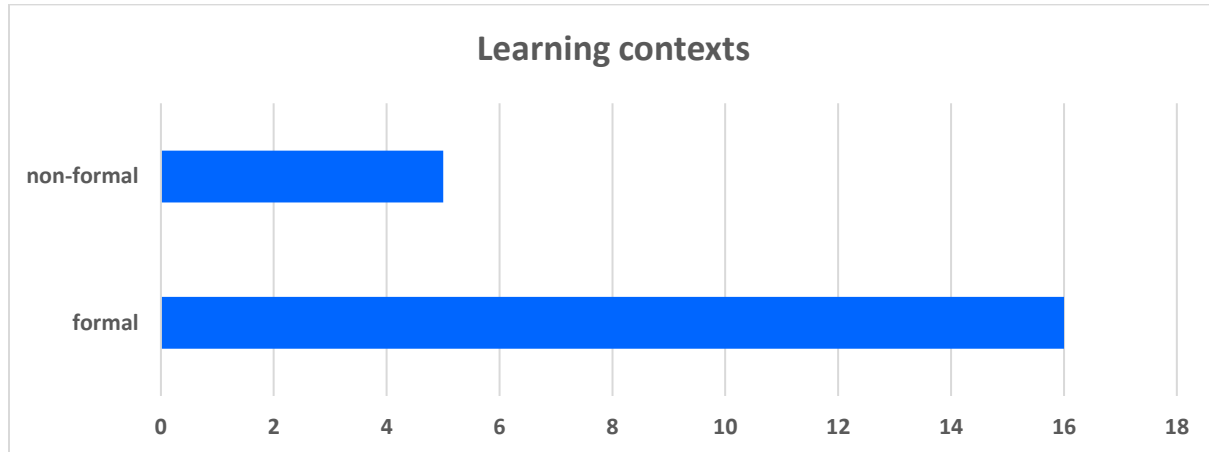
Figure 2.13

The research contexts of the reported studies

Scientific fields
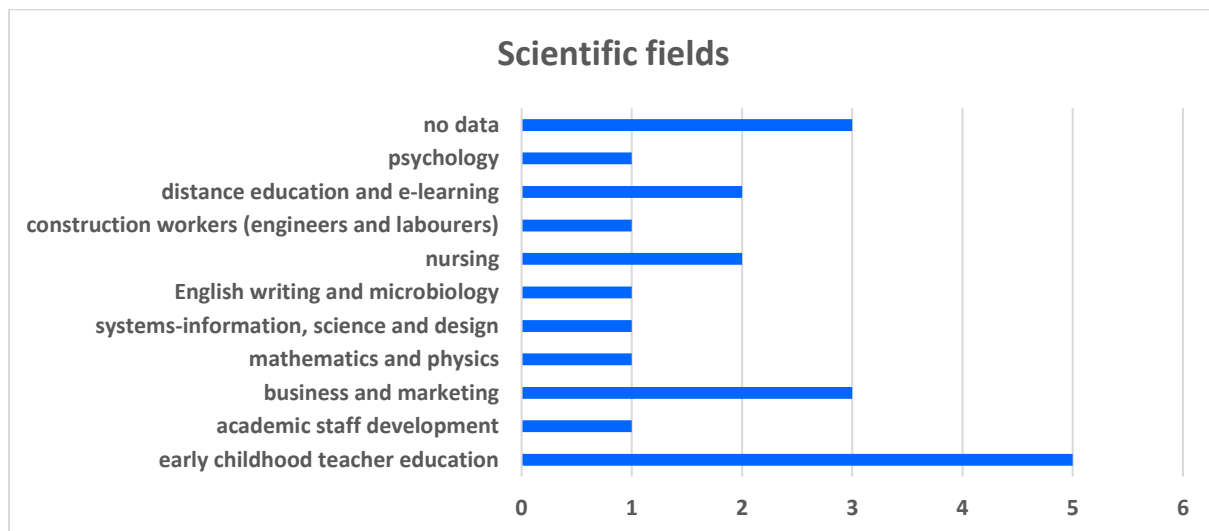
Figure 2.14

Types of publication
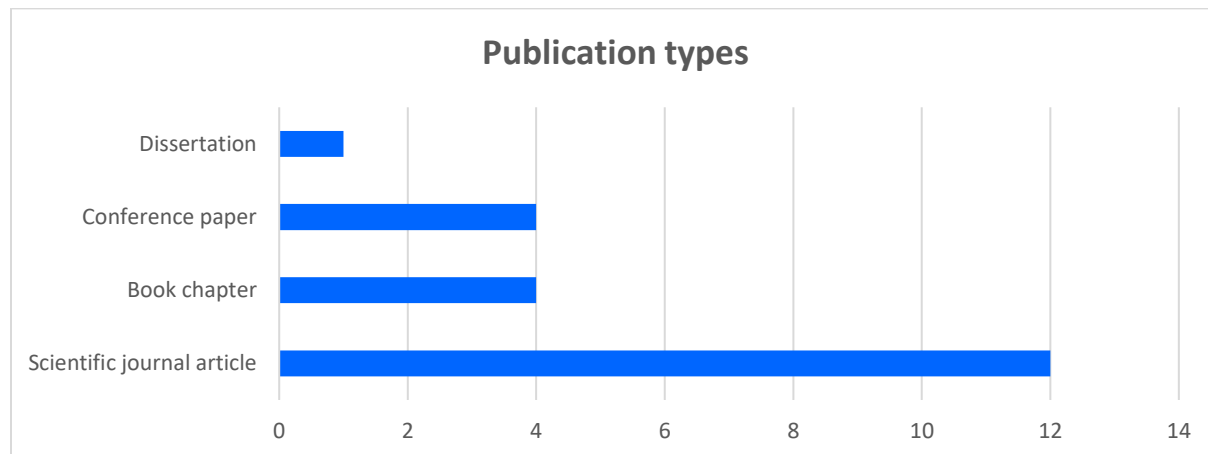
Figure 2.15

The fields of inquiry of the reported studies
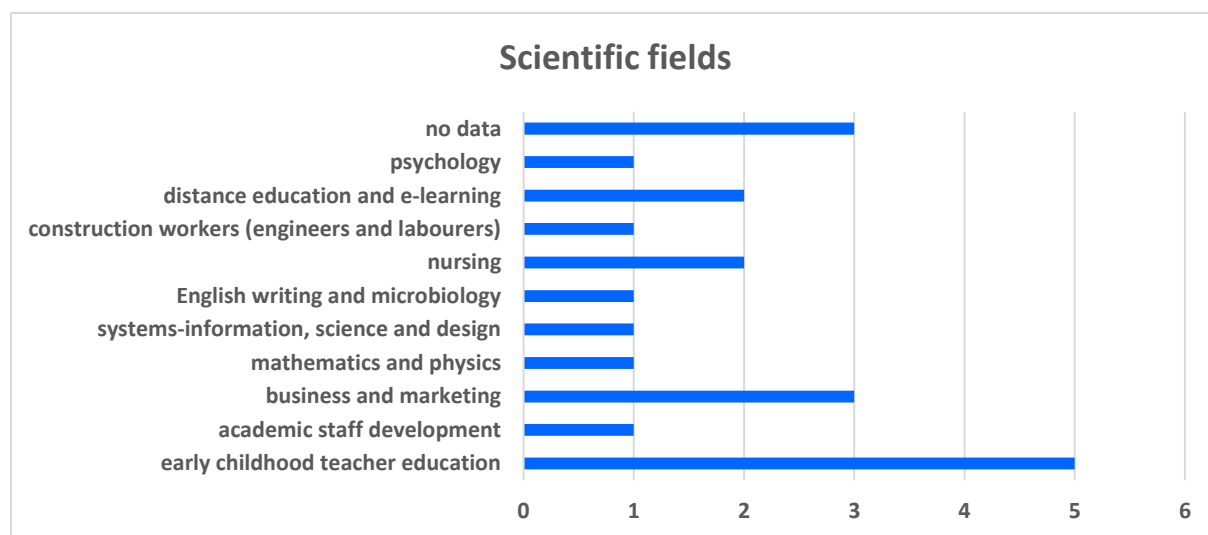
 The authors concluded that: only a small number of studies address some of the aspects of

heutagogy, namely capability development and non-linearity; the geographic and cultural

distribution of researchers and the selected population and sample size is rather limited; and there

are numerous studies conducted in online or mixed learning environments (Agonács & Matos,

2019).

Agonács and Matos (2019) found 172 publications that referred to heutagogy as a supporting theoretical framework or a suggested learning. Among them, only 21 empirical studies focus on the implementation or application of heutagogy or self-determined learning. Few heutagogy studies have been conducted within Asian contexts in general and the Vietnamese context in particular and/or concerning the theme of autonomous language learning beyond the classroom in those settings.

Hence, considering the relevance of heutagogy to adult education and non-formal contexts, and that learning is a dynamic, non-linear process intrinsic to the learners and occurs in numerous circumstances (Hase, 2014), heutagogy will shed light on what, why and to what extent English majors in Vietnam maximise their language learning in out-of-class settings. When learners view situations to be both valuable and doable, they are in the best position to act to achieve a desirable outcome (Mithaug, 2007). Furthermore, Benson (2012) maintained that autonomous language learners are supposed to determine the language learning content and "the content of language learning is related to the "why" of language learning: what the learner wants to do with the language, or more fundamentally, who the learner wants to become as a user of it" (p. 37).

Thus, self-determined learning theory appears to be a relevant tool for data interpretation in this study for the following reasons. First, heutagogy has been widely employed as a theoretical framework or an educational approach in many educational studies in the literature. Second, learning often occurs outside the classroom, and learners are most effective when they perceive situations as valuable and doable, enabling them to act accordingly (Hase, 2014; Mithaug, 2007), it is critical to utilise this theory to interpret language learners' autonomous learning beyond the classroom regarding how and why of their studying. Third, heutagogy

concentrates on the notion of human agency which assumes that learning is intrinsic to learners who may have the capability to determine why, how, when and what to learn (Hase, 2014), so it may be beneficial to employ this theory to cast light on the decisions, choices and actions of Vietnamese learners of English when they engage in English language learning beyond the classroom.

Sociocultural perspective

In addition to SDT, sociocultural theory is another lens planned to be of utility in the current research. Similar to the acquisition of a language, the development of AL is contingent upon social contact (Little, 2009). Numerous forms of sociocultural inquiry have been employed in diverse areas of research such as medicine, business management, linguistics, social work, and education (Schoen, 2011) and the term sociocultural theory is interpreted differently among these multiple research circles (Thorn, 2005). The label sociocultural perspective should be preferably utilised in this study.

Sociocultural theory alludes to a theoretical framework for understanding individuals' behaviour and learning in social surroundings (Schoen, 2011). Specifically, the focus of its attention is "how individual, social, and contextual issues impact human activity, especially learning and behaviour" (Schoen, 2011, p. 12). Sociocultural researchers explore the phenomenon of interest in its situated context holistically to uncover potential factors in multiple domains of human experience (individual, social, cultural), which may exert an impact on the issue (Schoen, 2011). Human learning occurring in different ways and different contexts (Pritchard, 2017) is impacted by both external forces and internal processes, which affect individuals' cognitive development, behaviour or actions (Schoen, 2011). Furthermore, based on an analysis of multiple works related to diverse sociocultural studies, Phan (2012) proposed a

hierarchical model portraying three distinctive but interrelated entities potentially impacting individuals' learning such as "the historical and cultural attributes of a society; individuals' families within a local community; and the individual in his/her surroundings" (p. 4). As such, historical origin within a social environment may be deemed a psychological tool to regulate individuals' thoughts and behaviour (Phan, 2012). Moreover, an individual's identity, which is culturally established and mediates his/her expectations for the future, is partly contingent upon social milieu (Phan, 2012). For instance, those who reside in technologically advanced communities may disclose a strong and coherent identity; nonetheless, those who face unfavourable drawbacks and uncertainties such as financial difficulties, social insecurities, and political unrest may adopt an oversimplified perspective upon the world and themselves (Phan, 2012). In addition, individuals' learning and growth may be, in part, influenced by the family within a society since a society may exert some positive and/or negative impact on the family (Phan, 2012). The family, in turn, may postulate that family members are compelled to observe a body of internal tenets, which may (dis)engage individuals in their learning (Phan, 2012). Additionally, the individuals are assumed to bear responsibility for their individualized learning in their environments since environmental contexts may establish a set of philosophical precepts which, "consequently, contextualize individuals to believe and to act accordingly" (Phan, 2012, p. 8). They, therefore, may adopt individualized perspectives upon learning and establish a motive for engagement (Phan, 2012).

Schoen (2011) contended that "the field of education is informed by research in multiple disciplines and schooling itself occurs in a nested socio-political environment, making a sociocultural perspective particularly relevant to those doing work in the field of education" (pp. 12-13). Hence, considering the educational practice in Vietnam, a sociocultural perspective is

utilised as a lens in this study to interpret the data about individuals' autonomous language

learning beyond the classroom through factors from three domains of human experience -

individual, social, and cultural.

Summary

This chapter provided information related to the research context and a critical review of

literature leading to the research focus and theoretical lenses of the study. The four theoretical

lenses are complementaty and together provide a more comprehensive understanding of the

autonomy of the learners and the social and cultural context influencing their learning motivation

and behaviours. The research methodology will be presented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The present chapter provides an overview of the methodological steps taken in approaching the problem of the study. It presents the study's research paradigm, research design, research methods, ethics issues, as well as the limitations and delimitations of the study.

This research aims to explore the factors (de)motivating the English majors' autonomous learning beyond the classroom at a public educational institution at the higher education level in Vietnam. Related to this aim are the following research questions:

1) How do English majors at a Vietnamese public higher education institution engage in autonomous language learning outside the class?

2) How do they utilise the resources and affordances at their disposal in their environments and how do they associate those resources with their classroom learning?

3) Why do they engage or disengage in autonomous language learning outside the class?

4) What factors (de)motivate their autonomous language learning outside the class?

To achieve the aims of the current research, an interpretive investigation both emphasising qualitative nuances and having quantitative elements to data collection (Hackley, 2020) was selected. The goal is to explore language learners' AL beyond the classroom in the Vietnamese context, without presuming what will be found (Hackley, 2020).

Qualitative research

According to Erickson (2018), in Latin, "qualitas refers to a primary focus on the qualities, the features, of entities—to distinctions in kind—while the contrasting term, quantitas, refers to a primary focus on differences in amount" (p. 87). Thus, a qualitative inquiry "identifies

meaning-relevant kinds of things in the world—kinds of people, kinds of actions, kinds of beliefs and interests—focusing on differences in forms of things that make a difference for meaning" (Erickson, 2018, p. 87).

The prime purpose of qualitative research is to better understand a phenomenon via the participants' direct experiences of the phenomenon and to value the participants' peculiar points of view which can only be fully interpreted within their context and from their standpoint (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). Qualitative researchers attempt to explore and accurately narrate what participants do in their daily lives and what their activities mean to them (Erickson, 2018). They, therefore, primarily heed the question, "What are the kinds of things (material and symbolic) to which people in this setting orient as they conduct everyday life?" (Erickson, 2018, p. 87). Investigating things in natural settings, qualitative investigators essay to interpret things concerning the meanings participants bring to those things (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Yin, 2011). Qualitative inquiry, therefore, is also naturalistic inquiry since the research is conducted in real-world surroundings and researchers do not attempt to manoeuvre the phenomenon (Patton, 2002). The participants will be acting in their daily capacity or articulating what they long to voice beyond only "responding to a researcher's pre-established questionnaire" (Yin, 2011, p. 8). Accordingly, the qualitative investigation can capture participants' viewpoints and represent the meanings participants offer to real-world phenomena, not the researchers' beliefs or predispositions (Yin, 2011).

The nature of the qualitative investigation is inductive and researchers are compelled to ensure that "a research environment … is trusting, balanced, and ethical with all parties respecting the opinions and participation of others" (Terrell, 2016, p. 69). Since qualitative researchers are required to actively toil to interpret, generate or construct knowledge or insights,

close work with the participants to disclose meaning or formulate theories is required (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018; Terrell, 2016).

Qualitative inquirers are also deemed "interpretive" researchers who attempt to offer a personal detailed account which "fits the situation or themes that capture the major categories of information" (Creswell, 2012, p. 238). Hence, numerous researchers will make diverse interpretations of the same transcript and no interpretation is better or more precise simply as different researchers bring their viewpoints to their interpretations (Creswell, 2012).

Research paradigm

"A paradigm is a comprehensive belief system, world view, or framework that guides research and practice in a field" (Willis, 2007, p. 8) and qualitative research is predominantly situated in an interpretive stance, which presumes that no single, observable reality exists out there (Merriam, 2009). Instead, there is a possibility of multiple realities or understandings of a single phenomenon and reality is socially constructed through language and interaction (Ling & Ling, 2017; Merriam, 2009; Tracy, 2013). According to Willis (2007), interpretive researchers assert that all studies are under the influence of the researchers' world views and the terminology, procedures, and data all have meaning because a research community has shared that meaning. "Research is thus a socially constructed activity, and the "reality" it tells us about therefore is also socially constructed" (Willis, 2007, p. 96). Bhatacherjee (2012) maintains that,

Interpretive research is a research paradigm that is based on the assumption that social reality is not singular or objective, but is rather shaped by human experiences and social contexts (ontology), and is, therefore, best studied within its socio-historic context by reconciling the subjective interpretations of its various participants (epistemology). (p. 103)

Since social reality is deemed plural or multiple, I adopt a stance that "there is no true meaning of an event; there is only the event as experienced or interpreted by people" (Stake, 2010, p. 66). Since an event is interpreted differently by different people, a deeper understanding of a phenomenon can be acquired by multiple interpretations (Stake, 2010). Moreover, pursuing an interpretive approach in designing and conducting my study, I seek to gain the perspectives of diverse participants and to elucidate higher education students' AL in the Vietnamese context (Yin, 2018).

Utilising understanding as an approach, interpretive researchers seek to perceive the social reality via the lens of the participants since they take cognizance of the intentional attribute of human behaviour or actions spurred on by their interpretations (Cohen et al., 2018). Furthermore, since participants interpret the social world within specific socio-cultural, socio-temporal and socio-spatial settings, interpretive investigators are compelled to renounce their presuppositions about participants, cultures and surroundings and interpret the phenomenon of interest in its situated context (Cohen et al., 2018). An interpretive inquiry is, hence, exploratory in nature. It explores and interprets the attitudes, behaviours and interactions made by the participants toward the topic (Cohen et al., 2018). Hence, to gather data and build a theory or develop knowledge, interpretive researchers must concede the possible relationships between researchers and participants (Nuttavuthisit, 2019). The participants might "be involved in guiding the research process, providing information and suggesting analyses while the researcher becomes part of the social reality", so "a researcher must be able to continuously adapt in order to attain emerging knowledge" (Nuttavuthisit, 2019, p. 10).

Interpretive analysis

According to interpretivism, the focus of the investigation is on how people make sense of the world (White & Cooper, 2022). Realities are socially constructed, according to the interpretative approach and the interpreter, so the goal of the study is to advance understanding rather than to pinpoint universal truths (White & Cooper, 2022). Bhatacherjee (2012) contends that to analyse the data, interpretive researchers employ a holistic and contextual approach and focus on the participants' perspectives concerning language, signs, and meanings related to the phenomenon of interest. Since a holistic approach deems the whole "a complex system that is greater than the sum of its parts", the researcher's goal is to search for "the totality or unifying nature of particular settings" (Patton, 2002, p. 59). Furthermore, qualitative researchers perpetuate natural settings to interpret such contextual conditions as the society, institution, and environment which may strongly impact the participants' actions, activities or behaviours (Patton, 2002; Yin, 2011). Additionally, within interpretive research, data collection and data analysis constitute concurrent and iterative processes as coincident analysis can assist the researchers in identifying potential drawbacks of the interview protocols to modify or even alter certain original research questions (Bhatacherjee, 2012; Creswell, 2012). As such, other previously collected information is being analysed to seek major ideas whilst data are being collected and the researchers might move back and forth between data collection and analysis for more information to "fill in gaps" in participants' stories (Creswell, 2012, p. 238).

Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher is one of the unique characteristics of qualitative research (Roger et al., 2018). The researchers are compelled to adopt a "neutral" or unbiased standpoint during the process of collecting and analysing data and ensure that their personal biases or presumptions should not defile the nature of subjective interpretation in interpretive inquiry

(Bhatacherjee, 2012). In addition to meticulous design and triangulation, another strategy for confronting bias is explicating the whole process of conducting research as explicitly as possible (Stake, 2010). As such, terminology and operational definitions should be offered; data collection tools and data gathering should be tried out in advance to seek critical review for modification and improvement (Stake, 2010). The ultimate goal is to help the audience see the biases the researchers have been tackling (Stake, 2010).

Furthermore, I am aware of the possibility of multiple interpretations of the same events owing to emic and etic perspectives (Yin, 2011). An emic perspective refers to the insiders' or participants' view and an etic perspective refers to the external or outsider's view, typically the researchers' point of view (Franklin, 2009; Yin, 2011). Acknowledging this fact, I attempt to offer a detailed descriptive account of the topic of interest and assure that more will be done to minimise the imposition of my etic interpretation as a researcher onto participants' emic interpretation (Yin, 2011, 2018). Nonetheless, whatever I do, my role as a research instrument for collecting data cannot be denied, and as a human being, I possess my human personality, so following Yin's (2011) suggestion, I deem "the emic-etic distinction and the possibility of multiple interpretations of the same events an opportunity, not a constraint" (p. 13) to conduct the current research. Hence, I may "slide along more than one insider-outsider continuum, and in both directions, during the research process" (Hellawell, 2006, p. 489). I may "simultaneously be to some extent an insider and to some extent an outsider" (Hellawell, 2006, p. 490). As an English instructor, I may be deemed an insider to the extent that I will be interviewing English instructors, departmental administrators and/or institutional managers, who have been working in the educational sector, in Vietnamese, which is also our native language, but I may be considered

an outsider to the extent that I will be interviewing students whom I do not know (Van

Marsenille, 2015).

Research Design

Research design constitutes the basic structure of a research project and a plan for

implementing an investigation (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012). To design a research project,

researchers are compelled to review their ontological and epistemological presuppositions

(Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012). Hence, considering the abovementioned ontological,

axiological, and epistemological assumptions, an interpretive research design was utilised in the

current research. First, I posit that there are potentially multiple, intersubjective social realities in

the outside world (Bhatacherjee, 2012; Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012) and "human knowledge

is developed, transmitted and maintained in social situations" (Berger & Luckmann, 1967, p. 15).

Social reality, accordingly, should be studied within its socio-cultural and historical settings by

seeking the multiple participants' subjective interpretations of the matter investigated

(Bhatacherjee, 2012; Ling & Ling, 2017). The findings of the research, consequently, are an

interpretation as a perspective formed in a social setting (Ling & Ling, 2017). Hence, the

possible relationships and interactions between the researcher and the participants are of

paramount importance in understanding human experience (Nuttavuthisit, 2019).

Specifically, the current study's research design was characterised by the following

features. This study involved a multimethod approach, combining specific data collection and

analysis techniques within a single research project (Hunter & Brewer, 2015; Seawright, 2016).

Both qualitative and quantitative data gathering and analysis were also employed together to

achieve the goals of both breadth and depth of understanding (Johnson et al., 2007). This study

was also qualitatively driven as the core component of the data was qualitative (Morse &

Niehaus, 2009). Furthermore, this study adopted a sequential data collection approach. As such, survey data were gathered initially, followed by solicited diary and semi-structured interviews. In addition, combining qualitative and quantitative research methods to maximise the sample size through participant recruitment was a way of participant enrichment (Collins et al., 2006).

Furthermore, although qualitative data are used in the majority of interpretive investigations, quantitative data may also provide data for interpretation of the phenomenon explored. Thus both qualitative and quantitative data can be collected (Bhatacherjee, 2012). Moreover, data can be collected by numerous techniques and data analysis can be concurrently and repetitively conducted by interpretive researchers so that possible well-timed adjustments can be performed to explore the event thoroughly (Bhatacherjee, 2012).

Finally, since interpretive investigation design is apropos for investigating context-specific or distinct phenomena of interest (Bhatacherjee, 2012), it seems to be appropriate for a study exploring the factors (de)motivating learners' AL beyond the classroom in the Vietnamese context. As such, this study could be an important investigation into language learners' AL beyond the classroom at a higher education institution in the Mekong River Delta of Vietnam. To uncover factors which (de)motivate language learners' AL beyond the classroom, I had to develop trustful relationships with participants, namely students, instructors and managers. I interacted with them to understand more about language learners' learning behaviours beyond the classroom. As an interpretive researcher, I conducted this investigation through a holistic and contextual approach by interpreting the meanings the participants assigned to the topic in the specific Vietnamese context. Thus, a subjective and reflexive manner was adopted. Also, I attempted to provide a thick descriptive account of what was done to assure the credibility of my interpretive research.

Context and participant selection

Bhatacherjee (2012) states that interpretive researchers utilize a theoretical sampling approach to locate participants who "fit the phenomenon being studied, whether [or not] they possess certain characteristics that make them uniquely suited for the study" (p. 104). Considering the aim of the current study, participants were English majors, English instructors, administrators and institutional managers at a public HEI offering English language education in Vietnam.

Context is deemed paramount in research investigating language learning beyond the classroom (Hyland, 2004). The location of the study is a higher education institution training English majors in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam. Student participants in this study were second-year and third-year English majors taught by Vietnamese lecturers of English at this institution. Twenty-three English majors (7 in the third year and 16 in the second year) participated in this study. Additionally, ten staff participants (two institutional managers, four administrators, and four English instructors) agreed to participate. All the participants in this study were volunteers and they all signed ethics-approved consent forms. There was no relationship between myself and the students in this study, for I have not been working in Vietnam since September 2018. However, the English instructors, administrators and institutional managers in the current research were individuals whom I know, for I have been working in the educational sector in this province since 2001.

 Bhatacherjee (2012) notes that convenience samples and small samples are deemed acceptable in the interpretive study should they concur with the nature and aim of the study. To recruit participants for the current research, the purposeful sampling technique was utilised. I selected participants from whom I could gain the most insight (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). My

selection criterion was English majors, English instructors and some administrator volunteers, student participants having at least one year experience of studying at this institution, and willingness to offer precise and sufficient answers to my questions (Bhatacherjee, 2012).

Data collection tools

Since learning beyond the classroom occurs in a multitude of both public and private venues and learners at times may not notice such learning contexts they are partaking in, an amalgamation of data collection tools was utilised (Reinders & Benson, 2017). The main data collection tools employed were a survey administered to students, instructors, administrators and institutional managers, a daily activities diary completed by students, and semi-structured interviews with students, instructors of English and administrators. The collection of multiple sources of data offers a more accurate and comprehensive picture of language learners' learning beyond the classroom walls (Lee, 2022). Hence, the use of mixed-methods research designs involving both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques provided a promising approach for investigating language learning beyond the classroom (Peters, 2022).

Survey

Bhatacherjee (2012) advocates collecting both qualitative and quantitative data to produce a more accurate and obvious understanding of the matter investigated within interpretive research. Furthermore, Reinders and Benson (2017) state that beyond-the-classroom research should employ a survey as a data collection instrument to understand in what kinds of contexts learning occurs. Accordingly, to strengthen confidence in the findings through triangulation, a survey was utilised to explore the realities of autonomous learning conducted by English majors in out-of-class settings. In this way, a broad picture of students' AL activities was painted and could be utilised for comparing and contrasting later in the data analysis process.

Questionnaire design and pre-test. To examine how the English majors have practised English beyond the classroom, two versions of an online Google-form questionnaire in English were submitted for ethics approval (see Appendices F and G). A student questionnaire with seventeen items and a staff questionnaire with eleven items were designed to examine different aspects of ALLBC, as brought to light in the literature review. These included:

- the conceptualisation of language learning beyond the classroom (Benson, 2011; Reinders & Benson, 2017);

- settings for language learning beyond the classroom (Lai, 2015b; Lamb, 2004; Reinders & Benson, 2017; van Lier, 2004);

- language learners' engagement in learning beyond the classroom (Chiesa & Bailey, 2015; Day & Robb, 2015; Fowle, 2002; Gilliland, 2015; Kerekes, 2015; Long & Huang, 2015; Matsuda & Nouri, 2020; Nguyen & Tran, 2019; Nunan & Richards, 2015; Vela & Rushidi, 2016; Walters, 2015; Walters & Bozkurt, 2009);

- learners' use of technology and the internet (Appel & Mullen, 2002; Beatty, 2015; Chik, 2015; Coxhead & Bytheway, 2015; Curtis, 2015; do Carmo Righini, 2015; Dressman, 2020; Hanf, 2015; Knight et al., 2020; Kozar, 2015; Lai, 2017; Lin & Siyanova-Chanturia, 2015; Ludke, 2020; Nunan & Richards, 2015; Reinders, 2016; Sasaki, 2015; Vanderplank, 2020, Webb, 2015);

- communication with native speakers (Arnold & Fonseca-Mora, 2015; Barkhuizen, 2015; Cadd, 2015; Grau & Legutke, 2015; Macalister, 2015; Stanley, 2015; Thomson & Mori, 2015); and

- factors impacting language learners' AL beyond the classroom (C. T. Nguyen, 2011; Chen, 2013; Ferdous, 2013; Guo, 2011; Haşimoğullar, 2017; Hsieh & Hsieh, 2019;

Hyland, 2004; Inomata, 2008; Inozu et al., 2010; Lai, 2015b; Lamb, 2004; Leatemia et al., 2016; Moncrief, 2011; Nunan, 1988; Orhon, 2018; Sargsyan & Kurghinyan, 2016; Tran, 2019; Tran & Duong, 2018; Vu, 2015; Yap, 1998).

The students were requested to give their responses to both open- and closed-ended questions about their use or practice of English beyond the classroom, more specifically with whom, where, when, why, and their frequency of use of English. In addition to frequency, venues, activities, sources, and reasons, they were also asked if their English instructors offered any guidance or recommendations as to how to use English beyond the classroom, which (if any) resources helped them prepare for tests and examinations, what role technology played in their practice and the reason(s) for studying English as a major at college. They were also asked to complete a self-assessment as to their levels of confidence in English and English learning beyond the classroom, and motivations for ALLBC. The student questionnaire also collected demographic data (years of studying at college, gender, years of studying English) and invited students to partake in keeping a diary of their daily activities in the English language and in participating in two semi-structured interviews in the Vietnamese language.

Similarly, the staff were requested to give their responses to both open- and closed-ended questions concerning English majors' English practice beyond the classroom (their frequency, venues, activities, sources, reasons, English instructors' guidance and recommendations, preparation for tests and examinations, use of technology) and (de)motivations for learners' autonomous learning beyond the classroom. The staff questionnaire also collected demographic data (title at workplace, years of working at the institution, gender) and invited staff to participate in two semi-structured interviews in the Vietnamese language.

Both versions of the questionnaire were pilot-tested and revised twice. The first drafts of the two versions were sent to five students from different countries including Colombia, Thailand, Nigeria, China, and Egypt at the University of Alberta for their feedback and comments concerning grammar, lexicon, clarity and any ambiguity or confusion the EFL participants might encounter when completing the questionnaires. Eventually, four doctoral students from Colombia, Thailand, Nigeria, and Egypt offered their feedback. Their feedback and comments are presented in Appendix A.

The revised questionnaires were then sent to an English language centre in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam to be pilot-tested with English teachers, who were all Vietnamese citizens. Some had just graduated from colleges or universities in the local area, and their English language skills, as commented by the Director of the English language centre, would be similar to those of the potential student participants. Therefore, should those English teachers not encounter any difficulties, it could be considered appropriate for the target student participants. Finally, five EFL Vietnamese teachers finished both questionnaires and offered their comments to make the questionnaires clearer and more understandable. Those comments are synthesised in Appendix A.

Likewise, those comments and suggestions were all carefully reviewed and often accepted. The item "Are you confident with your English" was retained because understanding the level of learners' self-confidence in their English was deemed to help understand their (dis)engagement in ALLBC.

Furthermore, before being administered to two groups of students at a HEI (second-year and third-year) via Zalo, a popularly used social media application in Vietnam, the student questionnaire in English was reviewed by the research assistant, also an English instructor, who

then suggested that the student questionnaire should be bilingual (English-Vietnamese) in order to ease the understanding of the student participants who might have more limited English language skills. Accordingly, I translated the student questionnaire into Vietnamese, asked her for comments and feedback, and then had the bilingual version verified by an EFL Vietnamese instructor who was also a doctoral graduate of the University of Alberta. Therefore, the Google form of the student questionnaire was bilingual (English -Vietnamese), while that of the staff was only in English since they had a higher level of English proficiency.

Questionnaire administration. After gaining Ethics Approval from the University of Alberta, I shared the link to the staff questionnaire with the staff members via emails and Zalo to invite them to partake in the. The link to the student bilingual (English - Vietnamese) Google form questionnaire was sent to a research assistant who shared it with students in two Zalo chat groups (one of the second-year students and one of the third-year students). Both of the questionnaires remained accessible until the end of June 2021.

Students' daily activity diaries

Although journals and diaries have been employed in beyond-the-classroom language learning research, "often these have been investigations of the researcher's own learning" (Hyland, 2004, p. 182). Bailey's (2022) review indicated that the number of beyond-the-classroom language learning research studies that employed diaries by research authors or co-authors and "language learners who were themselves language teachers and/or linguists" (p. 359) outweighed those utilising diaries recorded by normal language learners, who were not the researcher-authors. Since diary entries and experiences of language-learner researcher-authors may differ from those of more typical learners (Bailey, 2022), the diaries in the current research were used to record typical language learners' daily activities outside the class.

What are solicited diaries? Since at least the late 1970s, researchers studying language learning and instruction have used diaries kept by both teachers and students as a data-gathering technique (Bailey, 2022). It is a research tool that encourages diarists to reflect on their feelings, ideas, activities, experiences, and behaviours (Alaszewski, 2021; Bartlett & Milligan, 2015; Hyers, 2018; Meth, 2017; Milligan & Bartlett, 2019). "Being a source of insight into the learners' experiences" (Bailey, 2022, p. 354), it is designed to better understand a diarist's thoughts, feelings, actions, experiences and behaviours around a specific topic of interest over time (Cao & Henderson, 2021; Milligan & Bartlett, 2019). The diary entries offer researchers a glimpse of the diarists' subjective points of view, including their feelings, what they are trying to accomplish, and the degree of success they believe they are achieving (Bailey, 2022). Unlike unsolicited diaries voluntarily kept by diarists, solicited diaries are intentionally created by diarists who are solicited to do that for a specific research purpose (Cao & Henderson, 2021; Milligan & Bartlett, 2019). Reviewing the literature, Cao and Henderson (2021) define solicited diaries as "records of researched phenomena, produced under researchers' guidance, based on events or recorded at regular intervals, which records in essence contain participants' perceptions and reflections on their experiences" (p. 4).

Why were solicited diaries used? Due to the following reasons, solicited diaries were selected as a tool for data collection for this current study. Firstly, Benson (2001) contends that out-of-class language learning researchers should have participants "keep journals in which they describe activities and their feelings about them" (p. 203) and facts from ongoing events in everyday life are favoured to those of a recounted report (Levesque, 2018; Milligan & Bartlett, 2019). Secondly, depending on the research topic and available resources, the somewhat inconspicuous period of data gathering may be extended (Hyers, 2018; Meth, 2017; Milligan &

Bartlett, 2019). Thirdly, diary approaches deepen researchers' awareness of all facets of human existence by capturing particularly delicate, challenging, or impossible-to-observe behaviours, events, or activities in intimate and private contexts (Alaszewski, 2021; Hyers, 2018; Meth, 2017; Milligan & Bartlett, 2019). Fourthly, keeping a diary can help to lessen recall bias issues, which can distort the documentation of numerical data gathered at a specific point following the occurrence of the events (Bartlett & Milligan, 2015). Several studies in the literature also used solicited diaries as a method for gathering information. For instance, in one study on learners' out-of-class language learning activities, Hyland (2004) asked the participants (eight student teachers), who consented to partake in semi-structured interviews, to write at least one page in their daily journal given specific guidelines for one week. Recent studies on language learning motivation beyond the classroom have also indicated the value of using diary-keeping as a method of data collection (Dincer & Işk, 2022; Hoang et al., 2022). The aforementioned points explain why a solicited diary technique was effective in investigating the students' autonomous language learning beyond the classroom.

   Solicited diary design. According to Milligan and Bartlett (2019), researchers should consider the diary's design in addition to ensuring that a diary approach can assist them in answering their research questions more effectively than alternative qualitative data-gathering techniques. Diaries can be completely unstructured, semi-structured, structured, or extremely structured (Bartlett & Milligan, 2015; Cao & Henderson, 2021; Hyers, 2018; Meth, 2017; Milligan & Bartlett, 2019). It is also crucial to create a structured diary format with clear direction or instruction and comprehensive guidelines if researchers desire diarists to routinely record specific entries, for example, daily ALLBC activities in this study (Bartlett & Milligan, 2015; Meth, 2017). Researchers can employ approaches including an understandable format, in-

person explanation, and informal written guidance to direct participants (Alaszewski, 2006, 2021). Additionally, a more structured style might be especially beneficial for individuals who might find this type of diary writing unfamiliar or intimidating (Meth, 2017).

Given that a mixed-methods inquiry benefits from several characteristics of using diaries, both quantitative and qualitative items could be incorporated into a structured diary format to make the qualitative diary comply with the design (Bartlett & Milligan, 2015; Hyers, 2018; Mittelmeier et al., 2021). In addition, a structured diary can choose a fixed-response form to record and gather numerical data on the frequency of particular activities performed (Bartlett & Milligan, 2015). For example, a structured diary form might be very useful in obtaining a precise account of "how often" or "how many times," "when," and "how long" a diarist engages in a certain activity throughout a given period (Bartlett & Milligan, 2015). So, a structured solicited diary format with both quantitative and qualitative items was of utility in the current study.

Hyers (2018) further suggested that the diarists' abilities and skills could have an impact on the diary format. Thus, apart from the guiding questions and the specific examples of documenting daily activities in all entries of the solicited diaries (see Appendix B), all fill-in-the-blank charts based on the number of weeks they had been writing were created in the Google Docs file in advance to encourage diarists to work in the best conditions to fulfil their commitments of voluntary research participation. Only by filling in the gaps in the provided chart or table in English would diarists reveal their intention to chronicle their daily English learning outside of the classroom. As a result, three diarists simply opened their Google Docs files at the end of the day and started writing their diaries as if they were fill-in-the-blank English exercises. Only one diary keeper who maintained her diary in a notebook was required to create

an empty chart herself. Since she preferred that arrangement during the diary-writing session, participant comfort was given top priority.

Additionally, it was believed that having the diarists keep their structured, solicited diaries in the target language would be advantageous for language learners because keeping a diary in the target language could improve the diarists' retention of the target language's grammatical structures as well as their awareness, confidence, and language proficiency (Bailey, 2022). Thus, in the current study, all diarists kept English-language versions of the solicited diaries.

Recruiting and informal training. According to Hyers (2018), researchers using solicited diaries as a technique of data collection may struggle to find participants who are willing to devote time to documenting a phenomenon over a long time. For this reason, I actively endeavoured to value the students' contributions and commitment during the recruitment of student participants, diary data collecting, and analysis (Hyers, 2018). It was significant to emphasise that the diaries were not associated with students' coursework grades.

Inviting individuals to take part in a pre-diary survey, according to Hyers (2018), may spark interest and encourage participants to keep diaries in the future. For this reason, student questionnaires were used to recruit participants for diary writing. Hyers (2018) also recommends that the list of volunteer diarists be compiled over some time before the diary start date to complete the initial necessary preparations, such as announcements, informational meetings, and pretesting for the subsequent dairy-keeping process. This would ensure that data were simultaneously collected from all volunteer diarists.

As a result, I made an effort to check the student survey's Google form every day to update the list of willing potential students and their mobile phones and/or email addresses. I

attempted to contact ten possible diarists using provided email addresses and mobile phone numbers via a prominent social media platform in Vietnam since there did not seem to be any additional volunteers. Eventually, two third-year students and four second-year students responded and indicated their willingness to take part in the diary-keeping. In the end, only four second-year diarists were able to participate in the current study.

According to Milligan and Bartlett (2019), the prevalence of modern technology, including smartphones, tablets, and other electronic devices, has seemingly "significantly simplified" diary-keeping (p. 1462). I, therefore, chose to employ Google Docs as a technological platform for students to keep their solicited diaries in light of the nature of distance technology-based data collecting in this current study and technological benefits, as previously suggested. Alaszewski (2006) argued that in addition to outlining the goals and objectives of the diary, the researchers are expected to provide instructions on the protocols of diary research because practically all participants in the study lacked prior experience keeping diaries. Training in keeping solicited diaries may be especially important for novice participants, especially those who would do it in a foreign language. Additionally, developing positive working relationships with diary keepers is essential, particularly when technological challenges are involved (Hyers, 2018).

So, after thanking students for agreeing to take part in the diary-keeping process, I provided them with informal instructions on how to use Google Docs. Because it was necessary to safeguard the participants' identities, the informal training consisted of hands-on and one-on-one interaction. The informal training centred on the advantages of Google Docs for sharing and collaboration of information as well as how to use this platform, which might be valuable for students' current learning as well as future work. I also suggested that they download the Google

Docs apps onto their mobile devices since they all stated that they would complete the task on their smartphones. After demonstrating how to use Google Docs on a smartphone, I assigned each student a separate Google Docs file and asked them to try using it on their devices while providing their full name and the class to ensure that they would be comfortable using Google Docs apps. This was also seen as a way to test the diary so that any challenging problems could be resolved before actual diary writing (Meth, 2017). Additionally, I would be able to assist them in finding a solution if they ran into any problems.

Finally, three second-year students were able to complete it successfully. One student, however, found it uncomfortable to complete it on her smartphone; as a result, she decided to keep her diary in a notebook. Each day, she took a photo of all the entries and shared it with me via the Zalo app. I then saved the image in two different file formats after downloading it to my laptop (JPG and PDF). When the process of keeping the student's diary was complete, I combined all of her individual PDF files into a single file and gave my supervisor access to her journal in PDF format. In summary, three students kept their solicited diaries in Google Docs and one kept it in her notebook, and each day she took a photo of the entire journal and messaged it to me through Zalo.

Diary-keeping process. The diary-keeping period lasted 22 weeks, from May 24th, 2021, to October 24th, 2021. I checked diarists' recordings their diaries at least once a day because Edmonton (Canada) and Vietnam are in different time zones. The first time was between 10 and 11 a.m., and the second time was between 9 and 10 p.m. (MT). The reason for this was that from May through October, 10 a.m. on a Monday in Edmonton would be, for instance, 11 p.m. on a Monday in Vietnam. At this point, all the diarists would have finished their work, including writing their diaries, and I could start checking the diary recording, highlighting all the

information of English-related learning activities to distinguish them from other activities, and entering them into my summary Excel spreadsheet, and thanking diarists for their work.

I rechecked around 9 or 10 p.m. MT, which was 10 or 11 a.m. the next day in Vietnam if I realized that one or two diarists had not completed their entries that day. I also kept an Excel spreadsheet that summarised the activities each student engaged in outside of class to learn English, and I also determined how many hours each student spent learning English each week. Then, after checking over the weekly summary, any reflections that come to mind on why a certain student watches the same YouTube channel, use only one book, or does not use internet resources, to name a few, are noted in the summary spreadsheet. I later needed to investigate those questions during my interview with each student. Up to the conclusion of the diary-writing time, the same procedure was repeated. Fewer reflexive questions were asked during several weeks near the end of the diary-keeping period because it looked like nothing new had occurred, but I still kept in touch with the students via the Zalo app in case I needed more details for my later analysis.

