

Learning the english language in terms of out-of-class activity

Aprendiendo el idioma inglés en términos de actividad fuera de clase
Aprendendo a língua inglesa em termos de atividade fora da aula

Recibido: 16 de enero de 2019. Aceptado: 06 de febrero de 2019

Written by:

Aygul Z. Ibatova (Corresponding Author)¹

¹Tyumen Industrial University, Russia
aigoul@rambler.ru

Abstract

In this study, we aim to identify the various activities of non-class students, which, as independent work, helps student autonomy and makes learning more optimal. The research was conducted on the basis of the Branch of Tyumen Industrial University in Surgut, Elabuga Pedagogical University and Shadrinsk Pedagogical University, 120 students participated (from the first to the fourth year). We used from questionnaire of Littlewood and Lui (1996). Descriptive-survey method and library research method are used in this study. Result of this study showed, students in this study suggested practical reasons for not conducting activities involving face-to-face interaction, the actual reasons for their avoidance may have been more complex and involved both individual and social/political factors. These students used a variety of activities and learning strategies and had a good relationship with English in their private domain. While this study has focused on only one group of learners, it has implications which extend beyond this specific context, since it highlights the importance of considering not just opportunities for learning, but also students' attitudes and society's attitudes. These factors may inhibit or facilitate the taking up of specific learning activities in the second language. English is learnt in a variety of contexts and the meanings attached to using English outside the classroom vary within these contexts.

Keywords: Independent work, Out-of-class activity, foreign language learner.

Resumen

En este estudio, nuestro objetivo es identificar las diversas actividades de los estudiantes que no pertenecen a la clase, que, como trabajo independiente, ayuda a la autonomía de los estudiantes y hace que el aprendizaje sea más óptimo. La investigación se realizó sobre la base de la Rama de la Universidad Industrial de Tyumen en Surgut, la Universidad Pedagógica de Elabuga y la Universidad Pedagógica de Shadrinsk, participaron 120 estudiantes (desde el primero hasta el cuarto año). Usamos del cuestionario de Littlewood y Lui (1996). En este estudio se utilizan el método de encuesta descriptiva y el método de investigación de la biblioteca. El resultado de este estudio mostró que los estudiantes en este estudio sugirieron razones prácticas para no realizar actividades que implican una interacción cara a cara; las razones reales para su evitación pueden haber sido más complejas e involucraron factores tanto individuales como sociales / políticos. Estos estudiantes utilizaron una variedad de actividades y estrategias de aprendizaje y tuvieron una buena relación con el inglés en su dominio privado. Si bien este estudio se ha centrado en un solo grupo de estudiantes, tiene implicaciones que se extienden más allá de este contexto específico, ya que resalta la importancia de considerar no solo las oportunidades de aprendizaje, sino también las actitudes de los estudiantes y las actitudes de la sociedad. Estos factores pueden inhibir o facilitar la realización de actividades de aprendizaje específicas en el segundo idioma.

Palabras claves: trabajo independiente, actividad fuera de la clase, estudiante de idiomas extranjeros.

Resumo

Neste estudo, nosso objetivo é identificar as diversas atividades dos alunos que não pertencem à turma, que, como trabalho independente, auxiliam a autonomia dos alunos e tornam o aprendizado mais otimizado. A pesquisa foi realizada com base na Filial da Universidade Industrial de Tyumen em Surgut, na Universidade Pedagógica de Elabuga e na Universidade Pedagógica de Shadrinsk, onde 120 estudantes participaram (do primeiro ao quarto ano). Utilizamos o questionário de Littlewood e Lui (1996). Neste estudo, o método de pesquisa descritiva e o método de pesquisa da biblioteca são utilizados. O resultado deste estudo mostrou que os alunos deste estudo sugeriram razões práticas para não realizar atividades que envolvam interação face a face; As razões reais para a sua evitação podem ter sido mais complexas e envolveram fatores individuais e sociais / políticos. Esses alunos usaram uma variedade de atividades e estratégias de aprendizado e tiveram um bom relacionamento com o inglês em seu domínio privado. Embora este estudo tenha se concentrado em um único grupo de alunos, ele tem implicações que se estendem para além desse contexto específico, pois destaca a importância de considerar não apenas as oportunidades de aprendizagem, mas também as atitudes e atitudes dos alunos. da sociedade. Esses fatores podem inibir ou facilitar a realização de atividades específicas de aprendizagem na segunda língua.

