

ENGLISH LEARNING OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM: PRACTICES AND ENGAGEMENT AMONG EFL LEARNERS: CASE ECOLE NORMALE SUPERIEURE DE BAMAKO (ENSUP)

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Abstract

This study explores English learning outside the classroom (LOTC) among English as Foreign Language (EFL) learners at the École Normale Supérieure de Bamako (ENSUP). Recognizing limitations of traditional classroom instruction, the research examines the types of out-of-class activities students engage in and how frequently they use these activities to support language development. Using qualitative methods, including documentary review and semi-structured interviews with educators and learners, the study identifies a range of LOTC practices such as flipped learning, extensive listening and reading, use of technology and social media, project-based activities, journaling, and media exposure. Results reveal that students generally understand LOTC as voluntary engagement with English in real-life contexts and report daily or weekly participation in these activities. The findings show that out-of-class engagement contributes to vocabulary growth, listening and communication skills, learner autonomy, and motivation, although contextual challenges, especially the lack of an English-speaking environment limit authentic use. The study highlights the importance of integrating accessible, meaningful LOTC practices to bridge classroom learning with real-world language use and to enhance overall English proficiency in EFL settings.

Résumé

La présente étude examine l'apprentissage de l'anglais en dehors de la classe (Learning Outside the Classroom, LOTC) chez les apprenants d'anglais langue étrangère (EFL) à l'École Normale Supérieure de Bamako (ENSUP). Partant du constat des limites de l'enseignement traditionnel en classe, cette recherche vise à identifier les types d'activités d'apprentissage extrascolaires mobilisées par les étudiants et à analyser la fréquence de leur utilisation dans le développement des compétences linguistiques.

L'étude s'appuie sur une approche qualitative combinant une analyse documentaire et des entretiens semi-directifs réalisés auprès d'enseignants et d'apprenants. Les résultats mettent en évidence diverses pratiques d'apprentissage hors classe, notamment l'apprentissage inversé, l'écoute et la lecture extensives, l'utilisation des technologies et des réseaux sociaux, les activités basées sur des projets, la tenue de journaux d'apprentissage et l'exposition aux médias en langue anglaise.

Les données recueillies indiquent que les étudiants perçoivent généralement l'apprentissage hors classe comme un engagement volontaire avec la langue anglaise dans des contextes authentiques et déclarent participer à ces activités de manière quotidienne ou hebdomadaire. Les résultats montrent également que ces pratiques contribuent au développement du vocabulaire, à l'amélioration des compétences d'écoute et de communication, ainsi qu'au renforcement de l'autonomie et de la motivation des apprenants. Toutefois, certaines contraintes contextuelles, notamment l'absence d'un environnement anglophone, limitent les possibilités d'utilisation authentique de la langue.

Cette étude souligne ainsi l'importance d'intégrer des pratiques d'apprentissage hors classe accessibles et pertinentes afin de renforcer le lien entre l'apprentissage en classe et l'usage réel de la langue, et d'améliorer le niveau global de compétence en anglais dans les contextes d'apprentissage de l'anglais comme langue étrangère.

Key words: *English, Learning, Outside, Classroom, Practices, Engagement, EFL Learners.*

I. Introduction

Traditionally, language learning was confined to the classroom, with the world outside regarded simply as a space where language was used rather than learned. However, the emergence of communicative language teaching has challenged this notion, emphasizing that meaningful language acquisition cannot occur only within classroom walls. Research shows that traditional classroom-based learning is constrained by factors such as large class sizes, limited time, strict curricula, and restricted opportunities for discourse and practice. These limitations highlight the importance of learning activities beyond formal instruction, as out-of-class learning can provide richer, more diverse opportunities for language engagement.

Applying developing language skills outside the classroom plays a crucial role in both second and foreign language development. While learners of a second language may encounter natural contexts for use, learners of a foreign language often have fewer opportunities to interact with the language beyond scheduled lessons. Nonetheless, learners can enhance their proficiency through various out-of-class resources, including multimedia (such as the Internet, television, radio, and video games), group projects, community activities, and self-directed exploration. Research in

second language acquisition underscores that language learning is not limited to formal instruction but extends to anytime and anywhere engagement, with out-of-class practice contributing significantly to learners' communicative competence and autonomy.

In the Malian context, these issues are especially pronounced. English holds high value for academic achievement, career advancement, and global access, yet its use outside formal education remains limited. National languages dominate daily communication, and French often occupies a prominent role in education and public life, creating a sociolinguistic environment in which English is underused and sometimes perceived as distant or externally imposed. Opportunities for meaningful English interaction beyond the classroom such as English media or community use are minimal. Consequently, students at the *École Normale Supérieure de Mali* frequently struggle to extend their learning beyond structured lessons, which restricts their exposure to authentic language use and hinders the development of communicative competence, fluency, and confidence.