It was also important to note that, on May 24, 2021, the first day of the students' first week of diary-keeping, they were all at home, starting their summer holiday earlier than planned because of the spreading COVID-19 pandemic in Vietnam. Additionally, due to the pandemic, they began their new academic year online on August 16th, 2021 (week 13). Thus, the entire diary-keeping period could be split into two divisions: the summer break (weeks 1–12) and the school year (weeks 13-22). To determine whether there were any differences between the two periods, this segmentation was also meant to compare and contrast students' English learning outside of the classroom. The diary-keeping came to an end after 22 weeks because the data appeared to have reached a saturation point and because students would be taking a term-ending

exam in November 2021 and new data did not appear to be advancing understanding or revealing fresh traits (Creswell, 2014).

Students who keep diaries for an extended time may experience a variety of emotional or psychological issues, such as participation anxiety and fatigue, which may harm the diarists' motivation, focus, and long-term commitment to the diary-writing (Cao & Henderson, 2021; Hyers, 2018; Meth, 2017; Milligan & Bartlett, 2019; Milligan et al., 2005; Mittelmeier et al., 2021). Therefore, before the diary-keeping, I worked to establish a positive relationship with student participants by routinely asking them whether any assistance was required (Hyers, 2018; Meth, 2017), and the informal hands-on instruction was designed for this goal. Additionally, because maintaining a diary is labour- and time-intensive, it is critical to provide some kind of commitment incentive (Alaszewski, 2021; Hyers, 2018; Meth, 2017). A few examples of appropriate incentives include monetary reward, lottery tickets, initial briefing and ongoing interaction, detailed instructions on how to keep a journal with sample entries, a focus on the significance of social issues, skill development, and others (Alaszewski, 2006, 2021; Hyers, 2018; Meth, 2017).

Moreover, Hyers (2018) also recommended that regular follow-up and appropriate application of incentives play an essential role in retaining a dedicated commitment to diary writing. To prevent participants from forgetting to report, the researcher may send them a reminder on their social media accounts (Lee, 2022). Therefore, throughout the diary-writing period, I made an effort to keep up with daily documentation of the diaries and provided the diarists with sincere words of appreciation and encouragement in English via Zalo, a well-liked social media app in Vietnam, as timely incentives to honour their labour-intensive commitment. It was observed that the daily English language incentives sent via Zalo to students provided the

best possibilities for students to refresh their English knowledge and advance their language abilities. This, in turn, might help to reduce attrition and maintain commitment to some level. These options for language study might also assist in addressing the moral issues raised by receiving payment for participation.

In addition, I believe that two relevant communication techniques, namely sympathy and empathy (Bennett, 2013), might help to keep students committed to the current study. I pondered how I would "think and feel in similar circumstances" and how the diarists would perceive people from their points of view, according to Bennett (2013, p. 212). I would then attempt to act respectably with the diary participants. For instance, I messaged the diarists when a missing entry was discovered, "Hello! How are things going? What's up? Is there anything I can do to assist you?". I was extremely worried for the comfort of the participants, therefore I chose to express my serious attention rather than inquire about the missing entry.

Much to my surprise, they occasionally apologized for missed entries in addition to making up for them later. One diarist, for instance, even used to promise me that she would edit her entry the next day because she had a headache the day before. Despite recollection bias, the degree is significantly smaller than that of recall bias in retroactive approaches that ask participants to recall events that occurred over weeks, months, and much longer (Gunthert & Wenze, 2012).

Even so, I sometimes received a question from another diarist asking me when they should stop writing their journal in week 16. This may imply that there were some overt indications of participant weariness while the diary was being written. Then, I had to express my sympathies to her and urge her to continue to the end of the diary-keeping journey. In addition, one student stated that on October 24, 2021, the final day for keeping diaries, she had completed

the journey. After her inquiry, I felt relief from her fatigue, so I sincerely thanked her for making the extra effort and committing to the lengthy voyage.

Generally speaking, I made an effort to employ efficient, specific communication approaches to encourage students to keep their commitments. The completion of four solicited diaries after 22 weeks of writing them under the social, psychological, and economic strains brought on by the worldwide COVID-19 outbreak may be highlighted by everything mentioned above. Last but not least, "extending the duration of the one-week language diary" helped "collect more naturally occurring instances of learning beyond the classroom" (Lee, 2022, p. 322), and 22-week diary keeping offered a richer account of naturally occurring events of language learners' ALLBC.

Semi-structured interviews

According to Maccoby and Maccoby (1954), an interview refers to a face-to-face conversation wherein the interviewer attempts to elicit information opinions or beliefs from the interviewee(s) (cited in Brinkmann, 2018). One of the aims of this study was to explore how English majors engage in learning beyond the classroom, so in-depth data was sought to understand how learners use numerous contexts for their learning (Reinders & Benson, 2017). This study utilised semi-structured interviews as the third data collection method due to their widespread use across various disciplines (Nathan et al., 2019; Roulston & Choi, 2018). These interviews were also used in a learning-beyond-the-classroom investigation to enhance understanding and clarify findings, as per Lee (2022). In the current research, the semi-structured interview was conducted in the Vietnamese language with individual interviewees (students, instructors of English and administrators) to ensure that all the information was correctly interpreted and participants felt relaxed and confident in their responses.

Data analysis method

Survey. To analyse the data from the questionnaires, I used the descriptive data displayed in the charts that Google Forms automatically created for the data analysis of the closed-ended questions in the questionnaires. Additionally, I also employed a descriptive analysis technique known as "Using Excel for open-ended question data analysis" developed by Clarke (2013, 2016) to examine all textual responses and summarise the results (Medelyan, 2021).

According to Clarke (2013), in doing the data analysis on the open-ended questions, researchers wish to enumerate all the responses received on the total questionnaires, identify common themes within the responses and then count the number of responses applying to those themes. The detailed step-by-step procedure is described as follows.

1. Download the Microsoft Excel Comma Separated Value File (.csv), which was automatically generated by Google Forms and contained all responses from the student questionnaire.

2. Make a copy of the Microsoft Excel Comma Separated Value File (.csv) and save it as an Excel Worksheet (.xlsx) for my descriptive

3. Open a new worksheet for the question that needed analysing and rename the worksheet (Question 5 or Q5 for example).

4. Copy and paste all responses to the item (next to the respondent numbers) to the data analysis spreadsheet.

5. Translate any comments made in Vietnamese in the open-ended responses.

6. Familiarise myself with the responses by reading and re-reading (Terry & Braun, 2016) all the responses and identifying some themes that I had generated, while still using the students' own words "to ensure that the words of participants were used in

the names" (Nowell et al. 2017, p. 10) but also reduce the data (Medelyan, 2021). For example, "I don't know but every time I'm free I will practise" (23rd student respondent, or SR for short) would become "Every time I'm free".

7. Prepare a frequency count, by using the initial letter of each theme as a code in a small form so that I could label each of those responses based on each one of those themes (Clarke, 2013). For example, I had *n* for *Never*, *o* for *Once a week*, *e* for *Every day*, *s* for *Sometimes*, *u* for *Usually,* and *f* for *Every time I'm free*.

8. Prepare a frequency count of how many times those responses appeared, as instructed by Clarke (2013, 2016) by using the COUNTIF Excel function to count cells in a range that meets a single condition and then the SUM Excel function to double-check the right number (the sum of all responses to an item).

In addition, Clarke (2016) explained how to use Excel to analyse items with multiple responses to a questionnaire. For each questionnaire with two responses, a row is inserted in the spreadsheet, but a number is not added as it is still related to the questionnaire (Clarke, 2016). This is done to ensure researchers can review the paper version of the questionnaire and verify if the actual responses entered in the spreadsheet match the written version (Clarke, 2016). This approach helps researchers identify potential errors and ensures accurate data entry(Clarke, 2016).

Since several responses were in the Vietnamese language, I replaced them with verified English translations and kept the original English responses before proceeding to the next step. Then, after inserting a new row below the number of the questionnaire that had two responses, I entered the second response on the new row, and the same steps were repeated with other questionnaires which had two responses to this item. I then read all the responses and attempted

to identify possible common themes so that I could group all the responses into categories that could be significant for my survey (Clarke, 2016).

According to Clarke (2016), a theme could be created when the researchers see certain responses related to a certain theme or see people giving quite a few similar or related responses. For example, to analyse the question of what kinds of materials or resources students use to do their English homework in the student questionnaire, I saw things like *Google, Internet, resources online, online, some materials in Google,* and *some tests in the Internet*, I created a theme called *Online* (resources). Similarly, such items as *teacher provide, resources from teachers, the curriculum provided by the teacher,* and *instructors give*, formed a theme called *Teachers provide*. Such items as *YouTube, Cambridge, use the materials of Cambridge* to create *Specific website* themes. This theme differed from Online (resources), which referred to resources on the internet in general because they covered specific websites indicated by the student respondents. In the same way, a theme called *Materials of the course* was created when such items as *materials of the course, course books, course books of the institution, speaking, listening,* and *writing* were found. Here, speaking, listening, and writing were understood as the names of the courses, which were common course names used at the institution. Furthermore, the "*Materials of the course*" category is presumed to be somewhat different from the "*Teachers provide*" category in terms of the concept of mandate. As such, *Materials of the course* category refers to mandatory items, namely course books supposed to be used by all teachers and *Teachers provide* theme covers optional materials, namely handouts given optionally by different teachers. A theme called *Available materials* was also created by the same token when I saw *documentation is available (3x)*. Continuing in the same fashion with the rest of the responses, I

noted two more themes. One was called *Other* which might cover *Books, Apps, Smartphones,* and *Dictionary,* and another one was called *No*.

Next, I assigned a code to each of those themes in a simple way such as *o* for Online, *r* for Others, *m* for Materials of the course, *a* for Available materials, *t* for Teachers provide, *w* for Specific websites, *n* for No. I then assigned one of those codes to each of the responses and calculated the number of responses by using the COUNTIF Excel function to count the frequency and the SUM Excel function to count the number of responses received. As a result, I had 30 responses. Since some extra responses were found in the 23 questionnaires, I adjusted for the proportion (percentage of respondents (Clarke, 2016)) who had listed the resources they used to do their English homework or assignments. Accordingly, I had to use a total of 30, for example, instead of 23, to be able to understand the percentage. After doing the proportion, I also used the SUM Excel function to double-check if I had done it correctly. If they add up to 100%, it is done correctly (Clarke, 2016).

Solicited diaries. Since Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis can be applied to diary research (Hyers, 2018), I followed Hyers's (2018) instructions on how to use it to analyse diary data. As such, I familiarized myself with the complete data set on an ongoing basis, one participant at a time: revising the available background information to contextualize the diary, and then revising the diary entries in chronological order (Hyers, 2018). To generate initial codes, I perused the data, seeking events and/or patterns and took notes within diary documents (Hyers, 2018). To search for themes, I reviewed notes and initial themes to generate an organized group of themes by constantly inquiring myself what are the patterns found within a diary and amongst different diaries (Hyers, 2018). I moved "from themes to diaries, from entry to entry, from participant to participant" (Hyers, 2018, p. 18). To review themes, Hyers (2018)

recommends such questions as, "Are certain themes interrelated, or are they different manifestations of a single common experience? Does this theme fit one participant's experience but not others? Do the extracts (quotes) where an initial theme was spotted all have something in common? Does an extract labelled with one theme fit into other themes? Do different themes really differ?" (p. 18). Next, to define and name themes, I named, defined, and identified examples of the themes by revising the data and providing extracts or quotes for each theme (Hyers, 2018). Finally, to produce the report, I strove to present an account which may prevail upon the audience (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Hyers, 2018) and reported the results of my first analysis to my supervisor to seek her feedback and guidance for subsequent analysis.

Additionally, to inform the diary approach within this current study, I tried to play three roles of a qualitative researcher, namely the role of a lantern, a window and a mirror (Hyers, 2018; Shank, 2002). Playing the role of a lantern, I was able to uncover certain parts of the phenomenon of learners' ALLBC (Hyers, 2018; Shank, 2002). Performing the role of a window and a mirror, I attempted to let the reader see what was in the diaries by keeping myself much away from interpretation and revealing the information in the solicited diaries with as little interpretation as possible (Hyers, 2018; Shank, 2002).

Meth (2017) argued that the researchers needed to consider what kinds of individuals, experiences, lives, situations, and stories were not included in the data as well as what stories were not included in personal diary accounts while doing the study. These hardships may indicate powerful emphases in people's interpretations of events and may elucidate the types of meanings people are giving to them (Meth, 2017). Additionally, it is crucial to concentrate the analysis on the research context and the participant records while continuously acknowledging the subjectivity of the diary entries and the researchers' interpretations of the data (Meth, 2017).

Semi-structured interviews. The data collected from the interview and students' daily diaries was analysed with a technique called thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is ubiquitously utilised within qualitative research (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). It is "a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79) with "relevance specific to the research focus, the research question, the research context and the theoretical framework" (Roberts et al., 2019, p. 1).

To conduct interview data analysis, I took an approach called reflexive thematic analysis because I attempted to actively engage in the interpretation of data while considering my own cultural identity, social positions, theoretical presumptions, and ideological beliefs, as well as my academic knowledge (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Braun et al., 2019).

In practice, coding and analysis frequently combine both inductive and deductive approaches because researchers always add something to the data when they analyse it and because they rarely totally disregard the explicit meaning of the data when they code for a particular theoretical framework, according to Braun and Clarke (2012). Thus, my coding and analysis used a combination of both inductive and deductive approaches because I mainly coded "from the data, based on participants' experiences" and utilised such "theoretical constructs" from the literature of self-determination theory, language learning motivation and heutagogy or self-determination learning theory as motivating, demotivating, and self-efficacy to make issues that participants did not clearly express themselves obvious (Braun & Clarke, 2012, p. 60). After the coding was complete, I provided the supervisor with a preview of the codes, themes, and subthemes for her approval, comments, and suggestions. I later amended and authored the findings report by answering the research questions (comparing the interview data from students

and staff including instructors and administrators) contrasting the findings with the survey and solicited diary data.

Translation

Due to financial constraints, I had to transcribe the interviews and follow-up communication transcripts into English and had them validated by an English instructor who held a doctorate in education from the University of Alberta and was working at another Vietnamese higher education institution. As previously mentioned, the same English instructor also validated the bilingual version of the student questionnaire.

Triangulation

Triangulation is "the observation of the research issue from (at least) two different points" (Flick, 2004, p. 178). Triangulation is one of two strategies utilised to validate the findings to enhance confidence that the correct interpretation is made (Creswell, 2012; Stake, 2010). Following Creswell (2012), I attempted to determine the credibility of the findings by examining evidence from different participants (students, instructors, administrators), various types of data (questionnaires, interviews, students' solicited diaries, reflexive notes), and more data collection methods (curriculum documents review, survey, interviews, students keeping a solicited diary), in descriptions and themes in this research (see Figures 3.1 and 3.2). I then examined each information source and gathered evidence to support every single emergent theme (Creswell, 2012). Moreover, I am aware that,

> "Triangulation involves the use of three or more pieces of information to support a premise, this does not mean the premise is always true, but it dramatically increases the probability that it will be true in when the given conditions are present (Schoen, 2011, p. 32).

Figure 3.1

Triangulation of data collection tools

Triangulation of data collection tools

Survey

Solicited diaries   Semi-structured interviews

Figure 3.2

Triangulation of data collection sources

Triangulation of data collection sources

Students (survey, diaries, interviews)
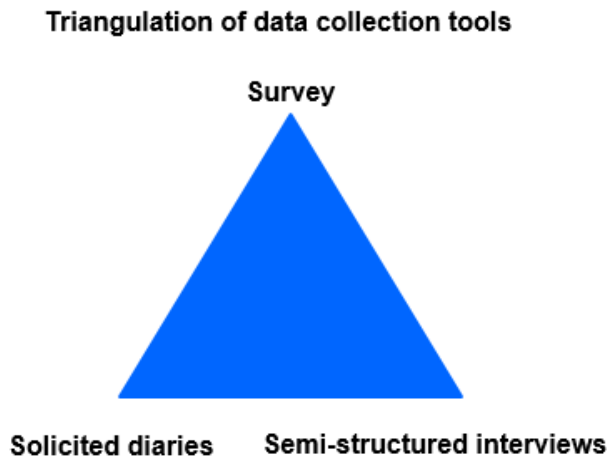
Faculty
(survey, interviews)   Administrators/managers
(survey, interviews)
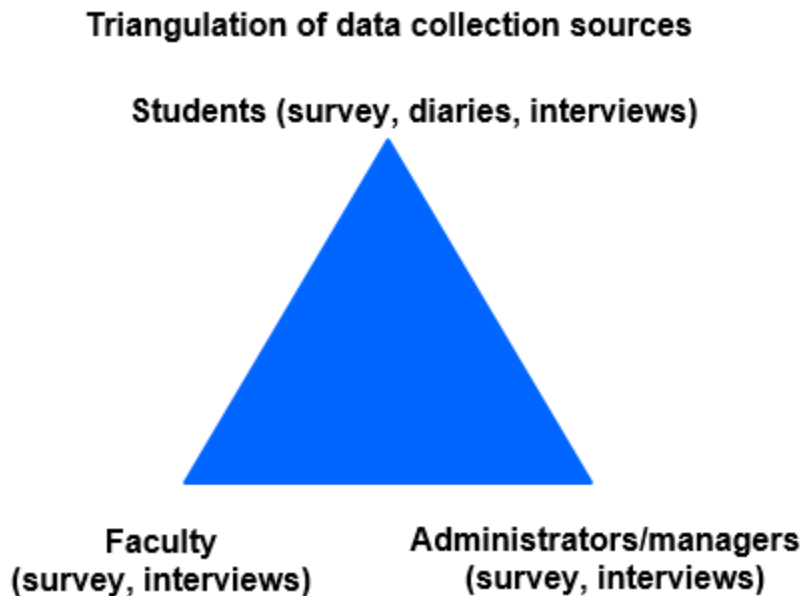
Member checking

Member checking is another strategy employed to reveal the credibility of the findings

(Creswell, 2012). It is a process wherein "the researcher asks one or more participants to check

the accuracy of the findings" (Plano Clark & Creswell, 2014, p. 364). Following Plano Clark and

Creswell (2014), I ensured that the interview transcription and translation were sent to student

and staff participants for their verification of the accuracy of the account (Creswell, 2012).

Furthermore, the findings report of the interview was sent on July 31, 2023, via Zalo to staff and

student participants for their feedback on such issues as the completion of the description, the

precision of the themes included, and the fairness and representation of the interpretations

(Creswell, 2012; Plano Clark & Creswell, 2014) as well as any modifications and/or revisions

desired by the participants. Four staff members responded, messaging, "I'm not sure what to

change/modify" (Hoa, August 1, 2023), "I have nothing to change or modify" (Dep, August 3,

2023), "Okay, I have no further idea" (Giau, August 2, 2023), "I have no further idea" (Thom,

August 6, 2023), and one student replied, "I have no further comment" (Dong, August 3, 2023).

Trustworthiness

To establish the trustworthiness of thematic analysis, I followed the step-by-step

approach for conducting a trustworthy thematic analysis suggested by Nowell et al., (2017, p. 4),

which is presented as follows.

Phases of Thematic Analysis	Means of Establishing Trustworthiness
Phase 1: Familiarizing oneself with data	Prolong engagement with data
	Triangulate different data collection modes
	Document theoretical and reflective thoughts
	Document thoughts about potential codes/themes
	Store raw data in well-organized archives
	Keep records of all data field notes, transcripts, and reflexive journals
Phase 2: Generating initial codes	Researcher triangulation

	Reflexive journaling
Phase 3: Searching for themes	Researcher triangulation
	Diagramming to make sense of theme connections
	Keep detailed notes about the development and hierarchies of concepts and themes
Phase 4: Reviewing themes	Researcher triangulation
	Test for referential adequacy by returning to raw data
Phase 5: Defining and naming themes	Researcher triangulation
	Documentation of theme naming
Phase 6: Producing the report	Member checking
	Describing the process of coding and analysis in sufficient details
	Thick descriptions of context
	Report on reasons for theoretical, methodological, and analytical choices throughout the entire study

Ethical concerns

Leavy (2017) contends that ethical considerations are embedded within every aspect of the research process, so a discussion of the ethical substructure of my project, addressing my values system, ethical praxis, and reflexivity is as follows. First, motivation plays an indispensable role in language learning and is impacted by both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. In an EFL context such as Vietnam, it can be argued that in addition to external orientation (e.g. obligatory language tests, mandatory language proficiency certificates) and intrinsic orientation (e.g. enjoyment, interest, a sense of challenge), autonomous learning is undeniably salient to aid in sustaining motivated engagement in English learning. Since the time to study English in class

is insufficient, this research is aimed at exploring the factors (de)motivating English majors' autonomous learning in the Vietnamese sociocultural setting. Accordingly, I sought to learn the stories of English majors' practice of English outside the class autonomously by having them keep a solicited daily activity diary. I also interviewed them in Vietnamese individually at quiet and safe places according to their choices or preferences. In fact, every interviewee remained at home throughout the interview (audio call via Zalo) because of the global COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, which helped ensure their safety and quietude. Furthermore, data was also collected to identify and understand what factors (de)motivate participants' autonomous learning outside the class from the instructors' and educational administrators' perspectives.

Second, since the study was conducted with students, instructors and administrators as research participants, an application for approval from the Research Ethics Board (REB) at the University of Alberta was submitted after the successful completion of the candidacy exam. Ethics approval from the principal, instructors and/or managers, and students at a public educational institution in Vietnam was obtained before the data collection process began. Also, the process of interviews was assured not to upset or harm any participants.

Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, no international flights were available, so a technology-based strategy and a research assistant were used to recruit student participants. After obtaining consent from the institutional manager to conduct my research at the institution, I secured a research assistant to help recruit volunteers to participate in my study. Specifically, the research assistant helped me make an online connection with the second-year and third-year students in one second-year and one third-year class after they had finished their classes, to introduce myself, and my study (purpose, significance) and invite them to participate in the survey in English. The students' questionnaire also invited student volunteers to partake in the

successive diary-keeping and/or interview processes. Students who agreed to participate in the successive diary keeping and/or interview were asked to provide their emails and/or cell phone numbers so that I could contact them individually, give them instructions as explicitly as possible and answer their questions. Then, I negotiated the date, time and place to conduct the in-person semi-structured interviews with individual students. This process was similarly carried out with staff participants (English instructors, administrators). The informed consent was signed and collected before the interview.

The research assistant who was provided with all necessary information concerning the data collection process and ethical requirements was asked to sign a special form to guarantee that the student's identity (full name, email and cell phone numbers) was fully protected. No one should disclose their identity for any reason.

Thus, despite the worldwide Covid-19 pandemic, I was able to stay in Edmonton and collect the data for my study, entirely online thanks to available technological platforms, namely Google Forms, emails, and social media.

Also, protecting the identity of the participants is of utmost importance, so Xuan (which in English means *spring*), Ha (which means *summer*), Thu (which means *fall* or *autumn*), and Dong (which means *winter*) were the pseudonyms of the four diarists, who were also the four students interviewed. The pseudonyms of the six staff members who were interviewed were Hoa (*flowers*), Thom (*fragrance*), Dep (*beautiful*), Giau (*wealthy/rich*), Sang (*luxurious*), and Khoe (*strong*).

Fourth, since my research was conducted in Vietnam, I had to consider Vietnamese culture and protocols for communication. Thus, building interviewees' rapport and encouragement took my sustained effort (Trull, 1964). Leavy (2017) also maintains that to

ensure the success of the interview, researchers should build rapport with interviewees through active listening. As such, eye contact, gestures, and probes should be utilised to focus researchers' attention on what the interviewees are articulating and encourage them to continue sharing their stories (Leavy, 2017). Probes are follow-up questions the researcher asks the interviewees to expand on for more information by elaborating or clarifying (Creswell, 2012; Leavy, 2017). Active listening also assists the interviewers in collecting "markers which may be the keys to vital information" (Leavy, 2017, p. 141). Markers refer to different topics interviewees may mention whilst voicing their stories, which may be essential to return to and explore (Leavy, 2017).

Hence, I gave the interviewees advance access to the questions so they would be prepared for the interview and be more supportive. Using Vietnamese, the language of the interview, I also started a chat to make the participants feel comfortable and occasionally shared my own experience of improving my English on my own in a friendly tone to make students feel comfortable and encourage them to share their own stories or opinions while focusing on the purpose of the interview by actively listening to their stories. After each interview, I shared reflections and findings with my supervisor for her feedback and mentorship. Such timely guidance and feedback assisted me in revising my interview strategies for the subsequent interviews. Before the second student interview, I also consulted my supervisor about the second interview protocols.

Delimitations of the study

The boundaries of the research were established from the start. First, I attempted to understand the factors (de)motivating the students' autonomous learning beyond the classroom. Second, not all kinds of Vietnamese learners of English were invited to participate in the study.

Specifically, the student participants were only English majors at a public educational institution at the higher education level in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam. Hence, non-English majors at this institution were not included. Similarly, non-English and English majors at other higher education institutions including public or private throughout the region or country were excluded.

Summary

This chapter described the methodology overarching plan and rationale of the research, as well as ways to gather data and data analysis methods. This chapter also discussed how to support the rigour of the research in terms of member checking, trustworthiness, ethical considerations, and the boundaries of the study. The results of the survey will be presented in the chapter that follows.

CHAPTER FOUR: SURVEY

Introduction

This chapter presents findings from the Google-form survey administered to student and staff participants. The survey sought to investigate in what contexts or settings autonomous language learning beyond the classroom (ALLBC) occurs (Reinders & Benson, 2017) and how English majors in higher education in Vietnam practised English outside of the classroom. Specifically, it was intended to find the answer to the following sub-questions:

Do English majors practise their English beyond the classroom? Can they do that?

How often and where do they practise? Why?

What kinds of materials or resources do they use?

What activities do they engage in? What activities do they (dis)like? Why(not)?

What can be done to encourage/motivate their English practice beyond the classroom?

Demographic data

The survey involved students and staff, with second- and third-year English majors as the student group and instructors of English, administrators, and institutional managers as the staff group.

Students

As mentioned in the previous section, the student questionnaire also collected some demographic information about the student participants. Of the total 39 students in two classes (third-year and second-year), 23 or 58.97% completed the questionnaire. Of the total student sample, 30.4% were third-year students (n = 7) and 69.6% were second-year students (n = 16).

The response rate was slightly over 50%.[3] The gender distribution of the total student

respondents was 73.9% female (n = 17), 21.1% male (n = 5), and 4.3% (n = 1) preferred not to

say. See Figure 4.1. This is not uncommon in English classes at higher education levels in this

EFL environment because the majority of the students in each class are female. Further, this

aligns with data presented in a recent mixed-methods study by T. T. Le and M. X. Le (2022),

whose questionnaire surveyed 102 high-school EFL teachers working at 102 institutions (82

regular high schools and 20 gifted high schools) in seven provinces in the Mekong delta of

Vietnam and found that females made up 70.6% (n=72) of the participants., while males made up

only 29.4% (n=30).

Figure 4.1

Student respondents' demographic data
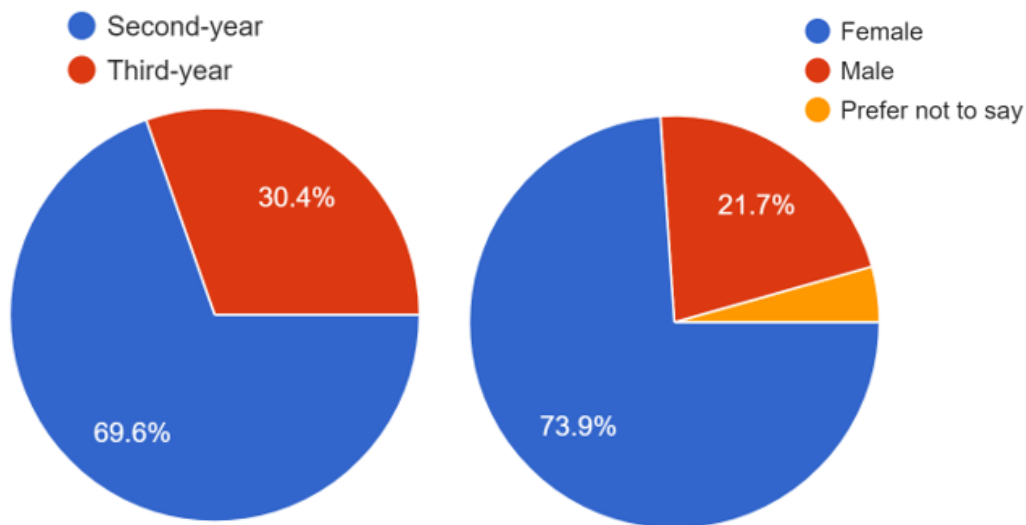
Concerning the duration of studying English, seventeen students (73.9%) started their first English lessons when they were at school, so their time of learning English varied from six to eleven years. However, six students (two second-year ones, and four third-year ones) thought about the time they started their first English lessons at HEIs, so they indicated that they have been studying English for two years, three years or even "about the major, just recently" (a third-year SR). This seemed to support the research assistant's concern about the student's English proficiency, but it might reveal comprehension of the question as one of the difficulties respondents faced, including recalling requested information from memory, evaluating the connection between the retrieved information and the question, and communicating the response (Bowling, 2005). These cognitive burdens seem to be especially heavy for respondents who complete the self-administered questionnaires (Bowling, 2005) in foreign languages. Thus, although the bilingual (English-Vietnamese) questionnaire could help student respondents understand the questions to some degree, for Bowling (2005) the process of responding to the questions and the quality of the data is considerably impacted (Bowling, 2005). Since English is now a mandatory subject from elementary education (optionally for grades 1 and 2) to tertiary education (Hoang 2010; Prime Minister, 2017), it can be presumed that the students in this study have been learning English for at least six or seven years.

Staff

Of thirteen invitations to partake in the current study sent to staff at the institution, eleven replied and ten completed the questionnaire. Of the ten staff participants, two were institutional managers, four administrators, and four English instructors. The gender distribution was six males and four females. The staff's time of working at the institution varied from five to 23 years and seven staff members have been working at the institution for more than ten years.

Thus far, a general picture of both the student and the staff participants has been reviewed. In the following sections, findings that answer the research questions will be examined in detail.

How do English majors at a Vietnamese public higher education institution engage in autonomous language learning beyond the classroom? (RQ1)

Do students practise their English outside the class by themselves?

Students. Item 4 asked the students to indicate whether they practised their English beyond the classroom. Only twelve of 23 respondents (52.2%) indicated that they did practise their English beyond the classroom. Two respondents (8.7%) indicated that they did not practise their English beyond the class at all, and nine student respondents (39.1%) selected the Maybe option. The selection of the Maybe option should be treated with some caution because, within the high-context collectivistic cultures of Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East, people tend to convey messages indirectly and implicitly (Nam, 2015). This is because in high-context cultures people always attempt to maintain harmony and do not say anything that might make them lose face or hurt others' feelings, particularly when expressing an indirect refusal (Nam, 2015; Storti, 2015). Given the high-context collectivistic culture in Vietnam, the *Maybe* response might indirectly refer to No or rarely because, for the sake of saving face, Vietnamese seldom say "No" and they usually say it indirectly (Borton, 2000). The responses to this item are presented in Figure 4.2.

Figure 4.2

Student responses to their practice of English outside the class by themselves
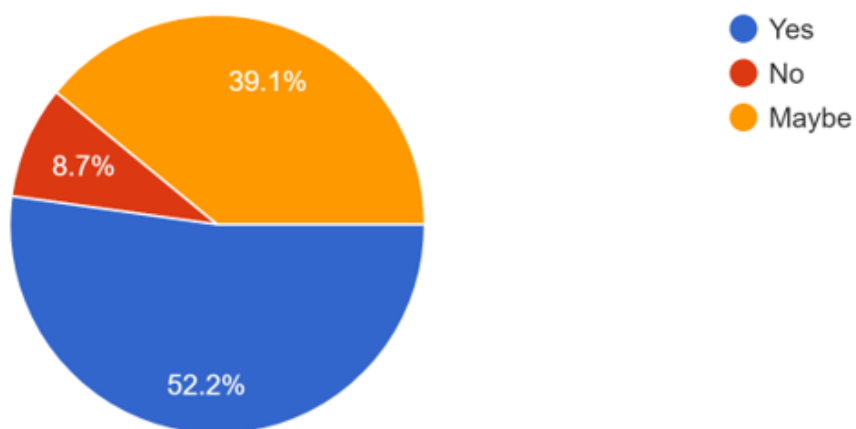
Staff. Similarly, the staff were asked about the English majors' ALLBC (item 4, staff

questionnaire), and their responses to this item are presented in Figure 4.3.

Figure 4.3

Staff responses about students practise English outside the class by themselves
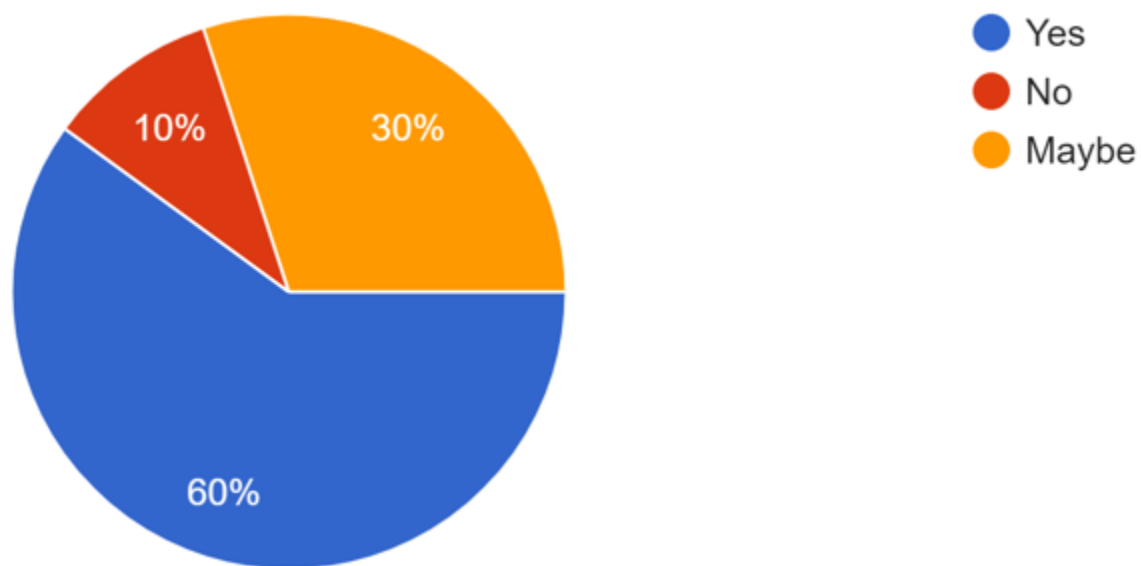
As seen in Figure 4.3, six staff respondents (STARs) thought that the students engaged in autonomous/voluntary language practice beyond the classroom. Meanwhile, three staff members were unsure about this issue, and one claimed that the English majors at this institution did not practise their English beyond the classroom autonomously. These responses align with those of Vu and Shah (2016) who found that nine out of ten Vietnamese instructor participants did not believe that their students studied autonomously beyond the classroom. In a similar vein, the instructor participants in Chan's 2003 study listed "poor," "not good," "not very well," and "not very good" as their answers to the question "How good are our students at learning English autonomously?" (p. 42). In contrast to the findings of Vu and Shah (2016), more staff members who responded to this survey believed that the students practised their language outside of the classroom on their initiative or voluntarily.

Responses from the staff and students in the questionnaire revealed that apart from those who studied autonomously beyond the classroom, there were students who did not engage in ALLBC, albeit the sample was small. This might partly match the observations of Bui (2016) who found that students of a bilingual program (English-Russian) seemed to be passive in autonomous learning. A large number of students adopted a "deal-with-it" attitude to their learning, so their autonomous learning was driven by the "deal-with-it" attitude to pass the course (Bui, 2016).

How often do students practise their English outside the class by themselves?

Students. As seen in Figure 4.4 only six SRs of the total student sampling (26.1%) indicated that they engaged in autonomous English language learning beyond the classroom daily or regularly, or when they "have a chance to do it" (SR17). In a survey of the self-directed English listening practices of 192 second-year non-English majors from all three majors

(Education, Education Management and Information Technology) at a public HEI located in Hanoi, the capital city of Vietnam, Vu and Shah (2016) found that no students indicated that they practised English listening skills autonomously by themselves and 9.9% of 192 SRs indicated that it was unnecessary to practise their English listening skills because these skills were not assessed at the end of the term (Vu & Shah, 2016).

Figure 4.4

Student responses about how often they practise their English outside the class by themselves
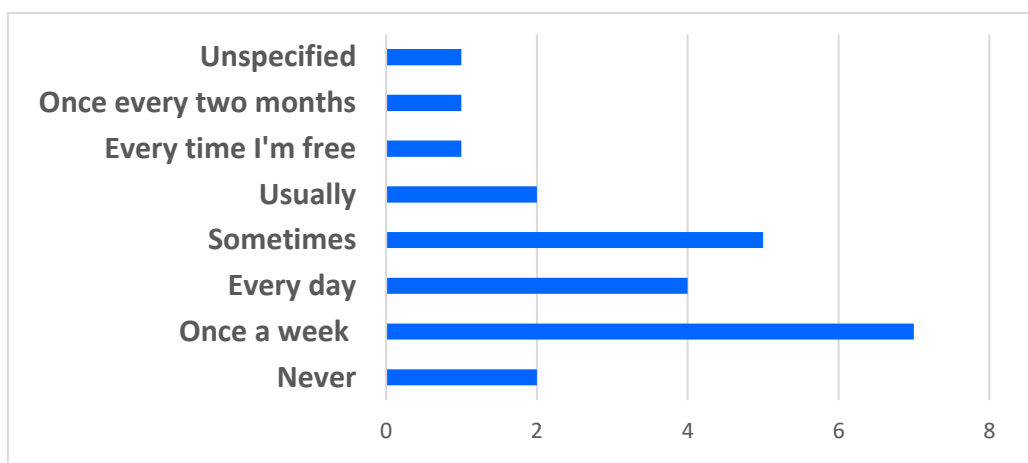
Meanwhile, 13 SRs indicated that they sometimes or just once a week practised their English beyond the classroom and all of the nine student respondents who selected the *Maybe* option were included in this group. Apart from three SRs indicating that they only engaged in their ALLBC once a week, a second-year female student responded "No never" (SR2) to this question. This indicated she did not engage in ALLBC though she had responded *Yes* to item 4. Accordingly, in reference to the number of twelve SRs, as previously mentioned, who selected the *Yes* option in item 4, several students rarely or only engaged in their ALLBC at times or even did nothing, albeit saying *Yes*. Thus, amongst twelve SRs indicating that they practised their English beyond the classroom, only six SRs reported doing it regularly and the other six SRs

reported "rarely" or "at times" to this question. Also, two SRs (8.7 %) said that they never engaged in such kind of learning.

The results of the present study seem consistent with those of Vu and Shah (2016), who found that only 61.4% of SRs "occasionally" practised listening outside of the classroom autonomously, 28.6% "rarely" did, and 6.8% did not engage at all (Vu & Shah, 2016, p. 61). It is also interesting to note that a third-year female student indicated that she would practise her English beyond the classroom every time she was free. Similarly, Vu and Shah (2016) found that approximately 30 SRs (15.6%) indicated that they would engage in self-directed learning if they had free time. These results should be interpreted with caution because of the small sample size, but they may be useful in helping other researchers plan more research examining how students conceptualise free time or having free time and how it affects their ALLBC. As previously mentioned, one response was themed *unspecified* because I was not sure of what SR4 meant when she just wrote "2" as an answer to this question.

Staff. Eight staff questionnaires gave acceptable responses. They are presented in Figure 4.5.

Figure 4.5[4]

Staff responses about how often students practise their English outside the class by themselves

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[4] Two responses from the fifth and the seventh staff were not considered because they, for some reason, gave the answers to the question of "how", instead of "how often". For example, the response from the fifth staff respondent was "Chat with friends; read books and newspapers, watch movies in English, ... in English", and the seventh staff respondent wrote "voluntarily" (sic). So these responses were not counted
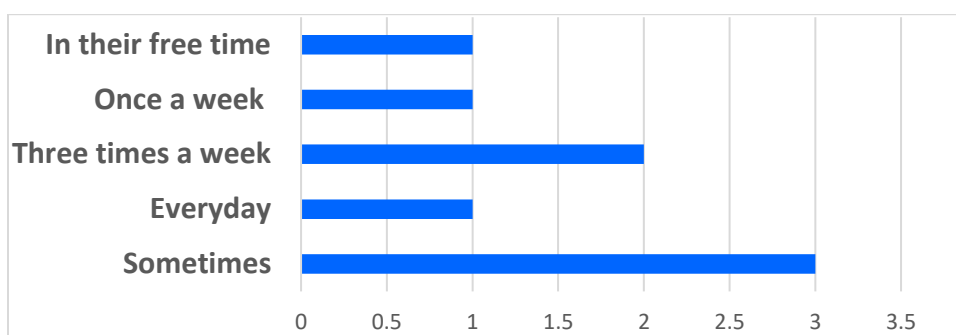
As seen in Figure 4.5, a slightly considerable variation was found among staff perspectives in terms of their perception of the frequency of students' engagement in English language practice beyond the classroom, albeit small sampling. Only one staff member thought that the student participants practised their English autonomously beyond the classroom every day, and one indicated that they did it in their free time. Overall, they did not consider students active in the pursuit of ALLBC. This finding appears to be in line with that of Bui (2016), whose instructor participants stated that students were typically passive and not engaged in learning, frequently compelled to study (by the instructors), and had a low level of self-awareness of autonomous learning. This suggests that staff members could play a significant role in encouraging and promoting learners' ALLBC.

Overall, the data indicates that concerning frequency, participants' ALLBC engagement ranges from "regularly" to "never", prompting further investigation.

Where do students practise their English outside the class by themselves?

When asked where they practised their English beyond the classroom (item 6), and 20 SRs (86.9%) selected the home/dorm/boarding room option, with the majority stating "at home". The prevalence of off-campus locations such as homes, dormitories, and boarding houses may be related to the affordability of smartphones amongst the younger generation, the easy access to the internet via personal electronic devices, namely, mobile phones or laptops/computers, and the

global effects of the coronavirus epidemic over the data collection time. Interestingly, one student respondent reported that she practised English beyond the classroom wherever she could. The student responses to this item are presented in Figure 4.6.