Palavras-chave: trabalho independente, atividade fora da aula, estudante de língua estrangeira

Introduction

Teaching and learning can become inherently spontaneous and student-centered when moved from the confines of the classroom into the world at large. From the collaborative learning atmosphere that results from the unique relationships developed outside the classroom, to the deep learning that occurs when students must put into practice “in the real world” what they have theorized about from behind a desk, field experiences are unmatched in their learning potential. Field experiences early in a student’s career can be formative and can inspire students to continue in a field. Since the 60s, the process of teaching the second language has become more towards the learner and learning. In this student-centered education, language learners are encouraged to become more independent in learning and less dependent on the teacher (Benjamin & Chen Yih-Lan, 2003). Chernenko and Chukileva (Chernenko & Chukileva, 2015) refers to three distinct sections, including Individual work, Teamwork, Mass scale, for students’ activities outside the classroom. How can we describe active independent learners in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes needed? The answers to this question are different for independent work. For independent work this relates to being able to work without guidance (Candy, 1991).

After analyzing the literature on this issue, we have been revealed by the fact that in the universities the control and monitoring of the independent work are not given enough attention. Accordingly, level of motivation for mastering foreign language education is reducing and there is lack of incentives for foreign

language communication with representatives of different countries. Also in universities there is acute shortage of creative and enterprising students. The majority of students must generate personality and specific competencies required in further studies and work during training in undergraduate. In this study, we aim to identify the various activities of non-class students, which, as independent work, helps student autonomy and makes learning more optimal.

Research Literature

In independent work learning is a side-effect of problem solving, working or acting only. There is no explicit regulation of learning by the learners, nor any conscious attempts of learners to regulate learning as such (but teachers of course may be focusing on the learning consciously). Students are regulating their actions, problem solving or working, but not their learning. Learning occurs unconsciously and is regulated by the environment or by the teacher(s). Thus learners have no conscious learning goals, no conscious learning strategies and they are not aware of the kind of testing of learning to be expected. Still there is learning, even very important learning. Although learners themselves do not organise this kind of learning, some organisation is still possible, be it through pedagogical authorities or through environmental conditions. The environment can be organised in such ways that more or less implicit learning becomes probable. Simons (Simons, 1997) did a search of the literature in order to find the skills and attitudes that learners need for independent work. The first set of skills

and attitudes they found relate to being able and ready to work without help of others (alone and with fellow students). This has to do with competencies like personal autonomy (Candy, 1991). As we know, student' independent work is related to out-of-class language learning (OCLL) activities. Out-of-class language learning (OCLL) is defined as any language learning activities that are performed outside the class, be it for the sake of learning the language itself or for pure pleasure. Studies on OCLL, however, show that there has been inconsistency in wording the term; different authors use slightly different word, for example (Hyland, 2004) and Chusanachoti use 'out-of-class language activity, Al-Otaibi (Al-Otaibi, 2004) prefers to use 'out-of-class language practice', MacIntyre succinctly explains that learning strategy is a conscious behavior that learners use as a plan or tactic towards success in language learning as cited in (Al-Otaibi, 2004).

As such, this study will not try to attempt learning strategies employed outside the class, rather it describes and quantify out-of class language activities (e.g. reading novels, watching movies, and so on) whether done consciously or unconsciously. Out-of-class language learning is a scope of research that has received much attention and interest over the years. In this exhaustive research, there has been a great consistency of receptive skills (listening and writing) being the most widely used out-of-class language learning activities (Hyland, 2004, Al-Otaibi, 2004). Specifically, Pickard [8] sought out to identify out-of-class language learning employed by 20 advanced German learners of English. Survey from the distributed questionnaires reveals that receptive skills such as listening to the radio, and reading newspapers are among the most popular activities. Productive skills, such as speaking or writing, are not considered since the opportunities to use them outside the class are severely limited. However, given the small number of sampling, such conclusion should be made cautiously. In EFL contexts, a similar array of activities has also been reported. In Hong Kong, Hyland (Hyland, 2004) notes that passive skills such as reading books, and surfing the net are among the most frequently used out-of-class activities by 228 university English-education students. She argues that a hindrance in speaking English outside the class stems from students' fear of negative judgments primarily caused by social or political factors there. 106 Chinese students studying English in New Zealand are also reported of