Although research suggests that out-of-class activities such as flipped classrooms, online learning, project-based tasks, interaction with proficient speakers, and media-based learning can support language development, there remains a gap in understanding how such activities are used by students in this context. Specifically, little is known about the range of out-of-class English learning opportunities available to students at the *École Normale Supérieure de Mali*, the extent to which students engage with them and how frequently they participate in these activities. This gap limits educators' ability to design and support learning experiences that extend English acquisition beyond the traditional classroom.

Therefore, this study investigates the types of out-of-class English learning activities in which students engage and examine how often they use these activities to enhance their language development. By addressing these questions, the research aims to provide insights

that can inform instructional practices and promote greater learner autonomy among English language learners in similar educational contexts.

II. Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative case study design to explore the phenomenon of Learning outside the Classroom (LOTC) in English language education. Qualitative research is particularly appropriate when the objective is to understand participants' experiences, perceptions, and interpretations of a phenomenon within its natural context rather than to quantify relationships between variables (Creswell & Poth, 2018). It allows researchers to generate rich, contextualized descriptions and explanations of educational practices that may not be adequately captured through quantitative measures (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Qualitative case studies are especially useful for investigating contemporary educational phenomena in real-life settings and for developing an in-depth understanding of complex social and pedagogical processes (Yin, 2018). The study focused on LOTC practices among English language educators in the secondary schools in Academie rive droite in Bamako and student teachers at ENSUP in Mali. A case study approach was selected because it facilitates an intensive examination of a bounded educational context and enables the researcher to explore the interactions between participants, practices, and institutional environments.

To enhance the comprehensiveness and credibility of the study, methodological was employed through the combination of documentary research and semi-structured interviews. Qualitative research is strengthened by allowing findings from one source of data to be compared and corroborated with evidence from another source.

Documentary research constituted the first phase of data collection. Relevant academic articles, books, policy documents, curriculum frameworks, educational reports, conference

proceedings, and institutional publications were reviewed. The documentary review covered three levels of analysis: Local level (Mali); Continental level (Africa); International level. This review provided the theoretical and contextual foundation for understanding LOTC and its role in English language teaching. It also helped identify gaps in the existing literature and informed the development of the interview guide. However, the limited availability of studies specifically addressing LOTC in English language education, particularly in the Malian context, highlighted the need for primary data collection.

Semi-structured interviews served as the principal method of primary data collection. This interview format combines predetermined open-ended questions with the flexibility to explore emerging themes and participants' unique experiences. Such flexibility enables researchers to obtain detailed, nuanced, and context-rich information while maintaining consistency across interviews. An interview guide was developed based on the literature review and the research objectives. The guide included questions addressing: Types of LOTC activities used in English language teaching; Frequency and organization of LOTC activities; Perceived benefits of LOTC for language learning; Challenges associated with implementing LOTC; Recommendations for improving LOTC practices in Malian educational settings. Follow-up and probing questions were employed whenever necessary to clarify participants' responses and deepen understanding of their experiences.

The study employed purposive sampling, a widely accepted qualitative sampling technique that involves selecting participants who possess direct knowledge and experience related to the phenomenon under investigation. Purposive sampling is particularly suitable for qualitative studies because it prioritizes information-rich cases capable of providing detailed insights rather than statistical representativeness (Patton, 2002; Palinkas et al., 2015). Participants consisted of Student teachers enrolled in English language teacher education programs at ENSUP; English

language educators teaching at the secondary school level. These participants were selected because of their professional engagement with English language teaching and their direct exposure to LOTC practices. Their experiences enabled them to provide informed perspectives on the implementation, effectiveness, opportunities, and constraints of LOTC activities in authentic educational settings. Participant recruitment continued until sufficient depth and richness of information were obtained and no substantially new themes emerged, following the principle of data saturation commonly used in qualitative research.

Data collection was conducted over a specified period. Prior to each interview, participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of their participation, and their right to withdraw at any stage without consequences. Informed consent was obtained from all participants. A semi-structured interview guide was distributed to participants to facilitate data collection. Rather than conducting face-to-face interviews, participants were invited to respond to the guide independently, allowing them sufficient time to reflect on the questions and articulate their experiences in detail. The guide contained open-ended questions aimed at eliciting in-depth information related to the study objectives. This method promoted participants' freedom of expression and reduced potential interviewer influence on responses, thereby enhancing the richness and authenticity of the data collected.

The collected interview data were transcribed word by word and analyzed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a systematic qualitative analytical method that facilitates the identification, organization, interpretation, and reporting of patterns and themes within textual data. The analysis followed six stages: Familiarization with the data through repeated reading of transcripts; Generation of initial codes; Identification of emerging themes; Review and refinement of themes; Definition and naming of themes; Interpretation and reporting of findings. Themes derived from the interviews were compared with insights obtained

from the documentary review to strengthen the interpretation of results and ensure analytical rigor.

III. Results

This result consists of two parts: The first part deals with scientific journals and the second part focuses on interviews with participants on the types of Activities students do outside of the classroom to improve their language in learning outside the classroom.