Figure 4.6

Student responses about where they practise their English outside the class by themselves
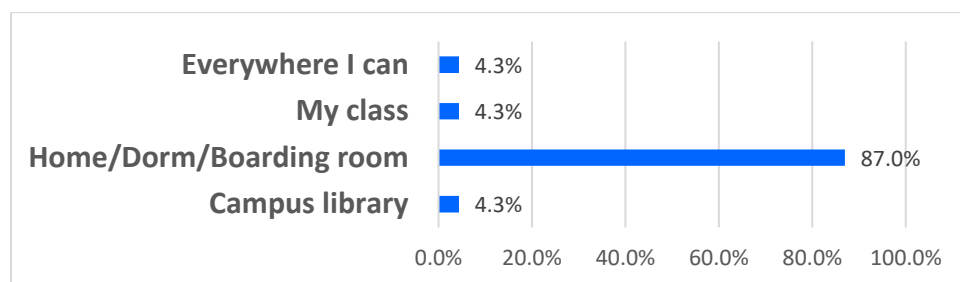
How do students utilise the resources and affordances at their disposal in their environments and how do they associate those resources with their classroom learning? (RQ2)

What kinds of materials or resources do students use to practise their English outside the class by themselves?

Data (item 7) showed that 100% of SRs used smartphones, followed by laptops/computers (60.9%) and language learning apps (56.5%). Given the popularity of the internet and the smartphone as well as the accessibility of Wi-Fi systems in the country, electronic and digital resources are undeniably mutually interconnected. Five students indicated that they used online resources (21.7%) and two used course books (8.7%). Similarly, Lai and Gu's (2011) study found that student participants utilised a multiplicity of technologies within their ALLBC such as online dictionaries, Facebook (updating status, reading and commenting on classmates' and friends' posts in the target language), YouTube (searching for interesting audio-

visual materials), online forum and online learner communities (only observing and reading discussions), online news.

Drawing on Activity Theory, Inaba (2019) argued that language learners' activities of learning and using the target language beyond the classroom are influenced by learners' multiple activity systems, namely language classes, other courses at HEIs as well as learners' personal activity systems including part-time jobs, networking and interacting with people on social media. Since learners' preferences and utilisation of resources are influenced by "the interaction of several factors in their activity systems" (Inaba, 2019, p. 153), learners' usage of digital dictionaries and online resources for their assessment assignments was driven by such factors as gaining good marks, assessment guidance, and characteristics of resources (Inaba, 2019). Inaba (2019) also observed that learners usually depended on information provided by the instructors. The data (item 10) also indicated that learners preferred teachers' materials for test and examination preparation. According to Pham (2011), students may have believed that those materials were more likely to be covered in the examinations and when searching for online resources, students were also looking for "the same kinds of forms" on the internet (SR16's response to item 10). Moreover, it should also be noted that none of the five male student respondents (three second-year students: SR1, SR6, SR14 and two third-year ones: SR11, SR15) indicated that they used course books in their ALLBC. This might suggest a slight difference between male and female students regarding preferred types of materials and resources used in their ALLBC, requiring further exploration.

In addition, only six SRs (26.1%) indicated that chatting with native speakers was a way to practise their English beyond the classroom. This small number might suggest that the students in this current study possibly had few encounters with English-speaking foreigners

living, working, or being available in their local area. It is interesting to note that none of the SRs in Bui's (2016) study mentioned speaking with native speakers as a way to practise their language outside of the classroom, although they were studying at a large HEI in Hochiminh City, which is home to the well-known Bui Vien Walking Street where foreign tourists frequently congregate at night and a good place to practise speaking English if students wish. Responses are summarised in Figure 4.7.

Figure 4.7

Student responses about what kinds of materials or resources they use to practise their English outside the class
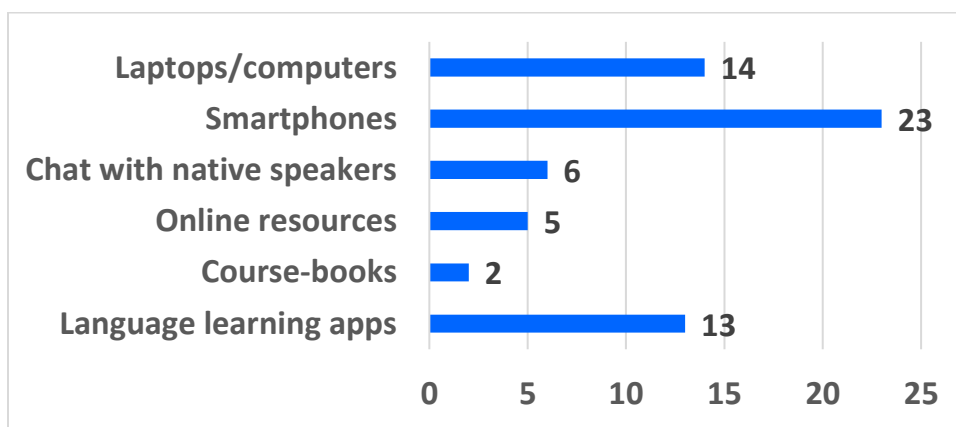
The staff questionnaire (item 5) also contained a question about materials and resources. Consider Figure 4.8.

Figure 4.8

Staff responses about what kinds of materials or resources they think students use to practise their English outside the class

Category	Value
Laptops/computers	8
Smartphones	9
Chat with native speakers	5
Online resources	9
Course-books	5
Language learning apps	7
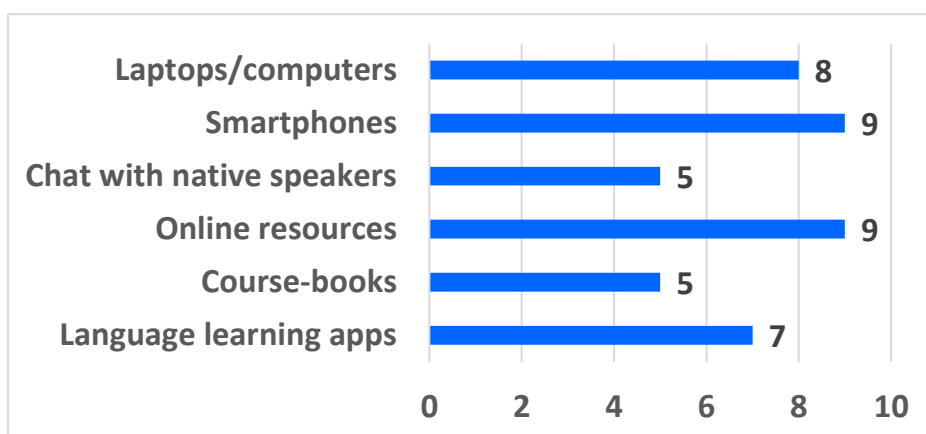
Results in Figure 4.8 aligned with those from the student questionnaire regarding devices used by students, namely, smartphones, laptops/computers, and language learning apps. While nine staff thought that students also utilised online resources for their English practice beyond the classroom, only five SRs (21.7%) selected this option. Likewise, although five staff thought that students employed course books - mandatory learning materials of the courses - to practise their English beyond the classroom, only two SRs (8.7%) indicated that they used these materials as their resources to practise their English skills beyond the classroom. In the same vein, five staff thought that students might chat with native speakers beyond the classroom to practise their English, but only six SRs (26.1%) mentioned this kind of practice.

Comparing and contrasting the data from the student and staff questionnaires, instructors' perspectives did not fully align with the responses of students. While there was agreement about smartphones, language learning apps and possibly laptops/computers as being widely used by the English majors to practise their English beyond the classroom, the mandatory learning materials of almost all courses - the course books - were reported to be of less use beyond the classroom by the students. Additionally, both staff and students indicated that chatting with native English speakers was an opportunity to practise English beyond the classroom, but few English majors

reported doing so. It should be noted that, from an insider's perspective, I know that no native English speaker has ever worked as an English instructor at this institution, even for a short time, so English majors at this institution may have had minimal opportunity to chat with native English-speaking instructors in person within- and beyond-the-classroom settings. In the Hong Kong context, Hyland (2004) also found that students did not take up that opportunity to develop their English skills with native speakers because of "the lack of chances they had to find such conversation partners" and "the perceived awkwardness" of communicating in English within public Cantonese-speaking contexts (Hyland, 2004, pp. 189-190). More insight into this matter will be gained through the student interviews' data, which is covered in the chapter on the results of the semi-structured interviews.

What kinds of materials or resources do students use to do their English homework?

The open-ended item 9 asked the student participants what kinds of materials or resources they used to do their English homework or assignments. Responses to this item were provided in both Vietnamese and English, just like those to item 5 (the student questionnaire). Because this item involved many responses to a questionnaire, a similar strategy employed in item 5 was replicated but with a slight difference (Clarke, 2016). Following Clarke (2016) to analyse an item with multiple responses to a questionnaire, I identified and then regrouped numerous responses, which are shown in Figure 4.9.

Figure 4.9

Student responses about what kinds of materials or resources students use to do their English homework
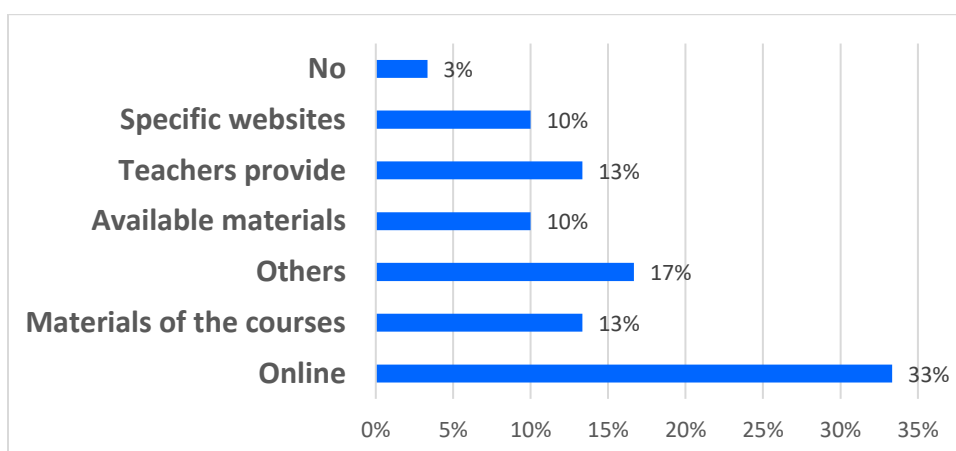
As seen in Figure 4.9, online materials and resources were the most frequently selected (33%). This was followed by such categories as *Teachers provide* and *Materials of the course* (13%). From the emic perspective, although student respondents did not specify the names of *available materials*, these materials could also refer to materials available to students and within their reach, and they might not bother to search for anything else. Therefore, the available materials might also refer to books, course books of the institutions, handouts provided by the instructors or materials of the courses. Meanwhile, *Others* category indicated that some student respondents also mentioned that they used smartphones, apps, dictionaries, and books to do their English homework. Unfortunately, they did not specify what kinds of books and dictionaries they utilised. In addition, students also indicated that they searched for necessary materials on such specific websites as YouTube and Cambridge. It is interesting to note that one student respondent indicated that she "maybe no" used any materials or resources to do her English homework or assignment (SR2). These findings suggest that most students used both online and available materials and resources to do their English homework and assignments. Not only did they search for things on the Internet, but they also looked at specific websites for the materials they might need. Interestingly, although male student respondents indicated using various types

of resources to do their English assignments such as Google, YouTube, course books,
smartphones and online resources, they did not mention materials provided by the instructors.
The importance of the perceived value of classroom discussion and lecturing as well as materials
given by instructors will be further discussed later.

What kinds of resources and materials and resources students use for test and examination

preparation?

Similar to the previous question, open-ended item 10 asked the SRs about the kind of resources
and materials they used to prepare for tests and exams. Many different responses were given to
this question in both Vietnamese and English. As a result, I adhered to every step of the
descriptive analytical processes mentioned in items 5 and 9. The results of item 10 are shown in
Figure 4.10.

Figure 4.10

Student responses about what kinds of resources and materials and resources they use for test
and examination preparation
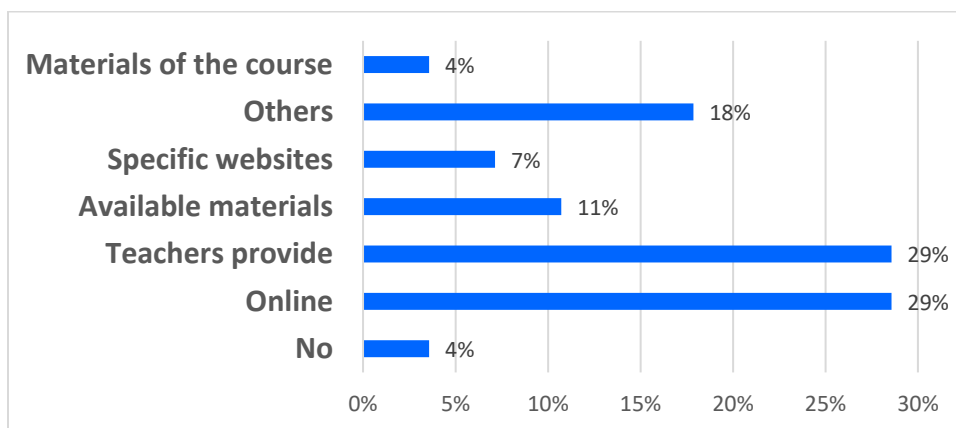
As illustrated in Figure 4.10, the materials from *online resources* and *teachers* were the
most frequently mentioned responses by eight SRs (29%). A similar finding was also found by
Inaba (2019), who reported that the student participants "often only relied on information

provided by their teachers in the classroom" (p. 153). Pham (2011) observed that the traditional perception of teachers as the most reliable sources of knowledge lead Vietnamese learners to hold the belief that they were supposed to "memorize what is covered in the curricula or what teachers said in class" (p. 7) so that they can pass end-of-term examinations. From the student's perspective, the answers and explanations given by teachers were perfectly accurate and classmates' understandings were sought only for clarification (Pham, 2011).

One SR in this current study also indicated that she tried to find "the same kinds of form" on the internet (SR16). It is also possible that searching for the same or similar forms might enable students to remind themselves of the content they used to know but might have forgotten or to help them correctly recall less foundational details by drawing on multiple strong sources of information, as Swan Sein, Dathatri, and Bates (2021) discovered. Although there is not any conclusive evidence to support what "the same kinds of form" means from the perspective of the learner, based on my experience working as an English instructor in the country, I highly doubt that there are two factors that might lead students to look up "the same kinds of form" online to prepare for tests and exams. The first one might be because many English teachers or instructors in the country may also consult online reference materials, such as reading passages, grammar and vocabulary exercises, listening tests, writing questions, and so on, to prepare test papers because their resources might be out of date and scarce. Second, the student may have noticed that often during her educational life; as a result, she incorporated that observation into her study habits and test-taking strategies. Nevertheless, to find out if it holds true in this language learning environment, more research into this topic may be conducted.

Furthermore, responses from five SRs (18%) were grouped into the category *Others* which referred to books, smartphones (students using smartphones to search for necessary

materials), other materials in general and what students themselves "learn from many different sources" (SR20). It is interesting to note that to prepare for tests and examinations, only one student consulted course books - the mandatory materials of the course (4%). As mentioned earlier, instructors in Vietnam "usually tell students exactly what to read and what needs more attention, if not memorized carefully, as these sections are likely to be questioned in the exams" (Pham, 2011, p. 8). Thus, even though course books are compulsory information sources for almost all courses at HEIs, participants' responses suggest that they were less useful for learners' review than instructors' extra non-compulsory learning materials, which somehow could find their way covered in the test or examination papers.

One SR also indicated that she used nothing to deal with tests and examinations by giving a "Maybe no" (SR2) answer to this question and item 9. It is possible that she was not interested in learning though she indicated that she loved English in her response to item 17 asking about the reason for the selection of her major. Although there isn't enough evidence to draw any firm conclusions about the students' responses, it could be interesting to look into how language learners approach tests and exams, especially whether there are any differences between those who declare they love the target language and those who do not.

Additionally, although specific websites were reported in the questionnaires, only materials from Cambridge (website) were mentioned by a third-year student (SR21). No one reported searching for materials on YouTube to prepare for tests and examinations. This suggests that further research into how digital platforms affect students' test and exam preparation as well as how teachers utilise their advantages during instruction may be encouraged.

What English language learning apps do students know or try to use to practise their English beyond the classroom?

Item 11 asked SRs what English language learning apps they knew or tried to use to practise their English beyond the classroom, and 13 apps were reported by the SRs. The data indicated that the Tflat Dictionary was mentioned by nine SRs (39.1%). Cake - Learn real English from videos was reported by eight SRs (34.8%), Google Translate by six SRs (26.1%), Duolingo - a globally used app - and ELSA: Learn and Speak English by five SRs (21.7%), respectively. This finding agrees with Inaba's (2019) findings which showed that to understand the learning materials at home in preparation for the next classes, students searched for unknown words and expressions by consulting their electronic and online dictionaries. However, unlike student participants in Inaba's (2019) study, English majors in this current study did not utilise paper dictionaries to check the meanings of unknown vocabulary. It should be noted that paper dictionaries may not be portable and cost students some money but multiple dictionary apps are free of charge and extremely convenient to carry wherever students go and consult them whenever they desire. They are much faster and more convenient to use than traditional dictionaries.

It is necessary to note that while many apps, like Tflat Dictionary, Cake, Duolingo, ELSA, and Vocabulary, were named by both sets of student respondents, Google Translate and HelloTalk seemed to be more popular with second-year students. Nonetheless, the Tflat Dictionary was commonly utilised by second-year students, according to data collected from daily activity diaries and student interviews. Interestingly, one second-year student respondent also indicated that she did not try any English language learning apps to facilitate her English beyond the classroom. Since there is still much to learn about the favourite dictionaries and language learning apps among students, more research is needed.

Furthermore, there seemed to be a significant difference between male and female student respondents in terms of exploring a variety of language learning apps. For example, male students only mentioned commonly-used apps such as Tflat Dictionary, Google Translate, Duolingo, and English Grammar while their female counterparts also tried different ones such as vocabulary apps, ELSA, Cake, Kien Guru, Hello Talk, TOEIC Test, Lingo Deer. Rosell-Aguilar (2018) conducted a large-scale survey into the use of the *busuu* mobile app - a popular language learning app and found that compared to male student users, females used the app less frequently but for a longer duration. Bancheva and Ivanova (2015) found that in various informal learning activities in the workplace, most females look for opportunities to network as well as learn from their mistakes, while males are more inclined to think about their knowledge and experience. Further research might explore gender differences within various age groups of language learners concerning the what, the how, the frequency and the why of employing a variety of language learning apps within their ALLBC in different foreign language learning environments.

These survey results, taken together, showed that student participants in this study were aware of and had explored a variety of digital tools for language learning, both within and outside of the classroom. This means that anyone may now easily take advantage of available opportunities, easily expose themselves to English, and probably develop their English-language skills in a range of informal digital environments (J. S. Lee, 2022). This undoubtedly has significant ramifications for instructional and research approaches looking at ways to encourage students to use digital devices to facilitate their language learning inside and outside of the classroom. Responses to this item are presented in Figure 4.11[5].

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[5] Since there was a gender breakdown within student participants in the survey and some extra responses were found amongst 23 questionnaires, I had to do the proportion which referred to the percentage of respondents (Clarke, 2016), who had listed the apps they had tried and/or used. Accordingly, I had to use the total 16 of female SRs, six

Figure 4.11

Student responses about what English language learning apps they know or try to use to practise

their English beyond the classroom
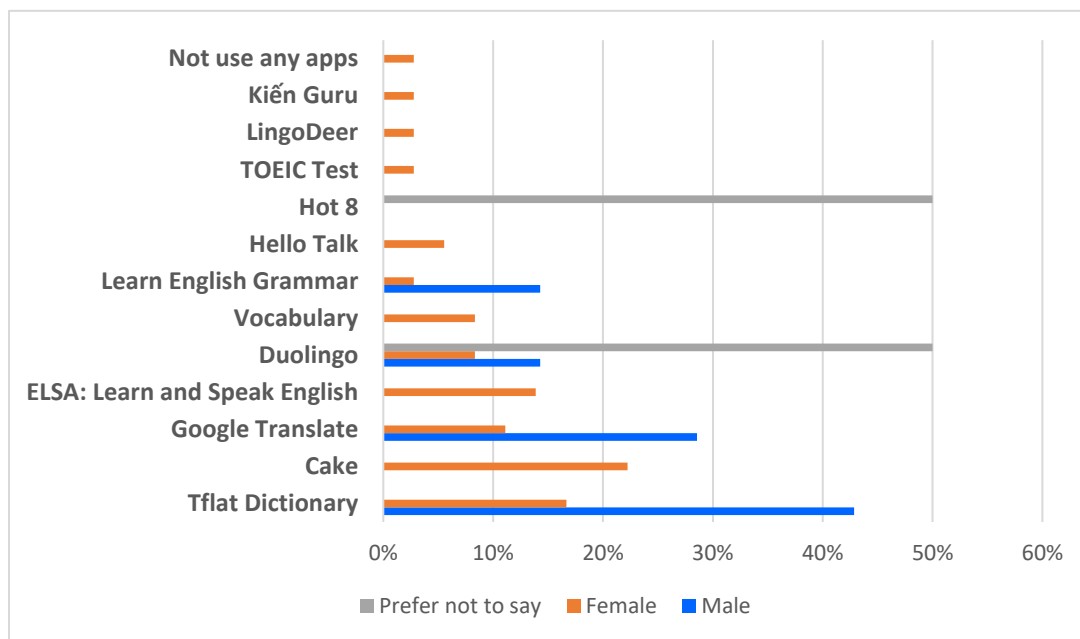
How do students know language learning resources?

Students. To examine this issue more deeply, item 12 asked how student participants

came to know about English language learning apps. From the student questionnaire data, the

internet was reported by 21 SRs (91.3%), ranking number one amongst the most frequently

selected options. This was followed by Friends (n = 16, 69.6%). Instructors ranked third (n = 9,

39.1%). Moreover, few SRs indicated that they learned the apps from family members (n = 2,

8.7%). Nonetheless, some degree of inconsistency in the responses of SRs was uncovered. From

item 8 (student questionnaire), it was found that 100% of student participants indicated that

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males and one Prefer not to say, instead of 23, to be able to understand the percentage. After doing the proportion, I
also used the SUM Excel function to double-check if I had done it correctly. If they add up to 100%, it means that I
do it correctly (Clarke, 2016).

instructors suggested online resources for practising English outside the class, but the responses

of students to item 12 (You know those resources from...) seemed to be inconsistent when nine

SRs did not indicate that they came to know the online resources from the instructors. They just

listed the Internet, friends and even advertisements on the Internet. Although this finding is

somewhat disappointing, it may warrant additional investigation into this phenomenon to learn

more about it and look for strategies that can make it easier for students to access a large number

of helpful learning resources on the Internet. The responses to this item are presented in Figure

4.12.

Figure 4.12

Student responses about how they know about online resources
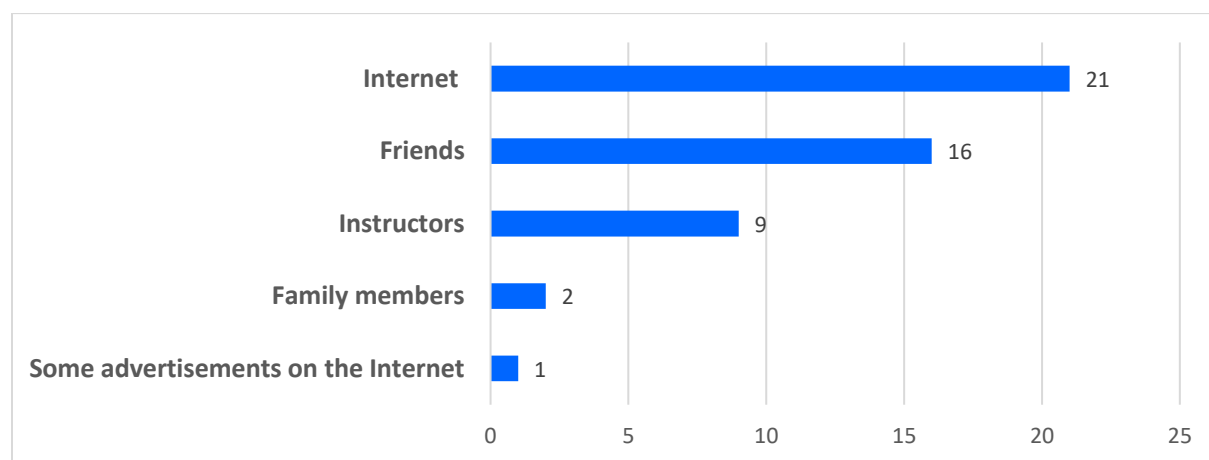
Staff. Item 7 on the staff questionnaire further helped us understand where the English

majors in this current study learned about resources available for their beyond-the-classroom

English practice. The responses to this item are presented in Figure 4.13.

Figure 4.13

Staff responses about how they think students learn about online resources
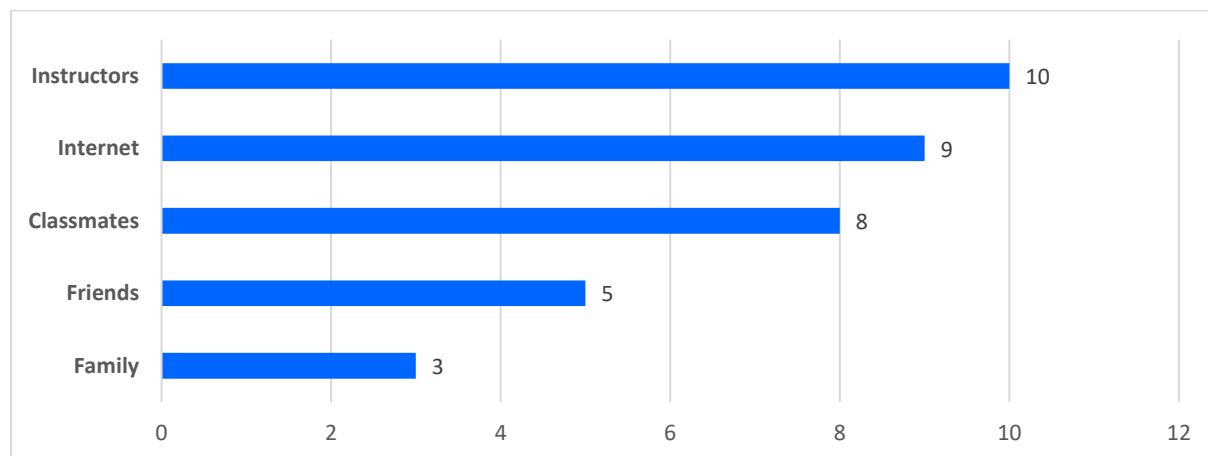
As seen in Figure 4.13, from the perspective of the staff, English majors in this current study came to know online learning resources from different sources such as instructors, the Internet, classmates, friends, and family, amongst which three sources, namely instructors, the Internet, and classmates seemed to be the most frequently selected. Although both friends and classmates were mentioned by the staff, staff seemingly placed more emphasis on classmates as sources than friends.

Comparing data from student and staff questionnaires, the internet and classmates seemed to be two primary sources introducing and providing online learning resources to English majors in this current study. The discrepancy between the students' and staff's responses regarding this issue will be discussed in chapter seven – semi-structured interviews from both students and staff.

Why do students engage or disengage in autonomous language learning outside the class? (RQ3)

What activities do students participate in to practise their English outside the class?

Students were asked to name or list activities they engage in to practice their English outside of the classroom for open-ended item 13, which was similar to items 5, 9, 10, and 11. Both English and Vietnamese were found in the responses. As a result, inductive coding of responses (Medelyan, 2021; Terry & Braun, 2016) and descriptive analysis (Clarke, 2013, 2016) were also utilised for this item to synthesise the data. Responses to this item are presented in Figure 4.14.

Figure 4.14

Student responses about activities they participate in to practise their English outside the class
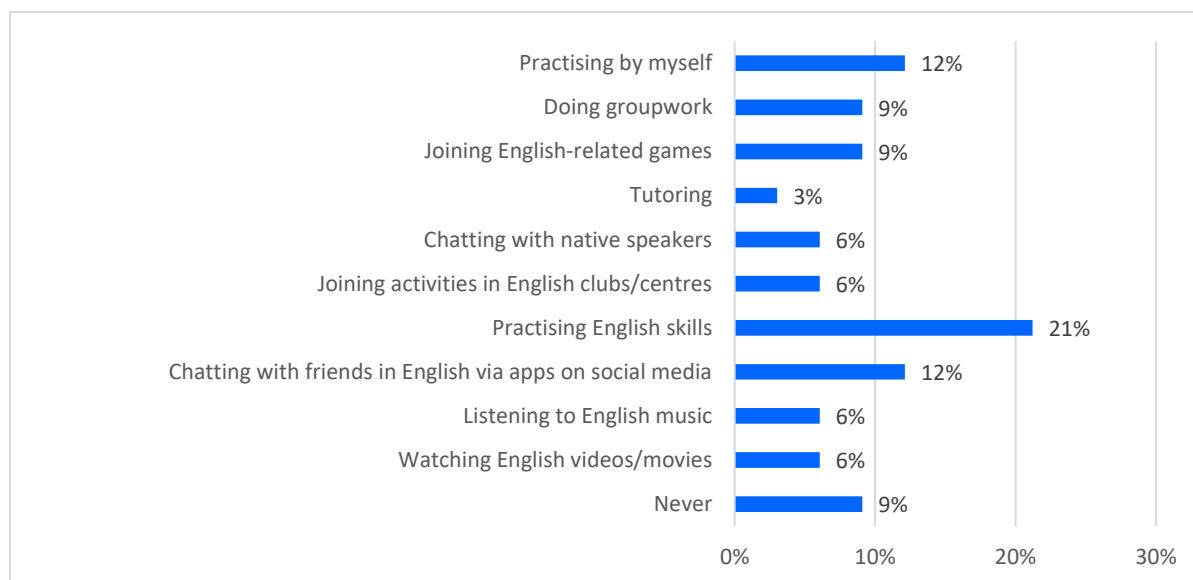
Students reported engaging in a variety of activities as part of their learning outside of the classroom, as shown in Figure 4.14. First, they either engaged in solo or group activities. The second was that the activities were motivated by the student's interests or language development. Thirdly, it might be started with a dual aim of making money while reviewing the language, namely tutoring. Last, the developments in technology also served as motivation. As in the findings of Gao (2009) and Hyland (2004), the students listed activities such as watching English

movies/videos, listening to English music, joining communicative activities and English-related games in classes or at English language clubs/centres, chatting with friends or native speakers in the target language via social media. They practised their English by themselves and engaged in "group homework" (SR2) or "group activities" (SR10) beyond the classroom.

Although the survey data also indicated that seven students practised their English language skills beyond the classroom, one third-year female student (SR20) specified that she practised speaking, writing and reading skills. *Tutoring* was considered an activity to practise English beyond the classroom by only a male student. The interview data indicated that one female student used to work part-time as a teaching assistant for a male English-speaking teacher at an English language centre for a relatively short time. Unfortunately, due to objective reasons (no salary for teaching assistantship and just transport fee covered, few opportunities for chatting outside the class) and subjective ones (her anxiety when talking with the English speaker teacher and short working time) as well as culture-related ones (females afraid to initiate a conversation with male strangers, females not advised to go to others' houses, especially strangers' at night), she could not take advantage of this opportunity to sharpen her English skills.

What activities do students like most?

Item 14 asked English majors to describe the activities they enjoyed the most to better understand the motivations behind their participation. Similar to previous open-ended questions, this one was synthesised using inductive coding (Medelyan, 2021; Terry & Braun, 2016) and descriptive data analysis (Clarke, 2013, 2016). Responses to this item are presented in Figure 4.15.

Figure 4.15

Student responses about what activities they like most

Figure 4.15 illustrates how students' preferences revealed several forms of ALLBC and a sizable selection of activities. The data appeared to suggest that learning was enjoyable on both an individual and a group or cooperative basis, especially when it involved such activities as playing games or conversing on social networking platforms, joining English club meetings, viewing movies with English subtitles, or listening to English music. Furthermore, ALLBC was linked to classroom learning since one student in this study preferred using the review materials.

Unfortunately, it was unknown why tutoring was deemed to be a preferred activity to practise English beyond the classroom because student respondents did not clarify this response in the questionnaire. However, student comments from the interviews will be presented in Chapter Six - Semi-structured interviews. Nguyen and Stracke (2021) recently conducted a case study investigating students' beliefs and practice of learner autonomy in the Vietnamese EFL context. They found that, apart from social activities and personal hobbies and interests, such part-time jobs as a private English tutor, a teaching assistant to native English teachers at schools, an apprentice at an international organisation, or an administrator of a community fan

page were reported to be English practice opportunities beyond the classroom actively created by Vietnamese EFL learners at the tertiary level. Those opportunities were "the perfect way" to hone their English by practising English, revising and/or reinforcing English knowledge and mastering English skills (Nguyen & Stracke, 2021, p. 328).

It should be also noted that the EFL learners in Nguyen and Stracke's (2021) study were successful proficient learners, whose high engagement in both within- and outside-the-class learning environments was confirmed by their instructors. Meanwhile, the students in this study were English majors with limited English proficiency as judged by the staff participants during the interviews.

Why do students like engaging in those activities?

Students. Concerning the reason why English majors are interested in engaging in activities beyond the classroom, only nine student respondents explained. First of all, speaking or communicating activities were easy and could help facilitate listening and speaking skills (SR4; SR17). Similarly, watching videos/movies in English could help learn vocabulary and practise listening or pronunciation (SR13; SR22). Meanwhile, the SR10 enjoyed group activities most because they could help develop her English skills and become closer to her friends. In the same vein, chatting with friends via messenger in English "created excitement in using English" (SR12) and listening to UK-US music seemed to help SR15 "relax and study English in a comfortable way" (SR15). Likewise, joining small English-related games helped students "play and use English to communicate with others" (SR16). One male second-year student indicated he preferred the activity of "using resources to review because it helps a lot to understand what is still confusing" (SR14). Hence, the purposes of English majors' engagement in ALLBC in this

current study comprised English improvement, dual-purpose purpose-learning and relaxation, and classroom-learning notes review.

As in Inaba (2019), these findings show that aside from longing to develop their target language skills, learners engaged in ALLBC chiefly for enjoyment or to explore their interests. This seems to be understandable because language learners "might have two different intentions for one practice" (Inaba, 2019, p. 46).

Staff. There were two items (9 and 10) asking the staff for their thoughts on why students engage in ALLBC in the staff questionnaire. The closed-ended item 9 indicated that all ten staff believed that English-major participants in this current study practised English beyond the classroom for the sake of tests/examinations and nine staff thought that students did that for their English skills development. Four staff thought that students autonomously practised English beyond the classroom for a two purposes - English development and enjoyment. The responses to this item are presented in Figure 4.16.

Figure 4.16

Staff responses about why students like engaging in ALLBC
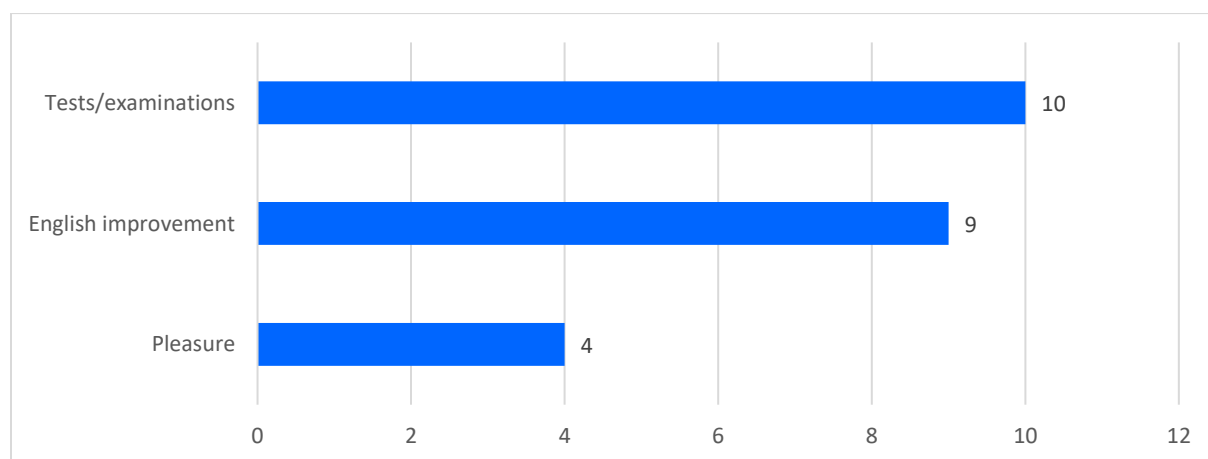
The open-ended item 10 asked staff respondents for their perspectives as to why English majors might engage in practising English beyond the classroom autonomously. Eleven responses from nine staff questionnaires were received, with one deemed not relevant, and these are presented in Figure 4.17.

Figure 4.17

Staff responses to why students engage in ALLCB
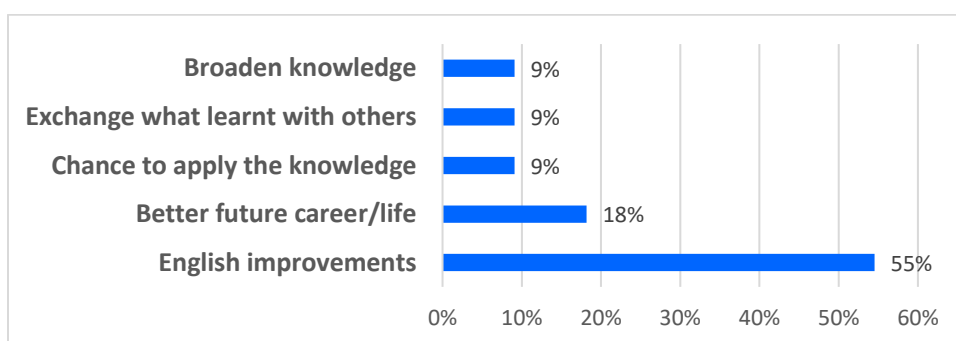
As Figure 4.17 demonstrates, the dominant response was nurturing English language development.

Apart from homework and test preparation, what are the reasons for students using online resources for practising their English outside the class?

Item 16 in the student questionnaire asked students about additional reasons for using online resources to practise English beyond the classroom, apart from doing homework and preparing for tests and examinations. Eight SRs just responded Yes, but did not specify. One out of five student respondents who responded "no" said, "No I don't because I must be (need) more time to find the good materials" (SR21). Other reasons were reported by four student respondents (two second-year ones and two third-year ones). One third-year student wrote "English books" (SR11), so he might have used online resources for searching English books as well. Another male third-year student also often utilised the online resources to "tran(s)late some

new words and some structure(s)" he had never met before (SR15). Meanwhile, a female second-year student wrote, "Yes, I practise listening, reading and improving my vocabulary" (SR13) and her female classmate said, "Of course, i often use it for checking my pronounce" (SR16).

It is also necessary to note that a second-year male student respondent indicated that he also employed online resources "for work" (SR6). Thus, besides using online resources for doing homework and preparing for tests and examinations, several English majors also utilised online resources for such other purposes as practising their English skills, namely listening, reading, pronunciation and vocabulary, searching for various kinds of materials including English books, ones necessary for tests/examination and checking their understanding of the target language (translating new words and learning new structures). These findings are similar to those of Inaba (2019) who observed that learners of Japanese in Australia employed online dictionaries "to read hard copy materials, such as textbooks and handouts" (p. 119) and "to identify the most appropriate translation words" (p. 120).

Do staff think that English majors practise their English outside the class for exams or tests only?

Staff were also asked whether tests and examinations constituted the only reason why the English-major participants might practise their English skills beyond the classroom since the EFL context within the country was characterised as an exam-driven learning environment (Le Q. X., 2013; Mai, 2015; Nguyen & Stracke, 2021; Pham & White, 2019; Tran, 2018). Responses to item 14 (staff questionnaire) are presented in Figure 4.18.

Figure 4.18

Staff responses about whether English majors practise their English outside the class for exams or tests only
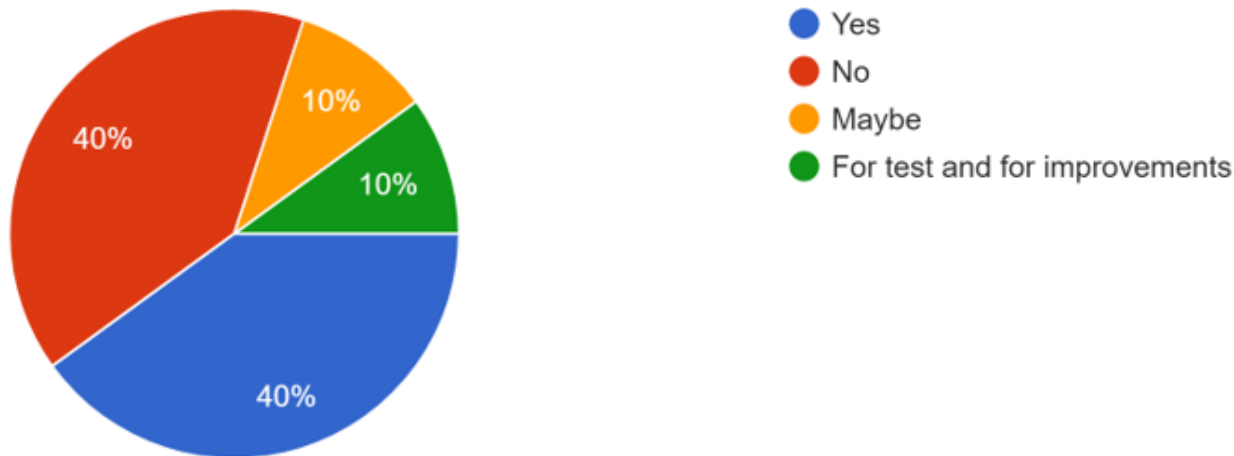
Figure 4.18 reveals that six staff agreed that English majors in this current study practised their English skills beyond the class for tests/examinations only, while four staff respondents disagreed with this point of view. This appears to support the fact that the EFL environment in the country is categorised as an exam-oriented or exam-driven context (Duong & Pham, 2022; Le, 2001; Le Q. X., 2013; Nguyen & Stracke, 2021; Pham & White, 2019; Tran, 2018).

As the analysis shows, English majors in this current study seem engaged in different activities beyond the classroom for a variety of purposes: English knowledge improvement and enjoyment or relaxation, information sharing with others, applying within-the-classroom learning to beyond-the-classroom situations, the expectation for better future job and future life as well as preparation for tests and examinations. The two most common purposes stated are the development of English skills and test and examination preparation. The present results support other research on AL that demonstrates language improvement and passing international language tests, securing employment or educational possibilities as reasons for engagement in activities beyond the classroom (Lai et al., 2022). With respect to the Vietnamese context, the

results also correlate with those by Nguyen and Stracke (2021) showing that EFL learners prefer test-orientated activities led by teachers in the classroom.

What activities do students dislike? Why?

Students. To understand why English majors did not engage in ALLBC, item 15 asked the student respondents what activities listed in item 13 they disliked. Except for three students who did not engage in any activities to practise their English beyond the classroom, thirteen out of twenty SRs indicated that they liked it all or just gave a "No" response to this item. Since the student respondents did not further clarify or justify their enjoyment in their responses, comments as to when they felt like learning/practising English outside the class from the second interview will be discussed in chapter seven which presents findings from semi-structured interviews.