employing passive skills as the top five most frequently used OCLLs (Pearson, 2004). These activities are listening to news on the radio, independent study in the library, reading books, watching television programs and listening to the music. According to a study conducted in Thailand, it is reported that browsing the net, reading posters, and watching movies are the top three OCLL (Chusanachoti, 2009). In Saudi Arabia, passive out-of-class activities such as watching movies, listening to songs, and reading for pleasure are the most widely used by 237 English language learners. The frequency differs somewhat between females (n = 97) and males participants (n = 140), with female showing a higher frequency than the male counterparts (Al-Otaibi, 2004).

Related Works

(Fuad, et al, 2018) investigated "Active Learning for Out-of -class Activities by Using Interactive Mobile Apps". in this study, the proposed model will exploit students' usage of technology and mobile devices for interaction and learning outside the classroom. Mobile apps will facilitate active and blended learning, where participation is part compulsory-part interest driven, is learner-centric and where learning is being evaluated continuously. By having a guided learning environment and by using mobile technology, we believe that students can be steered more effectively once they leave the classroom and expect students to maintain more focus on the course content and ultimately to learn and retain information better (Fuad et al, 2018).

Cortina-Pérez and Solano-Tenorio (2013) investigated "The effect of using out-of-class contexts on EFL learners". This work discusses the effect of Out-of-Class Language Learning (OCLL) in Communicative Competence in English within an EFL program with a group of native-Spanish students from Colombia. Results revealed that there were evident differences between both groups in the post-test performance in favor of the treatment group (Cortina-Pérez&Solano-Tenorio, 2013).

Lakova and Chaklikova (2016) investigated "Management of Students' Independent Work through the Project Technology in Foreign Language Education". This study focuses on the management of students' independent work in the specialty "Journalism" on the subject "Special Foreign Language" in high school through project

based learning. Result of this study showed, Students accomplished the following skills that contributed to the development of personality and tend to the reflection: 1- The ability to search for information on the project independently, including in foreign languages, in a variety of information sources; 2- The ability to evaluate information critically, systematize, generalize and interpret the facts; 3- The ability to identify the contradictions and on this basis to formulate the problem, arguing its relevance; 4- The ability to develop an action plan to address the problem, choose methods and techniques; 5- The ability to predict the possible positive and negative impacts of decisions; 6- The ability to present the results of the project activity (Lakova & , 2016).

Chan (2016) investigated “Popular Culture, English Out-of-Class Activities, and Learner Autonomy among Highly Proficient Secondary Students in Hong Kong”. The study found that the case participants mainly engaged in self-initiated, interest-driven out-of-class learning, through which they improved their school performance and started to internalize English learning for their personal purposes and develop learner autonomy. It is also suggested that out-of-class learning and school performance promoted the growth of each other. Teachers should recognize the use of interest-driven, popular culture out-of-class activities to further establish the link between out-of-class and classroom-based learning (Chan, 2016).

Research Questions

1. What activities did the student teachers and practising teachers report using to support lifelong English language learning?
2. Which of these activities were reported to be most widely used?
3. Which activities did they believe were most helpful?
4. What beliefs did they have about using English outside the classroom?
5. Did these beliefs affect their out-of-class activities in English?

Methodology

The work can be used in further development of the problem of self-study of students of professional educational institutions.

The research was conducted on the basis of the branch of Tyumen Industrial University in Surgut,

Elabuga Pedagogical University, Shadrinsk Pedagogical University, 120 students participated (from the first to the fourth year).

