

EFL Learners' Engagement in Informal L2 Learning: A Cluster Analysis Approach

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ABSTRACT

Informal second language learning, a growing area of interest in second language acquisition research, refers to self-directed and often unintentional exposure to a second language outside structured educational settings. In the context of English as a foreign language, particularly in countries like Vietnam where English is not widely spoken in daily life, informal learning can play a crucial role in supplementing formal instruction. Learners engage with English through various means, such as digital media, social platforms, and entertainment, which provide authentic language input and can significantly boost motivation and language proficiency. Although this phenomenon has gained attention worldwide, research on informal second language learning in Vietnam remains scarce, especially regarding how learners engage in such contexts. To fill this gap, this study explores the extent to which Vietnamese English as a foreign language learners engage in informal second language learning activities. To this end, the data were collected from 96 undergraduates at one university in Ho Chi Minh City using a questionnaire adapted from existing theoretical frameworks. The questionnaire measured engagement across different activities in four dimensions: behavioural, cognitive, affective, and linguistic engagement. To uncover engagement patterns, the data were analysed using the descriptive statistics, analysis of variance (ANOVA), linear mixed models, and cluster analysis. The findings indicate that participants engage in certain informal activities that trigger strong affective and cognitive engagement, while others, requiring greater linguistic engagement, generate less emotional engagement. The cluster analysis revealed two distinct clusters of activities: one comprising receptive and interactive activities (e.g., video watching, conversations) that elicit high affective and cognitive engagement, and another including text-focused tasks (reading, writing) that involve greater linguistic engagement but much lower affective engagement. These results emphasise the role of multimedia and social interaction in enriching informal language learning experiences while also highlighting the difficulty of maintaining interest in more linguistically demanding activities. The study's insights offer valuable practical implications for English learning and teaching in Vietnam, as well as suggestions relevant to the country's national goals of promoting English as a second language in education.

Key words: informal L2 learning, learner engagement, language acquisition

INTRODUCTION

Informal L2 learning (ISLL) refers to language use and development that occur beyond formal educational settings, without teacher involvement or materials explicitly designed for instruction¹⁻³. It encompasses diverse learner-initiated activities, such as watching movies, playing video games, browsing websites, engaging with social media, or conversing in the target language⁴. With the growing accessibility of digital technologies, these informal spaces have become increasingly important sources of language input and use, offering authentic and often personally meaningful experiences that complement classroom learning⁵⁻⁷, especially in EFL contexts where English input is often confined to the classroom⁸⁻¹⁰.

Researchers have increasingly focused on ISLL in recent years due to its potential to support L2 devel-

opment^{3,11,12}. ISLL exposes learners to extensive and authentic language input, which can promote vocabulary acquisition and overall proficiency^{11,13-15}. Empirical studies have reported significant links between informal practices and language gains across skills^{7,16-18}.

In addition to linguistic development, ISLL also enhances learners' affective experiences. Many learners report higher motivation, stronger confidence, and greater enjoyment when they engage in informal English practices^{6,19,20}. Some even consider ISLL more effective for their language improvement than classroom-based instruction^{2,21}. These positive effects show the value of ISLL not only as a source of language input but also as a tool for fostering long-term engagement with language learning.

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Despite these recognised benefits, a crucial element of ISLL, learner engagement, remains under-researched, particularly in the Vietnamese context. While international literature increasingly emphasises the importance of engagement in self-directed learning^{22,23}, existing Vietnamese studies have largely focused on describing the types and frequency of informal learning practices^{9,24,25}. These studies often report a surface-level preference for receptive over productive activities, but do not examine the nature of learner engagement in these practices.

This gap is significant, as engagement is essential for learning to occur^{26,27}. Without understanding how learners engage in ISLL and what shapes that engagement, it is difficult to design interventions or support systems that foster effective language development. Addressing this gap, the present study aims to explore EFL learners' engagement in ISLL, offering a learner-centred perspective that can inform both theory and practice.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptualising Informal L2 Learning (ISLL)

To conceptualise ISLL, the current study adopts a frequently cited framework in the field by Benson^{22,28}, which consists of four dimensions of out-of-class language learning: location, formality, locus of control, and pedagogy.

The *location* dimension refers to where learning occurs. ISLL takes place outside formal classroom instruction, in settings such as the home, online environments, or public spaces. Terms like out-of-class, out-of-school, extracurricular, and extramural are used to describe such contexts. Some of these activities, while occurring on school grounds (e.g., English-only days, school magazines), are still considered outside formal lessons as they are not part of the prescribed curriculum. Besides, ISLL excludes immersive L2 environments such as studying abroad or migration²⁸.

The *formality* dimension concerns whether learning is part of a structured programme leading to formal qualifications. ISLL is distinct from both formal learning, which follows a curriculum and includes assessment, and non-formal learning, which may occur outside institutions (e.g. through language apps or private classes) but still involves organised content. ISLL involves no testing, certification, or use of materials designed specifically for language instruction². Instead, learners engage with authentic content for personal reasons, not educational ones^{2,29}.

The third dimension, *locus of control*, refers to who manages the learning process. In ISLL, the learner takes full control, choosing when, how, and what to engage with. This autonomy sets ISLL apart from both formal instruction and many non-formal courses. A learner might decide to play English-language video games because they enjoy the storyline or community, not because a teacher assigned it^{4,22}.