For the six out of twenty students who indicated that they did not enjoy several activities their reasons varied. One second-year student – SR1- said that he was not interested in online learning, but did not provide any reasons. While a second-year student disclosed that she disliked speaking with foreigners because she was not confident about her speaking skills, a male third-year student indicated that "I don't like to chat with my friends because they are in the same E(nglish) level with me, then I can't raise my E(nglish) level. I prefer to chat with a foreigner than chat with Vietnamese friends" (SR15). Additionally, one second-year student and one third-year student also indicated that they disliked some apps and the second-year student even further reported that there were so many apps that he was not sure which one was suitable. The English majors in this current study seemed to be overwhelmed with the products displayed within Apple and Google Stores on their smart devices and could not choose one to meet their needs.

Staff. An open-ended item 11 asked the staff for their perceptions about students' reasons for not engaging in practising their English beyond the classroom. The responses to this item are in Figure 4.19.

Figure 4.19

Staff responses about why English majors did not practise ALLBC
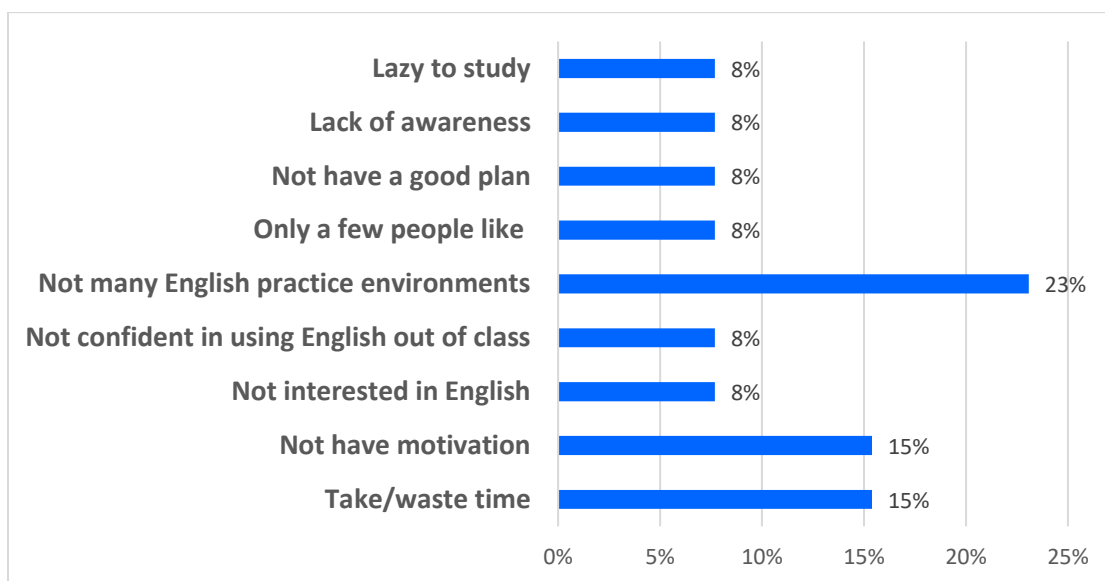
Multiple explanations are provided in Figure 4.19. English practice environments seemed to be the most frequently mentioned followed by students' motivation and learning time. It seemed that almost all reasons indicated here could be categorised as personal reasons, namely lack of awareness, motivation, confidence, learning plans or strategies or even indolence or sloth.

The results partly support the findings of Vu and Shah (2016) according to whom "students have poor awareness of the importance of English listening skills" (p. 59). This might indicate that learners' self-awareness seems to play a role in learners' ALLBC. Thus, it was presumed that from the staff perspective, students' autonomous English language practice beyond the classroom was seemingly hindered by both external factors such as a little exposure

to real-life English communication beyond the classroom in the EFL context and internal factors that originate in the learners. This supports Bui's (2016) results, who noted that the autonomous learning of Vietnamese students majoring in the Russian-English bilingual program was hampered by two different factors: a lack of student motivation and self-determination, a lack of full awareness and the appropriate attitude for AL (Bui, 2016). Additionally, the little exposure to real-life communication in the target language beyond the classroom was also deemed one of the factors impacting AL (Bui, 2016).

Overall, it is possible that learners' lack of confidence, willingness to communicate, limited interaction in the target language, learners' motivation and learning time, learners' lack of awareness, learning plans or strategies or even learners' laziness hamper learners' enthusiastic engagement in ALLBC.

What factors (de)motivate students' autonomous language learning outside the class? (RQ4)

The student questionnaire also included questions about the motivations for English majors' ALLBC (item 17), self-evaluations of their English proficiency, and their capacity to use English outside of the classroom (items 18, 19).

Why do students choose English as their major at college?

Students' reasons for choosing their major are summarised in Figure 4.20.

Figure 4.20

Student responses to why they chose English as a major
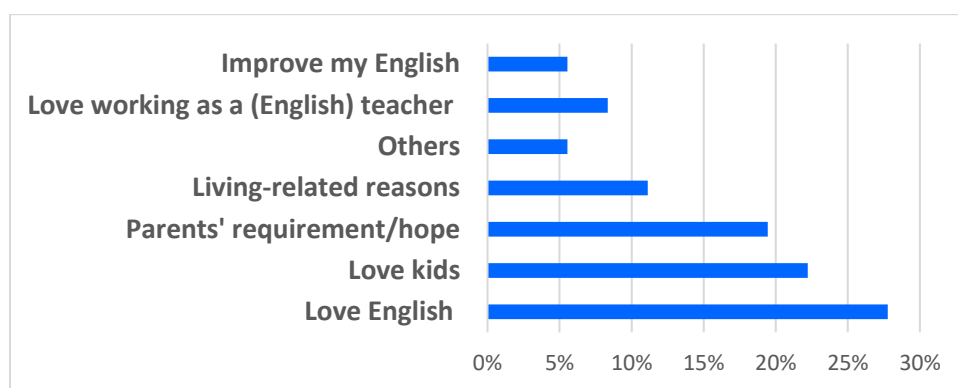
As seen in Figure 4.20, a love for English was the most frequently cited (n = 10, 28%) reason for choosing English as a major at a HEI. This was followed by a love for kids (n = 8, 22%) and parents' expectations (n = 7, 19%). In addition, students were interested in this major because of their wish to be an (English) teacher (n = 3, 8%), to develop their English (n = 2, 6%). Interestingly, student respondents also indicated that they decided to study this major because they "like the pronunciation of English" (SR23) and "love …method skills" (SR21). Several reasons related to their future lives were also reported such as "This major can help me have many conveniences in the future" (SR16), "because it helps me …orient some other areas" (SR22), and "because … this is an easy industry to find jobs" (SR12).

These findings suggest that students' discipline selection was significantly impacted by both intrinsic interests and extrinsic factors. This finding is supported by that of Al-Rfou (2013) who suggested that parents, siblings, friends, and future-job-related factors such as income, career option, occupational prestige, and type of work were among the factors that could be impactful to students' discipline selection. Further, Le et al., (2020) argued that students' motivation and academic outcomes were influenced by finding the right" discipline of study. Thus, it was presumed that undergraduate major selection was possibly one of the factors influencing language learners' motivation which, in turn, might indirectly impact their

autonomous language within and beyond the classroom to achieve their desired learning outcome because Dörnyei and Ushioda (2021) maintained that motivation is impactful to language learners in terms of three aspects, namely the "why"- learners' decision to learn something, the "how long"- learners' willingness to sustain their learning and the "how hard"- learners' pursuit to their learning.

Are students confident with their English?

Item 18 asked student respondents to self-assess their English skills. The responses to the item are presented in Figure 4.21.

Figure 4.21

Student responses about a self-assessment of their English skills
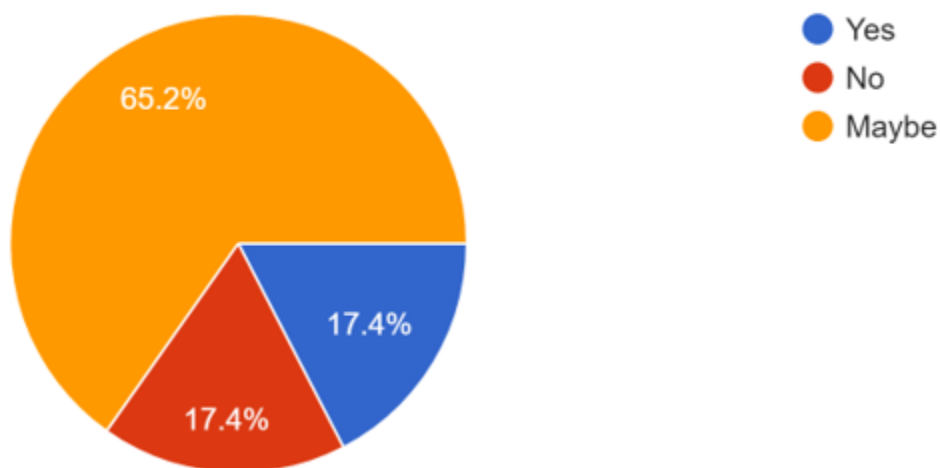
As shown in Figure 4.21, the majority of student participants (82.6%) in this survey were not confident about their English (17.4% of students who confirmed that they were not confident about their English skills plus 65.2% of students who were uncertain of their English command). Item 19 then asked students if they believed in their own abilities to practise their English beyond the classroom.

Do students think that they can practise their English outside the class by themselves?

The responses to item 19 asking students to self-evaluate their abilities to practise English beyond the classroom are presented in Figure 4.22.

Figure 4.22

Student responses about being able to practise their English outside the class by themselves

Responses reveal that six SRs (26.1%) thought that they could practise English beyond the classroom autonomously, twelve students (52.2 %) were not sure that they could and five SRs confessed that they could not do it (21.7%). Thus, seventeen SRs (73.9%) did not believe that they could study autonomously beyond the classroom effectively.
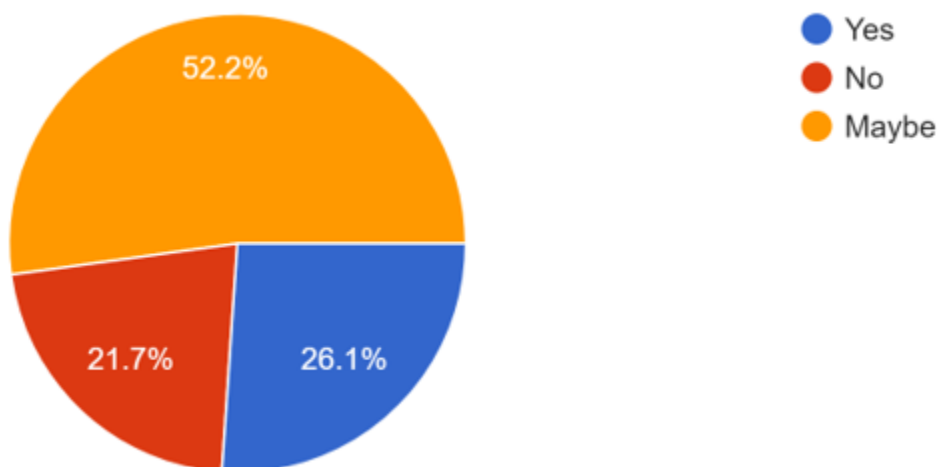
What can be done to help/encourage/motivate students to practise their English outside the class by themselves?

The data used to explore this issue were collected from both the student questionnaire (item 20) and the staff questionnaire (item 12).

Students. Item 20 directly asked student respondents about factors that could encourage/motivate their engagement in ALLBC. As previously mentioned, since the responses

to this open-ended item were of multiple textual data, the descriptive analysis technique (Clarke, 2013, 2016) and inductive coding (Medelyan, 2021; Terry & Braun, 2016) were of utility, and the responses are presented in Figure 4.23.

Figure 4.23

Student responses about what can be done to help/encourage/motivate students to practise their English outside the class by themselves
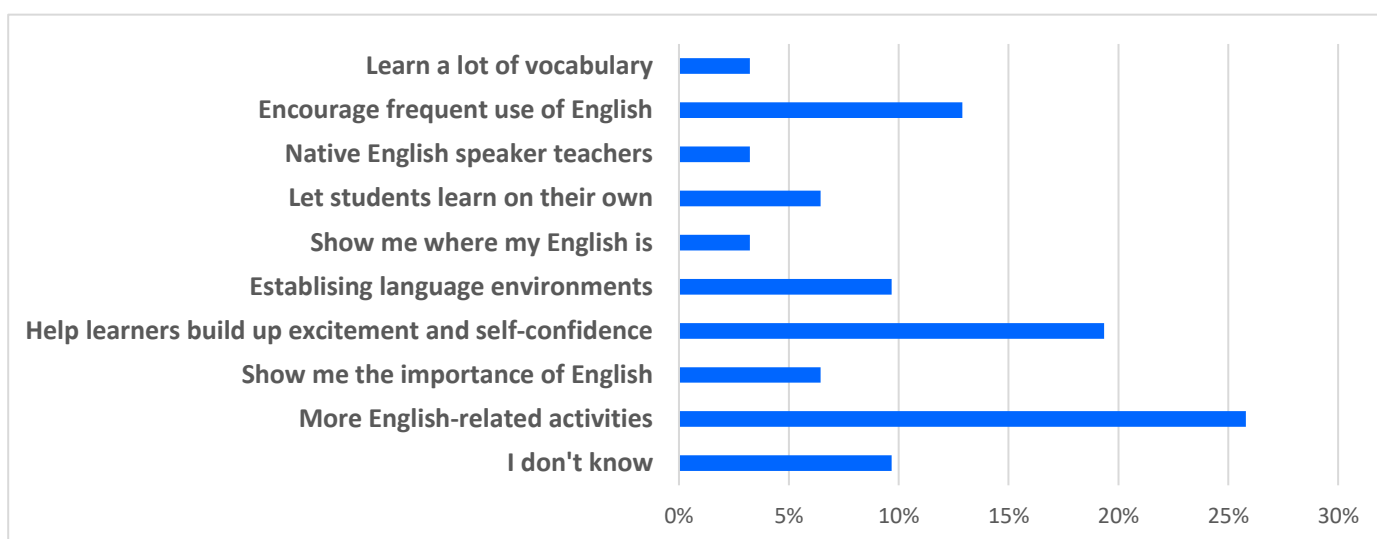
As seen in Figure 4.23, SRs reported a variety of suggestions to help encourage/motivate EFL learners to engage in autonomous learning beyond the classroom. Specifically, three SRs recommended that more language learning environments should be established to help learners gain "a lot of English exposure" (SR21) and eight SRs suggested that more exciting English-related activities such as extra-curricular activities, games, and contests should be regularly organised to "excite learners" (SR22). Also, six English majors indicated they needed someone to show them the importance of English and help them build up excitement and self-confidence in communicating in the target language. Students hesitated to speak English, feeling "quite shy", sensing that their words sounded "unnatural and inaccurate" (SR23). The English majors emphasised the importance of 1) frequent practice in the EFL settings (n =4, 13%); 2) the

benefits of boosting learners' vocabulary (n = 1, 3%) to help them become more self-confident in using the target language; and 3) the availability of native English speaker instructors (n = 1, 3%) as a source of encouragement and/or motivation for their language learning beyond the classroom.

Three SRs had no idea of what could motivate them to study autonomously beyond the classroom, and one further indicated that he needed to receive comments on his actual level of English so that he could be encouraged or motivated to engage in ALLBC. This may be supportive of a discussion by Reinders (2010), who remarked that language learners "have little knowledge of their strengths and weaknesses as language learners" (p .46). While they may know that they need to nurture language development, they may not be aware of the fact that they have a poor ability to learn from and with others, which is an important learning skill. (Reinders, 2010). These findings may suggest that in addition to extrinsic incentives, the intrinsic interest of the EFL learners in this current study needs to be triggered to encourage or motivate them to engage more in ALLBC. Students also seem to demand instructors' guidance and an infrastructure of support for learning English within the institution.

English majors in this current study reported a lack of motivation to learn English beyond the classroom autonomously and offered several internal reasons as to why: 1) lack of awareness of the value of ALLBC; 2) low self-confidence and willingness to communicate with their English skill; 3) overall perception of low English competency. Some indicated they had no idea of the pivotal role of the English language in their lives, as the SR11 – a male third-year student responded when asked what can be done to help/encourage/motivate students to practise English beyond the class solo, "Tell students how important the role of English is" (SR11) or what could encourage their English learning. Similarly, some could not self-assess their English

abilities; some needed help with their self-confidence and excitement to learn English and some even were unmotivated because they did not have sufficient English vocabulary to use English confidently. Looking at external influences, the learners identified their EFL language learning environment to have little real-life authentic communication in the target language. Thus, some students suggested that language learning environments should be established to provide more opportunities to encourage English use beyond the classroom. The interview data also indicated some similar recommendations from the staff perspectives, which will be presented in chapter seven – semi-structured interviews.

Staff. Open-ended item 12 asked the staff respondents about their motivations for language learning outside of the classroom. I classified the 20 responses shown in Figure 4.24 using previously mentioned techniques: the descriptive analysis technique (Clarke, 2013, 2016) and inductive coding (Medelyan, 2021; Terry & Braun, 2016).

Figure 4.24

Staff responses about what can be done to help/encourage/motivate students to practise their English outside the class by themselves
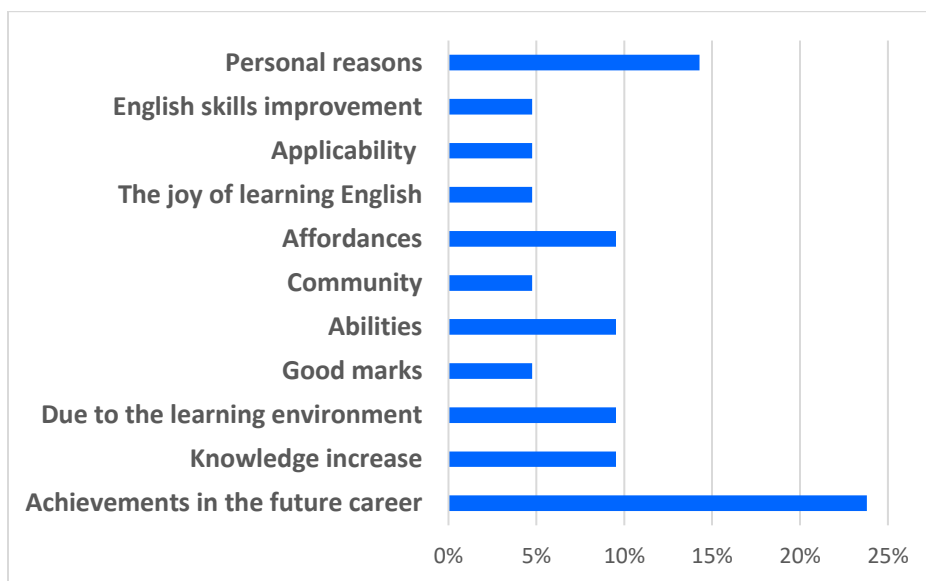
As shown in Figure 4.24, a range of factors could motivate students to autonomously engage in English practice beyond the classroom as indicated by the staff respondents. The most common one refers to career prospects such as jobs, job positions, job promotions, salary, or income. The category of "Personal reasons" includes such responses as "for personal reasons" (STAR 6), and "tourism" (STAR 9). Although it was unfortunate that STAR 6 did not specify what personal reasons were, it seemed quite understandable when STAR 9 mentioned the reason for English practice for travelling because "most forms of international tourism entail interactions in English" (Ennis & Petrie, 2020, p. 1).

The joy of learning English was one of three reasons for learners' engagement in practising English beyond the classroom proposed by staff respondent 5. The "Abilities" category refers to students' abilities or capacities, namely self-confidence (STAR 1) and practical competence (STAR 10). The category of "Affordances" refers to time and technology because time and technology, according to the seventh STAR, could be deemed factors which

might provide more opportunities for learning or "affordances" (Richards, 2015) beyond the classroom.

Meanwhile, the factor "applicability" offered by staff respondent 10 could refer to the potential usage of English. Thus, from the staff perspective, students might engage in autonomous English practice activities beyond the classroom English might be applicable to their future real-life situations or events. It is also interesting to note that, in addition to two expected factors, namely English skills and English knowledge development, the learning environment and good marks were considered the factors that could generate students' motivation to practise their English beyond the classroom autonomously. "Due to the language learning environment" here could be understood as due to time limitations within-the-classroom learning (Richards, 2015), and so little is real-life English communication within the EFL environment that English majors, from the staff perspective, could be motivated to practise their English beyond the classroom more to develop their low English proficiency. Additionally, "good marks" as a factor triggering students' engagement in autonomous English practice beyond the classroom is in line with Inaba's (2019) observations that learners' "motives for gaining good marks triggered an increase in class-related literacy practices and helped overcome the gap between their Japanese language skills and task demands" (p. 87).

Although the responses from the staff appeared to be more general than those from the students, some similarities were evident. The joy or excitement of English learning seems to be a factor that might drive students' engagement in ALLBC because both the staff's responses and the students' responses revealed that students needed excitement to awaken their interest in English learning. The idea or function of a language learning environment was mentioned by both groups of respondents, so an environment or community full of English-related activities in

which students could regularly practice their language skills with partners or with English-speaking individuals could start their participation in ALLBC in this EFL environment. However, a common theme in many students' responses seemed to be the instructor's encouragement, guidance, or support. They stated they were unsure of what would prompt their participation in ALLBC,   they needed someone to show them the importance of English learning for their future careers and they needed someone to help their level of English proficiency, and specific support to boost their self-confidence. The staff group also brought up the concept of abilities, which might be used to describe students' capacities to participate in ALLBC. As a result, it appeared that the teachers' encouragement of students to develop their skills or confidence was a key factor in motivating them to participate in ALLBC. The student group stressed the value of vocabulary learning as a factor, and the staff group mentioned the need for English development and an increase in English-language knowledge as factors triggering students' engagement in ALLBC. These comments suggest that the abilities mentioned here may also include English language proficiency. Comparing and contrasting the responses from the student and staff groups may thus indicate that one reason driving students' engagement in ALLBC is the instructor's encouragement of them to gain more self-confidence and English language proficiency. It is also interesting to note that the idea that aiming to gain good marks motivated students to engage in ALLBC lends itself to the claim that the language learning environment in the nation is exam-driven or exam-oriented. Finally, further information may be required to comprehend why the staff believes that applicability and affordance are two factors that could spur students' engagement in ALLBC.

What factors can demotivate language learning outside the class?

The staff were also asked in the open-ended item 13 what things can demotivate language learning outside of the classroom. The responses to this item are presented in Figure 4.25.

Figure 4.25

Staff responses about factors that can demotivate language learning outside the class
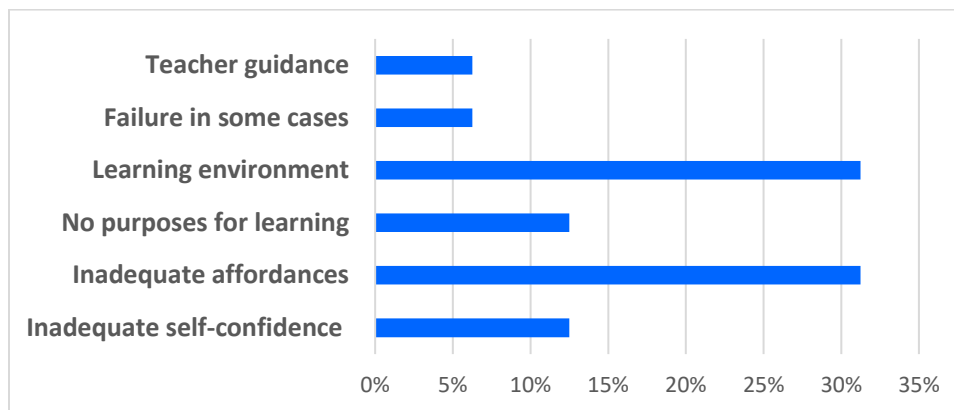
As shown in Figure 4.25, the category of "inadequate affordances" and "learning environment" seemed to be the dominant ones among the factors indicated here by the staff respondents. Inadequate-affordance factor refers to a lack of time, technology, and money. Thus, if affordances refer to opportunities for learning or what is accessible to a learner in his/her environment that might be employed for learning (Richards, 2015; Y.-J. Lee, 2022), from the staff perspective, a lack of money, time, and technology might be factors demotivating students' autonomous English language learning beyond the classroom. In addition, the factor of "learning environment", which refers to tasks, tests, inadequate facilities, and "for exams or tests only" (STAR 6), might also be deemed a demotivating factor impactful to students' autonomous English language practice beyond the classroom. It is also noticed that STAR 5 indicated that "teacher guidance" and "positive learning environment" were two factors which might demotivate learners' ALLBC.

Research in the United Arab Emirates and Vietnam revealed that instructors often struggle to support students' learning due to time constraints, mandatory curriculum, and nationally standardized outcomes (Ibrahim & El Zaatari, 2020; Le, 2017). In Vietnam, instructors have to use limited classroom time to help students achieve CEFR-based National 6-level Proficiency Scale examination standards, rather than designing communicative tasks and interaction activities to help learners use language purposefully (Le, 2017). In the United Arab Emirates, students believed that some instructors prioritised curriculum completion over academic and psychological support, while some instructors might also have faced pressure to meet curricular requirements and pass exams (Ibrahim & El Zaatari, 2020). Instructors may have overlooked the harm, disturbance, and degradation of self-confidence caused by their actions due to these pressures (Ibrahim & El Zaatari, 2020). Feeling under such constant pressure that some instructors might have "constantly or bitterly complained or said something that" students did not long to hear and as a result, students "had a hatred of (the teacher) and they didn't want to study that course anymore" (Interview with Dep). Ibrahim & El Zaatari (2020) argued that normalizing insults, embarrassment, or disrespect towards students might lead to a decrease in their love for their school.

High expectations are vital for student success, but excessive pressure can negatively affect their happiness and sense of belonging, which are crucial for their psychological and academic performance (Allen et al., 2022; Ibrahim & El Zaatari, 2020; Lin & Chen, 1995). Academic stress significantly impacts students' performance at secondary and tertiary levels, with low achievement often linked to higher perceived stress (Pascoe et al., 2020). High curriculum requirements, exams, reports, and projects might demotivate students, impacting their learning experience (Ibrahim & El Zaatari, 2020; Pascoe et al., 2020). Further exploration is

needed to understand the underlying factors contributing to this issue, highlighting the need for improved educational environments.

The study revealed that students' self-confidence and lack of learning goals were significant concerns, confirming Bui's (2016) findings that ALLBC was ineffective due to factors like time constraints, self-awareness, lack of learning materials, lack of autonomous learning strategies, and difficulty resolving problems. Bui's (2016) study found that while some students were aware of learning autonomously, their ALLBC was unsuccessful due to inefficient learning strategies, unenthusiastic self-awareness, passive habits, and teacher-led orientations, such as finishing homework or assignments and preparing for lessons. Demotivating factors, including lack of self-awareness, limited resources, lack of authentic language communication, insufficient learning goals, inefficient strategies, passive habits, and distractions from real-life situations, significantly impact language learners' ALLBC at the tertiary level, highlighting the importance of addressing these issues in education.

In brief, the study partially supports Bui's (2016) observation that a lack of time and a supportive learning environment may discourage language learners from engaging in ALLBC. However, the faculty believes students may be demotivated by a lack of learning objectives, confidence, or failure. The survey data showed that instructors' instruction and a perceived positive learning environment negatively impacted learners' engagement in ALLBC. Further research might provide more insights into this topic and other learning environments. Figure 4.26 summarises the similarities and differences between my findings and those of Bui (2016).

Figure 4.26

The similarities and differences between my findings and those of Bui (2016).

A Venn diagram comparing "My findings" and "Bui's (2016)".

- **My findings**: Technology, money, Inadequate self-confidence, failure in some cases
- **Overlap**: Lack of time, Lack of self-awareness, Limited resources, Insufficient learning goals, Passive learning habits, Inefficient strategies, Learning environment
- **Bui's (2016)**: External extracting factors, unable to resolve their own problems
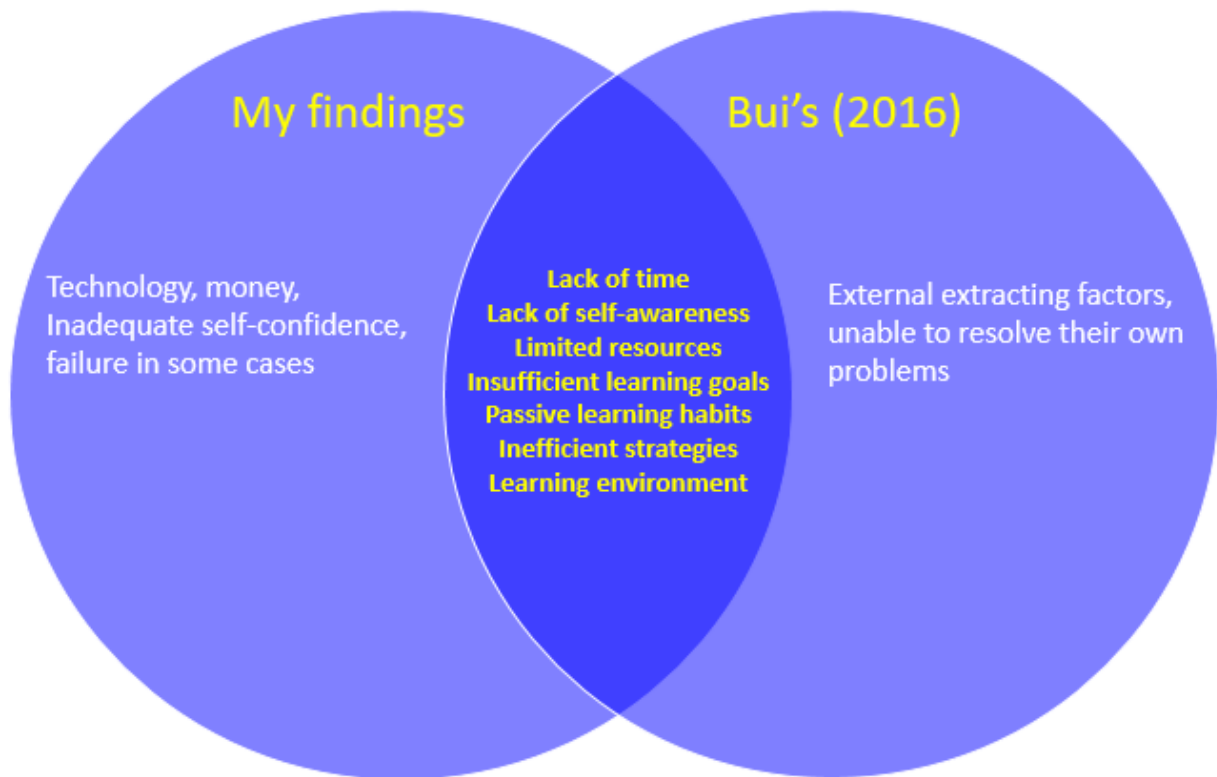
Summary

This chapter presented the findings that emerged from the Google-form survey administered to student and staff participants. These include:

1. A limited number of English majors engaged in ALLBC to develop their English

- few engaged in ALLBC regularly

- several students had never engaged in ALLBC.

2. Many student participants (82.6%) were not confident about their English skills and 73.9% of SRs indicated that they could not or were not sure that they could practise their English beyond the classroom by themselves.

3. 82.6% of SRs preferred to practise their English beyond the classroom at their accommodation such as home, dormitory or boarding home and hardly any mentioned campus library as their favourite place for their ALLBC.

4. English majors explored numerous language learning apps within their ALLBC, among which translation apps are reported to be more frequently used than other kinds of apps

5. Smart digital tools and internet technology were favoured by English majors in their ALLBC.

6. It is unclear why the course books- the mandatory learning materials - were of little use within students' beyond-the-classroom language practice.

7. Participants reported practising their English beyond the classroom mainly for listening, reading and writing

8. English majors practised their English beyond the classroom for two purposes: development of English skills and test and examination preparation.

9. Hindrances to ALLBC included learners' lack of confidence, learners' unwillingness to communicate, limited opportunities for authentic interaction in the target language in the EFL environment, learners' lack of motivation and limited learning time, learners' lack of awareness, learners' lack of learning plans or strategies or even learners' "laziness".

10. Students recommended ways to increase their ALLBC - through extra-curricular activities, games, and contests. They also indicated they needed someone to show them the importance of English and help them build up excitement and self-confidence.

The results should be interpreted cautiously because the survey's sampling was quite small, as already mentioned. However, these results seem to contribute fresh knowledge to the discipline. For instance, even though these results seem to support earlier studies that indicated few students participated in ALLBC, the present findings reflect that some students never do. Additionally, it appears that one of the obstacles preventing students from participating in ALLBC is students' lethargy. Further, the current study found that students in their ALLBC made less use of the course books, which are required reading for practically all courses offered by the institution. More research is required.

CHAPTER FIVE: SOLICITED DIARY

Introduction

A solicited diary with both quantitative and qualitative components represents another data collection tool of the present study. The solicited diary is "an account produced specifically at the researcher's request, by an informant or informants" (Bell, 1998, p. 72) and has been used in different areas of research to understand multiple aspects of human life including education (Carli Lorenzini & Olsson, 2021; Hyers, 2018; Milligan & Bartlett, 2019).

The students were asked to record their activities over 22 weeks based on the guiding questions and the specific examples of documenting daily activities in all entries of the diaries (see Appendix B). The 22-week diary-keeping period from May 24th to October 24th, 2021, involved reviewing students' records daily, focusing on English-related learning activities. This was done to differentiate them from other activities like housework, YouTube watching, and music listening. The information was then incorporated into an Excel spreadsheet, and the students were commended and motivated to continue their work.

Additional factors may also have influenced diarists. On May 24, 2021, the first day of the student's first week of diary-keeping, they were all home and had begun their summer break earlier than expected because of the Covid-19 outbreak that was sweeping through Vietnam. Further, on August 16th, 2021, they started their new academic year online owing to the epidemic (week 13). Thus, the full diary-keeping period might be divided into the summer holiday (weeks 1–12) and the new academic year (weeks 13-22). This segmentation is also intended to compare and contrast students' English learning or English practice beyond the classroom to see whether there were any variations between the two periods.

I will discuss the findings from the solicited diaries in the next section by answering the research questions and comparing the findings with the survey results.

How do English majors at a Vietnamese public higher education institution engage in autonomous language learning outside the class? (RQ1)

To answer this research question, I will concentrate on data pertaining to what, where, how long, with whom, how, and how often four students engaged in those activities over the two time periods mentioned.

The summer holiday (weeks 1-12).

Three of them practised English alone, while one reported that she occasionally did so with her older sister. The length and frequency of engagement varied. The following themes emerged in the coding and analysis: differences in the length and frequency of their engagement, similarity in the manner and content of student engagement, and being unaware of learning opportunities.

Length and frequency of their engagement. The data showed that each diarist practised English for somewhere between 0 and 6 hours daily. Of the four diarists, Thu spent the most time beyond the classroom practising her English, with Ha spending the least. Specifically, Ha reported spending 46 days during the course of 12 weeks (84 days) doing nothing related to English. Thu, meanwhile, recorded 51 days when she spent four to six hours per day engaging in activities related to English. Ha spent a half-hour daily, whereas Thu spent an average of 3.8 hours. In contrast, the time that Dong and Xuan spent in ALLBC was similar. These findings confirm the survey's results that a small number of students regularly engaged in ALLBC and that many others had never done so. The students' average daily time spent practising English outside of the classroom is illustrated in Figure 5.1.

Figure 5.1

Students' average daily time in hours of English practice beyond the classroom during 12 weeks of summer holiday
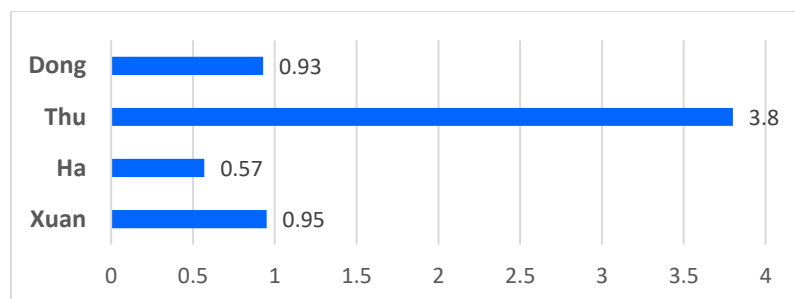
In general, the total weekly time spent by the four students was approximately 11 hours or 1.6 hours per day.

Manner and content of student engagement. Data showed that students continued their English language learning beyond the classroom by using readily available resources including books (reading, grammar, dictionary), computers, and smartphones. Although their approaches appeared to vary slightly, the students shared three common interests: deepening and reviewing their knowledge of English grammar, expanding their vocabulary and practising English listening skills. Their engagement is illustrated in Table 5.1

Table 5.1

Diary data showing manner of student engagement and content in ALLBC during the summer holiday

	English grammar revision and expansion	English vocabulary expansion	English skills practice
Dong	reading grammar books, reviewing grammatical structures	reading books or learning synonyms	reading books in English (aloud) to improve pronunciation and doing reading exercises watching "English videos" on the smartphone
Thu	using books and smartphones, father's computer	using books and smartphones, father's computer	listening to YouTube English songs or music on a smartphone, and father's computer and television to improve English listening skills practise English with an elder sister
Ha		reading a dictionary, books in English, watching some English videos" on the same Facebook	using (a) book in English as a strategy to work on reading and pronunciation skills
Xuan	reading a book, watching video clips on different YouTube channels, watching short movies, engaging with Facebook postings, and utilising Tflat Dictionary and Duolingo apps	reading a book, watching video clips on different YouTube channels, watching short movies, engaging with Facebook postings, and utilising Tflat Dictionary and Duolingo apps	watching YouTube videos to improve pronunciation, practising speaking on two occasions in preparation for the domestic B1 English exam, practising listening skills by listening to English songs and music on YouTube while doing housework

As shown in Table 5.1, students utilise resources at their disposal, namely, books/dictionaries, computers, and smartphones at their disposal during their ALLBC, sharing common interests despite slight differences in their approaches. They also stated various reasons for their engagement, such as reviewing "old knowledge" of English grammar and feeling

confident "to write sentences" and speak (English), doing grammar tests and improving writing and speaking skills (Dong/diary), watching some English videos" on the same Facebook channel to get to "know a lot of interesting things in the world and learn a lot of vocabulary" (Ha/diary), and reviewing vocabulary and idioms (Xuan/diary).

Apart from wishing to develop English skills, student engagement was aimed at preparing for the domestic B1 English exam, which was presently a graduation requirement for English majors. Students also watched YouTube videos to learn a different foreign language to "get a certificate" (Xuan/diary). The name of the language was withheld to ethically safeguard the participant's identity. The preparation of students for a certificate-required language exam seems to confirm the claim that the language learning environment in the nation is exam- and/or certificate-focused. Further, it suggests that the examination system may serve as a major motivator for ALLBC even though it does not theoretically fall within the definition presented earlier.

Being (un)aware of learning opportunities. This theme was found in the diaries of Dong and Xuan. Data from their diaries are presented in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2

Diary data showing students' being (un)aware of learning opportunities

	Diary data
Dong	on Monday - the first day of diary keeping (May 24, 2021): "read reading books"- reading stories, taking notes of new words, and answering questions to be "more confident doing (a) reading test".
	on Wednesday (May 26, 2021-week 1), learnt "nothing" from "learning synonym words" for half an hour to "widen knowledge" and "reading English posts on Facebook" for half an hour
	read "English posts on Facebook" "for fun"
	weeks 7, 9, and 10: reading English posts was also a way to learn the language and aid in her ability to "read fluently"

	weeks 11 and 12: learning English by reading English posts and watching English videos, but at the end of the activity, "nothing" was recorded under the entry "What learnt" in the diary.
Xuan	Initially: listening to English music while doing housework was a way to practise listening skills Later: after listening to English music for 30 minutes, … learned "Nothing". Instead, it was merely "for fun"

As shown in Table 5.2, it seemed that students were sometimes aware of the benefits of learning engagement, and sometimes not. It also revealed fluctuating awareness of the value of ALLBC. This might suggest that students may benefit from a tutorial on ALLBC, its benefits and characteristics, including the value of fun, entertainment, and amusement from English resources.

In brief, during the summer holiday students reported different durations and frequencies of engagement in ALLBC and some of the students did not seem to "connect" some of their "fun" activities with their educational advantages.

The new academic year (weeks 13-22).

The entire educational system in this period had to convert to an online format because of the COVID-19 pandemic's deteriorating situation across the nation. Therefore, the four students continued to be at home and attend classes delivered online. However, given that it was school time, apart from attending online learning sessions or lectures, students occasionally were able to collaborate to complete their assignments or prepare for a presentation. As seen in their diaries, students seemed to vary from one another in terms of the length and frequency of their engagement in ALLBC. Although the four diarists' engagement appeared to have a somewhat comparable approach and content, there appeared to be considerable variation in each of these

elements. The coded themes were: length and frequency of their engagement, manner and content of their engagement, and awareness of learning opportunities.

Length and frequency of student engagement. Even though each student's schedule may have been impacted by the online learning mode, there were differences in the frequency and length of their ALLBC engagement. The data showed that of the four diarists, Thu spent the most time practising her English outside of class, while Ha spent the least amount of time beyond the class, even if her time of engagement and the time of the other two students marginally rose. Ha skipped ALLBC for 16 days in this period, 5 of which she spent relaxing following a demanding week of online study. The diary data also showed that both Dong and Xuan increased the amount of time they spent for ALLBC, although Xuan's engagement appeared to be higher than Dong's. Both students invested additional time at home to complete homework assignments and stay prepared for new classes when the school year started. These data support the survey's findings that seemingly, few students frequently engaged in ALLBC. The time that students spent in ALLBC over the two periods is compared in Figure 5.2.

Figure 5.2

The time students spent in ALLBC over the two periods
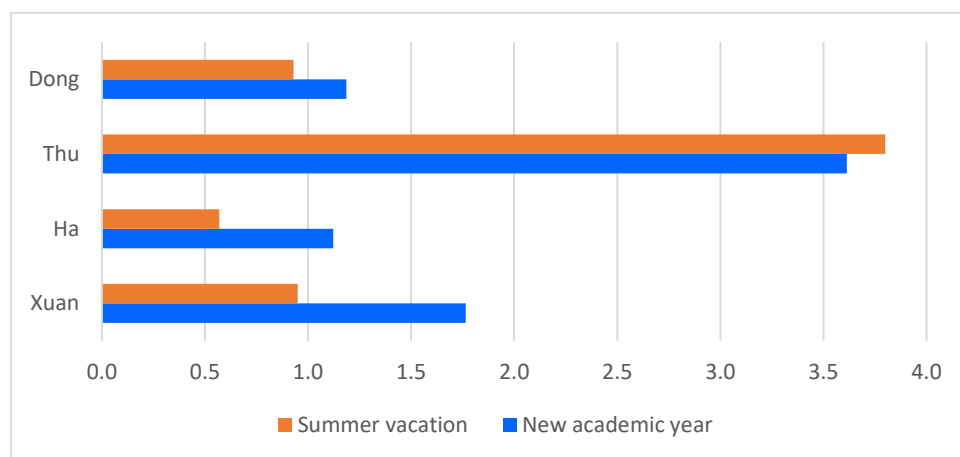
Regarding "with whom," the diary data showed that while some students worked alone at this time, others occasionally worked with friends (classmates) to complete homework assignments or prepare for presentations. For instance, Dong, who Ha claimed to be one of her class's top students, worked solo throughout this time. Similar to Dong, Thu reported completing her homework independently. As previously indicated, Thu continued to practise her listening and speaking skills with her sister by viewing Facebook videos or listening to English songs on their father's computer or their smartphones. On the contrary, Ha worked in groups to prepare for their presentation on an essay about "the national English Olympia" on Friday, October 22, 2021, while doing "translation exercises" with her "group" on Google Meet on Sunday, September 19, 2021. In a similar vein, starting in week 16 (on Saturday, September 18, 2021), Xuan "completed the exercise" working for "one hour" with "friends" (Xuan/diary).