1. Documentary research:

Learning outside the Classroom (LOTC): A Theoretical Perspective

Learning outside the Classroom (LOTC) is grounded in constructivist and sociocultural theories of learning, which emphasize that language acquisition occurs through meaningful interaction, authentic experiences, and learner engagement beyond formal instructional settings (Lave & Wenger, 1991). From a sociocultural perspective, language learning is facilitated through participation in social practices and interaction with more knowledgeable others (Vygotsky, 1978). Consequently, learning opportunities that occur beyond classroom boundaries contribute significantly to language development (Richards, 2015). The emergence of digital technologies has expanded the scope of LOTC and given rise to what researchers refer to as Informal Digital Learning of English (IDLE). IDLE encompasses self-directed language-learning activities conducted through digital technologies, including social media, online videos, digital games, and virtual communities. According to Guo and Lee (2023), digital environments provide learners with authentic exposure to English and facilitate autonomous language learning through interaction with various social and technological contexts. Their systematic review demonstrates that learners' motivation, personal interests,

peer interaction, and technological accessibility are among the most influential factors affecting successful language learning outside the classroom.

Within this theoretical perspective, LOTC is not viewed as a replacement for classroom instruction but rather as a complementary extension that increases learners' exposure to the target language and promotes learner autonomy.

Flipped Learning and LOTC:

Flipped learning represents one of the most practical manifestations of LOTC. Bergmann and Sams (2012) describe the flipped classroom as a pedagogical model in which direct instruction is moved outside the classroom while classroom time is dedicated to interaction, collaboration, and problem-solving activities. This approach reflects constructivist principles by encouraging learners to engage actively with learning materials before attending class.

As Milman (2012) has explained, learners read different materials from different sources, provided by either the teacher or the learner at home, workplace, or anywhere else. Then the learner tries to understand its meaning or identify areas of complexity. After that, students come to class to share their understanding with the rest of the class through interaction with other learners or asking questions of the teacher. For example, the teacher assigns learners to prepare and deliver a presentation on a particular topic. Learners go, search, and prepare outside the classroom and give presentations in the classroom the other day. According to Braj Kachru's Circle of World Englishes (as cited in Crystal, 2003), in countries where English is treated as a foreign language, the classroom often becomes the only environment in which learners are exposed to and practice the language. However, progress tends to be slow and limited because of restricted class time and other related challenges. Therefore, it is essential to bridge classroom learning with opportunities outside of it. Teachers should equip learners to use and continue learning the language beyond formal

lessons. When encouraging students to engage in out-of-class learning, teachers need to take into account the learners' interests. They also must consider each student's current level of knowledge, specific needs, goals, and available resources. Without this careful planning, efforts to support learning outside the classroom are unlikely to help students reach the desired proficiency (Noori, 2018; Takal & Binti-Ibrahim, 2019). Recent studies on digital language learning support the effectiveness of this model. Research on Informal Digital Learning of English (IDLE) has shown that learners who engage in autonomous learning activities through digital technologies tend to develop stronger self-regulation skills and greater ownership of their learning processes (Fauziah & Diana, 2023). Furthermore, a growing body of research indicates that learning experiences conducted outside the classroom can significantly enhance learners' language proficiency and communicative competence when appropriately integrated with formal classroom instruction (Zhang & Liu, 2022). Here are some ways to support and involve learners in learning a language outside the classroom.

Extensive listening as a LOTC Activity: is an approach to learning a language outside of the classroom. It refers to any listening activity that allows learners to receive interesting and comprehensible listening input (Renandya & Farrell, 2011). Listening allows learners to pick up vocabulary and grammar subconsciously by hearing the same words and structures repeatedly in spoken texts. Nunan et al. (2015) suggest that teachers help learners choose appropriate listening materials and reflect on their learning. Some characteristics of appropriate extensive listening include being interesting and understandable without pausing (Waring, 2008). Listening to a favorite radio program, a celebrity's speech, an interview, a talk show, songs, a (Waring, 2008) and many other items can be extensive listening. Learning to listen in a new language takes practice and time, often more than learners have in class, and so extensive listening is

another kind of outside-classroom learning activity. To improve listening abilities, learners must do more listening to interesting programs, they must also think about how they listen and how to improve their listening skills (Nunan & Richards, 2015).

Extensive Reading as a LOTC Activity:

ER "means reading in quantity and in order to gain a general understanding of what is read. It is intended to develop good reading habits, to build up knowledge of vocabulary and structure, and to encourage a liking for reading" (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, pp. 193-194). According to Nunan et al. (2015), extensive reading in the target language is an excellent way to learn that language. They claimed that extensive reading not only helps learners with reading fluency and improvement of reading comprehension, but it also enhances writing, listening, and speaking skills. Renandya and Farrel (2011) stated that extensive reading improves students' word recognition skills, vocabulary, reading comprehension, fluency, and general language proficiency. Besides, it makes students develop more positive attitudes towards reading and language learning. They believe that students get the benefits while enjoying what they are doing. What they need to do to choose understandable materials and read a lot. Day and Bamford (2002) have stated ten principles for extensive reading when it is done for learning. Nunan et al. (2015) According to Nunan et al. (2015), extensive reading in the target language is an excellent way to learn that language. They claimed that extensive reading not only helps learners with reading fluency and improvement of reading comprehension, but it also enhances writing, listening, and speaking skills. Nunan et al. (2015) believe that five principles will assist learners in engaging in extensive reading outside of the classroom, while the remaining five will assist in learning the target language. The ten principles are as follows:

1. The reading material is easy.
2. A variety of reading materials on various topics must be available.

3. Learners choose what they want to read.
4. Learners read as much as possible.
5. The purpose of reading is usually related to pleasure, information, and general understanding.
6. Reading is its own reward.
7. Reading speed is usually faster than slower.
8. Reading is individual and silent.
9. Teachers orient and guide their students.
10. The teacher is a role model for the reader.

In addition, recent research continues to support the value of extensive reading for language development. Studies indicate that regular engagement with reading materials outside formal instruction contributes to improvements in reading comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, language fluency, and learner motivation (Sangers et al., 2025; Robb & Ewert, 2024). Extensive reading has also been shown to facilitate vocabulary learning and overall language proficiency through sustained exposure to comprehensible input (Liu & Zhang, 2018; Yamashita, 2008). Furthermore, extensive reading promotes learner autonomy by encouraging students to assume responsibility for their own language development through self-selected reading activities (Renandya, & Chong, 2019). These findings reinforce the role of extensive reading as a central component of Learning outside the Classroom (LOTC).

Another way for foreign language learners, whose direct, face-to-face contact with native: speakers may be limited; to access much new vocabulary is the Internet. This input contains a great deal of useful vocabulary that is meaningful to the learners (Nunan & Richards, 2015). Learners who notice and try to learn that vocabulary will improve their language skills in other areas, such as reading comprehension (Nation, 2001; Walters, 2006). Talking to Native Speakers, The best way to acquire or learn a foreign language is by being and interacting with native speakers. It helps learners develop communication skills based on contact

with native foreign or English speakers outside the classroom (Davis, 1991). Arnold et al (2007) when people learn to speak a language before any other language, this language is called a "native language," and these people are considered native speakers of that language. There are specific ways of learning a foreign language through interacting with native speakers, such as studying abroad and living in a related language context. Learners living in a non-English-spoken country usually have a chance to study in an English-spoken country and reach English language competency. In particular, university students can study a language abroad where the target foreign language is spoken and get degree credits at their home university. Besides this, living in a country where the target language is spoken, such as English, also increases language competence and cultural understanding. Specifically, in a natural interaction, learners practice listening and speaking. When speaking to learners, as Arnold et al. has mentioned, native speakers adapt and modify their speech to facilitate understanding. Moreover, learners can negotiate with a native or fluent speaker through a language emersion program. According to Bostwick (2011), the language emersion approach requires. Teachers to teach and conduct all activities in the target language.

The Language Village: is an immersion approach model designed to simulate an actual foreign language context. In a language village environment, well-trained and skilled teachers help villagers to understand what they hear, how to respond and interact, and finally acquire and practice new skills all the time and every day. The purpose of designing and creating such an environment is clear: no one needs to go abroad, pay for huge expenses, and spend several months in a foreign society to learn a language. According to Arnold et al., in contrast to an actual foreign language environment, language villages prepare direct and structured contact with the foreign language for a week or a few weeks. Furthermore, as Richards (2014) has mentioned, language

villages provide a stress-free and social setting where learners improve language skills and increase cross-cultural understanding.

Journaling: According to Perham (1992), all kinds of journaling are a means for recording personal ideas, daily experiences, and evolving insights. When journaling, someone talks to him/herself, another person, or an imaginary person. It is the best approach for supporting learners to develop and improve their writing skills. In addition, it helps learners in terms of personal growth, synthesis, or reflection on what they have acquired. Teachers may encourage learners to write in a dialogue journal or keep other journals. Perham has named some kinds of journals, such as learning journals, diaries, dream books, autobiographies, spiritual journals, professional journals, interactive reading logs, theory journals, and electronic journals. Among all the kinds of journals, the dialogue journal is the one that helps the teacher guide and supervises learners' progress. Teachers may engage learners in dialogue journals and encourage keeping other journals. A dialogue journal is a practical approach that keeps learners involved in language learning outside the classroom. It is a conversation between the teacher and the learners. Peyton (1993) has defined dialogue journals as reciprocal, ongoing, written exchanges between teachers and students used over time. Like other journaling, learners record their thoughts, experiences, and insights in a dialogue journal. For Peyton (1993), dialogue journals are conversations in which teachers and learners regularly communicate. Based on Peyton's description, learners write as much of a dialogue as he/she can, and the teacher writes back, replying to learners' questions and comments, introducing new topics, or asking questions. When communicating with learners, the teacher's job is to communicate rather than evaluate, correct, or comment on the learners' writing. However, today's social media, such as Messenger, What's Up, and others, may have reduced its importance to some extent, especially in developed countries. However, it is still a helpful approach in countries such as Afghanistan. Journaling has many benefits. One of the best