We used questionnaire of Littlewood and Lui (1996)(Chan, 2016). The questionnaire investigated a number of different areas including information on the students' language background and educational experiences in English, their attitudes towards using English in different situations, the part it played in their daily lives, the activities they reported engaging in English and the activities they found most useful for improving their English. There were 12 items in total including both closed ranking questions and open-ended questions (you can see the questionnaire in Appendix A).

Descriptive-survey method and library research method are used in this study.

Results

The questionnaire was first piloted with a group of 16 full-time students from the previous year. Some of the questions and suggested activities were revised in the light of their responses and after informal discussions with individual students. It was then sent to all students enrolled for bachelor's degrees (B.Ed) at the Branch of IUT in Surgut, and post-graduate certificates in education majoring in English Language (PCEd) at Elabuga Pedagogical University, Shadrinsk Pedagogical University. This group consisted of full-time students and also part-time students who were practising teachers. The questionnaire was also administered to a group of full-time primary school teachers on a language enhancement course. A total of 120 questionnaires were given out and 110 were returned. Of these, ten questionnaires were completed by students who rated themselves as native English speakers and these were discounted. The remaining 100 were then used in the study, giving an overall response rate of 75%. A breakdown of the students completing the questionnaire is given below. It should be noted that while a large proportion of the respondents (81.3%) were female, this actually reflected the general gender balance of the courses.

Despite the fact that these students were either planning to be English teachers or were English teachers already, not all of them regarded the English language as playing an extremely important role in their daily lives outside the

classroom. While 16.7% viewed it as very important, using it every day in many contexts,

nearly 40% said that it was not very important and they only used it occasionally (Table 1).

Table 1- How important is English in your daily life outside the classroom?

Statements	Very important: I use it frequently every day in many contexts	Important: I often use it in different situations	Not very important: I only use it occasionally	Not important at all: I never use it outside the classroom	Total
No. of respondents	16	41	40	3	100
% of respondents	16	41.2	39.9	2.2	100

Thus a considerable number of the students appeared either to be unmotivated or unable to find many opportunities to use and practise their English outside their study or school

environment, even though 60.5% of the students regarded their English as either weak or only fair and 96.5% felt that they needed more practice and improvement as shown in Table 2.

Table 2- Current level of English

Statements	My English is weak and I need to improve it considerably	My English is fair, but I still have a lot to learn	My English is good, but there is still some room for improvement	My English is near native speaker and I don't think I need to develop it further	Total
No. of respondents	13	125	82	8	228
% of respondents	5.7	54.8	36.0	3.5	100

Respondents were asked about the frequency with which they carried out various activities in English. It can be seen from Table 3 that the most common.

Table 4- The frequency of activities carried out in English

Activities	Average score
1. Write emails	1.5
2. Read academic books and articles	1.8
3. Surf the internet	1.8
4. Watch videos/DVDs/VCDs	2.2
5. Watch TV programmes	2.5
6. Read newspapers and magazines	2.5
7. Listen to songs	2.5
8. Speak with colleagues/fellow students	2.6
9. Read novels	2.8
10. Attend meetings	3.1
11. Listen to the radio	3.5

12. Speak with friends	3.5
13. Talk on the phone	3.6
14. Talk to people in shops	3.8
15. Speak with family members	4.1

1 = very often – 5 = never

activities did not involve face-to-face interaction. Students mentioned writing emails, reading academic books and surfing the net as their most common activities. Other activities included watching videos, reading newspapers, watching TV programmes and listening to songs. Students did not read outside their study area as much as one might expect and although they mentioned speaking to students and colleagues in English as a fairly common activity, they rarely found opportunities to speaking English outside their worker study environment. The interviews suggested that speaking in English was confined to environments where it was sanctioned by the demands of an external body such as the university or a principal.

Conclusion

Previous studies on out-of-class learning, especially in the Tyumen Industrial University context, have tended to focus on the fact that students favour 'passive' receptive activities for their independent works and have suggested various ways to get the students to engage more with the productive aspects of the language, especially speaking. However, without addressing contextual factors in which the language use is taking place, this is easier said than done. While students in this study suggested practical reasons for not conducting activities involving face-to-face interaction, the actual reasons for their avoidance may have been more complex and involved both individual and social/political factors.