Manner of student engagement and content. Regarding ALLBC, four students worked on their homework assignments, prepared for upcoming lessons, or practised their presentations, either by themselves or with classmates. Additionally, due to the global COVID-19 outbreak, all students who were enrolled in classes that were offered online finished their tasks by using the provided handouts or Google Classroom. The need for students to use digital devices accessible to the Internet, such as laptops, PCs, and cell phones or smartphones, was no inconvenience to Vietnamese students as they commonly own such.

Nonetheless, there did seem to be some variation in the manner and content of student engagement. While some students never engaged in activities beyond the classroom that had nothing to do with their coursework, others reported participating in ALLBC to develop their English. For instance, Dong tried to "read English books," "learn new words," and "do grammar exercises" in "English documents" and "English books" (Dong/diary). Thu worked regularly

beyond the classroom to practise her English, much like Dong, even though she was just as busy with studies as the other students. She worked independently to develop her listening abilities by listening to English music on her smartphone to "know more meaning of sentences" (Thu/diary), in addition to honing her speaking and listening skills with her sister. Additionally, her diary revealed that she spent one to two hours every day studying vocabulary on her father's computer or her smartphone. She used to frequently spend one or two hours reading a grammar book to boost her confidence when performing grammar exercises.

According to Ha's diary entries, her engagement was limited to completing her coursework. Similar to Ha, Xuan spent most of her time in ALLBC working on schoolwork, although her journal revealed that she twice read short stories on Facebook to develop her reading skills and tried using the Duolingo app for three weeks to learn vocabulary and grammar. She also recorded watching YouTube videos for brief periods to hone her English.

The manner of student engagement in ALL also varied. Dong chose to review and learn her English language vocabulary and grammar through English books and "English documents" (Dong/diary). Thu employed a grammar book, her smartphone, and her father's computer and even consulted her elder sister in her English learning engagement. Like other students, for instance, Xuan worked on her schoolwork beyond the class and also the Duolingo platform to study grammar and vocabulary, though occasionally. She further viewed YouTube videos to develop her listening and pronunciation abilities, and knowledge of vocabulary and "cultures of countries" (Xuan/diary) for about 30-60 minutes per day. Her diary also showed that she worked on her pronunciation "for fun" for a duration of ten or fifteen minutes (Xuan/diary). She also made an effort to polish her reading abilities by watching the "English Language Academy

channel" or the "Reading English Everyday" website for ten to 15 minutes. Xuan engaged in ALLBC by utilising technological advances for irregular short spurts of time.

Awareness of learning opportunities. While Thu and Ha recognised the learning value of ALLBC, Dong and Xuan did not seem to be equally aware. As previously mentioned, Dong stated during this time that she learned English beyond the classroom by working on grammar exercises in the "document" (handout) or English book for 30 to 60 minutes, but recorded "Nothing" under the heading "What Learnt". She also made a similar comment on Thursday, September 2, 2021, when she reviewed the lessons by doing her homework, picked up "new words" in her English book over 30 minutes of AALBC and acquired "new knowledge" in nearly all of her online study sessions (Dong/diary).

 Similar to Dong, Xuan occasionally remarked that, whether she spent 30 minutes, an hour, or three hours working on her assignments on her smartphone or notebook, she learned "nothing". But other times, after spending one or two hours completing schoolwork on her smartphone, she recorded that she acquired "grammar," "writing," or "reading" (Xuan/diary). Xuan may not have been aware of what learning meant or of the learning possibilities that emerge in lengthy engagement.

In sum, comparing the two time periods, the students reported different durations and frequencies of engagement in ALLBC, with the tendency to spend more time working beyond the classroom when the new school year began. For example, the student who engaged in ALLBC the least during the summer holidays saw a considerable increase in engagement time when the school year officially began and she used her time beyond the classroom exclusively for her coursework. Further, despite her busy schedule and first-ever online coursework owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, the most time-invested student continued to engage often in ALLBC.

Overall, the four diarists' engagement appeared to have a similar approach and content. For instance, they had the goal of enhancing their English language proficiency and improving their knowledge of the English language. Also, because classes took place during this period, all four students used their digital devices to work on academics beyond the class. However, while some students just used this time for coursework, others made an effort to engage in ALLBC to advance their English language knowledge and skills in other ways. In addition, several students used materials provided by the teachers and their family members (siblings), in addition to digital gadgets and English books, to continue their English education beyond the classroom. Finally, it appears that occasionally some students may not be aware of the educational advantages of their engagement in ALLBC.

The diary results demonstrate that few students engaged in ALLBC, while some never did at all, found also in the survey data. Moreover, English majors practise their English beyond the classroom by using technology and language-learning apps to promote their English language knowledge and skills, also noted in student surveys. Additionally, the diary findings support that students use the "documents" (Dong/diary) or learning materials from their courses during their engagement in ALLBC. Similarly, although it was during a semester, no student reported utilising the required readings from course books for almost all courses to study beyond the class, supporting the survey's results.

How do students utilise the resources and affordances at their disposal in their environments and how do they associate those resources with their classroom learning? (RQ2)

The summer holiday (weeks 1-12)

During the COVID-19 pandemic-affected summer holidays, students' uses of the resources and opportunities offered by their learning environment to practice their English varied from those of other periods. The diary data also show a connection between classroom learning and ALLBC. The coding and analysis revealed the following theme: students' use of resources and affordances.

Students' use of resources and affordances. Four students reported in the diaries their use of *smartphones* as the main tools to access online and digital resources to engage in their at-home English learning. They watched YouTube videos and viewed Facebook posts on their smart devices[6]. It was also discovered that the students used *English books* as part of their study activities. Table 5.3 presents the diary data showing that students used English books as part of their study activities.

Table 5.3

Diary data showing students used English books as part of their study activities during the summer holiday

	Diary data
Dong	"sometime(s) read Reading books" to "practise reading skill" to be "more confident doing reading test(s)", "read English stories to practise pronunciation" to "pronounce confidently" and "read (a) grammar book" to "learn structures"

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[6] According to N. M. Nguyen (2022), along with Vietnam's rising smartphone and internet connectivity rates, social media has increasingly permeated most Vietnamese people's daily lives in recent years and the nation has been among those with the highest percentage of social media users worldwide because of its highly connected and young, digitally literate populace. International networks like Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram are used much more often by Generation Z and about 94 per cent of Vietnamese internet users utilised Facebook in 2022, making it the most popular social media network in the nation (N. M. Nguyen, 2022). A recent survey also found that 97.04% of high school students (grade 12) owned a mobile phone and that 87.45% of them were capable of accessing the Internet effectively (Trinh et al., 2019), so the widespread use of smartphones among students and widespread access to the internet and the Wi-Fi network in the nation aligns

	keeping a notebook to "practise remembering new words" and occasionally an "English document" (tài liệu) to "practise speaking" for "B1 English exam" and a "document" to "do grammar exercises" to "review old structures"
Thu	"read a book" to improve her "writing skills," "vocabulary," and learn "more sentence patterns"
Ha	"read every page and every word," used a dictionary, and took notes to "learn more words and practise reading skills" opened an English book, "reread," and took notes to better her reading comprehension and pronunciation (reread means reading aloud)
Xuan	"read a book" to "improve pronunciation and vocabulary" used the "document" (tài liệu) to prepare for the B1 English examination ONCE attempted to read Maniac!, written by Singaporean author Andy Ong, which was given to her as a gift for filling out a questionnaire during a HEI major selection orientation

As shown in Table 5.3, apart from using books within their ALLBC engagement during the summer holiday amid the COVID-19 pandemic, students also utilised a kind of learning material called "tài liệu" or document. The document cited by the students refers to the handouts or instructional materials usually provided by the instructors, according to my working experience. Thus, it is possible that some students used the resources supplied by the instructors to engage in ALLBC. Even while it was not typical among the four students, this seems to show a connection between learning engagement both within and beyond the classroom.

As was mentioned earlier, Thu used a laptop and her father's computer to practise speaking English with her sister as a practice partner, who had a tourism degree but stayed home due to the pandemic. This highlights the connection between studying beyond the classroom and within the classroom, which students engage in to promote their English proficiency.

While four students used their smartphones to watch YouTube videos, "short films" (Xuan/diary) and Facebook posts for their at-home English practice, some also used them for other purposes. Dong, for instance, expressed interest in reading Facebook posts in English just

for fun in her diary during this period, as mentioned previously. Thu employed the Duolingo app on her smartphone frequently while she was learning English at home. Ha, however, sometimes or twice in the evening, utilised her smartphone to hone her listening skills by spending 30 minutes listening to English music, as she noted in her diary. She also read an English book online for an hour on her smartphone to "learn a lot of vocabularies" (Ha/diary). Meanwhile, Xuan documented utilising the dictionary and translation app Tflat beyond the classroom to learn her English. It is interesting to note that after the initial interview, Xuan discovered that other students also utilised the Duolingo app and in weeks 11 12 and 14 she also mentioned trying that app within her ALLBC.

Additionally, although the participants indicated that they watched YouTube videos while engaging in the ALLBC, not all of them named specific channels. Xuan and Ha recorded the name of the YouTube channel they frequented. Ha listed Nas Daily Tiếng Việt while Xuan listed such channels as Học Tiếng Anh Langmaster, English with Greg, Nas Daily Tiếng Việt.

In brief, during the summer holiday period, students utilised various resources and affordances to study English at home during ALLBC. All four students used smartphones, given the widespread use of smartphones and internet access. Some students did not use textbooks, but some did. One student used her laptop, her father's computer, and her elder sister as a study companion, suggesting that other students did not have access to similar tools or did not seek assistance. This highlights the importance of understanding students' access to resources and tools during ALLBC. Similarly, although almost all students have notebooks, learning materials or handouts, which Dong refers to as "documents," and print dictionaries, not all of them use them within their ALLBC. Finally, the documents from instructors and a sister who served as a

practice partner for English demonstrate a connection between outside and inside-classroom learning for English language learners.

The new academic year (weeks 13-22)

During the pandemic learning, every student used the tools and resources they had at their disposal to access online courses, and accordingly, they also utilised those affordances within their ALLBC. All four students utilised their smartphones, as was already noted, to access online lectures and practice their English at home. They specifically used their smartphones to access Google Classroom and employ the Google Meet tool to attend online classes. They also watched English videos and/or YouTube videos on various channels, namely Nas Daily Tiếng Việt and TED-Ed, using their smartphones. Additionally, Dong and Thu acknowledged that they used English-language books while engaging in ALLBC. Thu also "read the grammar book" to make her "better", "more confident when doing grammar exercises" and "prepare for the new semester" (Thu/diary).

Some students did not mention resources and tools that might be in their possession, such as laptops and PCs, however. Thu noted making use of her older sister and her father's computer throughout her engagement in ALLBC, as was previously mentioned. It was noted that Thu also used a computer to learn English vocabulary and "do the homework" to "improve learning outcomes" (Thu/diary). Ha once claimed she used a laptop on Tuesday, September 1, 2021, within her ALLBC, but it turned out she used it to create a PowerPoint file and rehearse her presentation that was set for the following day.

Further, although students have the dictionary and study materials provided by the instructors, these were not cited by all four students. Dong and Ha reported using dictionaries and documents, respectively. Xuan was the individual to frequently utilise notebooks during her

ALLBC, as opposed to Thu, who noted this in her diary just once during this time. However, Ha's use of a laptop to create a PowerPoint presentation and practise her scheduled presentation and Dong's use of learning materials provided by the instructors show the connection between the students' ALLBC and classroom learning.

The students all used their smartphones for their ALLBC during this time, though in varied ways.

For instance, Dong mainly used her smartphone for attending online lectures, reviewing "old lessons", doing homework and preparing "new lessons (Dong/diary).

Thu's diary showed that she used a computer and smartphone to listen to English songs on YouTube to "improve listening skill" as well as to "know the meaning of sentences" and "learn vocabulary" (Thu/diary). During the interview, Thu mentioned her learning English vocabulary on the Duolingo platform (see below).

Ha's diary revealed that she solely watched the Nas Daily Tiếng Việt channel to "learn a lot of vocabularies" (Ha/diary)

Xuan's diary indicated that, in addition to using a smartphone to view YouTube videos on channels like TED-Ed and Nas Daily Tiếng Việt, she also used the Duolingo app three times to practise her English. Xuan discovered Duolingo during the interview and tried the app some days during weeks 11, 12 and 13.

In brief, as the new academic year started in lockdown, students made use of the available tools and resources to take online classes, engage in ALLBC, complete their homework, and practise their English at home. All students use smartphones to engage in online learning and the ALLBC with certain differences. Some students utilise them to build up their English vocabulary through language learning apps or by watching or listening to music on

YouTube. Thu and Xuan, however, referenced Duolingo in their diaries. While Xuan tried the app for a few days, Thu used it almost every day to review and learn vocabulary. Students indicated that they listened to English music on YouTube for amusement and to develop their listening skills. In addition, Xuan named the multiple YouTube channels that she often watched, signalling awareness of this platform's tools for language study.

Students reported using the resources they possessed largely to broaden their English vocabulary and grammar, for listening to or watching English music on YouTube, and practising pronunciation. No one mentioned using the tools and resources they had on hand to facilitate their reading and writing skills.

Some students employed the various tools they had at their disposal, such as PCs, laptops, and smartphones, while others exclusively used their smartphones. A few students consulted English grammar books, dictionaries, notebooks, and other learning materials obtained from their instructors during their ALLBC. All of these tools are examples of a connection between students' classroom learning and ALLBC.

When comparing the two time periods, during ALLBC, students utilised smartphones to study vocabulary, grammar, listening, and pronunciation skills, but not reading, writing, or listening comprehension. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, students used various tools for online study sessions and ALLBC, including smartphones, laptops, computers, and even their siblings as English-speaking partners. They also used resources like dictionaries and learning materials but could benefit from instruction on how to use them effectively. Figure 5.1 summarises students' use of available resources.

Figure 5.1

Students' use of resources

online resources

apps

handouts

family member

students' use of resources

grammar book

social media

notebook

booklet about English

The results from the diary data seem to be in line with the earlier survey results, which showed that there was some agreement between the staff questionnaire and the student questionnaire regarding the technology used by students to learn English outside of the classroom, specifically smartphones, laptops/computers, and language learning apps. In contrast to the other 13 apps cited by students in their responses, the Duolingo app was referenced in the diary data. One student's use of "document" (Dong/diary) was revealed by the diary data; however, no student mentioned course books. The diary data supported the survey findings that some students used the handouts or learning materials provided by the instructors and that the course books were deemed to be less useful beyond the classroom.

The survey data showed that students did not consult paper dictionaries for unfamiliar vocabulary, but one student engaged in reading a book in English to learn vocabulary and

practice reading skills by reading, checking dictionaries, and taking notes. In the follow-up conversations following the interviews, the Tflat dictionary app was found to be helpful in various situations when searching for specific terms, especially when unsure of the meaning of a word. The student shared not having a large print dictionary at home, supporting the earlier survey findings on students' non-use of paper dictionaries in their ALLBC. The study supports the use of digital dictionaries and translation apps over traditional print dictionaries.

Lai and Gu (2011) found that students use various technologies for ALLBC, including online news, dictionaries, forums, and Facebook, but only watch videos on Facebook or YouTube. They suggested that instruction on updating statuses and leaving comments might be beneficial, and understanding ALLBC's value might increase students' interest and efforts. The chapter on semi-structured interviews will cover the reasons why students were unenthusiastic to engage in this way.

Why do students engage or disengage in autonomous language learning outside the class? (RQ3)

The summer holiday (weeks 1-12)

The entry "Why" in four solicited diaries was studied to find the reasons why students engaged in ALLBC to better their English. The days when students did not engage in ALLBC were reviewed to see what they were doing and tried to delve into the reasons why they were not engaging in the ALLBC. The coding and analysis revealed the following themes: developing English language knowledge and skills to perform better in courses, tests and exams, and students engaging in ALLBC for fun, confidence building, and learning about the culture and facts of other countries.

Developing English language knowledge and skills to perform better in courses, tests, and exams. The diary data revealed that four students engaged in ALLBC to develop their English language knowledge and skills to perform better in their courses, tests, and exams.

Concerning the improvement of their English language knowledge, Dong read a grammar book to "learn new structures," "be confident to write sentences" and "be confident while using English," as well as to "be more confident for doing grammar tests" (Dong/diary). To "review old knowledge", Dong also practised grammar (Dong/diary). Along with learning synonyms, Dong also "learned new words" by reading books to "be convenient for the English learning process" and expanded her vocabulary for "writing and speaking" (Dong/diary).

Regarding practising English language skills, Dong made an effort to practise "writing letters" to develop her writing abilities (Dong/diary). Additionally, she was observed to "practice doing grammar" to promote her writing and speaking skills (Dong/diary) Along with doing exercises to promote her reading skills," Dong also read Reading books to practise reading skills and to "be more confident doing the reading test," and "read fluently" (Dong/diary). Also, Dong studied English-language books or "English stories" to "develop her pronunciation" and speak English more "confidently" for the domestic B1 level exam, required of all majors (Dong/diary). This again reflects the impact of an exam-oriented language learning environment on students' engagement in ALLBC.

Similarly, Thu's diary revealed that she read a book or grammar book, used a smartphone or computer, and absorbed vocabulary to "consolidate" her understanding of the English language (Thu/diary). To "learn more sentence patterns," she also read books (Thu/diary). She occasionally made an effort to learn vocabulary and grammar to prepare for the upcoming semester and to build her confidence when completing vocabulary and grammar exercises.

Attempting to assist in her listening skills, Thu used a smartphone or smart television to watch or listen to English music or songs on YouTube. She said that this helped her "relax," "understand the meaning of the sentence," as well as "support (her) listening skill" (Thu/diary). Thu spoke English with her older sister to practise, as was already described. Thu reported working on her writing skills by reading books about English writing.

Even though Ha missed many days of her engagement in ALLBC during this time, her diary revealed that she watched videos on the Facebook page Nas Daily Tiếng Việt for general knowledge and to develop her English vocabulary because it was "fun and good to know a lot of interesting things in the world" such as people, society, and culture and "learn a lot of vocabularies" and especially because it was "suitable" for her (Ha/diary). This has the implication that students may engage in ALLBC through the exploration of online resources if those resources are suitable for them in terms of their skills and interests. Although Ha did not engage in ALLBC very often during this period, her diary showed that she tried to develop her reading skills and used her smartphone to listen to English songs. Her attempt to practise her pronunciation was noted once in her diary.

Unlike Ha, Xuan watched YouTube videos about vocabulary to "learn new words" to develop her English vocabulary and grammar (Xuan/diary). She also used the Duolingo app for enjoyment and to learn vocabulary and grammar, though it was not frequent. Additionally, Xuan watched videos on the Nas Daily Tiếng Việt channel to "expand" her "understanding of other countries" (Xuan/diary).

Xuan also made an effort to facilitate her reading, listening, and pronunciation skills when practising the English language. It was possible that Xuan's habit of listening to English music while doing the housework served the two purposes of being enjoyable and honing her

listening skills. Her habit of viewing YouTube videos to sharpen her pronunciation in the areas of "how to pronounce the names of famous people," "fixing mistakes when pronouncing English words with the same pronunciation," and "how to speak English fast and understand natives" was also noted in her diary (Xuan/diary). She also once mentioned listening to IELTS and TOEFL audiobooks to promote her reading and listening skills. This appears to demonstrate that students are aware of the digital and online tools and resources that are available to them and that they can seek to strengthen their English, but they do not endeavour to sustain this exploration.

Students' engagement in ALLBC for fun, confidence building and learning about the culture and facts of various countries. Despite similarities in reasons for engaging in ALLBC, student intentions slightly vary. Dong reviewed "new words" to "practice remembering new words" and practised taking mock English exams to "test knowledge" (Dong/diary). She also read English-language books. Her reading of English Facebook posts was connected to reading fluency but also for enjoyment (Dong/diary). In other words, Dong engaged in ALLBC to try to memorise new words, assess her proficiency with the English language, and for fun.

Meanwhile, Thu studied vocabulary to "consolidate" (her) understanding of the English language and "improve vocabulary" to "know more meanings of words" (Thu/diary). Also, Thu used reading a grammar book and learning English vocabulary to "prepare vocabulary" and grammatical knowledge "for the new semester," which helped her feel "more confident doing exercises" and aided in her academic progress (Thu/diary). Interestingly, to "support listening skill" and "understand the meaning of sentences," Thu also listened to English songs. In short, Thu appeared to have engaged in ALLBC to solidify her English skills and increase her sense of confidence as she prepared for the upcoming semester.

Ha and Xuan reported that they were interested in learning more about the English language as well as expanding their comprehensive knowledge of the outside world. They intended to have fun throughout their engagement while learning about the culture and facts of various countries.

Similar to Dong, who thought that assisting a friend with exercise was a means to "review old knowledge," Xuan likewise used ALLBC to "recall" her vocabulary (Xuan/diary). Additionally, Xuan studied for a different foreign language exam in addition to the domestic B1 level exam like Dong. Exams and certifications appear to be the main focus of this engagement.

In other words, apart from wishing to develop knowledge and proficiency in the target language, it seems that students also have different purposes for their engagement in ALLBC.

Different reasons for students' disengagement in ALLBC. As previously mentioned, while Thu and Dong appeared to have engaged in ALLBC every day, Xuan missed 12 days of writing in her diary, and Ha missed 46 days. The diary data showed that many of the factors influencing students' engagement in ALLBC seem to be derived from personal issues.

Dong's diary revealed that she spent around an hour every day during the summer engaging in English-related tasks, including habitually watching movies and YouTube videos "for fun" (Dong/diary).

In a similar vein, Ha's diary stated that she had several reasons for disengaging from ALLBC. First of all, she frequently skipped her ALLBC study sessions on weekends in favour of relaxing. She also spent two days of her summer holidays with her grandparents to develop a "closer" relationship with them (Ha/diary). She occasionally skipped engagement in ALLBC in favour of watching soccer matches on TV where her idol was participating (more details below). Particularly, she also spent practically every day, sometimes "all day", playing the online game

"Liên Quân Mobile" which included July 19, 29, and August 2, 2021 (Ha/diary). She also occasionally watched movies on TV all day long (July 28 2021) but not in English.

Xuan had skipped her ALLBC learning due to personal and family matters. She also enjoyed watching movies on Facebook, reading Vietnamese stories, watching the news on TV with her family, playing games with friends, watching entertaining videos on YouTube, and even going shopping with friends over the summer. She occasionally worked cleaning and tending to her garden. Xuan first listened to English music to practise her listening skills, but later wrote in her diary that she was just having fun and had learned "nothing" from the experience.

Given Thu's considerable engagement in ALLBC during the summer holiday, it appears that students' self-awareness may be a crucial factor in maintaining student engagement in learning or practising English outside of the classroom on their own.

In brief, the four students appeared to engage in ALLBC to advance their knowledge of and proficiency in the English language over the summer holiday that was disrupted by the COVID-19 epidemic. Furthermore, students' engagement in ALLBC seems to be inspired by additional factors such as enjoyment, confidence building, and learning about the cultures and facts of many countries. It appears that students' self-awareness may be an important component in retaining their engagement in studying or practising English beyond the classroom.

The new academic year (weeks 13-22)

The schoolwork and timetable were anticipated to have an impact on the student's participation in ALLBC during the academic year as well as the pandemic and online delivery. These factors might have contributed to (dis)engagement with ALLBC in the context studied.

Similarity in the reasons for students' engagement in ALLBC. The principle reasons for students' engagement with ALLBC were their completing coursework and, the advancement of their English language knowledge and proficiency.

Dong engaged in ALLBC doing homework, preparing for new lessons, and reviewing old lessons. She also tried to read English books to "read fluently" and practised her grammar in the "English document" in addition to acquiring new vocabulary (Dong/diary).

Thu stated that she was doing her homework because she wished to "improve learning outcomes" (Thu/diary). She also tried to learn vocabulary to "consolidate" her grasp of the English language by reading books or using a computer or smartphone to increase her confidence in performing exercises. She read books to "learn more sentence patterns" (Thu/diary) and grammar books to increase her confidence when doing grammar exercises. Thu also listened to English music on YouTube to develop her listening skills, unwind, and "understand the meaning of the sentence" (Thu/diary).

Ha continued to watch English videos on the same Facebook channel, Nas Daily Tiếng Việt, for an hour to "learn a lot of vocabularies" because she thought "it was good" for her (Ha/diary). She worked in groups on Google Meet, prepared and practised for an upcoming presentation, and did her homework on Google Classroom.

Xuan, noted in her diary, that she viewed YouTube videos to prepare for new classes or to complete homework. She spent 30 minutes using the Duolingo app, for instance, both for fun and to learn new words. Like Ha, Xuan also viewed videos on YouTube from Nas Daily Tiếng Việt, but she also watched videos on such channels as TED-Ed, Dan Hauer, Langmaster, Rachel's English, Linguamarina, mmmEnglish, and English Language Academy for fun, to hone her listening, reading, and pronunciation skills, as well as to learn about different cultures.

Additionally, her diary revealed that she made an effort to practise her pronunciation on at least six occasions for a total of 10 or 15 minutes. Additionally, she spent 10 or 15 minutes reading short stories on the Reading English Everyday Facebook page for fun, reading practice, and improving her grammar and vocabulary. In addition, she kept enjoying herself by listening to English music.

Similarity in the reasons for students' disengagement in ALLBC. During the pandemic an increased use of technology created challenges. Therefore, it is logical that students would seek out downtime during the weekends or after online learning sessions. For instance, Dong skipped for seventeen days due to online learning and because of the need for relaxation on weekends, and this was typical for others.

Similar to Dong, Ha stated that the weekends should be spent unwinding. However, as was already noted, Ha was quite enthusiastic about playing online games and did so for one to two hours practically every day and on weekends. She used to play it, especially "after (a) tiring week," "all day" for numerous days (Ha/diary). Such an imbalance of studying and relaxing might impact student engagement in ALLBC.

As with Dong and Ha, Xuan also looked for entertainment after finishing her online coursework during this period.

Thu, unlike other students, appeared to be very committed to improving her English despite the impact of her online learning schedule. She did not miss any of the ALLBC activities.

Again, in comparison to other students, it seems that Thu's self-awareness of honing her language proficiency plays a crucial part in keeping her engaged in ALLBC despite the difficulties of online learning and doing schoolwork online as well as the impacts of the hectic schedule over a semester. It is, therefore, possible that when the new academic year officially

started, students may have missed many days of engagement in ALLBC since they wished to rest after a hard week of studying owing to the challenges of online learning and doing coursework. A lack of a good balance between studying and relaxing might be a contributing factor affecting students' engagement in ALLBC.

During both periods, it appears that students were engaged in ALLBC to advance their English language knowledge and skills. Some students even attempted to engage in ALLBC activities for both enjoyment and the development of their language skills. In addition, language study for earning exams and certificates were stated. Notably during the second period, several students did not engage in ALLBC in favour of resting and enjoying the weekend to replenish their energy. These results are consistent with survey data that stress the two most frequently mentioned purposes: the development of English skills and test and examination preparation.

What factors (de)motivate students' autonomous language learning outside the class? (RQ4)

Factors motivating students' engagement in ALLBC

In this study, a desire to develop language skills and enjoyment, as well as improved performance on language tests are noted as the principal reason for engagement in ALLBC. The student's high levels of motivation, determination, and self-awareness may also be contributing factors.

A two-purpose engagement: enjoyment and English practice. Several students report engaging in activities for two purposes. For instance, Dong used her smartphone to view English videos for pleasure and to "get used to pronunciation" (Dong/diary). Thu enjoyed listening to English songs for two hours a day on her smartphone. Afterwards, she wrote in her diary that she

spent roughly an hour every day listening to English music on her computer and smartphone. The two goals of Thu's engagement seem to be for pleasure and English practice.

Ha spent fifteen minutes on her smartphone listening to "music in English" to "relax before sleeping" (Ha/diary). In addition, she reported in her diary that she spent 30 minutes on her smartphone listening to "some English songs" to "practise listening skill" to "improve listening skill" (Ha/diary). These activities are all related to learning English.

Like Ha, Xuan also noted in her diary that she used her smartphone to enjoyably listen to English music for an hour. Also, she spent two hours watching "short films" in English for entertainment and gaining vocabulary (Xuan/diary). For entertainment and to learn about various cultures, Xuan also spent an hour watching videos on the Nas Daily Tiếng Việt channel on YouTube (Xuan/diary). Hence, Xuan's engagement also began with a purposeful focus on two goals.

The impact of the test-, exam-, and/or certificate-focused language learning environment. The accounts of Dong and Xuan appear to be excellent illustrations of how the test-, exam-, and/or certificate-focused language learning environment affects students' ALLBC. The diary data showed that Dong practised English beyond the classroom to prepare for the compulsory domestic B1 level examination needed for employment teaching English in Vietnam. Furthermore, Dong practised taking mock tests to "test knowledge" and speaking English to "be more confident" for the examination in addition to trying to read grammar books to become "more confident for doing grammar tests" (Dong/diary).

Xuan practised English beyond the classroom to prepare for the domestic B1 level examination. She attempted to learn a different foreign language at home and received a certificate.

Neither Thu nor Ha discussed testing in their diaries but alluded to this in interviews, discussed in the next chapter.

Confidence building. Diaries demonstrate that students engaged in ALLBC frequently to boost their confidence because of their insecurity in speaking English. For instance, Dong read books in English or "English stories" to practise speaking and pronouncing the language with confidence (Dong/diary). She also read grammar books to "learn structures," "be confident to write sentences" and speak English, "be more confident for performing grammar tests," and "be more confident while speaking English" (Dong/diary). She also practised speaking English at home to "be more confident" before the B1 examination (Dong/diary).

Thu reported studying vocabulary in addition to practising speaking English with her older sister so she could feel confident in communicating. To be "more confident when doing grammar exercises," Thu also learned vocabulary and read a grammar book to prepare for the upcoming semester (Thu/diary). This again illustrates how classroom learning and learning outside of the classroom are connected.

Although Ha's and Xuan's diaries did not list gaining confidence as an objective of engagement in ALLBC, during the interviews, they expressed their sense of self-confidence in ALLBC.

Students' self-awareness. Finally, student self-awareness seems to act as a motivator for sustained ALLBC, as demonstrated by Thu above.

By maintaining a commitment to different ALLBC activities for more than five months overall students demonstrated a strong drive and commitment to learning engagement.

Factors demotivating students' engagement in ALLBC.

Three demotivating factors affecting students' engagement in ALLBC emerged from the study. They include students' lack of self-awareness of the learning values, the impact of online learning and academic work and students' lack of balance between studying and unwinding.

Students' lack of self-awareness of the value of learning. The diary data revealed that some students did not appear to recognise the value offered by the ALLBC. Despite engaging in English-related activities, some noted that they learned "nothing", as reported by Dong and Ha. Since Bui (2016) found similar results, the role of self-awareness in ALLBC engagement merits further investigation.

The impact of online learning and academic work. The diary data from this study suggests that for some students online learning and academic work left no time for engagement in ALLBC as in the case of Dong. She only engaged in ALLBC to do her homework or prepare for new classes. The phrase "relax after a tiring week" appeared eight times during the weekend in Ha's diary. Xuan also mostly focused on her schoolwork, except for attending online learning sessions.

Students' lack of balance between studying and unwinding. In addition to dealing with family and personal issues, students' engagement in ALLBC also seems to be impacted by their ability to strike a healthy balance between studying and unwinding. Ha's diary best reflects how students can become engaged in gaming and abandon ALLBC opportunities. The interview data in the next chapter will shed more light on this.

Summary

Six key findings from the students' solicited diaries were presented in this chapter. First, the duration and frequency of the students' engagement varied both individually and between the summer break and their semester of online instruction. Second, there was variation in students'

awareness and use of seemingly accessible resources such as online sites or family members who had studied English. Third, each student used their smartphone for different purposes during ALLBC. Some used it to hone their listening and pronunciation skills as well as their vocabulary and grammar while others used it to access resources to practise reading tasks, paragraph or essay writing, listening comprehension, or other English-language skills. Fourth, based on the tools and resources used by the students, there appears to be a connection between students' classroom learning or doing schoolwork at home and ALLBC. Fifth, the diary data also show five motives behind students' engagement in ALLBC: language development through fun (e.g. watching Facebook videos); developing their English language knowledge and skills; preparing for a test- and/or exam- and certificate-focused language learning assessments, overall building confidence and students' self-awareness. Finally, students' engagement in ALLBC might be impeded by such demotivating factors as students' lack of self-awareness of the value of ALLBC, the impact of online learning on academic work and students' lack of balance between studying and unwinding.

CHAPTER SIX: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Introduction

This chapter presents findings from the third of the three data collection methods utilised in this current study. As was previously reported, four students and six staff members participated in the interviews conducted in Vietnamese language.

How do English majors at a Vietnamese public higher education institution engage in autonomous language learning outside the class? (RQ1)

When it comes to learning activities beyond the classroom, students frequently use the internet and digital technologies to complete school-related tasks, hone their English language skills, and engage in ALLBC at varying frequencies. Also, their preferred setting for engagement in ALLBC, which refers to "a place" where they "access and engage with language resources" (Benson, 2021, p. 102) was their lodging or residence.

Using online and digital technology to do school-related work and develop their English knowledge and skills.

Students frequently employ technological advancements to manage their coursework and develop their English language skills as technologies advance and become more widely accessible. In this current study, students appear to prefer YouTube videos, Facebook videos, and translation dictionary apps above other technological breakthroughs.

Doing school-related work. Preparing for new lessons and completing homework and assignments are two examples of school-related tasks. As Dong recalled, "After school, I come back to my room, then do my assignments given by teachers that day and prepare for new lessons for the next day. Prepare in advance." (Dong/Interview I). When assigned to give a presentation in the following class, Dong sought the instructor's feedback on the outline and also

watched videos on Facebook and YouTube to observe other presenters' delivery styles and speech tones to try to incorporate them into her presentation. Dong described her presentation, "As for online presentations, (I) will use the tone of speech or how to go about presentations. I can briefly mention things related to reality or practice and then focus on my main content" (Dong/Interview II).

Students also used a digital dictionary to check word definitions when doing the assignments. For instance, Thu used the app Tflat to check the definitions of new or unfamiliar words throughout her assignments since the Tflat app not only provides definitions of words in Vietnamese but also "sample sentences where the word is used" (Thu/Interview I). She preferred not to use Google Translate since, in her view, the Tflat dictionary app provides more definitions than Google Translate and "I see Google Translate translate some things without considering the context of words or sentences" (Thu/Interview I). When asked if she tried an online English-English dictionary, she acknowledged trying it but she preferred the English-Vietnamese dictionary, namely, the Tflat app. She also shared some barriers to English-English dictionaries such as "…not as fast as Tflat" because she did not remember a lot of the vocabulary, "though …English-English dictionaries provide the meanings of the words better than the English-Vietnamese ones", "English-English dictionaries are a bit inconvenient" when she needed "something urgent", "if … use English-English dictionaries to look up the meaning, .. have to translate its definition (into Vietnamese) (Thu/Interview I)

Thu preferred Tflat over the online Cambridge dictionary that her instructor recommended, suggesting that students' limited English vocabulary prevents them from accessing a web-based English-English dictionary.

Along similar lines, Ha shared, "After the class lessons, there are also many assignments that teachers assign, I go online to find (that) information" (Ha/Interview I). When questioned about whether her engagement was intended to complete the homework or improve her English skills, she said it was both and clarified, "…because when instructors assign homework, like Writing course, watching that channel (Nas Daily Tiếng Việt Facebook account), I will learn quite a lot of vocabulary" (Ha/Interview I). Ha also stated that since she was in grade 12, she had been a follower of that page and that she solely watched videos on that page. In addition, as was already reported, when asked which dictionary she used when noting in her diary that she looked up a word's definition in a dictionary, she stated, "When I'm unsure, I usually utilise the Tflat app and go up there to search. That is very helpful because it gives me a range of situations to take into account when looking for the particular word" (Ha/Follow-up communication on February 19, 2023).

Similar to other students, Xuan shared that she used both YouTube and English language apps "to do the assignments given by instructors" (Xuan/Interview I). She gave an example,

> …talking about food in a speaking class. Several channels on YouTube talk about this food. I searched for it on YouTube and viewed it to learn more about it. (Xuan/Interview I)

Xuan also mentioned learning pronunciation at home for the pronunciation course in addition to learning for speaking class. Pronunciation courses, in my experience, focused on practising reading English words, phrases, and short passages, therefore English majors were obliged to have a pronunciation coursebook authored by English-speaking authors. So, at home, as Xuan shared, "I read the material instructors give" and "practise (read) the words taught by the teacher. As for the passages in the document (learning material), I will translate, check and

learn to read aloud first" (Xuan/Interview I). To translate the learning materials, Xuan frequently used Google Translate or the Tflat app but she checked it up first on the Tflat. "If it is not available there", she would "search (for it) on Google" (Xuan/Interview II). In addition to providing contexts and more sample sentences, the Tflat app may be prioritised above Google Translate due to its popularity among students. When asked what app or website she searched for its pronunciation on, Xuan said, "Well, Tflat" because of its popularity among students (Xuan/Interview II)

Participants were also asked about what kind of dictionaries they used in follow-up communications. Dong stated that she employed the dictionary app to look it up because it was "faster" (Dong/follow-up communication). Thu, for example, admitted that she exclusively utilised apps on her smartphone. Ha stated that she exclusively used the Tflat app and was unaware of any others, and Xuan noted that she used "few paper dictionaries because electronic dictionaries are more convenient" (Xuan/follow-up communication). Thus, students may have favoured a dictionary app, in this case, the Tflat app, due to its popularity among students and the benefit of being convenient and fast while looking up words.

Developing English knowledge and skills. Student participants employed digital and online technology to facilitate their English language knowledge and skills in addition to managing their coursework. Students concentrated on vocabulary and grammar when it came to English language improvement. For example, despite her rare engagement in vocabulary learning, Dong estimated that she spent half an hour per day learning English structures by watching YouTube videos explaining how to learn English or English grammar. She watched videos in both English and Vietnamese, with the latter being her preferred language. When asked

what channels she frequently viewed, Dong stated that she did not watch any. She was particularly enamoured of videos which were "easy to understand" (Dong/Interview I).

Of the four student interviewees, Thu was the one who spent the most time engaging in ALLBC, so it was easy to see that she listed multiple kinds of resources within her ALLBC as she described,

> Every day after class, I use websites or apps to hone my English skills. Common websites are English Teaches, BBC Learning English. In general, many sites. The app I usually use Duolingo apps. The app has a blue owl icon. I also use the Cake app, which has many short videos with subtitles for me to easily practise English. (Thu/Interview I)

She generally used apps to learn vocabulary and kept a personal notebook in which she kept words for which she forgot the pronunciation and meaning. The notebook resembled her dictionary to her. Thu had been using the Duolingo app frequently because she desired to "know more about English," which meant she was interested in increasing her vocabulary because, as she commented, "If studying in apps and websites, the learners' vocabulary is also richer" (Thu/Interview I). To improve her English grammatical knowledge, she used another approach. She shared,

> In terms of learning outside the class, … I have joined a group on Facebook. There's a variety of things including English grammar discussed in that group. So that group sometimes shares about grammatical structures or word usage, which we all share. If we don't understand, we will discuss it further in our small group to better understand how to use it. (Thu/Interview I)

She not only joined that public group, but she also "took a screenshot and shared it on the Zalo group and discussed it further" (Thu/Interview I). She engaged in this educational

experience because, as she remarked, "I study in class, I only know the knowledge in the coursebook this and that. I think so. Furthermore, I think that site helps me a lot with vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, how to write sentences correctly"(Thu/Interview I). Thus, she strengthened her English language knowledge by utilising an English language learning app and joining public Facebook groups.

Similarly, beyond the classroom, Ha was interested in vocabulary learning through watching Facebook videos "to learn some more vocabulary" (Ha/Interview I). As previously stated, Ha followed the same sole Facebook account, Nas Daily Tiếng Việt.

Xuan, like the other students, enjoyed acquiring vocabulary after class by viewing YouTube videos and "using an app like Facebook" (Xuan/Interview I). She also attempted to "learn English idioms" depicted with "funny drawings," which she described as "kind of vocabulary learning" (Xuan/Interview I). Regarding grammar learning beyond the classroom, Xuan mentioned that a female instructor used to recommend the Grammarly app for reviewing or learning grammar. Although she knew her peers used it a lot, she did not download it because, as she stated, "because there are a lot of files on my phone if I keep downloading, I'm afraid that my phone won't work" (Xuan/Interview II). This might imply that a technological factor related to the sort of technological-specific tool may be a barrier to student engagement in ALLBC, despite the fact they employ technology routinely in their study beyond the classroom.

In addition to improving their English language knowledge, students utilised technological innovation to boost their English skills. Dong admitted that she had simply viewed several Facebook videos on simple themes to sharpen her English. Aside from clips of simple themes, she stated that she also viewed "some speeches at large conferences because English used will be more accurate in terms of structures and usage" (Dong/Interview I). Videos of

conference presentations ranging in length from one to 10 minutes and subtitled in Vietnamese were reshared on Facebook, where Dong often viewed them. In general, to nurture her English development, Dong mostly viewed Facebook videos with Vietnamese subtitles of simple topics and conference speeches. This might serve as a criterion regarding accurate English usage for her selecting materials to employ in her engagement in ALLBC. In a follow-up communication on June 6th, 2022, when asked why she appeared to spend time practising listening skills, she explained,

> Listening skills require a lot of work. Outside of class, I frequently run deadlines or gain new skills when studying online. Furthermore, after studying online, my device's battery is depleted. There are days when there isn't enough battery to study until the last few minutes of an online class. (Dong/Follow-up communication).

According to her, a busy schedule and technological issues seemingly hindered her from engaging in ALLBC more.

Unlike Dong, Thu attempted to use technological advances to practise numerous English skills beyond the classroom, specifically listening, pronunciation, reading, and writing. "..., [A]s for listening skills, I often use YouTube" (Thu/Interview I), she shared. She also mentioned the YouTube channel "English speeches" because it offers a lot of "music clips, videos, and subtitles" to help her "practise listening and learning new words"(Thu/Interview I). She also integrated two forms of technical resources to improve her pronunciation: Facebook videos and the Tflat dictionary app, as proven by her sharing, "Usually, I follow a few sites on Facebook. They'll post a new word (daily?). The word will have a pronunciation. I look at it to pronounce it. If it's too difficult for me to understand, I'll use Tflat (dictionary app)" (Thu/Interview I). Thu also searched online for short reading passages to practise her reading skills. Similarly, she

sought out topics that were both simple and sophisticated to hone her writing ability. Yet, in a follow-up communication on June 4th, 2022, when questioned why she appeared to spend less time outside of the classroom practising reading and writing skills during the summer holiday, she explained that,

> I also practise reading and writing skills, although I rarely mention them because I only do them on occasion. Because I spend most of my time working on my listening skills, which are still poor, I need to practise more. (Thu/follow-up communication).