advantages of the dialogue journal is that it helps teachers to understand their learners' zone of proximal development (ZPD) and provides more personal input to them. Chiesa et al. (2013) believed that in a foreign language environment, a dialogue journal gives students input and helps to generate their output. The developed output will not only improve foreign language skills but also improve students' cognitive skills. Furthermore, it helps students use the full range of available language functions, or "speech actions." Hiemstra (2001) has claimed personal growth and development, intuition, self-expression, problem solving, reflection and critical thinking, stress reduction, and health benefits. Additionally, a dialogue journal is the best approach to support learners in improving their writing skills. As all language skills are interdependent, they will directly or indirectly improve other skills.

Project-Based Learning as Experiential LOTC:

Project-Based Learning (PBL) is another pedagogical approach closely associated with learning beyond the classroom. Drawing on experiential learning theory, PBL encourages learners to investigate authentic problems and produce meaningful outcomes through collaboration and inquiry (Markham, 2011; Markham, et al 2003). In addition, a study by Nunan D (1989) showed that for most learners, classroom instruction needed to be improved to develop language competence. Students proposed outside-classroom activities to achieve tremendous success. Field (2007) also believed that learners must develop the ability to use technology inside and outside the classroom for learning. What learners learn inside the classroom may not be directly connected to the outside context, while what they learn outside the classroom will be directly connected to the real world (Resnick, 1987). Considering this, language is more important and valuable outside the classroom than inside-the-classroom learning. Project-based learning is an active approach to learning and teaching a language in which learners are assigned to explore real-world problems and issues.

Moss and Van Duzer (1998) have defined project-based learning as an instructional approach in which learners are expected to solve a problem or develop a product. As its name suggests, project-based learning organizes learning around a project, which is usually complex tasks for learners, such as problem-solving, decision-making, and investigation. Backett (2002) has stated that projects are considered long-term activities designed for instructional purposes to facilitate language acquisition, content, and skills. The primary purpose of assigning learners to a particular project is to produce a comprehensible output both during and at the end of the project. An experienced teacher will know how to integrate several skills into a project. Stoller (2006) has stated that problem-based learning does not just engage students in the project; depending on the teacher, learners, and situation, it takes various forms. Some characteristics of project-based learning are as follows:

1. It has both a process and a product.
2. It gives learners some partial ownership.
3. It extends over a period.
4. It integrates different skills.
5. It develops learners' understanding of a topic through the integration of language and content.
6. It required learners to collaborate with each other and work on their own.
7. It requires learners to be responsible for learning by gathering, processing, and reporting information from target language sources.
8. It requires learners and teachers to change their roles over time.
9. It has a tangible final product, and
10. It reflects both the process and the product.

Stoller (1997) has stated ten steps for successfully implementing project-based learning. Some main steps are choosing the project, determining the outcomes, gathering and compiling information, presenting the outcome, and evaluating. Recent empirical studies demonstrate that project-based learning enhances learners' self-

regulated learning, language proficiency, and critical thinking skills. For example, Cao (2024) found that project-based learning positively contributed to English language learners' self-regulation and autonomy by engaging them in authentic learning experiences extending beyond classroom boundaries. Similarly, mobile-assisted project-based learning has been shown to improve learners' speaking abilities and communicative competence through technology-mediated collaboration and interaction. These findings support the theoretical assumption that meaningful language learning occurs when learners actively engage with real-world tasks and contexts.

Technology-Mediated LOTC:

Technology has become one of the most influential factors shaping contemporary language learning. While earlier researchers such as Hashemi (2016) emphasized the importance of technology for language learning, recent scholarship highlights its role in creating continuous learning opportunities beyond the classroom. According to Milliken and Banes (2002), the traditional 'chalk and talk' approach to teaching is only sometimes useful and successful. Nowadays, as in other fields of life, teaching, and learning have also become dependent on technology. As Hashemi (2016) has stated, technological changes have greatly affected foreign language teaching and learning. Of course, the percentage of this change and dependence may differ from one context to another. Countries such as Afghanistan still need help in getting advantages from technology. It is due to many reasons, such as traditional ways of teaching, lack of technological equipment, unfamiliarity with available technological facilities, cultural restrictions, learners' economic problems, language problems, and lack of electricity and access to the Internet. Nevertheless, many changes have come, especially in the last two decades. However, the case of developed and developing countries is more different. Students in these countries are more involved in using mobile phones, interactive videos, and games (Moyle et al., 2012). Using technology in classes,