As the discussion above has demonstrated, the students actually felt constrained when using English in public contexts for various reasons to do with their social identities, principally the implications attached to using English and the fear of being judged by a society prone to critical judgements of its English teachers.

Nonetheless it is worth bearing in mind that these were successful English learners. As a group of potential English teachers, they had all achieved fairly high levels of English and many were continuing to develop the language.

Perhaps we tend to emphasise the public use of English as a means to improve.

These students used a variety of activities and learning strategies and had a good relationship with English in their private domain. While this study has focused on only one group of learners, it has implications which extend beyond this specific context, since it highlights the importance of considering not just opportunities for learning, but also students' attitudes and society's attitudes. These factors may inhibit or facilitate the taking up of specific learning activities in the second language. English is learnt in a variety of contexts and the meanings attached to using English outside the classroom vary within these contexts, so this is an important area for future studies of independent work to investigate.

References

- Al-Otaibi, G., (2004). Language learning strategy use among Saudi EFL students and its relationship to language proficiency level, gender and motivation. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses. (Accession Order No. 3129188).
- Candy, P. C., (1991). *Self-Direction for Lifelong Learning. A Comprehensive Guide to Theory and Practice*. Jossey-Bass, 350 Sansome Street, San Francisco, CA 94104-1310.
- Chan, H. W., (2016). Popular Culture, English Out-of-Class Activities, and Learner Autonomy among Highly Proficient Secondary Students in Hong Kong. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 4(8), 1918-1923.
- Chernenko, G., Chukileva, K., (2015), Some organization forms of out-of-class activities while learning foreign languages in the technical higher education institution, *The journal of higher education language teaching and learning*, available on: <http://urn.fi/urn:nbn:fi:jamk-issn-2343-0281-13>.
- Chusanachoti, R., (2009). *EFL learning through language activities outside the classroom: A case study of English education students in Thailand*. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from

- ProQuest Dissertations and Theses. (Accession Order No. 3363815).
- Cortina-Pérez, B., & Solano-Tenorio, L. M., (2013). The effect of using out-of-class contexts on EFL learners: an action research. *Calidoscópio*, 11(2), 167.
- Fuad, M., Akbar, M., & Zubov, L., (2018). Active Learning for Out-of-class Activities by Using Interactive Mobile Apps. arXiv preprint arXiv:1805.00439.
- Godino, J. D., Rivas, H., Burgos, M., & Wilhelmi, M. R. (2018). Analysis of Didactical Trajectories in Teaching and Learning Mathematics: Overcoming Extreme Objectivist and Constructivist Positions. *International Electronic Journal of Mathematics Education*, 14(1), 147-161.
- Hashemi, Z., Hadavi, M., & Rezaeian, M. (2012). The Impact of Motivation on English Language Acquisition among Medical and Dentistry Students at Rafsanjan University of Medical Sciences. *Journal of Rafsanjan University of Medical Sciences*, 11(1), 35-44.
- Hyland, F., (2004). "Learning Autonomously: Contextualising Out-of-Class English Language Learning", *Language Awareness*, Vol. 13, No.3, pp. 180-202.
- Lakova, A., & Chaklikova, A., (2016). Management of Students' Independent Work through the Project Technology in Foreign Language Education. *International Journal of Environmental and Science Education*, 11(15), 7888-7898.
- Littlewood, W., & Liu, N. F., (1996). Hong Kong students and their English. Macmillan Publishers (China) Limited.
- Pearson, N., (2004). "The idiosyncrasies of out-of-class language learning: A study of mainland Chinese students studying English at tertiary level in New Zealand, Proceedings of the Independent Learning Conference 2003.
- Pickard, N., (1996). Out-of-class language learning strategies', *ELT Journal*, Vol. 50, No.2, pp. 150-159.
- Simons, P. R. J., (1997). From romanticism to practice in learning. *Life Long Learning in Europe (LinE)*, 1, 8-15.