> It appears that she prioritised her engagement in ALLBC to promote her English skills, which were still lacking, therefore she spent less time concentrating on reading and writing and more time working on listening skills.

> Although Ha's initial intention was to watch videos on the Facebook account Nas Daily Tiếng Việt to learn English vocabulary, when asked what she could have done to improve her English skills, she shared her belief that when she "watched the videos on that channel," she "also heard some words" and she believed "it's kind of practising listening skills" (Ha/Interview I). That was why she chose not to listen to anything else, except certain English songs with subtleties. She additionally indicated that she did not prioritise her reading and writing skills beyond the classroom. Instead, she focused solely on "some common vocabulary and daily spoken English" (Ha/Interview I) because she planned to work as a receptionist in restaurants, hotels, or similar establishments after graduating from college.

> Xuan, like Ha, was completely focused on the Facebook account Nas Daily Tiếng Việt to practise speaking skills and study vocabulary, which was her primary focus of engagement beyond the classroom. When asked about her other skills, she stated that she practised her pronunciation using YouTube videos and the Tflat app. She specifically listened to it and reread

it. She used the Tflat app to test it out. She read English to the app. If that word was true, it appeared. If that was not the case, she would read it again. During the interview, she maintained that she also tried to exercise her listening skills by watching videos on the YouTube channel TED-Ed because the channel offers videos of inspiring talks. Again, it appeared that student participants were interested in viewing speeches on Facebook or YouTube platforms on various topics as part of their engagement in ALLBC. Additionally, Xuan also revealed that she used to try to "read short stories posted on Facebook" (Xuan/Interview I). However, in a follow-up communication on January 7th, 2022, she stated that she only used the instructors' handouts for grammar and reading comprehension and that she did not "find more other materials outside" (Xuan/Follow-up communication). Thus, reading skills seemed not to be of Xuan's emphasis on engagement in ALLBC.

  Engaging in ALLBC at varying frequencies. According to the interview data, student participants engaged in ALLBC at varying frequencies. Dong, for example, admitted that she did not learn much beyond the classroom despite her efforts to increase her English vocabulary and grammatical structures. Specifically, despite expressing an interest in studying vocabulary organised by topics or themes, she learns vocabulary only "once in a while, but not very often" (Dong/Interview II), and when asked about time spent studying English grammatical structures beyond the classroom, she stated that it depended on the day, indicating that "maybe half or an hour" (Dong/Interview I). Furthermore, despite admitting humbly that she was poor at both listening and speaking, she rarely practised listening and only practised speaking skills "when giving presentation" (Dong/Interview II). Dong may be said to have rarely engaged in ALLBC to develop her English language knowledge and skills, even though she modestly self-described her listening and speaking skills as low. She only practised when the courses required it.

In comparison to other students, Thu's engagement in ALLBC was significant. She explained that she did it frequently since students were frequently requested to prepare new lessons to assist the next sessions going as smoothly as the instructor expected, therefore she regularly reviewed the learning materials beforehand. This might suggest that instructors can play a major role in increasing student engagement in ALLBC by, at the very least, preparing for new sessions ahead of time.

The interview findings also showed that Thu frequently engaged in ALLBC using various types of technological innovation. She reported regularly joining large public Facebook groups to "learn how to use (a) sentence", but she also "took a screenshot and shared it on the Zalo group and discussed it further" (Thu/Interview I). She particularly visited those groups around three times a week to learn roughly five words per visit centred on some newly posted words. She highlighted the Duolingo and Cakes applications for language learning. She was, especially, "a little crazy about" Duolingo (Thu/Interview I). "If I have free time, I will practise according to the levels, easy topics, from 1-2 hours" (Thu/Interview I), she explained. She typically viewed short videos on a language learning app Cake, and if she was "more inspired," she might watch two or three videos, each lasting 10 to 15 minutes (Thu/Interview I). She also revealed that she followed a YouTube channel named Communication with Topico Native because "that channel is pretty common" and she observed "a lot of likes" (Thu/Interview I). This demonstrates that students select materials for use during their engagement in ALLBC depending on some criteria.

Contrary to Thu, Ha did not engage in ALLBC much. She shared,

When I was at the college, every day, before bed, I spent 1-1.5 hours watching videos, listening to music or reading common spoken English sentences. ... When I'm at home, I spend 1.5 hours watching videos, not reading common spoken English sentences. I only

read (a book called) Reading commonly-spoken English Sentences when at college. I just watch the videos at home. Because I don't have much time when I'm at home. I watch it before bed, but I don't watch it in the mornings. (Ha/Interview I)

When asked if she had a lot of work at home, Ha said she did but also acknowledged having some free time. She listed such chores as cleaning the house in the mornings, helping her mom feed the pigs, and cooking meals. In the evenings, she had free time. Some days, she was "free all day long" but she did not watch videos much (Ha/Interview I).

When asked what she did at home in her free time, she replied, "I read comics" in Vietnamese language (Ha/Interview I)

She appeared to have a lot of spare time in the evenings, but she spent it on her interests rather than ALLBC. This might suggest that students' self-awareness is crucial in activating their ALLBC.

Xuan's engagement frequency was peculiar. When asked to describe more about participating in such activities (where, when, with whom, and how often), she shared,

These activities I participate in at home because it's summertime. Flexible time, when I'm free. Alone. The level of frequency is only occasional. For example, today I am learning vocabulary. Tomorrow, I'll learn to pronounce (words). The day after tomorrow, I'll watch (YouTube) to practise listening. (Xuan/Interview I)

Xuan also added during the first interview,

Depending on the amount of homework given by instructors, I can do more or less. Or depending on the time I want to learn English, I will learn more. If not, it's from 30 minutes to 1 hour.

…

Sometimes when I surf YouTube, I see a lot of interesting videos about English, so I

watch more.

…

It depends on the exercises. If necessary, I can study for 3-4 hours. Depending on the

fluctuations. (Xuan/Interview I)

Her frequency of engagement appears to be determined by the homework or activities

assigned by the instructors. Considering she stated, "It depends on the exercises. If necessary, I

can study for 3-4 hours" and "I see a lot of interesting videos about English, so I watch more," it

might be suggested that the more *interesting* exercises, homework or assignments assigned, the

more time she spent learning beyond the classroom. In summary, the interview data from student

participants revealed variable frequencies of ALLBC. Although they may differ in their

frequency of engagement in ALLBC, their location of engagement appeared to be comparable,

as stated in the next section.

Preferred setting for engagement in ALLBC. The interview data additionally showed

that students' preferred site for ALLBC engagement was their lodging. Because four student

interviewees were from rural areas, they lived on campus or in a boarding house while attending

college. They did not only study alone at their accommodations, but they also remained in those

settings to undertake group work by utilising the capability of the chat group of Zalo-a prominent

social media in Vietnam as previously described. If they were all free, they would gather at one

of the students' lodgings to do the group work together. For instance, Dong said, 'After school, I

come back to my room, then do my assignments given by teachers that day and prepare for new

lessons for the next day" (Dong/Interview I). Likewise, Thu mostly studied in her room, and

when it came to group tasks, they had two options, as Thu described,

…during the process, we gathered to do the homework the teacher assigned or more frequently, we are at our accommodation and contact each other via Zalo. If they and I are both free, we'll meet at my place. We can chat and discuss. There are usually 5 or more people in one group. We will share if we can find the answers to the exercises. (Thu/Interview I)

Ha and Xuan also lived in the campus dorm so they were also in their room and studied beyond the classroom.

There appeared to be multiple reasons why students preferred to study autonomously in their lodging although certain student participants had to equip themselves with the Wifi system or use smartphone data, as Thu shared, "…The landlord told us in advance that if we used it (wifi), we would equip ourselves. Otherwise, use phone data" (Thu/Interview). The first might be because, as Thu stated, "…the space is OK. The people around me are quiet so there is no noise" (Thu/Interview I). The second might be partly due to the campus library's limitations, as There appeared to be a student agreement on students' infrequent visits to the campus library, as Xuan noted, "Students rarely go to the library at the institution" (Xuan/Interview I). One of the primary reasons students did not frequently visit the campus library, according to Thu, was that "there aren't many books like the institution doesn't have many other books" (Thu/Interview I). The limitations of the institution's facilities were also consistent with staff opinions examined below.

Whilst staff perspectives on students' usage of digital and online technology differed slightly, they all tended to believe that students used and knew how to use technology within their ALLBC. Dep, for example, claimed that "almost 100% (of students) use a smartphone, so downloading resources is also super simple," and that they knew where to acquire learning

materials. Similarly, Thom believed that some English majors knew how to use internet technology in their ALLBC, albeit she estimated that only ten to twenty per cent of English majors at this institution could do so. She voiced her opinion,

...some English majors who .....also ... are aware of the need for self-improvement ...can practise by themselves by learning online – like joining some online English education courses or some online English learning clubs or buying an online learning software for them to practise more on their own. It is autonomous learning. (Thom/Interview)

Hoa believed that students who had access to technologies, such as a smartphone or laptop provided by their family, might "use the institution's wifi network to find learning materials or study autonomously" (Hoa/Interview).

Giau also believed that "…, so there is now a lot of material on the internet. [....] There are more conditions for autonomous learning" and English majors can "learn online, find foreign websites called resources, many learning resources" (Giau/Interview). Similar to Dep, Sang also observed that "… (I) see the majority of students use their phones", so "students can use their phones to access" the internet because "…many places where the internet is accessible" (Sang/Interview). To Khoe, generally speaking, "active students will make good use of open sources", which he referred to as online resources, "so they'll be able to broaden their knowledge …when they are studying, they will know how to find it" (Khoe/Interview).

Hence, it appears likely that staff members believed that students in general, particularly student participants in this current study, can utilise technologies to access online resources when studying autonomously beyond the classroom.

Concerning students' practice of engagement in ALLBC, staff participants shared a common belief that few English majors in this institution engaged in ALLBC, though some did.

For instance, Dep shared, "English majors' out-of-class autonomous learning is currently uncommon among students" (Dep/Interview). By "uncommon", she meant "there are not many students who are learning autonomously" because after class, "they get back (to their accommodation). That's all" (Dep/Interview). "They don't have a plan to learn on their own, to practise on their own" (Dep/Interview).

Thom found from her work experience that "... English majors at this institution demonstrate a low ability of autonomous learning beyond the classroom" (Thom/Interview). According to her, roughly 10 to 20% of English majors "have the capacity to learn" autonomously beyond the classroom (Thom/Interview). According to Hoa's teaching experience, English majors at this institution's practice of autonomous learning outside the classroom is "not common," which means that "not many, just a few" English majors at this institution can study and practise English outside the classroom autonomously (Hoa/Interview).

Giau believed that "in general, English majors do not practise (outside of class) much" (Giau/Interview). This viewpoint was shared by Sang, who observed, "...few are hardworking to learn on their own outside the classroom" (Sang/Interview). Similarly, although Khoe did not directly refer to English majors, he implied that "..., for English majors, the autonomous learning situation of these students is the same," which indicated that "…some of them are hard-working…. students are not active in learning due to laziness, so their awareness of learning is not good and their autonomous learning is not good" (Khoe/Interview).

In short, from data gathered from students and staff, it appears that while some English majors engage in ALLBC, the number was minimal. In other words, few English majors at this institution engage in ALLBC to practise their English beyond the classroom, though some do. Even though students engage in ALLBC, certain students' diversifying engagement frequency

appears to be influenced by their self-awareness of the learning values of ALLBC engagement. Specifically, instead of partaking in ALLBC to improve their English skills in their spare time, certain students spent it conversing with friends or reading storybooks or just engaging in the thought that "I'm done with my duty" and "That's the end of it". For instance, Dong, in an interview, admitted that she spent most of her time talking to her friends and not doing much else aside from homework. Likewise, as previously mentioned, Ha read comics in the Vietnamese language instead of engaging in ALLBC when she had free time.

In the same way, despite her reluctance, Xuan eventually admitted that she had only done her schoolwork and had not done anything else because, according to her, "…. I'm done and that's it" (Xuan/Interview II).

Staff also expressed certain commonalities concerning the campus library and students' rare visits to it, considering the setting of student engagement in ALLBC. From the standpoint of an instructor, Dep believed that students should study at the library but presented a critical issue, "Have we ever asked why students are carrying books and paying money to go to the café to study without coming to the library?" (Dep/Interview). According to Dep, students at this institution rarely went to the campus library to study on their own since "the institution library is not at all attractive" and even though there exist books for English language education, they are "old" and "very few" (Dep/Interview).

As an instructor, Thom also thought the institution's facilities, particularly the language lab for language learners, were lacking. According to Thom, because there was no language lab at this institution where English majors may "watch a video or a television programme and discuss with one another in English," students "haven't got that chance" (Thom/Interview). "(The facilities are) still limited, so their language skills are also limited" (Thom/Interview), as Thom

pointed out. In addition, in a follow-up communication on February 27, 2023, Thom cited two

reasons why English majors rarely went to the campus library to study. The first one was

because "the materials may be insufficient or outdated, and the resources are limited" and the

second one was because students "lack motivation to learn and have no passion for English, so

they do not actively seek knowledge or develop their competence at the campus library"

(Thom/Follow-up communication).

Hoa also believed "the resources in the library for English majors are super poor" and

"books are few, old, and no longer relevant" but "new books are scarcely updated"

(Hoa/Interview). There are also no computers available for students who go there to browse the

internet for autonomous learning, to acquire more study materials, or even to have fun, according

to Hoa.

Giau stated that "the library does not have many resources for students' autonomous

learning" (Giau/Interview). Sang agreed, noting, "…facilities are also... not good to meet the

demands of English majors" (Sang/Interview). Nonetheless, Khoe expressed a different view,

voicing,

> "…in general, the institution provides basic facilities for training namely a library, stable
>
> internet and practical field trips that create a basis and conditions for English majors to
>
> practise outside of class to improve their English skills". (Khoe/Interview)

Although Khoe cited a reason for the fact that "the institution now does not invest in

more specific facilities for this major," the justification cannot be presented owing to an ethical

concern. It is also worth noting that, while the Wi-Fi system is operational, "the quality of the

institution's Wi-Fi system is not good," as Sang stated. Hence, the quality of the Wi-Fi system, to

some degree, might be a barrier to students' ALLBC in this institution, and further information

on this topic will be discussed later in this chapter. When the interview data from students and staff are compared, it appears that the constraint of the campus library may have an impact on students' frequent visits to the library, and to some degree, it seems to partly understand why students identified their residence as their preferred setting for ALLBC.

In conclusion, the interview data collected from students and staff suggest that, while there are not many English majors in this current study engaging in ALLBC, those engaging in ALLBC can use available tools, to access online and digital learning resources, to do their school-related work, and to practise their English. The data also demonstrates that, while students' frequency of engagement in ALLBC varies, they all appear to favour their accommodation as their preferred learning setting beyond the classroom.

Triangulating the survey results and the solicited diary findings indicates that, while English majors at this institution engage in ALLBC to do school-related work and practise their English, the number of engaging students appears to be minimal. Students also exhibit varied levels of engagement when engaging in ALLBC. The data also suggests that students preferred to practise their English beyond the classroom in their accommodation, specifically in this current study dormitory or boarding home, with few or none noting the campus library as a regular setting for their ALLBC. The data also reveal that student participants employ available tools, such as smartphones in this current study, to access digital and online resources to complete school-related tasks and ameliorate their English language knowledge and skills. Yet, students appear to prioritise receptive skills over productive skills because they engage more frequently in watching and taking notes than in activities where they might produce the target language. Moreover, the data appear to indicate that students' lack of self-awareness of learning values may limit their potential for enhancing their English skills beyond the classroom.

How do students utilise the resources and affordances at their disposal in their environments and how do they associate those resources with their classroom learning? (RQ2)

Beyond the classroom, students frequently took advantage of all available tools to access learning resources and affordances to practise their English. Furthermore, data show that the student's major purpose for engaging in ALLBC is to perform school-related work.

Taking advantage of all available kinds of resources and affordances

Taking advantage of something means making good use of something (Harper Collins Publishers Ltd., n.d.). As such, student participants seemed to make good use of the resources and affordances at their disposal to practise their English. For instance, despite the lack of a wifi system at the boarding house, Dong made good use of her smartphone data to view Facebook Vietnamese subtitles videos of major WHO and World Bank conferences to improve her English. To study English, she also followed a Facebook page called Nas Daily Tiếng Việt to learn English because the host's "words are easy to understand" (Dong/Interview I). Dong also frequently employed "Tflat or Google Translate to translate new words or sentences" (Dong/Interview I) on her smartphone.

Frequently engaging in ALLBC, Thu's making good use of the resources and affordances at her disposal appeared to be a good illustration of the theme. Thu not only used all available tools, namely her smartphone and her laptop, to access language resources, including online resources such as Facebook and YouTube videos, popular websites such as English Teaches and BBC Learning English, as well as digital language resources such as the Duolingo app, Cake app, and Tflat dictionary app, but she also took advantage of having an elder sister, a roommate and classmates sitting next to her to polish her English. For instance, when asked how to practise

English skills, Thu shared that she practised English skills by searching for online topics, speaking with roommates and classmates, using YouTube for listening, particularly English Speeches, and Facebook for pronunciation. She used YouTube for vocabulary learning and Tflat for pronunciation assistance. She also used Facebook to study new words daily. At home, she practised English with her older sister by searching for simple topics online and practising for 30 minutes each. If the topic was difficult, they would practise for almost an hour. Sharing about the tools used, she mentioned using a laptop at the boarding house when her smartphone runs out of battery.

This shows that Thu sought to employ practically all of the resources and affordances available within her ALLBC to strengthen her English.

In contrast, despite using only a smartphone and not engaging in ALLBC as much as Thu, Ha attempted to "go online" to search for information to help her complete "many assignments that instructors assign" and to practise her English skills, as well as "watch Facebook videos about English to learn some more vocabulary" (Ha/Interview I). In terms of language learning apps, she used to use the Cake app like Thu, but she uninstalled it since it "consumes phone data" even when not in use. She said she was currently using the "only Tflat dictionary app", which she had used since high school on her smartphone to check the vocabulary. It is worth noting that she used to work part-time as a teaching assistant to an English-speaking teacher at a local English centre, but she only exchanged basic English greetings or Yes, No when she saw him and "didn't dare say anything else" because she was "anxious" if she "said something and he immediately replied with a string of English sentences that would put her to "shame" because she might not understand him at all (Ha/Interview I). The word "anxious" might suggest that language learners' anxiety has a substantial effect on their

capacity to make good use of affordances to practise the target language, which will be examined in details later in the next chapter.

Xuan, like Ha, only used her smartphone to "practise English outside of the classroom by studying vocabulary using apps like Facebook" and "watch YouTube videos" (Xuan/Interview I). Xuan sought to practise her English pronunciation by utilising the Tflat dictionary app in addition to watching YouTube videos. She described her method of practising pronunciation as follows:

I listened to it and read it again. To check it out, I use Tflat apps. I read English to apps. If that word is true, the word appears. If that's not true, I'll read it again. (Xuan/Interview I)

Unlike Thu, who had a sister as an English practice partner, Xuan had a sister, but the sister was uninterested in English, therefore she did not have a sister to learn English with at home.

To sum up, the current study's student participants appeared to make good use of the resources and opportunities available to them to practise their English beyond the classroom.

Performing school-related work as a primary purpose

Although the interview data revealed that students utilised available tools to access online and digital resources within their engagement in ALLBC, though their engagement was targeted at both accomplishing schoolwork and boosting their English, the former appeared to be prioritised. First of all, Dong mentioned completing assigned assignments and preparing for new lessons in advance after school. Dong regularly highlighted the presentations required by the classes as assignments and possibly preparing for new lessons because when asked after online learning, how she spent time learning more about the content of the lesson on that day, she said,

"I will find out what my next presentation is about and what's related to it. Then I'll go about it"
(Dong/Interview II). As previously noted, Dong studied "videos of presentation skills on
Facebook and YouTube" to "learn about how people present, the factors that help the audience
understand the topic, like the tone of speech" (Dong/Interview II) and then applied what she
learned to her in-class presentation. She employed "the tone of speech or how to go about
presentations" (Dong/Interview II) for her online presentation by briefly addressing items
relating to real life and then focusing on her major content.

Preparing for the next lessons was also described by Thu. For instance, to understand the
learning materials beforehand, she was at her residence reading the materials, and checking up
on unknown words using the Tflat dictionary app. If she was confused about something, she
asked her classmates via a chat group on the Zalo platform. This was frequent practice because
"the instructors usually ask students to prepare for new lessons. It will help the teaching process
go more smoothly" (Thu/Interview I). In addition to trying to understand the learning materials,
the students were also supposed to do the listening tasks beforehand as required in Listening
class. The students were given audio files by the instructors to listen to the recording and "find
the answers" (Thu/Interview I) to listening exercises at home and then "share the answers" with
the class via chat group on Zalo.

Confirming that her engagement in ALLBC was a dual-purpose undertaking, namely,
"doing homework and practising English skills" (Ha/Interview I), Ha clarified,

> When teachers assign homework like writing, or watching that channel, I will learn quite
> a lot of vocabulary. I can use them in my writing. And watching channels or listening to
> music is also to practise listening skills. (Ha/Interview I)

As previously noted, Ha merely used her smartphone to watch the Facebook page Nas Daily Tiếng Việt to expand her English vocabulary, and she felt that she could utilise that engagement to accomplish her writing assignment at home. She also incorporated what she learned beyond the classroom into her classroom learning. For instance, in writing class, she was asked to write on topics such as university transfer or something like that, so she could use the vocabulary she learned from those videos to complete the tasks. Furthermore, she used language learnt through her engagement in ALLBC in her presentation in her Speaking class. In other words, Ha viewed Facebook videos on her smartphone to gain vocabulary and employ that language in both "writing and speaking tasks" (Ha/Interview I). Besides, Ha also used the Tflat dictionary app and coursebook during her preparation for pronunciation class. She described,

> In my pronunciation course, I have a coursebook. If I did not know how to say any words
>
> in the coursebook, I would use the Tflat app. Then I would mark the pronunciation. Then
>
> the next class, I would ask. What word I didn't know, I would ask. That's it.
>
> (Ha/Interview I)

Aside from increasing vocabulary for writing and speaking courses, Ha also elaborated that she tried to learn more vocabulary beyond the classroom because her limited English vocabulary was causing her "trouble" in writing and translation classes (Ha, Interview II).

In short, Ha used the tools and resources at her disposal, such as her smartphone, coursebook, dictionary app, and Facebook videos, to complete her school-related work not only throughout her engagement in ALLBC but also in her classroom learning.

Similar to other students, Xuan also made good use of YouTube videos and online resources "to do the assignments given by instructors" (Xuan/Interview I). Xuan's two instances may serve as useful illustrations for this engagement.

We were talking about food in a speaking class. Several channels on YouTube talk about this food. I searched for it on YouTube and viewed it to learn more about it. (Xuan/Interview I)

Last week in Writing class, for example, the teacher gave us an exercise on "Why People Should Practise Sports." I kept some notes in my notebooks but then I didn't know which one was the main idea, which was the supporting one. Then I googled "why people should exercise." There are some answers there. Then I saw what the main idea was. So next I'd get that idea. (Xuan/Interview II).

In sum, student participants in this current study seemed to take advantage of accessible technologies to access online and digital materials during their engagement in ALLBC; while their engagement was aimed at both completing assignments and enhancing their English, the former appeared to be more emphasised.

Concerning students' taking advantage of employing available tools to access online and digital learning resources to study autonomously, the interview data of certain staff participants seem to reflect this to some degree. For instance, Dep believed that almost all students now owned a smartphone, so downloading online learning materials was "super simple" to them (Dep/Interview). Similarly, Hoa also believed that because the institution's Wi-Fi system was connected to classrooms and campus dormitories, students using such tools as smartphones, and laptops provided by the family, could make use of the Wi-Fi network of the institution to "find learning materials or study autonomously" (Hoa/Interview). From a managerial view, Giau also stated that students now knew "how to utilise many smart devices," so enrolling, discovering and making an account, entering into an account to attend free online classes, or finding and downloading learning materials would be simple for them. Sang observed that "the majority of

students use smartphones" (Sang/Interview) and added that "currently, students find a lot of resources on the Internet" (Sang/Interview), possibly implying that Sang believed students would utilise their smartphones to find resources on the Internet. Although Khoe did not specify the tools students use to access online learning resources, he believed that "active students will make good use of open resources," namely "electronic files or videos," to "broaden their knowledge" because "the majority of English majors are taught to search for resources by their instructors" (Khoe/Interview). Consequently, it appears that staff feel that students will make effective use of available technologies to exploit online learning resources to update their knowledge and study autonomously beyond the classroom if they are active language learners.

In a follow-up message via Zalo on June 26, 2022, I asked staff participants if they thought doing homework or preparing for new lessons every day was considered AL of English majors. Three of the four staff members agreed, while one said it depends. Khoe believed that "autonomous students are those who study without direct guidance and help from the teacher or through the internet environment" (Khoe/Follow-up communication). To him, completing homework/assignments and preparing for new classes on their own utilising the internet as a learning resource was a type of ALLBC. Two members of the teaching staff agreed. According to Dep, "... it's also a form of autonomous learning because students take the initiative to perform these activities to expand their knowledge" (Dep/Follow-up communication). Similarly, Hoa stated that "studying the material" ahead of time "would help the student understand the lesson fast, remember it for a long time, and even deepen the understanding" (Hoa/Follow-up communication). Yet, Thom believed that it was contingent on the active level of student engagement. She elaborated,

The fact that students actively prepare new lessons or do homework every day shows

self-awareness in the need to explore the content of lessons more deeply. In this case, I

think it is considered autonomous learning. Otherwise, the preparation of new

assignments or homework every day is due to the reminders and requirements of the

teacher, then it is not considered autonomous learning. They are only forced to complete

tasks without their own initiative. (Thom/Follow-up communication)

Students' active engagement in school-related work, according to Thom, was an
indication of ALLBC, whereas passive engagement was not.

It seems that students' active engagement in performing school-related activities using
available tools to access learning resources on the internet was viewed as a kind of ALLBC by
staff. While the staff did not explicitly state that students used available tools to access online
learning resources to complete assignments and prepare for new lessons as the major goal, their
responses appear to mirror that practice to some extent. To put it another way, staff appear to
believe that students use available tools to access online learning resources when performing
schoolwork and preparing for new lessons.

The interview data are consistent with the previous findings from the survey and solicited
diaries. First, the interview data show that English majors used smart digital tools and internet
technology in their ALLBC and explored several language learning apps, with translation apps
being more frequently used than other types of apps. Second, the interview data suggest that
there is a connection between students' classroom learning and performing course-related work at
home and ALLBC. Also, performing school-related work emerges as a primary goal of students'
ALLBC.

Nonetheless, the finding that students appeared to be more focused on completing assignments rather than improving their English during their ALLBC raises the question of the availability of online language learning resources that allow learners to diversify or augment their formal language learning (Chik, 2020). The findings of this research suggest that the availability of learning resources and digitally enhanced technologies at the disposal of language learners may not ensure their voluntary engagement in further developing their language abilities beyond the classroom. The availability of learning resources and technologically advanced inventions may be a necessary condition, but it may not be sufficient. The students' self-awareness of the value of ALLBC engagement may be a sufficient one, as suggested in the following section.

Why do students engage or disengage in autonomous language learning outside the class? (RQ3)

When it comes to the reasons for students' (dis)engagement in ALLBC, the interview data provided a wealth of useful information to help understand students' reasons for engagement and disengagement in ALLBC. Reasons for engaging in ALLBC comprised future-job-related components, performing school-related work, a dual-purpose engagement, admiring idols, and building self-confidence. In terms of reasons for disengagement, the following were noted: technical issues, school-related issues, and students' lack of self-awareness of learning values.

Reasons for students' engagement in ALLBC

Students' reasons for engaging in ALLBC included future job-related issues, performing school-related work, a dual-purpose engagement, admiring idols, and increasing self-confidence.

Future-job-related issues. First, student interview data revealed that students' engagement in ALLBC was spurred by future-career-related issues, such as a desire for a steady

job after graduation and being qualified for many occupations. For example, although Dong

disliked learning English in junior high, at the time of the interview, she was a "second-year

student preparing for the third year," and she admitted she had to work harder and practise

English on her own because "if I don't practise myself, I won't have a steady job"

(Dong/Interview I). She established this aim first and then engaged in her English practice

beyond the classroom since she was completely aware that her family was low-income, "so it is

imperative to learn" (Dong/Interview I). Furthermore, Dong believed that "with a degree in

English," "it's easier" for her to "find a job," she, therefore, might have endeavoured to engage in

ALLBC to graduate and be qualified to apply for jobs in "companies or enterprises" or "some

jobs" that she could "earn money for the family" (Dong/Interview). Unlike Dong, Thu enjoyed

learning English in junior and senior high school, and "because English is a popular language,... I

can work as an English teacher or apply for multiple different jobs" (Thu/Interview I). Despite

her desire to work in restaurants or hotels as a receptionist rather than as an English teacher, Ha

engaged in ALLBC to study "common spoken English" (Ha/Interview I). Regarding future

career orientation, Xuan also revealed that she followed this discipline in HEI since she felt the

demand for an English-related profession at the time. Thus, it seems that one of the reasons for

students' engagement in ALLBC was related to job prospects in the future.

Performing school-related work. Second, undertaking school-related work sparked

students' engagement in ALLBC. According to the interview data, school-related labour was

reflected in the fact that students attempted to finish assignments, prepare for exams/tests, and

even obtain marks for diligence. Additionally, instructors' instructional approach seemed to play

a role in triggering students' engagement to perform school-related tasks. For instance, Dong

admitted that she participated in activities beyond the classroom firstly to do her homework and

secondly, to improve her English to find a job after graduation. Dong also claimed that watching videos from the Nas Daily Tiếng Việt Facebook page aided her with "appropriate vocabulary" and "new structures" (Dong/Interview I) for writing paragraphs and letters in her Writing class. Similar to Dong, Thu also acknowledged that participating in learning activities beyond the classroom helped her to "learn a lot more about English" and "find the answers for the assignments given by the instructors" (Thu/Interview I). Moreover, as previously reported, Thu also claimed that she often engaged in preparing for new lessons by studying learning materials in advance because "after finishing the lessons, the instructors usually ask" students to do it to "help the teaching process go more smoothly" (Thu/Interview I). Thu indicated that, in addition to studying the learning materials before the class, she occasionally worked in groups with other students to "find the answers" to listening exercises in the coursebook as a manner of preparing for new lessons required by the instructors (Thu/Interview I). As previously reported, among the four student interviewees, Ha was less engaged in ALLBC but she conceded, "That's the case in every subject. "I only study when there is a test coming up" (Ha/Interview I). Ha's admission of "the case of every subject" appears to be a good illustration of the effects of tests/exams on students' engagement in ALLBC. Equally intriguing was Ha's confession that in her Reading class, she used to "raise... questions to seek the explanation of the instructors or instructions" to gain "credit for my diligence" because, as she admitted, "Should I not ask, I can't do it at home and can't get credit for diligence" (Ha/Interview I). Ha's "strategic raising questions to the instructors" could be attributed to the fact that the instructors did encourage students to raise more questions in the course to earn more credits for diligence, and once again, the instructors' teaching strategy appears to play a role in encouraging students to engage in ALLBC and raise some questions encountered during their engagement. As previously stated, Xuan admitted that

her first motive for participating in learning activities beyond the classroom was "to do the homework that the teacher assigned" (Xuan/Interview I). Hence, it appears that students' engagement in learning activities beyond the classroom was inspired by the need to accomplish school-related work.

Two-purpose engagement. Third, students' engagement in ALLBC may be spurred by a two-purpose reason. The dual-purpose engagement might include such duo as completing schoolwork and bettering their English, relaxing and strengthening their English, expanding their English language and broadening their horizons, or doing homework and practising English skills. For example, as previously reported, Dong acknowledged engaging in learning activities beyond the classroom, initially to complete her homework and then to develop her English to find work after graduation. Thu also noted that she participated in learning activities beyond the classroom because it not only helped her learn more about English but also helped her find answers to assignments. Thu also stated that she was "totally crazy" about the Duolingo language learning app "because there's a lot of good stuff in that app" and that she "started to get addicted to it" (Thu/Interview I). The Duolingo app, according to Thu, "...is just like helping me to entertain, learn more vocabulary" (Thu/Interview I). Similarly, Ha adored a YouTuber's accent so much that she had been watching his videos since she was in grade 12, and she believed that viewing his videos had allowed her to broaden her vocabulary and horizons. Finally, as previously stated, Xuan participated in learning activities beyond the classroom, "first to complete the homework set by the teacher, and then to practise … skills" (Xuan/Interview I).

Admiring idols. Fourth, adoring idols inspired certain students in this current study to engage in ALLBC to raise their English to the level of their idols. Dong, for example, offered two stories about her two idols during the interview: one was a Vietnamese pop singer and the

other was a South Korean boy band. Dong described the Vietnamese pop singer's English-speaking style as "lovely," adding that "...pronunciation was also good" (Dong/Interview II). "Yes," she answered when asked if she was interested in acquiring and practising doing something similar or speaking English like her idols (Dong/Interview II). Furthermore, she appeared to be knowledgeable about the South Korean boy band, especially their activities at the United Nations. She also compared her English to one of the band's members, commenting, "...now I'm halfway up the hill and he's on the mountain" (Dong/Interview II).

Unlike Dong, Thu's two idols when she was in school were two English teachers. One was a male teacher who had studied overseas and "his pronunciation was different than many people's" and "he spoke English fluently," according to Thu (Thu/Interview II). She also responded, "Yes," when asked if she was determined to learn as well as her teacher. The other was a female teacher who taught her English in grade 12. Thu described the female teacher as "dedicated to the students," which garnered Thu's admiration and desire to be like her.

Unlike Dong and Thu, Ha admitted to idolising a Vietnamese professional soccer player since she was in sixth grade. She also believed her idol could speak four languages, describing the professional footballer as "super good" (Ha/Interview I) and admitting that the idol was one of the reasons inspiring her to learn English on her own to practise her language skills.

Xuan also had a story of an idol. When asked if she had ever admired someone for learning a foreign language so well that she wished to follow them, Xuan said, "Yes" (Xuan/Interview II) and recounted that while surfing videos on YouTube, she happened to see some videos featuring an American girl, who knew a lot of languages, including Vietnamese. She could speak Spanish, French, and Korean. Xuan commented that the girl was "very good" and "very funny" (Xuan/Interview II) and could learn other languages on her own. I asked if she

wanted to be like the girl, and Xuan said, "Yes, I do" (Xuan/Interview II). Xuan also conceded that she admired Dong because "Every time, she reads English, I'm fascinated. She reads very well, so I try to be just like her" (Xuan/Interview II). Therefore, when asked how hard she had worked since meeting Dong, she replied she also tried to, "practise reading (aloud)"(Xuan/Interview II). It appears that, to some extent, admiring an idol can inspire learners to engage in ALLBC.

Increasing self-confidence. Self-confidence boosting was also seemingly a reason for some students' engagement in ALLBC. As previously stated, when asked why she participated in learning activities beyond the classroom, Xuan mentioned various reasons for participating in activities, including doing homework, practising skills, gaining confidence, speaking English correctly, and broadening knowledge. When asked later in the interview if she had learned anything from engaging in those after-class activities, Xuan mentioned that after-class activities helped her practise speaking, expand her vocabulary, and develop confidence in English. She also learned about the outside world and gained new experiences. Hence, because of insecurity about her English speaking skills, Xuan attempted to practise speaking and learning more vocabulary beyond the classroom. This assisted her in gaining confidence while speaking English in ALLBC.

In essence, students' incentives for engaging in ALLBC included future-job-related components, performing school-related work, a two-purpose engagement, admiring idols, and increasing self-confidence. Yet, certain reasons for students' disengagement from ALLBC were also observed.

Reasons for students' disengagement in ALLBC.

In the interviews, participants noted the following reasons for students' disengagement in ALLBC: technical problems, students' lack of self-awareness of learning values, and school-related reasons.

Technical problems. First, technical difficulties included smartphone data usage by apps, "annoying" app functionalities, and ageing devices. These difficulties were reported by Ha and Xuan. For instance, regarding YouTube videos, Ha stated that "YouTube is like it's more data-consuming than Facebook" (Ha/Interview I), so she didn't want to watch it. Furthermore, when asked why she deleted the language-learning app Cake after trying it for more than a month, she stated that even though she did not use it, it still consumed her phone data because it gave users daily notifications, which made her "a bit annoying" (Ha/Interview I). Xuan shared that she tried several language learning apps in addition to Facebook, YouTube, and Tflat apps, but she deleted them because her smartphone did not "have enough data" (Xuan/Interview I).

Ha also mentioned having a laptop "over ten years old" that was passed down to her from three cousins who were once HEI students. Because the laptop was so old, it operated so "super slowly" that Ha was "tired of" using it, so she only used it once or twice because "every time I use it, I get more annoyed," (Ha/Interview I) she remarked. Worse, Xuan did not have a laptop or computer, so her smartphone was her only means of accessing online and digital language learning resources. Thus, her access to various online and digital language learning resources appeared to be limited due to limited smartphone data because she desired "to download more apps to learn but my phone doesn't allow it" (Xuan/Interview I), she conceded.

Students (lack of) self-awareness of the value of learning/ALLBC. Although performing school-related work appeared to engage students in ALLBC, students' lack of self-awareness of its value suggests otherwise. Comments such as "I'm done with my duty and that's

it"(Xuan/Interview I) suggest that students do not voluntarily engage in ALLBC, or perhaps are unable to see its value in the process of their learning. Similarly, when sharing how much time she practised English beyond the classroom, Dong said it depended on "the number of exercises that the instructors give or the exercises to be prepared for the next day". Her response does not hint at voluntary self-selected activities that have been used to describe ALLBC in Chapter One. However, these references to assigned homework reveal the pivotal role of instructors in the ALLBC process, as will be elaborated upon as the data continue to be discussed. And she said "Yes" (Dong/Interview I) when I asked "More exercises mean more time for learning and vice versa? Additionally, though Dong self-described she was "bad at listening and speaking", she just practised "speaking when giving the presentations" (Dong/Interview II). Dong appears to have concentrated on completing the assigned tasks, in this case referring to the number of exercises assigned by the instructors and the preparation for new lessons, including the presentations. This might insinuate that if there is no presentation, there will be no speaking practice, but more importantly, this might imply that more presentations requested by the instructors might entail more speaking practice. In other words, more exercises requested by instructors might trigger more student engagement in ALLBC.

On the contrary, Thu's engagement, in ALLBC, as previously reported, reveals strong self-regulation, self-awareness and desire to improve, important characteristics of ALLBC. In her response about why she rarely mentioned practising reading and writing skills in her diary, Thu stated,

> I also practise reading and writing, but I rarely mention it because I do it occasionally. Because I spend the majority of my time working on my listening skills, which are still lacking, I need to practise more. (Thu/Follow-up communication)

Thu had self-assessed, recognised her strengths and weaknesses, and self-initiated a course of action for improvement.

Ha's initial intention of engaging in ALLBC was to complete her schoolwork, but her sense of accomplishment may have prevented her from actively engaging in ALLBC further. When asked about her English pronunciation practice, she described several activities such as practising her English pronunciation alone during her first year of college, reading the words in the coursebook, and asking classmates how to pronounce certain words. Her sense of self-satisfaction with her knowledge may have disengaged her from ALLBC. She stated,

> But I rarely do that in this second year because I think I know it. I know how to
>
> pronounce a lot of words, so I don't practise anymore. (Ha/Interview I)

Furthermore, because listening courses were only taught during the first year of college, Ha practised her listening skills less in the second year. When asked why she did not seek out other listening exercises to practise more because she enjoyed her listening courses, Ha admitted, "I think I can listen well, so I don't practise much" (Ha/Interview I). She was content with her listening ability and spent less time honing it.

Xuan cited several reasons for engaging in ALLBC, including completing homework, practising English skills, boosting her confidence, and broadening her horizons. When asked why she only completed her homework and did not learn more on her own, she smiled and reluctantly said, "Because... I'm done and that's it" (Xuan/Interview II). Her satisfaction from completing the required assignment may have disengaged her from further ALLBC.

It appears that students' self-satisfaction with their knowing or accomplishment with assignment completion reflects a lack of awareness of the learning values of frequent active

engagement in ALLBC. Hence, students' lack of awareness of the importance of further learning may have disengaged them from further ALLBC.

School-related reasons. Third, several school-related factors appear to have disengaged students in this current study from further ALLBC research. These issues may include only-for-test engagement, future career orientation, undesirable university major selection, and a hectic schedule. For instance, Ha straight shared, "When there is no test, I barely do it. Almost never." because "I'm embarrassed to tell you. I'm also a little lazy" (Ha/Interview I). As previously mentioned, Ha did not devote her time to reading and writing practice beyond the classroom because she desired to work as a receptionist in a restaurant or hotel, so she just concentrated on "some common vocabulary and daily spoken English" (Ha/Interview I). Also, although, as previously noted, Thu appeared to frequently engage in ALLBC to ameliorate her English, she sometimes did not have time for her ALLBC because she was busy with her homework. She said, "…I do too much homework so I don't have much time to practise anymore" (Thu/Interview II). Finally, student interviewees also asserted that some students did not want to engage in additional ALLBC because the English education programme they had been following was not their preference or decision. Instead, they went to the program because their parents wanted them to or because they could enrol on HEI with their senior high school academic records. Therefore, they simply studied to pass the tests and exams and graduate. That was why, when there was no test, they did not study autonomously beyond the classroom. When talking about this issue, I asked Thu if her classmates had ever confided in her that they did not select the right major and why, she shared,

Yes, they have. Many said their parents wanted them to. Besides, many picked this major

because they could apply for it using their academic records in senior high schools. It's

not the major they want to pick initially. (Thu/Interview II)

So, as Thu pointed out, "…it can be said that they study for exams and tests. They really

don't want to learn more" (Thu/Interview II).

In sum, in this current study, the engagement of the student in ALLBC may have been

impeded by only-for-test engagement, future career orientation, undesirable university major

selection, and a busy schedule.

Comparing with staff interview data, certain similarities concerning reasons for students'

(dis)engagement in ALLBC. Certain staff also cited similar reasons for students' engagement in

ALLBC regarding future job-related issues, performing school-related work, and admiring idols.

For instance, Thom believed some students studied autonomously beyond the classroom because

they expected better career prospects when graduating from HEI, though she also believed this

was only a small group of active students. She stated,

> In general, regarding this group, students find that practice will help them perfect skills
>
> such as pronunciation, grammar, listening, speaking, reading and writing. This will help
>
> them have better job opportunities. For example, if they (students) are good at language
>
> skills, they will get a job in a small or large centre (English language teaching).
>
> (Thom/Interview)

Future hope is also an incentive for students' further engagement in ALLBC, according

to Giau who noted,

> …some of them are seeing some hope now. Take the present situation of the province as
>
> an example. Now that Phu Quoc (city) is open to foreign visitors, they also see some

hope. Although many students are [...] after finishing college, they will be working for some travel companies in Phu Quoc and so on. Handsome salaries will make them strive to practise their English skills. (Giau/Interview)

Similarly, Khoe also believed,

…students who are actively […...] aware of their studies and are well aware of their future careers. Therefore, studying/ practising English skills or competence outside the classroom will become inevitable. (Khoe/Interview)

Thom also believed that the majority of students only studied beyond the classroom when the instructors requested. She stated,

…when the teacher assigns a task or a certain exercise, the students begin to go online to search and find information on how to complete the task assigned by the teacher. After those hours, they just go to class, and then participate in the activities in the class. (Thom/Interview)

This opinion was also shared by Hoa when she noted, "… in fact, students engage in learning only when learning tasks are mandated or an exam is coming up" and "when the instructor asks or assigns tasks. Like "you are supposed to do … tonight" (Hoa/Interview).