as claimed by Hashemi (2016), will allow students to be faster, more effective and more permanent learning. Looking at the increasing role of technology in daily life, education systems should adjust themselves and take advantage of the great influence of technology over learners. Technology will not only help learners to learn independently but also collaborate with their fellows. One of the great ways of supporting learners outside the classroom to learn English with the help of technology is through online or e-learning. According to Behera (2013), e-learning refers to acquiring and using scientific information distributed and facilitated by electronic media. As Nielsen (2012) has proposed, e-learning makes learning outside the classroom possible without the time pressure that usually exists when doing some activities in the classroom. In addition, it makes learners more self-directed and more autonomous in planning, monitoring, and evaluating learning according to their methods. Although language skills have very close relationships and depend on each other, specific skills are improved through certain technological tools and in a specific way. For example, to improve learners' listening skills, they are advised to use smartphones, computers, broadcasting, CD-players, or tape recorders. As Hoven (1999) has stated, these tools will provide learners with visual and voice input, which will help them enhance their content knowledge and ideas and develop their listening skills. Voice chat via the Internet will help learners even more. It will improve listening skills and enrich communicative capabilities (Nomass, 2013). Reading is another skill that can be improved through technology outside the classroom. Reading will help learners raise their knowledge level, enjoy literature and, more importantly, learn a language. Reading is a lot easier when it is with the help of technology. For instance, imagine reading on a computer or tablet. Learners can access thousands of books, search them in seconds, and read them on screen, and if they face any meaning or pronunciation problems, it is easy to check and listen. In addition, reading applications on smartphones, tablets, or computers has many facilities that are only easy to have with these

technological tools. Ybarra et al (2003) mentioned that any language experience would help learners when learning the English language. Technology helps in the improvement of speaking skills as well. The latest technological tools have provided various practical opportunities for learners. These tools improve learners' vocabulary and pronunciation (Nomass, 2013). Many apps are installed on smartphones and computers and can be used to practice language skills, including speaking. Besides that, with internet access, people can talk in real-time anywhere in the world with native speakers. In addition, technological tools and facilities are widely used for the learning and improvement of writing skills among learners. There are a few opportunities for learners to learn about and improve their writing skills. As Lewis (1997) has stated, graphics make expressing thoughts more interesting and precise. Consider highlighting, underlining, bolding, italicizing, and changing font size and color. More importantly, technological rules, especially computers, automatically check and correct spelling and grammatical mistakes. Using a computer, as a tool for studying grammar is a lot more encouraging compared to the past practice of using a pencil and paper (Ybarra & Green, 2003). Social media, such as Facebook and Instagram, has helped them unconsciously develop and improve their writing skills. Even though people who intend to develop and improve their writing skills, can effectively express and transfer ideas and reply with the help of these utilities, Recent studies show that proper use of technology can assist the educational system in working better and more effectively (Jonassen & Reeves, 1996). Therefore, teachers and educational institutions are strongly advised to include technological facilities in their teaching and learning processes and practically encourage learners to use them.

As stated by Hashemi (2016), using computer technology as a tool in teaching will bring many benefits to the class.

- It increases students' interest and curiosity.
- It encourages interaction between the teacher and students.
- It enhances communication among students.

- It enhances cultural knowledge and understanding.
- It improves teaching.
- It makes course content flexible.
- It considers individual differences.

The theoretical foundation of technology-mediated LOTC is closely associated with learner autonomy theory, which emphasizes learners' capacity to take responsibility for planning, monitoring, and evaluating their own learning processes (Benson, 2011; Lai, 2019). Through smartphones, online platforms, social media, podcasts, digital games, and artificial intelligence tools, learners can access authentic language input and engage in meaningful communication anytime and anywhere (Sockett, 2014; Lai, 2019). Research on Informal Digital Learning of English (IDLE) has demonstrated that digital technologies create rich opportunities for language socialization and self-directed learning beyond formal educational settings (Soyoof et al., 2021). Recent systematic and thematic reviews further indicate that participation in IDLE contributes to vocabulary development, communication skills, intercultural awareness, learner motivation, and digital literacy (Guo & Lee, 2023; Liu et al., 2025). Consequently, technology functions not merely as a learning tool but as a learning ecosystem that extends language learning beyond the physical classroom and supports continuous lifelong language development (Lai, 2019; Guo & Lee, 2023).

Exploring Social Media :

The revolution of technology has changed the world into a village, and the World Wide

Web, especially social media, has a crucial role. Nowadays, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, email, and digital tools are particularly widely used to share and get in touch with each other (Selwyn, 2007). Many learners use social media to discuss school, university, or classroom matters. A study by Omekwu et al. (2014) showed that learners use social media to communicate with friends, view movies, discuss national issues, and discuss academic

purposes. As Yadav (2021) has stated, social media refers to a set of websites, web links, intranets, apps, and any net-based links, such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, Messenger, Skype, and many more apps related to online English teaching-learning, like British Council, writer, speaker, EDMODO, DUALINGO, and Podcasts are used the most on the worldwide university campuses.

Social media platforms help learners to improve English language proficiency in general.

Specifically, it helps improve listening, reading, and writing skills and develop vocabulary.