Dep shared that "some students told me that they made me their idol. They wanted to learn like me" (Dep/Interview).

In short, the staff interview data indicated that students' engagement in ALLBC was triggered by such reasons as future job-related issues, performing school-related work, and admiring idols. Nonetheless, there was no evidence from the staff to show that students engaged in ALLBC because they had a two-purpose incentive and wished to boost their self-confidence.

In terms of reasons for disengagement, the staff also cited a variety of reasons for students' disengagement in ALLBC. Concerning technical issues, a lack of adequate technological tools, specifically a laptop, may limit students' engagement in ALLBC. For instance, Hoa stated that the number of students owning a laptop was limited "because the majority of students in the class are from rural areas and few have a laptop" (Hoa/Interview), despite the popularity of the smartphone among students. Meanwhile, other staff members shared their thoughts on students' discipline choices and students' self-satisfaction with their knowledge for future jobs. For instance, some staff members believed that the decision to enrol students in a HEI programme was in the hands of their parents. For instance, Dep noted,

> The fact is that when they choose English as their major, they haven't determined whether they like it or not. They're just following a trend or that's the choice of the family. (Dep/Interview)

Giau believed "the rest of the students" pursued their majors "because of the orientation of parents or family when they were in high school" (Giau/Interview). Similarly, Khoe stated, "…if what students told me is the truth, firstly, the biggest possibility is due to the coercion from parents" (Khoe/Interview). Khoe also cited two examples regarding the students' choice of discipline.

> …because the students are female, … parents do not want to them live and work far away from home, so the parents choose that major.

> …because it may be easier for students to find a job if they study that major, the family also requires them to study this major. (Khoe/Interview)

Concerning students' self-satisfaction with their knowledge for a future job, staff believed that if students believed their English knowledge was sufficient for their future job, they would be less likely to study further. This seems reflected in Giau's reporting,

> students in this institution may think that they just stop at the point where their knowledge of the English language is enough for them... (Giau/Interview)

In short, the staff interview data indicated that students' engagement in ALLBC may have been hampered by influences such as students' limited technological means, following a HEI programme based on parental wishes, and students' lack of awareness of learning values of further ALLBC reflected in their self-satisfaction of their knowing or knowledge for a future job.

Student engagement in ALLBC appeared to be spurred by future job-related issues, performing school-related work, and admiring idols, according to both students and staff. Meanwhile, students' limited technological means, following a HEI programme based on parental wishes, and students' lack of awareness of ALLBC learning values reflected in their self-satisfaction with their knowing or knowledge for a future job may have disengaged students from ALLBC.

Nevertheless, when the data from staff and student interviews about the reasons for (dis)engagement in ALLBC were compared, it was discovered that there were some similarities and differences between the two groups. Figure 6.1 summarises the reasons for students' engagement in ALLBC.

Figure 6.1

Reasons for student engagement in ALLBC based on data from staff and students

staff

Like English
Admire instructors
Future job opportunities
Self- awareness of learning
Prove abilities

School-related factors
Instructor's instruction/advice
Improve English

students

Dual purposes
Pleasing parents
Certificate-driven orientation
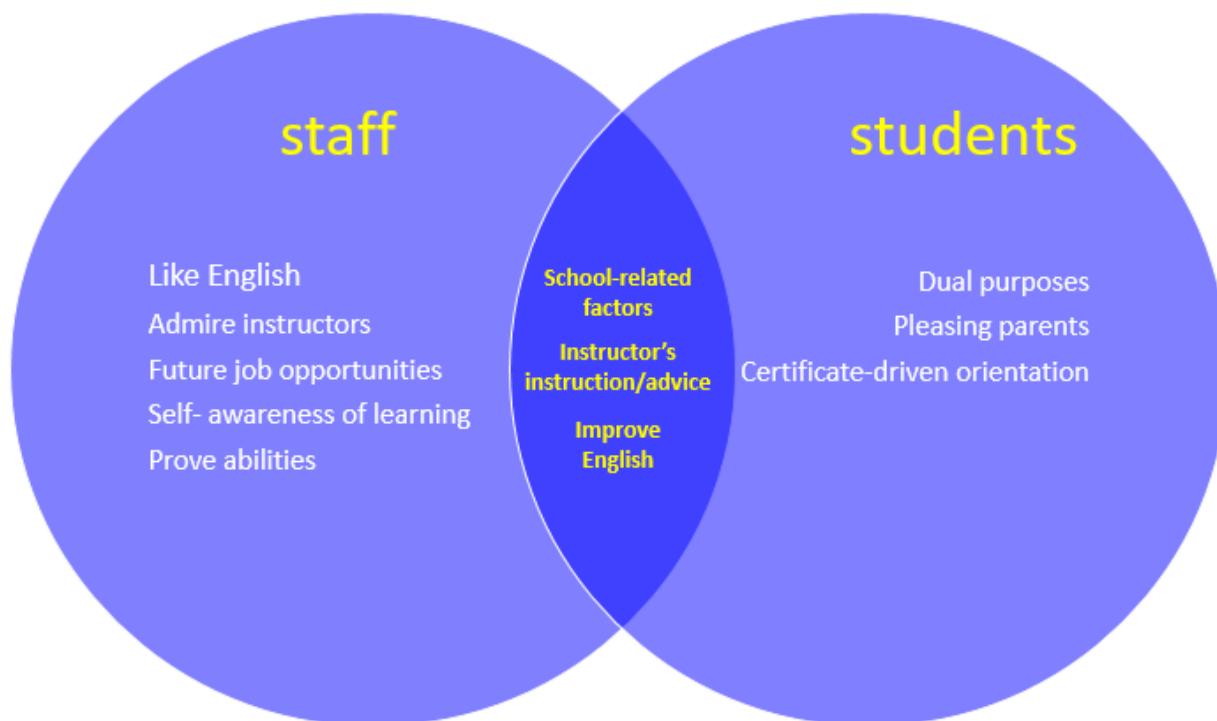
It can be observed that students appear to engage in ALLBC for reasons other than accomplishing school-related work, following instructor instruction/guidance, and seeking to develop their English. The findings suggest that if instructors are aware of the many other reasons students engage in ALLBC, they may be able to better encourage, engage and guide them.

The similar and different reasons for student disengagement in ALLBC are presented in Figure 6.2.

Figure 6.2

Reasons for student disengagement in ALLBC based on data from staff and students

staff | students

Students' awareness of ALLBC
Personal reasons
Lack of decision making skills
Not like English
Following a trend or family's choice
Lack motivation

Difficulties faced

Lack of learning or practising environment

Technology-related reasons
Instructors' way of instruction
Belief about ALLBC
Unwilling to make much effort
Culture-related
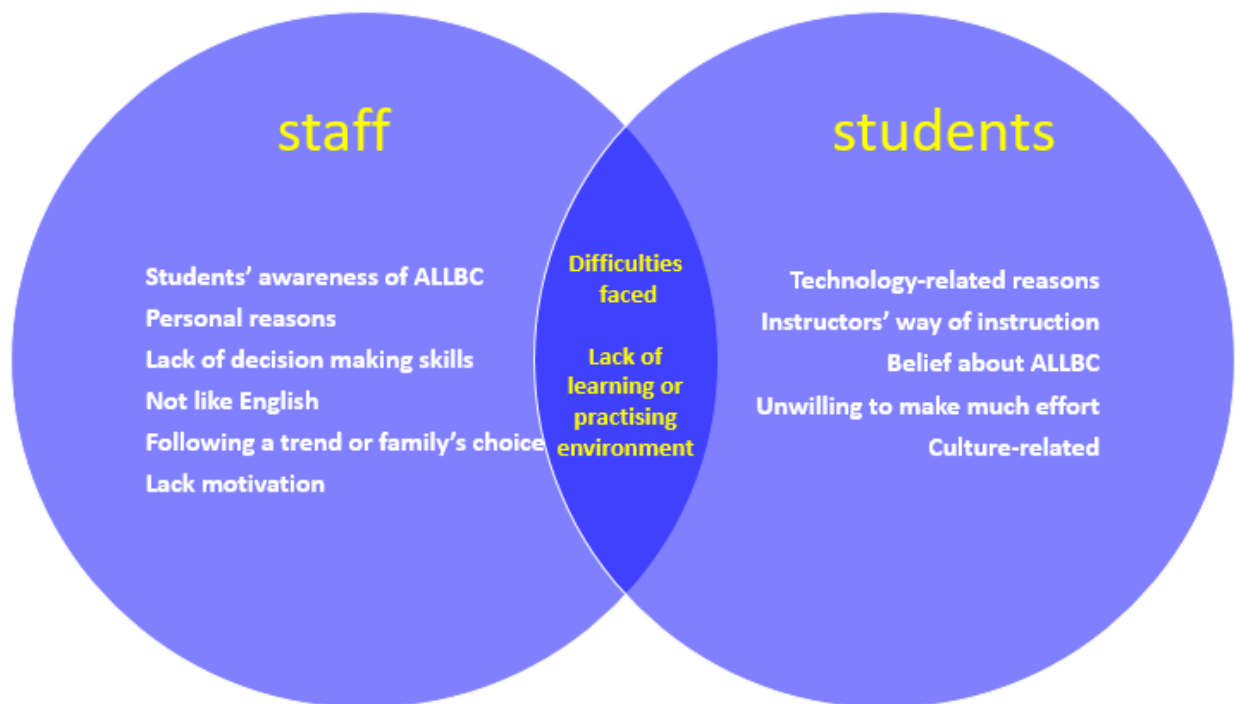
Figure 6.2 reveals that in addition to difficulties faced throughout the ALLBC engagement process and a lack of learning and practising language environment, students also cited additional obstacles hindering their engagement that instructors may be unaware of. One of the impediments involves the instructor's method of teaching. This might additionally suggest that if instructors are more informed about this, they will be able to reflect on their instructions and, if necessary, modify them to lend more efficient support to trigger students' frequent ALLBC.

The interview data, when combined with the survey and diary findings, support the previous findings. First, students engaged in ALLBC to boost their confidence, and their engagement was inspired by the purposes of completing schoolwork and bettering their English, relaxing and strengthening their English, expanding their English language and broadening their horizons, or doing homework and practising English skills. Second, the interview data also

revealed that students' lack of self-awareness of the learning values is a barrier to their continued engagement in ALLBC, as they appeared to be self-satisfied with their knowing and assignment duty completion. Furthermore, the interview data appear to indicate that students' limited technological tools, as well as their passive undergraduate major selection (following a HEI programme based on parental wishes or expectations), were constraints to the continued engagement of the student in ALLBC.

What factors (de)motivate students' autonomous language learning outside the class? (RQ4)

Regarding (dis)motivating factors affecting students' engagement in ALLBC, the data from student interviews revealed two three groups of motivators: social entities such as parents, instructors, and even idols, a desire to access available technology and obtain higher marks/scores/grades; and the imaginary future for a better life, a secure financial situation, a steady job. Meanwhile, demotivating factors may include family coercion/pressure to pursue English as an HEI major, instructor-related factors, technical factors, students' busy workload, and personal factors.

Motivating factors

The findings of student interviews revealed three groups of motivators: social entities such as parents, instructors, and even idols, a desire to access available technology and obtain higher marks/scores/grades; and the imaginary future for a better life, a secure financial situation, a steady job.

Social entities as motivators. Although figuratively self-describing herself as "a poor person in a city of knowledge" but "not active", Dong stated that she needed someone motivating her and the motivators might comprise "family, instructors, idols, this and that" (Dong/Interview

II). Among them, she emphasised her parents, who told her life stories and asked her to observe the lives of those around her to teach her a life lesson,

> …when I'm educated, I will have a secure foundation and be able to have a better job. Then (I will) have a sufficient income so that (I won't) suffer financial hardship like those around me. (Dong/Interview II)

Thinking that her parents' stories were true because her neighbours who could not make ends meet at home had to leave their homes and move to the city to find work, she thought because her parents "work hard", she "should study" because she did not "want to suffer like that" (Dong/Interview).

Thu's parents, like Dong's, encouraged her to study hard by simply telling her during their frequent night-time household chats "Try to learn, dear so that (you can) get a job after graduating from college." (Thu/Interview II).

Ha's parents, like Dong's and Thu's, supported her mentally by taking good care of her and encouraging her to study hard so that later in life, she could get a job and not be "as miserable as" their lives (Ha/Interview II). She also mentioned failing one course and having to retake it. As a result, she tried her hardest on the exam because she did not want to make her parents unhappy, as she recounted, "…motivation is (I) fear for failing (the exam). If I fail, my parents are sad" (Ha/Interview II).

Though Xuan did not mention her parents' teaching or sharing stories to motivate her learning, she did share that her father supported her decision to study English as a major in HEI and that the father—a retired elementary school teacher—also wanted his daughter to completely concentrate on her learning because when asked why Xuan did not work part-time to earn some money to purchase better smart devices that might be more useful for her ALLBC, she said,

"…if my father knows that, I'm going to get into trouble" (Xuan/Interview I). To some extent, Xuan's father was attempting to encourage her to study hard and not worry about other things. Xuan also stated during the second interview that her family, in addition to offering mental support by allowing her to choose the major she planned on pursuing in college, also provided her with a smartphone as a learning tool, so she was "pleased" with both the physical and mental support of the family for her learning. Thus, parents appear to play an important role in instilling hard work in students in this current study.

Dong's sharing also revealed that she admired her idol, a member of a South Korean boy band, and studied English beyond the classroom to be as good as him, who she said studied English autonomously and was able to enrol in a music school in the United States. As previously stated, she used to metaphorically compare her English ability to his by stating that he was on the mountain and she was halfway there. This might appear to suggest that Dong attempted to emulate her idol's English language ability.

As previously stated, Thu mentioned two English teachers who taught her English when she was in grade 8 (a male English teacher) and 12 (a female English teacher). She admired the male English teacher, who she learned had studied abroad, and wished to study as well as him because, as she commented, "…he spoke English fluently" (Thu/Interview II). When he no longer taught her English, she "felt like" another female teacher "didn't guide" her "as carefully as he", so she was "determined to study well" since she was in grade 9. Thu admired the female English teacher and wished to study hard to be like her because "…During the teaching process, she was dedicated to the students" (Thu/Interview II).

As previously stated, Ha demonstrated genuine admiration for a Vietnamese professional soccer player, who was "so good at studying that I want to do the same" (Ha/Interview I), as she

conceded. She also described him as "super good" and said, "Yes," when asked if the idol was one of the factors motivating her to learn English independently to practise her language skills.

Similarly, Xuan, as previously stated, admired an American girl she discovered on YouTube who could speak multiple languages, including Vietnamese. Xuan, like the other students, wished to be as good as her idol. In general, it appears that, apart from parents, the idols might be capable of indirectly instilling the necessary language learning motivation in the students in this current study.

Because Dong also mentioned teachers as a motivating factor, I asked her how teachers affected her knowledge search, and she said instructors could provide new insights and advice to students, providing them with new knowledge and skills that their parents may not have provided. For instance, when setting ambitious goals, instructors may encourage students to push themselves to achieve more than they could, which can significantly impact their learning experience. In addition, she also stated that she preferred an instructor over a technology platform because the former provided her with guidance to help her follow the "right direction" and become "more confident" (Dong/Interview II). Her sharing might suggest that instructors, in addition to sharing new knowledge, might also motivate students' engagement in ALLBC by providing motivational advice about more ambitious goals students might achieve, motivational guidance to keep them on the right track, and even help build their confidence.

Thu also had a story about how important teacher advice was for students' ALLBC. In senior high school, her English teacher advised her to learn more vocabulary at home and find more words to study. So, she kept a small notebook for forgetting words and writing new ones down, ensuring she was always on track.

Although Ha did not mention the instructors' motivating role in inspiring students' ALLBC, she admitted that Ms Thom used to guide her to search for online language learning resources, which was exactly what she needed because she did not "know what resources are good" for her, "it's all the instructor's guidance" (Ha/Interview I). When engaging in ALLBC, students may require the assistance of instructors in their search for great online language learning resources, as Ha's story suggests.

Concerning the motivating role of the instructors, Xuan thought that instructors should have a "leading role", which might mean that "instructors (should) motivate students. Students will try to learn more if they encourage students", for example, by articulating "the role of learning English" (Xuan/Interview I).

Instructors appear to play an important role in motivating students' ALLBC from the student perspective, as students require not only motivational advice but also guidance in searching for and possibly utilising online and digitally available language learning resources.

A desire for technology and high grades. Thu highlighted a desire to improve her English language knowledge when she said, "I want to know more about English" (Thu/Interview I). When asked what she meant by "know more", she replied, "…I want to share more about vocabulary. If studying in apps and websites, the learners' vocabulary is also richer" (Thu/Interview I). It seems that a desire to enrich her English language knowledge, specifically vocabulary, spurred her engagement in ALLBC.

Similar to Thu, Xuan first mentioned that "students want more knowledge. Want to have better English skills" (Xuan/Interview I). She then also shared that students wanted "better marks"(Xuan/Interview I). When asked what she meant by marks, she gave an example of herself. She explained,

Specifically, it's my case. I learn autonomously at home so that my English is improved. My English is better and more accurate. In class, I applied my English to do the test to get marks. To get higher marks. (Xuan/Interview I)

Not only was obtaining a better test score seemingly a motivating force driving students to engage in ALLBC, but it also, to some degree, mirrored the impact of tests or examinations on students' engagement in ALLBC.

Additionally, Xuan highlighted the benefits of accessible modern facilities, including televisions that connect to multiple sources, stronger Wi-Fi for smartphone access, and an audio device for practice listening, which could significantly assist her. Xuan, a smartphone-only student at ALLBC, desired more tools for accessing language learning resources.

An imaginary future as motivators. In addition to social entities as motivators, students in this current study also mentioned how an imaginary future - a better life, a secure financial situation, and a steady job motivated and inspired them to engage in ALLBC. For instance, as previously presented, Dong mentioning "a better job", and "a sufficient income" to avoid "financial hardship" (Dong/Interview II) motivated her to engage in ALLBC.

Similar to Dong, Ha mentioned "money" and "steady job" English majors "will get …later on" (Ha/Interview I) when asked what factors make her want to practise your English skills outside of the classroom. To Ha, similar to Dong, a desire for a secure financial status in her future life motivated her to engage in ALLBC to develop her English.

In sum, an imaginary future such as a desire for a better life, a secure financial situation, and a steady job appear to be motivators that ignite students' engagement in ALLBC.

Demotivating factors.

The student interview data also revealed several discouraging or demotivating factors such as family coercion/pressure to pursue English as a HEI major, technical factors, personal factors, and instructor-related factors and the impact of the language learning environment.

Family coercion/pressure to pursue English as a HEI major. When asked what factors make students lose motivation to learn languages beyond the class, Dong mentioned this factor. She stated, somewhat hesitantly, "Um... It's because students themselves don't like to study or are forced to study" (Dong/Interview I). When asked to explain her position, she stated, "As some of the students don't like to study English but the family forces them to study it…" (Dong/Interview I). Dong also added, during the second interview, "…some families have good conditions …, they want their children to know many languages, so they make them learn" (Dong/Interview II). According to Dong, such passive learning would make students disinterested in studying (Dong/Interview II). This fact was also confirmed by Thu. For instance, as previously noted, Thu affirmed that many classmates had told her that their parents "wanted them to" pursue this major at HEI and "It's not the major they want to pick initially", so they just studied "for the tests and exams" and did not "learn more" (Thu/Interview II). Hence, family coercion/pressure to pursue English as a HEI major might impact students' ALLBC, to some degree.

Technical factors. According to the student interview data, some students may have encountered technical difficulties that diminished their motivation to work autonomously beyond the classroom. For instance, when Thu was asked if she had ever been in a situation where she was interested in learning on her own but something happened that made her less motivated to learn beyond the classroom, she said, "Yes" (Thu/Interview I), and explained it was partly due to her smartphone battery, which was "not good" and "sometimes" when she had just begun her learning then it was "dead" (Thu/Interview I). She described herself as having lost interest and

"because of that, I don't want to learn more." (Thu/Interview I), as she stressed. In addition, when her smartphone broke, she also resorted to using her father's computer but she "couldn't log in. It's super slow. It's impossible to be interested in learning" (Thu/interview II). Furthermore, attending online learning through a smartphone or laptop for about three hours or more caused "eyestrain from prolonged viewing", so she did not "feel interested in learning anymore" (Thu/Interview II).

Similarly, Ha, as previously stated, cited increased data consumption for her smartphone as the reason why she preferred watching Facebook videos over YouTube videos. As previously reported, Ha tried out a language-learning app called Cake for more than a month before deleting it because "it still consumes phone data" even when she wasn't using it (Ha/Interview I). The reason why the unused language learning app still consumed smartphone data was that daily notifications from the app were automatically sent to Ha, which was "a bit annoying" (Ha/Interview I), so she removed it. Moreover, as previously mentioned, she borrowed a ten-year-old laptop from her aunt, which had previously been used by her three cousins, and it started so "super slowly" that she was "tired of using" it because "every time I use it, I get more annoyed" (Ha/Interview I), as she emotionally recalled.

Xuan used to try two language learning apps, Hello Talk and Duolingo, and while she said they were "very good," her smartphone did not have enough data, so she deleted them.

Thus, while some students in this current study had access to certain technological tools, the technical limitations of each tool appear to limit their engagement in ALLBC beyond their desire for ALLBC engagement and, to some extent, demotivate their learning.

Personal factors. Personal factors refer to the difficulties students in this current study experienced, that demotivated their ALLBC. For instance, as previously noted, in her rented

room, Dong had a lot of time but just enjoyed chatting or hanging out with her peers instead of engaging in ALLBC. This suggests a lack of self-awareness of how ALLBC could contribute to her learning.

Meanwhile, apart from technical difficulties, Thu also mentioned a busy workload that kept her away from engaging in ALLBC. She shared, "...when I had a practice teaching session, I was quite busy ..., so I rarely study beyond the class" (Thu/Interview I).

Difficulties of the courses might also contribute to students' learning demotivation. For instance, Ha also conceded that "reading is too hard for me…Although the instructor had explained to me several times, I was still confused" (Ha/Interview I). She had particular difficulty with word-form reading tasks, so she tried to ask the instructor and classmates for clarification, but she was "still confused" despite their best efforts. This was her situation in Grammar class as well. Further, when asked what she had done to improve her situation, she conceded, "I don't know how to improve it either, sir. Now I'm just trying to learn vocabulary" (Ha/Interview II). This suggests that students require assistance with their learning difficulties.

Sometimes, failing to gain what was expected also contributed to students' loss of interest in learning. For instance, Ha shared that though she tried her best to review notes for the exam, she did not do well and became less interested in learning English.

Another personal issue that may have limited student engagement in ALLBC was their lack of effort, as some students admitted. For instance, when asked to describe herself as an English learner, Ha shared,

Yes, I think I'm a very lazy English learner, sir. Because if it's a hard part to learn, I won't make any effort to do it. I will skip it. That's why I'm so lazy. (Ha/Interview II)

When asked to describe how "lazy" she was, she stated, "Lazy to learn English, sir. Whatever I like, I will learn. Whatever I don't like, I don't learn" (Ha/Interview II). She also added that she had a habit of not making an effort to learn difficult subjects, leading to significant gaps in their English language knowledge, which had been present since starting English learning in 6th grade, as well as in other subjects. Ha's habit - a lack of effort to overcome difficulties - appears to have demotivated her learning effort beyond the classroom since she was at school and she was fully aware of its impact on her knowledge gain. Her sharing "Whatever I like, I will learn" may emphasise the importance of inspiring students to engage in ALLBC by encouraging them to do things they enjoy and they will learn.

Xuan also acknowledged she was not very diligent in studying English and was "pretty lazy" (Xuan/Interview II). When asked what she meant by regular learning beyond the classroom, she shared that it was "probably about 2 hours of autonomous learning" and she was "just doing the homework the teacher assigned" and "... I'm done and that's it" (Xuan/Interview II), as previously reported. When asked what she meant by using the word lazy, she clarified, "…I'm pretty lazy because I rarely study. I rarely learn more. It also is synonymous with laziness" (Xuan/Interview II). Xuan was aware of her habit of completing only what was required in her school assignments. Perhaps such a lack of effort may have demotivated her further learning efforts.

Finally, students' low academic or language self-efficacy appears to hamper students' engagement in ALLBC. When asked how confident students were to practise English outside of the classroom, their answers indicated that they did not believe that they could study by themselves beyond the classroom. For instance, Dong rated herself as "average" and "not very confident" (Dong, Interview II). Similarly, despite engaging in ALLBC more than other students,

Thu rated herself as 70% confident because she was unsure of her vocabulary and grammar knowledge. Similarly, Ha admitted, "Studying alone, I am only about 30-40% confident" (Ha, Interview II), and Xuan stated, "I'm not completely confident." "I can only be confident when I prepare well" (Xuan, Interview I).

Instructor-related factors. Dong raised this problem, stating that ineffective instruction that confuses students and instructors who do not pay attention to students' ideas or opinions leads her to "dislike learning" (Dong/Interview I). The role of educators in motivating students to learn and ALLBC must not be underestimated.

In addition, Dong also mentioned the impact of the language learning environment on her ALLBC as a demotivating factor. When asked why she did not take speaking beyond the class seriously, she explained, "…it's more likely due to the environment" because other people "don't seem to need practising" (Dong/Interview I). She continued to conclude, "If I just want to practise speaking but the other person doesn't want to, I can't practise either" (Dong/Interview I). As a result, she decided to practise by herself when necessary, for instance for an in-class presentation assignment. Limited opportunities to use the target language in the context of a foreign language learning environment, as acknowledged in the literature, can have a significant impact on students' motivation to use the target language beyond the classroom.

A comparison of data from the staff and student interviews revealed several similarities. Certain staff members also expressed their thoughts concerning the importance of social entities as motivators. Staff emphasised the importance of instructors' roles in igniting students' efforts to engage in ALLBC. For instance, when asked what factors can motivate students to learn English outside the classroom, Dep affirmed, "instructors first" (Dep/Interview). To her, instructors, who have frequent contact with students, understand their language skills and psychology and can

understand their needs to stimulate autonomous learning, as they are the ones who have the most knowledge. Dep suggested that regular contact with students, possibly in the classroom, might help instructors understand their preferences better, potentially making them potential motivators for ALLBC.

Citing the students' need for a guide to recognise the benefits of autonomous learning by themselves, Thom suggested,

> ...it is the parents or the instructors who have got to be the ones to guide the students to realise the motivation to develop their autonomous learning ability so that they will have better job opportunities. (Thom/Interview)

> The important role of instructors was also shared by Hoa.

> To motivate students to engage in autonomous learning outside the class, … first things first, instructors must help them realise the importance of learning English. (Help them recognise) how important English is to their future work. (Hoa/Interview)

> Concerning the role of the instructors in provoking students' engagement in ALLBC, Giau believed,

> …surely while teaching, instructors must […] suggest many references for students so that they have more autonomous learning resources and data resources. For example, learning materials, websites etc. Instructors also have to give more exercises that ask students to study or research on their own beyond the classroom. (Giau/Interview)

To encourage more student engagement in ALLBC, instructors should recommend accessible online language learning resources and offer more opportunities for students to study or research beyond the classroom, according to Giau.

Sang believed that if students who have a specific goal of attending HEI are "led and directed" by the instructors, they will "learn very well" (Sang/Interview). Both students and staff emphasise the instructors' leading and guiding role in students' ALLBC in this current study.

Khoe identified two tasks that instructors and institutions should implement to motivate students' ALLBC. Dealing with students' passive motivation (motivation to pass the exam) and active motivation (motivation to learn for their future career) should be the responsibilities of both academic counsellors and the institution because he believed that "when students have a good grasp of this, they will act" and that "being active creates good motivation" (Khoe/Interview).

In sum, the data from the staff interviews revealed that instructors and possibly parents played a leading and guiding role in motivating students' ALLBC. They also hinted that the goal of the job opportunities might be important in engaging students in ALLBC. These perspectives also contribute to the development of the L2MSS' L2 experience.

Certain staff members also expressed their thoughts on the role of idols as motivators. As previously stated, Dep shared that some students used to tell her that she was their idol and that they wished to study well like her. Giau believed that while admiring idols was possible at the HEI level, it was not popular. However, he believed that this was a routine trend among high school students.

In sum, both students and faculty believed that social entities such as parents, instructors, and idols, as well as a desire for an imaginary future and practical needs such as a steady job and higher marks/scores/grades, were key motivators provoking students' engagement in ALLBC. Nonetheless, some differences regarding factors motivating students' engagement are also found in the data, and presented in Figure 6.3.

Figure 6.3

Factors motivating students' engagement in ALLBC based on data from staff and student
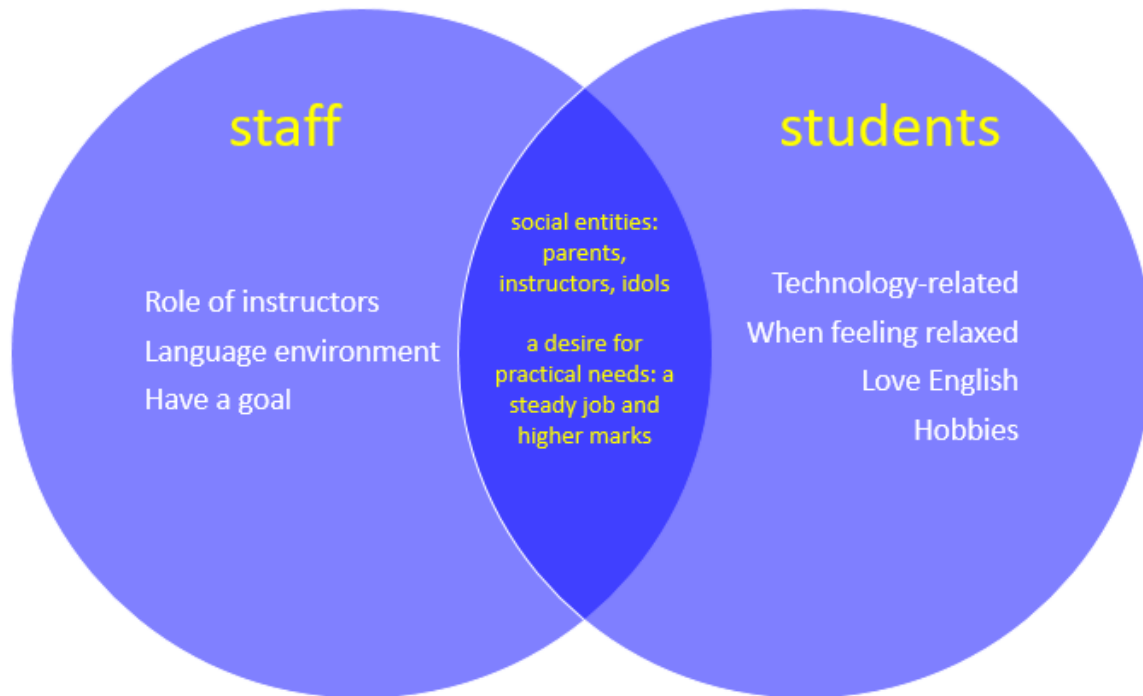
Figure 6.3 shows that instructors are not aware of some of the factors that may motivate students to engage in ALLBC to promote both their learning outcomes and their English abilities. Instructors could benefit from professional development about ALLBC in general and their role in particular.

Concerning the demotivating factors that prevent learners from engaging in ALLBC, the staff data analysis showed several similarities in terms of family coercion/pressure to pursue English as an HEI major, technical issues, personal issues, instructor-related issues, and the impact of the language learning environment. For instance, in addition to citing reasons such as students not knowing how to learn on their own, a lack of a plan, and spending time on things other than learning, Dep also believed that although they majored in English at HEI, they were not interested in their learning because, as previously mentioned, students did not choose English

as their majors, they just followed a trend or the choice of the family. "When entering HEI and facing some difficult problems, they begin to become more discouraged" (Dep/Interview).

According to Dep's thoughts, choosing English as a major may not be a student's personal decision and, accordingly, they may lack personal drive to learn it, especially when it is not an easy subject.

Giau thought that grade 12 students often hear "their parents asking them to learn English" Students "just do what the family asks, follow what the family advises" (Giau/Interview). Then when they arrive at university," they may realise that things are different, so they do not have a goal" (Giau/Interview). As a result, "the ability that students learn on their own is not high" (Giau/Interview).

Sang shared that some students followed their family's recommendation to study a certain major, but felt bored and discouraged after a while. Despite this, they were not allowed to quit due to the family's requirement, and they continued studying, but were not passionate about it.

From the staff perspective, students studied English as a major at HEI after passively following the advice or choice of their families, but when faced with learning difficulties at HEI, for instance, "…due to a lack of vocabulary and general knowledge …they can't keep up with it … and end up with discouragement" (Hoa/Interview) and seeing things were different from the vista previously described by the family, they may become discouraged and no longer desire to engage in ALLBC.

Concerning technical factors, staff suggested that students lacked the necessary tools to access online and digital language learning resources. Specifically, while almost every student had a smartphone, not every student had a laptop. For instance, Dep believed "Only 50% (students) have a laptop. Most of them are using mobile phones" (Dep/Interview). Hoa also

shared this view, "…what they can afford is a smartphone but few have a laptop" (Hoa/Interview). Giau held the same opinion, "…back to their accommodation namely the dorm, boarding house, they don't have a laptop or anything…" (Giau/Interview). Thus, according to the staff, a lack of tools for accessing online and digital language learning resources may limit students' opportunities to engage in continued ALLBC.

Staff also mentioned students' lack of self-awareness of the value of learning through ALLBC and individual difficulties. Dep believed that many students "share a firm conviction that should the teachers set assignments, they'll do them" (Dep/Interview). "They have no idea what they have to do to improve their knowledge and their skills" (Dep/Interview). Thom also cited some reasons for demotivating students' English learning outside the class. For instance, students did not "recognise the benefits nor feel passion for autonomous learning, so they don't see the need to study autonomously" (Thom/Interview).

Hoa also stated that students' English language gap was a possible factor demotivating students' learning and ALLBC. She stated some English majors had a significant gap in their basic knowledge of the English language from secondary school, leading to difficulties in understanding college learning materials due to a lack of vocabulary and general knowledge. This led to difficulty in keeping up with the material, resulting in discouragement.

Furthermore, certain staff shared the opinion that students' lack of effort influences their engagement in ALLBC. Dep believed that, apart from the perception that students disliked the English course or English as a major, students were "lazy" and did not feel inclined to practise English outside of class in an autonomous manner to develop their English skills.

Hoa explained that students were not practising English autonomously beyond the class due to their lack of intrinsic motivation, lack of interest in autonomous learning, and lack of

awareness of its importance. Additionally, young people enjoyed playing, further contributing to their lack of autonomous learning.

Giau affirmed, "The fact that students are lazy is true. English majors in this institution do have that bad habit" (Giau/Interview).

Partly agreeing with this view, Sang also explained students' bad habits. He argued that students struggling with learning may have struggled with their studies, leading to indifference and laziness. They may have also prioritised passing subjects or courses, resulting in a lack of motivation to learn. This might lead to laziness and a lack of interest in learning, as seen in some cases.

Khoe posited that laziness among students leads to poor learning awareness and autonomous learning.

It seems that staff consider students' lack of effort to affect their learning. Certain staff members also mentioned issues concerning instructors that have a significant impact on students' learning in general, and autonomous learning in particular. Dep believed that certain instructors did not invest heavily in their teaching by assigning extra work for students to research at home. She stated,

> They seemingly have not invested much in the lecture by, in addition to the mandatory content, making learning expand, stimulating students at home to research more themselves. (Dep/Interview)

Dep also stated that some demeaning behaviour on the part of instructors may demotivate students' learning. She explained that students did not like the course because "it may place them under so much pressure that they feel demotivated" (Dep/Interview). Worse,

The instructor constantly or bitterly complained or said something that they didn't want

to hear. Then they had a hatred of (the instructor) and they didn't want to study that

course anymore. (Dep/Interview)

From Dep's sharing, some instructors also appeared to adopt an undedicated instructional

approach such as, "not very enthusiastic in guiding the student" (Thom/Interview), so students

seem "to be demotivated" (Thom/Interview).

In sum, staff recognised that the instructional approach has a significant impact on

students' learning in general and autonomous learning in particular. However, they reported little

about taking action on their suggestions. Since they play a significant role in developing the L2

experience for students and contribute to their ideal and ought-to selves in the L2MSS

framework, they may benefit from professional development about ALLBC.

Finally, some staff mentioned the impact of the language learning environment on

students' ALLBC. For example, if students observed their roommates and classmates not

engaging in ALLBC, they may have followed suit. Dep described this phenomenon as "the

butterfly effect" (Dep/Interview). She meant that "Friends learn, they learn. Friends don't learn,

they don't either" (Dep/Interview). Likewise, Thom used a long-lasting situation as an

illustration to demonstrate the impact of the surrounding environment on students' motivation to

practise the target language beyond the classroom autonomously. She said,

For example, in a class, there is a student who is very interested in studying English.

However, when he/she comes to class, he/she interacts with his/her classmates, but they

are passive and do not actively interact with him/her….Gradually, day by day, week by

week, month by month, the student may lose his/her motivation because they encountered

a bad or negative environment for him/her to practice (his/her language skills).

(Thom/Interview)

Furthermore, Hoa, Giau, and Sang agreed that students at this institution lacked an encouraging language learning environment where they could frequently practise communicating in the target language to develop their command of it. From the perspective of the staff, the social environment can/not stimulate students' English language practice; "the butterfly effect" of the language learning environment influences students' learning in general, and ALLBC in particular.

In sum, staff and student data revealed several similarities in terms of demotivating factors that prevent learners from engaging in ALLBC: a gap in student's English language skills from high school to university, family coercion/pressure to pursue English as a HEI major, technological issues, personal issues, instructor-related issues, and the impact of the language learning environment. These and additional factors are summarised in Figure 6.4.

Figure 6.4

Demotivating factors influencing students' ALLBC based on data from staff and student
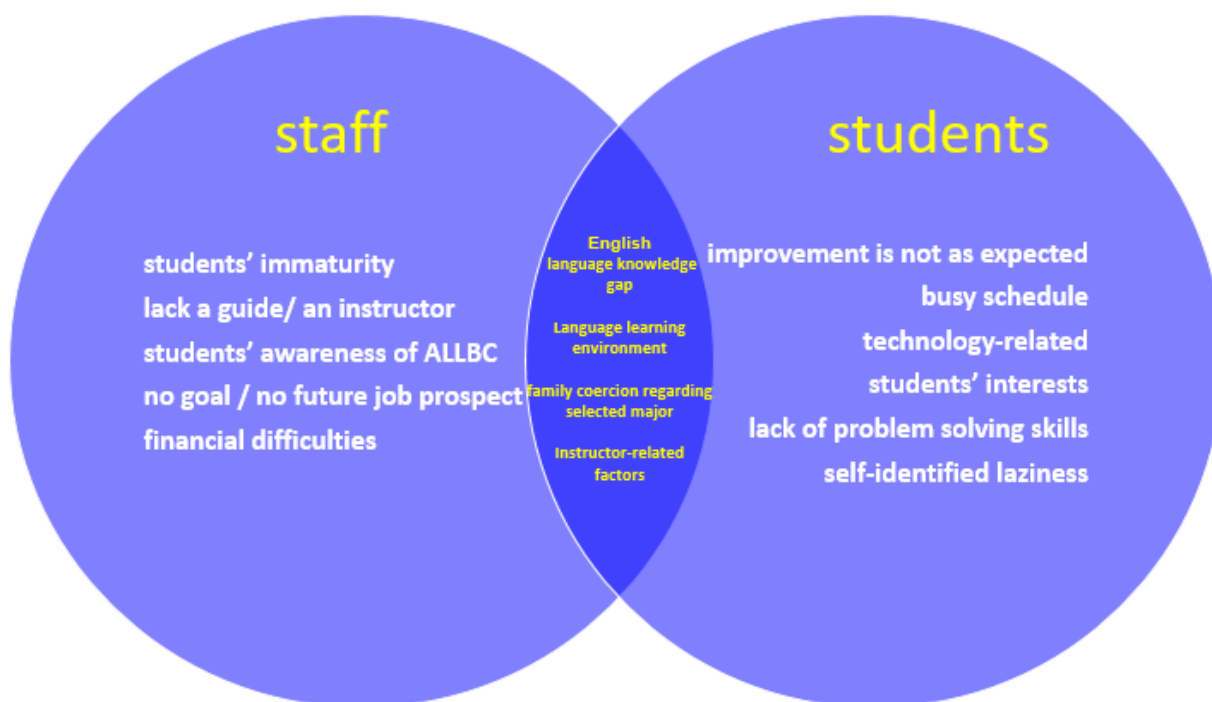
As seen in Figure 6.4, staff believe that students' immaturity and lack of awareness of ALLBC are factors demotivating their engagement in ALLBC. Further, staff feel that students lack the necessary skills to resolve problems encountered during ALLBC and need a guide to help them learn the value of ALLBC. They also recognised that students are responsible for their learning but students are not aware of this responsibility. However, although staff reported that instructors play a vital role in encouraging students to engage in ALLBC, they did not seem to be aware that students are expecting them to take responsibility for guiding and engaging them in ALLBC, These findings suggest that instructors require professional development about ALLBC and their role in increasing students' engagement in ALLBC.

Generally speaking, the survey, diary and semi-structured interview findings are consistent. Students' engagement in ALLBC was motivated by a desire to develop their English skills and better prepare for tests and examinations to obtain higher marks/scores/grades so that

they could graduate from HEI and have better future employment prospects. Further, social entities such as parents, instructors, and idols all play important roles in motivating learners to engage in ALLBC. The data also revealed demotivating factors such as students' lack of self-awareness of the value of ALLBC, their need to unwind when they return home (and not do more work), and the impact of online learning and academic work. The interview data identified more demotivating factors, such as family coercion/pressure to pursue English as an HEI major, students' lack of computers and technology skills to access online and digital language learning resources, their learning difficulties, lack of effort, and expectation that instructors would serve as their guides. Interviews with instructors pointed to their lack of investment in creating an inspiring teaching and language learning environment for students to use the target language and desire to practice beyond the classroom and the impact of the butterfly effect upon students' ALLBC.

Summary

This chapter's analysis of semi-structured interview data yielded nine findings. First, only some English majors at this institution engage in ALLBC to complete school-related work and practise their English. When engaging in ALLBC, students also exhibit varying levels of engagement. Second, students preferred to practise their English outside of the classroom in their residence, specifically in the dormitory or boarding home, with few or none mentioning the campus library as a regular setting for their ALLBC. Third, while student participants in this study use available tools, such as smartphones, to complete school-related tasks and develop their English language knowledge and skills, they desire more personal technological means (laptops) for accessing online and digital learning resources for ALLBC. English majors also explored several language learning apps and used smart digital tools and internet technology in

their ALLBC, with translation apps being more frequently used than other types of apps. Fourth, students appear to prefer receptive skills over productive skills - they are more interested in reading or watching and taking notes to increase their English language knowledge than in producing the target language. Fifth, there is a link between students' classroom learning and doing course-related work at home and ALLBC. Performing school-related work emerges as a primary goal of ALLBC for students. Sixth, students engaged in ALLBC to boost their self-confidence. This also revealed a two-purpose motive: completing schoolwork while improving their English, relaxing and simultaneously strengthening their English, expanding their English language and broadening their horizons. Seventh, several constraints were noted: students' lack of self-awareness of the value of learning in general and of ALLBC in particular, their limited access to technological tools, and choosing to major in English at the request of parents and not from personal desire. Eighth, students' engagement in ALLBC was motivated by a practical desire to promote English skills and prepare for tests and examinations to obtain higher marks/scores/grades, graduate and have better prospects of job security, and the influence of social entities such as parents, instructors, and idols. Finally, students' engagement in ALLBC was also demotivated by two groups of factors: personal factors included students' lack of self-awareness of the value of learning, lack of balance between studying and unwinding, learning difficulties, and lack of effort; and contextual factors such as family coercion/pressure to pursue English as an HEI major, the stress of online learning and academic work, the lack of tools and skills for accessing online and digital language learning resources, the instructor's planning and teaching style, the absence of an environment or place where students can practise beyond the classroom and the influence of the butterfly effect upon students' ALLBC.

The chapter also brought to light how these factors influence the students' development of their ideal L2 self, ought-to self and L2 learning experience, according to Dörnyei's (2005) L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS) framework. More references to this will be made in the next chapter.

CHAPTER SEVEN: DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

FOR FURTHER RESEARCH AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

This chapter summarises major findings as related to the study's research questions and

provides a more in-depth discussion concerning previous research, an interpretation of overall

findings through theoretical lenses, a statement of the contribution of my dissertation,

implications, limitations, recommendations for future research, and conclusions.

Answers to research questions

How do English majors at a Vietnamese public higher education institution engage in

autonomous language learning outside the class?

The current study found that while English-major students at this institution engage in

ALLBC to complete school-related work and practise their English, students' levels of

engagement varied. Since students' learning activities beyond the classroom were tightly linked

to the requirements of the instructors and the curriculum, their ALLBC activities primarily

consisted of completing schoolwork. This supports Dörnyei and Ushioda's findings that "the

least self-determined form of extrinsic motivation, [comes] entirely from external sources such

as rewards or threats" (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021, p. 16). After analysing 22 weeks of students'

daily diaries, their learning behaviours seem inspired by external motivation and extrinsic

incentives (Ryan & Deci, 2020). To some degree, the learning engagement beyond the classroom

of certain students (Ha, Xuan) in this current study might be described as controlled and non-

autonomous (Ryan & Deci, 2020).

Overall, these findings appear to be consistent with previous studies. For instance, Bui

(2016) found that the amount of time students engaged in ALLBC varied and their engagement

was passive and school-related in orientation such as doing homework, preparing for new lessons, and passing exams. Inaba (2019) also found that the majority of the student participants primarily engaged in reading and writing activities for their Japanese classes to pass their courses to graduate. This supports the idea the majority of their externally triggered engagement is in completing school-related and academic work (e.g. homework, assignments, tests, exams). One student in Inaba's (2019) study also shared that doing homework and reviewing notes were her primary study methods beyond the classroom. This appears to reinforce the interconnection between students' studying within class and beyond the classroom.

However, my findings were inconsistent with those of Nguyen and Stracke (2021), who found that for out-of-class learning, students actively and inventively created practice opportunities through part-time jobs, social engagements, and interests that concentrated more on improving language skills than on achieving high scores on tests. This might suggest that language students have multiple objectives and approaches to ALLBC and that the Mekong Delta area has less tourism and fewer opportunities for the use of English.

How do students utilise the resources and affordances at their disposal in their environments and how do they associate those resources with their classroom learning? (RQ2)

The current research found that students preferred to practise their English outside of the classroom in their student housing where they had reliable internet access, and not at the campus library which lacked language resources and access to the internet. This study also found that while students use available tools, such as smartphones, to complete school-related tasks and improve their English language knowledge and skills, they still need technological means (laptops) to access online and digital learning resources for ALLBC. This finding contradicts the findings of Nguyen and Habók's (2021) study, which revealed that most students have access to

computers and the internet both at home and at school and were provided with adequate facilities to use technology in learning. English majors in the current study also explored several language learning apps and used smart digital tools and internet technology in their ALLBC, with translation apps being more frequently used than other types of apps.

Why do students engage or disengage in autonomous language learning outside the class? (RQ3)

In this study, students engaged in ALLBC to sharpen their English skills but they appear to prefer practicing receptive skills over productive skills. They reported reading or watching and note-taking activities to increase their English language knowledge (vocabulary, grammar). Hyland (2004) also reported that while many of the students spent significant time studying and practising English beyond the classroom, their engagement was devoted to more listening and reading, rather than speaking activities. Similarly, González-Fernández's (2022) recent research found that reading and watching TV or videos were two popular input activities engaged in by students beyond the classroom to enrich their vocabulary. Explicitly acquiring vocabulary and grammar items appeared valuable to students in learning the target language (Inaba, 2019).

The findings of this study also indicate that students engaged in ALLBC to perform course-related work at home. As noted in the previous chapter, English majors in this current study had a dual goal for engaging in ALLBC: to improve English language knowledge and skills and to complete assignments requested by instructors, namely classroom presentations, but performing school-related work emerged as students' primary goal for ALLBC. Students engaged in ALLBC to complete school-related work and impress instructors in class and classmates via social media chatgroups – meeting requirements and receiving rewards. This aligns with the results of other studies (Bui, 2016; Chan, 2016; Inaba, 2019). For instance, Bui

(2016) found that most students only did homework and prepared lessons for the next class; very few students researched or explored more about what they had learned in the classroom. Chan (2016) also found some participants increased their investment in out-of-class learning as their schoolwork improved. Likewise, Inaba (2019) observed several links or influences between language classes, such as class-related tasks and voluntary L2 literacy activities. This suggests that performing school-related work is one of the main goals of students' ALLBC.

The findings of this study also indicate that students engage in ALLBC to boost their self-confidence in their English language abilities, and their engagement was triggered by a dual-purpose motive: completing schoolwork while improving their English and relaxing.

However, the current investigation also found that students' lack of self-awareness of the value of learning, limited technological tools, and following a HEI programme based on parental wishes or expectations serve to disengage students in ALLBC. This finding supports those found in a recent study by Tran and Tran (2021), who found that student enrollment decisions were influenced by multiple factors such as their family, teachers, friends, career counsellors, the media, their financial and family circumstances, and even admission criteria to the program best suited to their academic level.

What factors (de)motivate students' autonomous language learning outside the class? (RQ4)

The current study found three groups of motivators and two groups of demotivating ones. The three groups of motivators include social entities such as parents, instructors, and even idols, a desire to access available technology and obtain higher marks/scores/grades; and the imaginary future for a better life, a secure financial situation, and a steady job. My finding also lends credence to the argument that nowadays, an outstanding command of English creates social capital in several Asian cultural contexts, namely more opportunities for study and employment,

particularly in renowned occupations (Choi, 2018; Evans et al., 2022). Similarly, as Hashim and Leitner's (2021) observed, English is instructed and learned in Southeast Asia as a skill that provides opportunities for benefits in jobs such as those requiring scholarly or technological expertise, international relations, and entertainment.

Regarding the influence of social entities such as parents, instructors, and idols, Lai et al., (2015) also reported that the majority of interviewees stated that their parents were significant influences in defining their English language learning beyond the classroom and actively involved in their educational experiences. Furthermore, Lai et al., (2015) also observed that teachers influenced students' learning experiences beyond the classroom by impacting how they chose and used activities.

The current study found that two groups of demotivating or discouraging factors influenced students' ALLBC, namely, personal and contextual factors. The personal group consists of students' lack of tools and skills for accessing online and digital language learning resources, their learning difficulties, and minimal effort. They also revealed a lack of self-awareness of the value of learning through ALLBC and an inability to find a balance between studying and unwinding, both of which were also discussed by Patterson et al., (2005).

Another aspect demotivating students' engagement in ALLBC found in this current study is related to the students. Their reported learning difficulties in Reading and Grammar classes and failure to achieve higher performance in exams contribute to a decline in students' interest in learning which is consistent with what has been called the experience of failure in previous studies (Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009; Tran & Baldauf, 2007; Wang & Littlewood, 2021). In addition, students' lack of self-awareness of the value of learning, their lack of balance between studying and unwinding, and their lack of effort as demotivating factors align with the findings of Le et

al., (2017), who reported that students' characteristics were one of four demotivating factors. This lends credence to the argument that demotivating factors might encompass both internal and external influences (i.e., demotivators) that decrease or diminish motivation to study English (Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009).

The contextual group of factors refers to the impact of online learning and academic work, family coercion/pressure to pursue English as an HEI major, the instruction and behaviour of instructors and their lack of investment in teaching, a lack of environment inspiring students' target language practice beyond the classroom and the butterfly effect upon students' ALLBC. These findings agree with those of Wang and Littlewood (2021), who noticed five categories of demotivating factors reported by participants: "L2 learning environment (instructor's teaching method, instructor's personality, school facilities, tests or exam-oriented education, textbooks, task-related); attribution (success/failure experience, lack of confidence); L2 and its culture (lack of interest in English); and social and parental pressure (parental influence, social pressure)" (p. 6). In short, there is an inter-related ecosystem of factors relating to language learning.

Nonetheless, as previously stated, staff emphasised students' awareness of ALLBC as one of the personal factors demotivating their engagement in ALLBC. This might suggest that staff believe students are responsible for their learning, but they are unaware that they are also responsible for engaging students in ALLBC because students, in reality, are expecting their guidance, advice, modelling, facilitation, and leading role to study autonomously and effectively beyond the classroom.

A discussion of overall findings through theoretical lenses

In this section, I use the four theoretical lenses of self-determination theory, L2MSS, Heutagogy and sociocultural theory to interpret the findings.

Self-determination theory

SDT is a comprehensive macro-theory that explains human personality and motivation (Reeve, 2022). Using SDT as a theoretical lens helps me to understand the ALLBC of the English majors in this current study as follows,

1. The engagement in ALLBC of the English majors in the present research might have been triggered by extrinsic motivation because they engaged in ALLBC when they were assigned academic duties and desired to improve their course grades and prepare for all forms of examinations and tests of the programme. To some degree, their ALLBC engagement might be described as controlled and non-autonomous (Ryan & Deci, 2020).

2. Students in the current study might be described as amotivated language learners because they seemed to solely engage in studying due to external expectations and have no targets or objectives for learning (McInerney & Liem, 2022). They followed a HEI path led by parental wishes or expectations and not personal choice and they studied to pass the courses required to graduate from HEI. Accordingly, their learning engagement beyond the classroom appeared to be externally motivated and non-autonomous (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021; Ryan & Deci, 2020).

3. The current study also found that students appeared to exhibit identified regulation within their ALLBC because their ALLBC might be beneficial for them regarding overcoming difficulties in the courses or meeting multiple goals such as improving the target language, relaxing, and expanding their knowledge or even obtaining higher marks/scores/grades to graduate from HEI, and hoping for better future employment prospects with secure incomes. This form of extrinsic motivation might be described as

autonomous learning (Ryan & Deci, 2020) and this engagement seems to mirror a clear connection between students' classroom learning and ALLBC.

4. The current study also found that feeling demotivated had a certain impact on students' studying both inside and outside of the classroom because they experienced such demotivators (Kikuchi, 2015) as shaming by some instructors in the classroom. This suggests that specific learning-related events and experiences, as well as factors in the social educational environment, contribute to students' demotivation to engage in learning both within and beyond the classroom.

5. Learners' lack of effort was also found to be a factor demotivating students' engagement in ALLBC in this current study. The English majors were not self-motivated and lacked genuine motivation to engage in ALLBC to develop their language abilities.

Heutagogy

Heutagogy, also known as the study of self-determined learning, is a theory that places the student at the centre of the learning process and can be used to support and promote learner agency (Blaschke & Hase, 2019). Heutagogy also includes significant components of self-determination theory, such as learner autonomy, intrinsic and goal-setting motivation, self-regulation, and self-efficacy (Blaschke & Hase, 2019). Using heutagogy as a theoretical lens can help understand my findings as follows,

1. The lack of technological means to access online and digital learning resources within ALLBC is a challenge and limits students' potential to exercise their learner agency (Hase & Blaschke, 2021).

2. The relatively low level of academic or language self-efficacy of the students was one of the factors impeding their ALLBC. Learner self-efficacy and capability refer to the

learner's belief in his or her abilities, as well as the learner's ability to demonstrate an attained mastery or skill in novel and unique environments (Hase & Blaschke, 2021). Thus, if ALLBC is deemed a novel and unique environment in comparison to the traditional classroom setting, students in this current study appeared to lack self-efficacy and capabilities to "create transformational learning" (Hase & Blaschke, 2021, p. 14) and take their target language competence to a new level in this new environment.

3. Because of their lack of self-awareness of the benefits of learning within ALLBC, the English majors in this current study might miss the opportunity to use "the power to learn in their hands" (Hase & Kenyon, 2013, p. 20) to actively engage in ALLBC to improve their English language abilities. To put it another way, they may not use their learner agency to support their learning.

The L2 Motivational Self System (L2SMSS)

The L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS) is a model introduced by Dörnyei (2005) to provide an overview of the effort that people devote to L2 learning (Csizér, 2019). Using this model as a theoretical lens helps understand my findings as follows,

1. The ALLBC of the students in this current study might be motivated by their wish to be as good as their Ideal L2 self-image. They appeared to have a certain Ideal L2 self-image, so they engaged in their ALLBC to practise and develop their English language skills to be able to speak English as well as their idols or people they admired, namely the host of the channel or the actors/actresses in the YouTube clips, a famous professional soccer player, members of a Korean music boy bang or even their instructors of English.

2. Students in this current study engaged in ALLBC because they wanted to display an Ought-to L2 self-image. This is because if they did not complete tasks or submitted an

assignment late, they would "feel uncomfortable, apologetic, and super sad" with instructors (Xuan/Interview II) and parents.

In this study, the influence of the peers studying also might motivate students ALLBC. For instance, although they did not wish to do their homework, they also "took out the book to do (the homework)" (Xuan/Interview II) when they saw the friends/classmates/roommates around them doing it.

Sociocultural theory

Sociocultural theory is a collection of beliefs about the formation and evolution of the mind (Villamil & de Guerrero, 2006). Learning, according to this theory, is also a social phenomenon anchored in specific cultural, historical, and institutional settings (Villamil & de Guerrero, 2006). Using SCT as a lens helps understand my findings as follows,

1. In the individual domain, students disclose a strong and coherent identity in technologically advanced communities during their ALLBC (Phan, 2012) reflected by their making good use of popular contemporary tools (smartphones) within their ALLBC. However, some students face unfavourable drawbacks (Phan, 2012), such as not having personal technological tools for accessing online and digital learning resources of benefit to ALLBC engagement. In other words, they lack or do not have the necessary physical artefacts (Lantolf, 2006) needed to mediate their ALLBC. The technologically advanced communities also lead to individuals' lack of balance between studying and unwinding.

2. In the social domain, the ALLBC engagement of the students seems to be influenced by family factors. As previously mentioned, the socioeconomic situation of the family was reflected in students sometimes not being able to afford a computer or laptop of their own.

The butterfly effect[7] is another social aspect of the learning environment that influences students' ALLBC. The absence of an environment that inspires students' target language practice beyond the classroom seems to have a demotivating impact on students' ALLBC. From this perspective, students in this current study witnessed two negative demotivating processes: few English majors wished to communicate in the target language as a form of practice beyond the classroom, and few studied autonomously beyond the classroom.

The influence of social entities such as parents, instructors, and idols reveals the indirect impact of people, their roles and activities upon students' learning behaviours, even though having idols does not guarantee that students might devote a considerable amount of time beyond the classroom to develop their learning outcomes and English language skills.

The COVID-19 pandemic is an example of a social change that significantly impacted the ALLBC. Having switched to online learning due to the impact of the pandemic, possibly for the first time in their lives, students were required to attend lectures for two or three hours per day via a smartphone's small screen. They then had to complete numerous at-home assignments, leaving no time for ALLBC.

3. In the cultural domain, institutional factors such as the learning environment, the teaching methods, the manner of assessing/testing and even the facilities of the institution impact

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[7] The butterfly effect, coined by mathematician and meteorologist Edward Lorenz, describes the notion that a single flapping wing from a tiny insect can cause small changes in the atmosphere, affecting weather conditions all over the world (Ponder & Lewis-Ferrell, 2009). To put it another way, small changes in a system's original conditions can trigger a series of events that lead to significant system changes (Ponder & Lewis-Ferrell, 2009).

ALLBC. This is because "all settings for learning, including schools, are socially constructed contexts shaped by culture" (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2018, p. 23). Thus:

a. Tertiary EFL instructors in Vietnam were found to concentrate on teaching linguistic elements to develop linguistic competence instead of communicative competence in students (Trinh & Mai, 2019). Additionally, the primary goal of Vietnamese EFL education is to obtain a language certificate rather than to develop English competence (Trinh & Mai, 2019). Also, C. V. Le (2020) also observed that 'English examinations are usually designed to assess students' reading comprehension, knowledge of grammar rules, and vocabulary. As a result, teaching and learning overemphasise the acquisition of knowledge about English at the expense of the development of communicative ability." (2020, p.14). This demonstrates that the impact of exam-oriented or exam-driven language learning prioritises knowledge-focused activities over skill-focused ones. As a result, the types of ALLBC students explore may be limited.

b. "The social practices of the school, such as coordinated activities and routines, reflect the culture of that school and the goals and values of the larger society in which the school is embedded" (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2018, p. 23). Accordingly, Vietnam, like several Asian countries, has been characterised as a collectivist, Confucian-based cultural context, and maintaining harmonious relationships with others, particularly parents and educators, is important (Bui, 2019; Truong & Archer, 2019). Thus, youth are expected to respect their parents and instructors by pursuing their advice. This

lessens the value of the personal agency of the students which likely impacts ALLBC.

c. Students studying for tests and exams "is the product of traditional teaching" (C. V. Le, 2001, p. 37). Instructors in this culture are usually considered a sage on the stage (King, 1993), who not only feed students the knowledge or information they know but also tell students what to do, what to learn and what to remember to convey the sought-after performance in the examinations (C. V. Le, 2001). This cultural practice could work in favour of promoting ALLBC if instructors recognised their influence and scaffolded instruction to train students to engage in ALLBC.

Contributions of my dissertation

1. This study was the first to explore ALLBC in a higher education institution in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam.

2. The multimethod study collected, analyzed and interpreted data from students, instructors and administrators, thus including the voices of multiple actors. As such, it found considerable misalignment between student and staff participants regarding reasons for (dis)engagement in ALLBC, factors (de)motivating ALLBC, and, in particular, the roles of the instructors in encouraging more ALLBC. The students expected the instructors to facilitate/guide/instruct them on how to engage in ALLBC effectively, but few instructors recognised their duties as ALLBC facilitators/guides/instructors and might have offered more assistance/support/scaffolding. This might suggest that instructors require professional development on how to efficiently facilitate/guide/instruct students engaging in ALLBC. Similarly, staff might advocate for appropriate facilities for ALLBC on campus.

3. This research underscores the importance of student development of self-awareness in their learning and learning/experiencing the benefits of voluntary engagement in ALLBC. Again, strategies to bring this to students' awareness could ameliorate the situation.

4. The dissertation examined multiple definitions of ALLBC and posits the following as appropriate for the Vietnamese context: student engagement in ALLBC entails the motivation and active participation of the students in both school-related/academic tasks and language-enhancement activities beyond the classroom.

5. This dissertation presents reasons for language students' (dis)engagement in ALLBC and the (de)motivating factors affecting their ALLBC. Such information can enhance the understanding of instructors and educational managers who could propose policies that will benefit all stakeholders in the education sector.

6. This study's findings not only concur with previous research in the literature but also highlight some differences that may also benefit other researchers exploring ALLBC in the Vietnamese context. It also provides suggestions for future research in the country.

Implications

This study has two practical implications. EFL instructors should recognise that they are responsible for properly informing students about the benefits of ALLBC and that their teaching behaviour, combined with traditional methods of instruction, could have a detrimental impact on students' motivation and engagement in learning and ALLBC. Thus, instructors are advised to play a vital role in both boosting learners to have an awareness of the benefits of ALLBC and providing ongoing support to their ALLBC engagement. To encourage student engagement in ALLBC, instructors may employ a variety of approaches, such as providing additional exercises, homework, or assignments interest to students; increasing their ALLBC through extra-curricular

activities, English-related games and contests, showing them the importance of English and helping them build up excitement and self-confidence, role modelling (being active, passionate, and experienced lifelong language learners), using appropriate incentives such as unexpected or unannounced rewards after task completion (Brophy, 2004; Wentzel, 2020), adapting the motivational immediacy approach to increase learners' motivation in the moment of a learning activity (Taylor, 2022); and embracing the self-determined learning model of instruction (Shogren et al., 2012; Shogren & Raley, 2023; Shogren et al., 2019; Wehmeyer et al., 2000).

English majors are also responsible for the learning and development of their English and overall education. Alongside the emphasis on the value of ALLBC and encouragement of student participation in ALLBC by instructors, students are expected to actively and creatively seek numerous opportunities and employ resources and strategies to learn English beyond the classroom (Nguyen & Stracke, 2021; Sayer & Ban, 2014) to fulfill their personal goals as well as their academic assignments.

Limitations

The following limitations suggest caution about generalising the findings to other populations:

- This study involves a small number of participants (33 survey respondents) in general and a gender imbalance (four female students partook in diary keeping and semi-structured interviews) in particular.

- All participants in this current study were recruited primarily at one institution.

- Interviews with staff took place only once due to their busy schedule.

- The interviews were performed via an audio call feature. Because the Wi-Fi signal was sometimes poor, certain parts of the interviews were not recorded.

- The researcher highly encouraged the diarists to retain their diaries for 22 weeks. It is uncertain what results might have been without such active efforts.

Recommendation for the researched HEI

In order to promote student engagement in ALLBC and reduce demotivation among English majors, recommendations are proposed for policymakers, administrators, and instructors at the rsearched HEI.

Institutional managers and administrators are advised to pinpoint major areas concerning educational policies and institutional practices in order to offer more up-to-date facilities, develop more engaging and appropriate curricula, and create more opportunities for instructors to promote ALLBC. Specifically, in addition to self-taught professional development, instructors could benefit from training on how to efficiently facilitate/guide/instruct students to engage in ALLBC so that they may provide further opportunities for their ALLBC students.

Recommendation for future research

Further research might explore the following:

- The frequency of student's ALLBC engagement.

- The impact of instructor professional development about ALLBC and their role in promoting it in the classroom, through homework and in assessment.

- Instructional strategies that aid in developing student self-awareness of the value of engaging in ALLBC.

- The effectiveness of teachers' advice to students on promoting their ALLBC.

- The ALLBC of different participant groups, different age groups with a gender balance within a foreign language learning environment, and multiple participants

across multiple institutions and in diverse EFL learning contexts to provide a deeper understanding of the ALLBC

- Gender differences within various age groups of language learners concerning the what, the how, the frequency, and the why of employing a variety of language learning apps as well as the preferred types of materials and resources within their ALLBC in different foreign language learning environments.

- Why students favour receptive skills over productive skills such as speaking and writing while undertaking ALLBC.

- If tutoring could be considered a form of student engagement in ALLBC.

- The conceptualisation of free time or having free time from the student perspective and how it might impact upon learners' ALLBC.

- Using digital technology, namely a learning diary mobile app, and an ALLBC-track app to ease the diary-keeping process of diarists.

Conclusion

I began this dissertation with a curiosity about why my students had not engaged in ALLBC to better their English since resources were available to them. At that time, I hypothesized that students were lazy. Now, having collected data from students and staff, I understand the situation differently. I conclude with examples of changes in my thinking.

Lamb's (2002) study indicated that there was a positive connection between English language proficiency and English language learning beyond the classroom; therefore, the most determined learners would seek learning opportunities even if limited. Given the little exposure to authentic communication beyond the classroom in EFL environments, language mastery and acquisition will be reduced for those who do not make use of the available resources provided by

the internet to develop their language skills autonomously (Nguyen & Stracke, 2021; Nunan, 2014; Richards, 2015).

Classroom learning and beyond-the-classroom learning are interrelated, engaging learners in language learning beyond the classroom can create higher engagement with language learning in class and vice versa (Wang & Mercer, 2021).

Given the enormous benefits of advanced digital technology to education in general and language learning in particular as well as the growing tendency for autonomy-oriented or autonomy-supported language learning environments throughout the world over recent decades (Holec, 2009), the time and the inclination towards this instructional approach would be opportune, especially for foreign language education.

To encourage students' autonomous learning, it is essential that instructors feel autonomous in their work as well (Kusurkar & Croiset, 2015). Thus, it is important to modify not only the curriculum but also how society as a whole thinks and operates, encouraging autonomy among all those who are involved in education (Kusurkar & Croiset, 2015). Educators may also consider the concept of inspiring students' engagement in ALLBC.

The long-established exam-oriented and certificate-driven learning environment might be unlikely to change in one night (C. V. Le, 2001) and both instructors and learners in the environment are seemingly used to a traditional teaching and learning approach. One possible solution to this problem might be to encourage "learners who are still locked into the current education system" (Blaschke, 2014, p. 57) to gradually move along a pedagogy-andragogy-heutagogy (PAH) continuum before they can become self-determined, autonomous or heutagogical learners (Blaschke, 2012, 2014; Garnett, 2013; Garnett & O' Beirne, 2013; Luckin et al., 2011; Narayan et al., 2019). According to Dörnyei (2001), it might be the responsibility of

the instructors to lead the movement if they are concerned about the long-term growth of the students they teach. However, they may require professional development to do so.

An old proverb - "Give a man a fish and he eats for a day. Teach him how to fish and he eats for a lifetime" - seems to apply equally to lifelong learning in general and lifelong language learning in particular. Giving learners answers may only address short-term issues; teaching them how to look for solutions on their own will empower them to take control of their development (Griffiths, 2018). To engage in the ALLBC, learners in foreign language learning environments not only need to be equipped with long-term, effective language learning strategies, but their engagement also needs to be sparked by self-motivation. Each learner needs to make a significant personal investment of time and effort to advance and perfect their language proficiency; they need to be self-determined or highly motivated, autonomous language learners.

The saying "You can lead a horse to water, but you cannot make it drink," also seems to apply equally to learners' ALLBC because, should educators desire their students to continue to drink knowledge and/or skills from the educational well after they have completed their formal education, they must offer them the ability to engage in a high level of self-direction and, possibly, self-determination - ALLBC - both inside and outside of the classroom (Gavriel, 2017). Because humans are inherently inquisitive lifeforms (McQuiggan et al., 2015), though the proverbial horse may be led to water, it may also need to be sufficiently thirsty (and inquisitive) to sample it (Murray et al., 2022). Since "culture is formed by repeated practice" (Bambrick-Santoyo, 2018, p. 222), the creation of a culture of ALLBC requires repetitive practice to establish positive habits for the proverbial horse to sample the water from the well of the ALLBC every day. Vietnam's educational policy mandates ALLBC for students, but to reach this goal,

instructors need support in understanding how to implement ALLBC and in turn, how to help

students engage in ALLBC more frequently and beyond just for homework or exam preparation.

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Appendices

Appendix A
Comments and Feedback from Two Pilot Questionnaire Testing
Comments and feedback from the first pilot testing

Issues	Examples
Spelling	The – They
Repetition	According to you
Word choice	Practising – Learning
	Know the resources – Knew the resources
	Don't – Do not
	Dislike – Like least
Overlapping option	No – Never
Repetitive ideas	Items 4 and 19, 6 and 10, 9 and 13
Suggestions	*Smartphones/ laptop/ computers* under one category named *devices*
	Adding more options (*movies, media*) to item 4; *daily, weekly* to item 5;
	work to item 9
	Adding one more question about *students' English level* with options including
	beginner/intermediate/advanced

Comments and feedback from the second pilot testing

Issues	Examples
Suggestions	Removing several synonyms (help/encourage/motivate)
	Shortening the question to ease respondents' understanding (item 20, the revised student questionnaire)
	Adding greeting and short introductory paragraphs
	Dividing the questionnaires into two separate parts (Part 1 and 2)
	Removing option (*others* item 4, 18, the revised student questionnaire)
Wondering	"Are you confident with your English" might make student respondents confused
	British English or American English (practise or practice)

Appendix B
Students' Solicited Daily Activity Diary

WEEK …..: **FROM** (dd/mm/yy)………………….….**TO** (dd/mm/yy)…..………..……….

Guiding questions: Can you talk about your typical day after your English-language class?

1) What do you do daily after class?
2) What do you do daily to practise your English after class?
3) Why do you do those activities?
4) How do you do them (where/when/how often/with whom)?
5) What do you learn from doing those activities? How do they assist you?

Example:

		Description of activities							
	What	Where	When	How long	With whom	Why	How	How often	What learnt
Monday	Reading grammar books	Campus library	2 pm	2 hours	With a friend	Prepare for a grammar test	Read the theory, take notes and do exercises	First time	more confident doing grammar exercises
	Work part-time	Coffee shop	5 pm	4 hours	Solo	Money to support study	Server	Twice a week	Value of making money
	Watch videos on Youtube	At home	10 pm	2 hours	Solo	For fun	Smartphone	Daily	Nothing
	Listen to music	On a bus	On way home	30 minutes	solo	Habit	smartphone	daily	nothing

	Description of activities								
	What	Where	When	How long	With whom	Why	How	How often	What learnt
Monday									
Tuesday									
Wednesday									
Thursday									
Friday									
Saturday									
Sunday									

Appendix C
Interview Data Collection Process

Students

Students	1st interview	Transcription	Member checking	Translation	Member checking
Xuan	August 2, 2021	August 19, 2021 sent transcription	September 7, 2021 received feedback of transcription	September 11, 2021 sent translation	September 17, 2021 received feedback of translation
Ha	August 3, 2021	August 23, 2021 sent transcription	August 31, 2021 received feedback	September 9, 2021 sent translation	September 17, 2021 received feedback of translation
Thu	August 4, 2021	August 26, 2021 sent transcription	September 7, 2021 received feedback of transcription	September 16, 2021 sent translation	September 18, 2021 received feedback of translation
Dong	August 6, 2021	August 29, 2021 sent transcription	August 31, 2021 received feedback of transcription	September 4, 2021 sent translation	September 11, 2021 received feedback of translation

Students	2nd interview	Transcription	Member checking	Translation	Member checking
Xuan	October 9, 2021	October 20, 2021 sent transcription	October 24, 2021 received feedback	November 3, 2021 sent translation	November 6, 2021 received feedback of translation
Ha	October 1, 2021	October 10, 2021 sent transcription	October 12, 2021 received feedback of transcription	October 26, 2021 sent translation	October 28, 2021 received feedback of translation
Thu	October 2, 2021	October 13, 2021 sent transcription	October 14, 2021 received feedback of transcription	October 30, 2021 sent translation	October 31, 2021 received feedback of translation
Dong	October 8, 2021	October 17, 2021 sent transcription	October 23, 2021 received feedback of transcription	November 3, 2011 sent translation	November 6, 2021 received feedback of translation

(continued)

Staff

Staff	1st interview	Transcription	Member checking	Translation	Member checking
Thom	June 3, 2021	June 7, 2021 sent transcription	June 9, 2021 received feedback of transcription	June 18, 2021 sent translation	June 29, 2021 received feedback of translation (with changes done by the participant)
Hoa	June 27, 2021	June 30, 2021 sent transcription	June 30, 2021 received feedback of transcription	July 4, 2021 sent translation	July 5, 2021 received feedback of translation
Dep	July 7, 2021	July 12, 2021 sent transcription	November 3, 2021 received feedback of transcription	November 8, 2021 sent translation	December 12, 2021 received feedback of translation
Khoe	November 12, 2021	November 15, 2021 sent transcription	November 15, 2021 received feedback of transcription	November 24, 2021 sent translation	November 25, 2021 received feedback of translation
Giau	November 14, 2021	November 20 sent transcription	November 21, 2021 received feedback of transcription	November 26, 2021 sent translation	November 27, 2021 received feedback of translation
Sang	November 21, 2021	December 2, 2021 sent transcription	December 26, 2021 received feedback of transcription	December 26, 2021 sent translation	January 16 2022 received feedback of translation

Appendix D
Student Interview Protocol

1. *What do you do daily to practise your English after class?*
2. *Why do you do these activities? Do you do them as homework or your further English practise?*
3. *How do you do them (where/when/how often/with whom)?*
4. *What have you learned from doing these after-class activities?*
5. *How often do you use online resources such as YouTube, language learning apps to practise your English outside the class or to finish your homework? Please tell me more about them.*
6. *How often do you talk to foreigners to practise your English? Why (not)? Please tell me about it.*
7. *How do you practise your English skills outside the class?*
8. *How much do you know about locating/searching/finding and using online language learning resources? Please tell me about it.*
9. *How do you find the learning resources (by yourselves or someone's recommendations)? How do you use these resources for your English learning? Please tell me about it.*
10. *How do your these after-class activities relate to what had happened in the classroom?? Please tell me more about it.*
11. *How much time can you practise your English outside the class? Please tell me about it.*
12. *How do you like to practise your English outside the class: alone solo or with other people, namely friends, classmates, family members? Please tell me about it.*
13. *How much do you think the present school facilities may support your practise of English outside the class? Please tell me about it.*
14. *According to you, what factors (if any) may motivate you to practise your English outside the class autonomously/voluntarily? Please tell me about it.*

Appendix E
Instructor Interview Protocol

1. *What do you think about the English majors' practice of autonomous learning outside the class at your institution?*
2. *From your own observation, how do your English majors practise their English outside the class? Please tell me more about it.*
3. *Do you think that students are actually practising their English outside the class autonomously/voluntarily? Please tell me more about it.*
4. *From your own experience, what strategies can instructors use to encourage students to practise their English outside the class autonomously/voluntarily? Please tell me about them.*
5. *According to you, why are (not) students practising English outside the class autonomously/voluntarily? Please tell me more about it.*
6. *How much do you think the present school facilities may support students' autonomous learning?*
7. *How much do you think that the current assessments of courses impact the students' practice of their English outside the class? Please tell me more about it.*
8. *It has been argued that students always study for passing required exam or tests? What do you think about this assumption?*
9. *Which factors, if any, do you think may (de)motivate students' English learning outside the class? Please tell me more about it.*
10. *How much effort will you make in order to encourage your students to practice autonomous learning?*

Appendix F
Administrators Interview Protocol

1. *What do you think about the students' autonomous learning outside the class at your institution?*
2. *Do you think that English majors study English outside the class autonomously? Please tell me more about it.*
3. *According to you, how much do English majors know in finding and using learning to practise their English outside the class? Please tell me more about it.*
4. *According to you, why are students (not) practising their English outside the class autonomously/voluntarily? Please tell me more about it.*
5. *How much do you think the present school facilities may support language learners' autonomous learning?*
6. *How much do you think that the current assessments of courses impact students' practice of their English outside the class autonomously/voluntarily? Please tell me more about it.*
7. *It has been argued that students always study for passing required exam or tests? What do you think about this assumption?*
8. *Which factors, if any, do you think may (de)motivate English majors' learning outside the class? Please tell me more about it.*
9. *What do you plan to do to encourage your language learner's practice of autonomous learning?*

Appendix G
Student Questionnaire

Dear English majors,

This survey is being carried out to explore how the English majors engage in learning/practising English outside the class. All responses will remain anonymous. Please try to answer all the questions.

1. Are you a second-year or third-year student? (Anh (chị) là sinh viên năm thứ 2 hay năm thứ 3?)　　　　Mark only one oval.
　　　　Second-year
　　　　Third-year

2. Please tick your gender. (Anh (chị) có thể vui lòng cho biết giới tính của mình được không?)　　　　Mark only one oval.
　　　　Female
　　　　Male
　　　　Prefer not to say
　　　　Other:

3. How long have you been learning English? (....years) (Anh (chị) đã học Tiếng Anh bao nhiêu năm rồi?)

4. Do you practise your English outside the class by yourself? (Ngoài lớp học, anh (chị) có thực hành/luyện tập/trao dồi Tiếng Anh của mình không?)　　　　Mark only one oval.
　　　　Yes
　　　　No
　　　　Maybe

5. How often do you practise your English outside the class by yourself? (Ngoài lớp học, bao lâu anh (chị) thực hành/luyện tập/trao dồi Tiếng Anh của mình có thường xuyên không/bao lâu luyện tập một lần?)

6. Where do you practise your English outside the class by yourself? (check all that apply) (Ngoài lớp học, anh (chị) thực hành/luyện tập/trao dồi Tiếng Anh ở đâu? - Hãy đánh dấu vào tất cả các ô phù hợp)
　　　　Check all that apply.
　　　　Campus library
　　　　Home/Dorm/Boarding room
　　　　Other:

7. What kinds of materials or resources do you use to practise your English outside the class by yourself? (check all that apply) (Ngoài giờ học, anh (chị) sử dụng các nguồn tài liệu nào để tự thực hành/luyện tập trao dồi Tiếng Anh của mình?- Hãy đánh dấu vào tất cả các ô phù hợp)
Check all that apply.
　　　　　Language learning apps
　　　　　Course-books
　　　　　Online resources
　　　　　Chat with native speakers
　　　　　Smartphones
　　　　　Laptop/computers
　　　　　Other:

8. Do your English instructors suggest online resources for practising your English outside the class? (Giảng viên Tiếng Anh có gợi ý các nguồn tài liệu trực tuyến nào để anh (chị) tự thực hành/luyện tập/trao dồi Tiếng Anh không?)
> Mark only one oval.
>> Yes
>> No
>> Other:

9. What kinds of materials or resources do you use to do your English homework? (Anh (chị) sử dụng các nguồn tài liệu nào để làm bài tập Tiếng Anh của các học phần?)

10. What kinds of materials or resources do you use to review your notes for tests or examinations? (Anh (chị) sử dụng các nguồn tài liệu nào để ôn thi/kiểm tra?)

11. Please list some English learning apps you know or have tried to use to practise your English: (Xin anh (chị) vui lòng liệt kê các ứng dụng học Tiếng Anh mà anh (chị) biết hoặc đã từng sử dụng:)

12. You know those resources from…..(check all that apply) (Anh (chị) biết đến những ứng dụng học Tiếng Anh từ .....(Hãy chọn tất cả các ô phù hợp) Check all that apply.
> Internet
> Friends
> Instructors
> Family members
> Other:

13. What activities do you participate in to practise your English outside the class? (Ngoài lớp học, anh (chị) tham gia hoạt động nào để thực hành/luyện tập/trao dồi Tiếng Anh của mình?)

14. What activities do you like most? Why? (Trong số hoạt động kể trên, anh chị) thích nhất hoạt động nào? Vì sao?)

15. What activities do you dislike? Why? (Trong số hoạt động kể trên, anh (chị) không thích hoạt động nào? Vì sao?)

16. Apart from homework and test preparation, what are the other reasons for your using online resources for practising your English outside the class? (Bên cạnh việc dùng ứng dụng trực tuyến để ôn thi/kiểm tra, những lý do khác anh (chị) sử dụng tài nguyên trực tuyến để thực hành tiếng Anh bên ngoài lớp học là gì)

17. Why do you choose English as your major at college? (Vì sao anh (chị) chọn học ngành Tiếng Anh?)

18. Are you confident with your English? (Anh (chị) có tự tin với năng lực Tiếng Anh của mình không?)   Mark only one oval.
> Yes
> No
> Maybe
> Other:

19. Do you think that you can practise your English outside the class by yourself? (Anh (chị) có cho rằng bản thân mình có thể tự thực hành/luyện tập/trao dồi Tiếng Anh bên ngoài lớp học không?)   Mark only one oval.
> Yes
> No

Maybe
Other:

20. According to you, what can be done to help/encourage/motivate you to practise your English outside the class by yourself? (Theo anh (chị), cần phải làm gì để hỗ trợ/động viên/tạo động lực cho sinh viên ngành Tiếng Anh tự thực hành/luyện tập/trao dồi Tiếng Anh bên ngoài lớp học?)

21. Would you like to participate in semi-structured interviews (another data collection method in this study)? If yes, please write your emails and cell-phone number in the following blank. If no, please briefly explain your reason. (Anh (chị) có muốn tham gia phỏng vấn không? Nếu có, xin anh (chị) vui lòng cho biết email và số điện thoại đi động để liên lạc. Nếu không, xin anh (chị) vui lòng cho biết lý do nhé.)

22. Would you like to keep a daily activities diary (another data collection method in this study), If yes, please write your emails and cell-phone number in the following blank. If no, please briefly explain your reason. (Anh (chị) có muốn tham gia viết nhật ký hoạt động hàng ngày không? Nếu có, xin anh (chị) vui lòng cho biết email và số điện thoại đi động để liên lạc. Nếu không, xin anh (chị) vui lòng cho biết lý do nhé.)

Thank you so much!

Appendix H
Instructors/Administrators/Managers Questionnaire

Dear Teachers,

This survey is being carried out to explore how the English majors engage in language learning outside the class. All responses will remain anonymous. Please try to answer all the questions.

1. Please check your title.　　　　　Mark only one oval.

English instructor

Departmental administrator

Institutional manager

2. How long have you been working at this institution?　……. years

3. Please tick your gender.　　　　　Mark only one oval.

Female

Male

Prefer not to say

Other:

4. Do you think that English majors study/practise English outside the class autonomously/voluntarily?　　　　　Mark only one oval.

　Yes

　No

　Maybe

　Other:

5. If the English majors study/practise English outside the class autonomously/voluntarily, what kinds of materials and resources do you think they use? (check all that apply)

　　　　Course-books

　　　　Language learning apps

　　　　Online resources

　　　　Chat with native speakers

　　　　Smartphones

　　　　Laptop/computers

　　　　Other:

6. If the English majors study/practise English outside the class autonomously/voluntarily, how often do you think they study/practise English outside the class autonomously/voluntarily?

7. According to you, English majors learn about resources from …(check all that apply)

　　　　Internet

　　　　Friends

　　　　Classmates

　　　　Instructors

　　　　Family

　　　　Other:

8. According to you, do English majors seek instructors' suggestions for practising their English outside the class?　　　　　Mark only one oval.

　　　　Yes

　　　　No

　　　　Maybe

(continued)

Other:

9. According to you, English majors practise their English outside the class for…..
(check all that apply)

Tests / examinations
English improvement
Pleasure
Other:

10. According to you, why do many English majors engage in practising English outside the class autonomously/voluntarily?

11. According to you, why do many English majors NOT engage in practising English outside the class autonomously/voluntarily?

12. According to you, what factors can motivate language learning outside the class?

13. According to you, what factors can demotivate language learning outside the class?

14. Do you think that English majors practise their English outside the class for exams or tests only?   Mark only one oval.

Yes
No
Maybe
Other:

15. Would you like to participate in semi-structured interviews (conducted in Vietnamese)?   Mark only one oval.

Yes
No
Maybe
Other:

16. If you would like to participate in semi-structured interviews, please write your emails and cell-phone number in the following blank. If no, please briefly explain your reason.

Thank you so much!