Yadav (2021) has stated that BBC news/radio, YouTube, Podcasts, and Audiobooks can help in the development of listening skills; making their own Facebook group talk and chat frequently can improve their speaking; Speed Reading, Readerly, Flipboard, Play Newsstand, and BBC News may be used for reading; and Writer of OALD, English writing skills, and blogging are suggested to be used to develop and improve writing skills.

Learning from TV and Radio:

Radio and TV have always had an important role in acquiring and learning a second or, specifically, a foreign language. As Nunan and Richards (2015) have stated, learners commonly cite watching television as a valuable input for outside classroom learning. Based on research findings, foreign language learners are specifically encouraged to watch TV and English movies. They support many aspects of language learning, such as listening comprehension, vocabulary enrichment, and cross-cultural awareness (Danan, 2004; Vander plank, 2010). Listening to radio programs and watching TV provides a large amount of foreign language input. According to Webb (2014), television programs are a widely available resource for language learners to improve their vocabulary and listening comprehension. As long as learners view TV programs regularly and for an extended period, their listening comprehension and vocabulary will improve. According to

Richards (2014), several characteristics of watching TV demonstrate how it is a good activity for learning a language outside of the classroom, including its accessibility, flexibility, intensity of exposure, stimulus, multimodality, and notice of gaps. Learners can watch TV on different mobile technologies in different ways. In addition, learners tend to watch TV for long periods without getting bored. In addition, it provides its input in various forms, such as orthographically, aural, and visual. When learners watch TV, they will likely understand how English is used in different circumstances, in different forms, and for different purposes. Consequently, they will understand where and how to improve.

2. Field survey

What “learning English outside the classroom” means

In this study, participants understood learning English outside the classroom as using English in real-life contexts for example, speaking with friends, listening to media, and engaging in daily activities without formal lessons. This matches the concept of extramural English, which refers to English learners’ contact with the language outside classroom walls through activities initiated by the learner. Such activities include watching films, listening to music, using social media, and playing games in English, both intentionally and incidentally. Research highlights that extramural English can involve both deliberate learning (e.g., listening with the goal of learning) and incidental learning (e.g., listening for entertainment and learning without intending to). This means learners may learn new vocabulary and grammar even when they are not explicitly studying.

Activities and frequency

The participants listed media use (social media, watching TV), talking with friends, and travel as ways they practice English outside class. These activity types are also frequently reported in

academic studies. For example, research among university students found that listening to English songs, reading English content on social media, and watching English TV shows or movies were common extramural English activities. Participants also mentioned how often they engage in these activities (daily or weekly). Studies suggest that *increased exposure* to English outside class, especially regularly, helps learners develop stronger language skills over time.

Importance of out-of-class learning

All respondents agreed that learning English outside class is important. They explained that it improves language use, helps them communicate, and provides real-world practice. Research supports these beliefs. Studies show that contact with English outside classroom environments can promote vocabulary acquisition; listening and speaking skills; Learner autonomy and self-regulated learning. These benefits are tied to learners' ongoing engagement with English in meaningful contexts. Learner autonomy (the ability to take control of one's own learning) is a key benefit of extramural English, because learners choose activities based on their interests and goals.

Opportunities and challenges

Respondents in the study mentioned opportunities like learning centers, English clubs, and media resources. Research also highlights that learners in many contexts increasingly engage with English through digital media and technology, which expands opportunities for out-of-class exposure. However, the main challenge participants reported was the lack of an English environment. This reflects findings from other studies in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) settings, when English is not widely spoken locally, learners may struggle to find authentic opportunities to use English outside class.

Motivation to learn outside the classroom

Participants cited globalization, career opportunities, personal interest, and access to English information as key motivations. Research in language learning confirms that students are more likely to engage with English outside class when they see meaningful benefits, such as professional advantages or participatory experiences. Motivation increases when learning activities are tied to personal goals and real-world use.

IV. Discussion

Interpretation of Findings

The interview data were first transcribed, reviewed, and cleaned to ensure consistency and accuracy. Repeated statements, incomplete responses, and irrelevant information were removed, while meaningful units related to learners' understanding, practices, opportunities, challenges, and motivations for learning English outside the classroom were retained. The cleaned dataset was then coded to identify recurring patterns and themes.

Initial exploration of the data revealed that participants consistently associated learning English outside the classroom with authentic language use in everyday contexts. Most respondents referred to activities such as communicating with friends, engaging with social media, watching television, listening to music, and traveling. These responses suggest that learners perceive language learning beyond the classroom as a practical and experiential process rather than merely an extension of formal instruction.

This finding aligns with the concept of Extramural English (EE), defined as learner-initiated contact with English outside formal educational settings through both intentional and incidental activities. Research indicates that learners frequently encounter English through media consumption, social interactions, digital platforms, and entertainment activities, which contribute significantly to language development.

Participants' descriptions of using English through social media, television programs, conversations with friends, and travel

experiences demonstrate that extramural learning provides opportunities for authentic language exposure. These activities correspond to the most common forms of EE identified in previous studies, including watching videos, listening to audio materials, reading, digital interaction, and face-to-face communication.

The frequency of learners' engagement reported as daily or weekly suggests that regular exposure increases opportunities for language acquisition. This observation supports findings that the quantity and diversity of out-of-class English exposure are positively associated with language proficiency, particularly vocabulary growth and communicative competence.

Participants unanimously emphasized the importance of learning English outside the classroom, particularly for improving communication skills and gaining practical experience. Their perceptions are consistent with extensive research demonstrating that extramural English contributes to vocabulary acquisition, listening comprehension, oral fluency, and overall language proficiency.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings can be explained through input-based and usage-based language learning theories, which argue that repeated exposure to meaningful language input facilitates language acquisition. Participants' experiences suggest that out-of-class learning environments provide rich opportunities for such exposure, often exceeding the limited instructional time available in formal classrooms.

Another significant finding concerns learner autonomy. Participants reported independently selecting activities that matched their interests, such as social networking, entertainment media, and participation in English clubs. This self-directed engagement reflects the autonomous nature of extramural English, where learners voluntarily choose learning opportunities based on personal goals and preferences. Research has consistently shown that EE promotes self-regulation, learner autonomy, and increased responsibility for language development.

The data suggest that learners become active agents in their language learning process, which may strengthen motivation and sustain long-term engagement.

Participants identified several opportunities for out-of-class learning, particularly access to English clubs, digital resources, television programs, and online platforms. These findings reflect contemporary research showing that technological developments have significantly expanded opportunities for language learning beyond formal educational settings. Digital environments provide learners with access to authentic materials and communication opportunities that were previously unavailable.

However, participants also highlighted the lack of an English-speaking environment as a major challenge. This concern reflects a common issue in many English-as-a-Foreign-Language (EFL) contexts like Mali, where opportunities for authentic interaction with proficient speakers are limited. Although digital technologies partially compensate for this limitation, the absence of a natural linguistic environment may reduce opportunities for meaningful communication and spontaneous language use. Similar contextual barriers have been reported in previous studies of extramural language learning.

The findings further indicate that learners' engagement in out-of-class English activities is strongly influenced by motivational factors, including globalization, future career aspirations, personal interest, and access to information. Participants viewed English as a valuable resource for academic, professional, and social advancement.

This observation supports previous research showing that motivation and perceived benefits are important predictors of engagement in extramural English activities. Learners who recognize the usefulness of English are more likely to seek opportunities for language practice beyond formal instruction, thereby increasing their exposure and potential language gains.

Taken together, the findings suggest that learners perceive out-of-class English learning as a meaningful complement to formal

classroom instruction. Through authentic exposure, self-directed engagement, and access to digital resources, learners create opportunities to develop their language skills in ways that extend beyond the limitations of classroom learning. The results support the theoretical proposition that extramural English serves as an important context for language acquisition by providing authentic input, fostering learner autonomy, and sustaining motivation.

At the same time, the findings highlight the importance of contextual factors. While learners benefit from digital resources and informal learning opportunities, challenges such as limited English-speaking environments may constrain the effectiveness of these experiences. Therefore, educational institutions may consider creating more structured opportunities for meaningful English interaction outside the classroom through clubs, online communities, and extracurricular activities.

A limitation of the present study is its reliance on self-reported data, which may not fully capture the frequency, quality, or intensity of learners' engagement in extramural English activities. Future studies could adopt mixed-method approaches by combining interviews, learning diaries, digital tracking data, and proficiency measures to examine more precisely how different forms of out-of-class engagement contribute to language development.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that learning English outside the classroom plays a vital role in supporting language development in an EFL setting. Participants in this research understood out-of-class learning as using English in real-life contexts such as speaking with friends, engaging with English media, and using English for personal interests rather than only through formal instruction. These activities align with the concept of extramural English, where voluntary learner-initiated contact with the language contributes to both deliberate and incidental learning.

Participants reported frequent engagement with activities such as social media, watching English TV and films, listening to music, and conversations with others. Their regular exposure to English outside formal lessons appeared to support vocabulary acquisition, listening comprehension, and learner autonomy, reflecting the beneficial effects of extramural English documented in previous research. These findings confirm that meaningful contact with English in everyday life enhances practical language skills beyond what limited classroom time can provide.

Respondents also identified key motivations including globalization, career aspirations, and personal interests as important drivers for engaging with English outside class. This highlights how real-world relevance and personal goals encourage sustained language use beyond formal educational settings. At the same time, contextual challenges, particularly the lack of a local English environment limited authentic opportunities for language use outside the classroom. These contextual constraints mirror common barriers faced by EFL learners in similar research contexts.

Overall, the findings support the view that learning English outside the classroom is not only useful but also often essential for developing functional and communicative proficiency. By encouraging learners' out-of-class engagement through accessible resources and motivating activities relevant to their interests and goals, educators and institutions can help bridge classroom learning with authentic language use, ultimately contributing to more effective language acquisition.

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