The fourth dimension, *pedagogy*, addresses whether the activity is designed for language learning. ISLL is closer to naturalistic learning, where language is used without a learning goal^{2,22}. Learners often engage for enjoyment, not to study, leading some to describe them as language users³⁰. However, the line between incidental and intentional learning is blurred - learners may shift focus when motivated or facing difficulty, making ISLL a continuum influenced by factors like interest, proficiency, and awareness of learning opportunities³¹.

These four dimensions, when viewed together, clarify that ISLL is characterised by its independence from formal educational structures, its learner-driven nature, and its grounding in meaningful, real-world language use. ISLL does not rely on educational materials or instruction, yet may still contribute to language acquisition through repeated, authentic exposure^{2,28,32}. What matters is not just what learners do, but the situated and purposeful nature of their language use - doing something with the language, rather than studying it directly^{2,30}.

Benson's²² framework highlights ISLL as autonomous, interest-driven, and grounded in authentic language use. However, as learners vary widely in how they approach informal practices, understanding the quality and extent of their engagement becomes essential for explaining why some learners benefit more than others from similar experiences.

Previous studies on Informal L2 Learning

Empirical studies show that ISLL is widespread among language learners, though patterns of engagement differ across regions and activity types.

In Western contexts, older learners generally report higher levels of engagement than younger ones. For instance, Sundqvist⁷ found that Swedish learners aged 15 - 16 spent an average of 18.4 hours per week on English-language media, compared to 7.2 hours among 10 - 11-year-olds in another study³³. In Belgium, Kuppens^{15,34} reported that 11 - 12-year-olds frequently encountered English: 91% through music, 57% through films or TV (mostly subtitled), 47%

via websites, and 37% through computer games. De Wilde et al.¹¹ later observed even higher levels among a similar group. Their results showed that English-language activities had grown even more popular: 97% listened to English music daily, 80% watched English films or TV series with L1 subtitles, 78% used social media in English, and 75% played video games in English. In contrast, only 16% reported reading books in English every day. As observed, despite a slight difference in engagement levels across age groups, ISLL practices are becoming more prevalent among Western learners, with listening and watching remaining the most favoured activities.

Frequent engagement in informal L2 activities is also recorded in Asian contexts. Lai et al.⁶ reported that secondary-school students in China engaged daily in a range of informal English activities. Popular activities in their study include watching videos, listening to music, playing video games, and browsing English websites⁶. Hong Kong students were reported to engage more in activities that did not require face-to-face interaction, such as writing emails, reading academic materials, while watching videos, and speaking activities were less frequent, largely due to social pressures³⁵. In South Korea, it is reported that students predominantly engaged in receptive activities (e.g., reading and listening), while productive activities (e.g., speaking and writing) were considerably less frequent³⁶. However, the study in South Korea reports profiles of participants who shared similar patterns of engagement. Therefore, it can only be reasonably concluded that receptive informal English activities are, generally, more frequently engaged than productive ones and the popularity of each receptive and productive activity depends on the context of study²⁸. Regarding the Vietnamese context, a growing body of research indicates that Vietnamese tertiary students actively engage in a wide range of out-of-class activities to supplement their formal English education, with a strong preference for digital and online resources^{8,10}. Studies consistently show that activities such as watching YouTube videos, listening to songs, and using social media are among the most frequently used methods for language learning beyond the classroom^{9,10}. While their in-class learning was reported to be mostly passive and exam-driven, students demonstrate proactive and creative autonomy in out-of-class settings, pursuing part-time jobs, social activities, and hobbies to develop practical language skills rather than just aiming for high test scores²⁴. However, significant differences exist

between English-major (EMajor) and non-English-major (NEMajor) students; EMajors engage in out-of-class learning more frequently and prefer English-only resources, whereas NEMajors tend to rely more on bilingual materials⁸. Furthermore, although students acknowledge that interactive tasks, such as speaking with foreigners, are highly beneficial, they often resort to private, receptive activities like watching movies or listening to music due to limited opportunities for real-life interaction^{9,25}. The preference for private activities was also observed in another study in Hong Kong, which can be explained by the similar Asian context³⁵.

Despite slight contextual discrepancies, a consistent pattern across ISLL studies is that learners engage more in receptive activities than in productive ones^{2,28}. Among productive practices, non-interactive forms such as writing emails are more commonly reported than face-to-face communication^{35,37}. Across European and Asian contexts alike, the most frequent ISLL activities remain largely similar, with music, films, television, games, and online browsing consistently dominating learners' informal language experiences^{2,6,7,9-11,15,24,25,29,34,38}.

Outcomes of Informal L2 Learning (ISLL)

A growing body of research has highlighted the positive outcomes associated with ISLL, particularly with linguistic development and affective-motivational factors. Positive correlations have been found between ISLL practices and vocabulary knowledge^{7,11,15,17,18,34}, as well as with productive and receptive language skills, including speaking^{7,39}, writing^{40,41}, listening, and reading skills^{42,43}. These results resonate with usage-based and incidental learning perspectives, which posit that language acquisition occurs through meaningful, repeated exposure to salient input⁴⁴⁻⁴⁶.

In addition to linguistic outcomes, ISLL is linked to positive affective and psychological effects. Informal engagement is frequently associated with increased enjoyment, self-efficacy, confidence, and intrinsic motivation^{6,19,20,39}. These benefits are often attributed to learners' autonomy and the relevance of activities to their personal interests, which can lead to more meaningful and sustained contact with the language⁴⁷.

However, evidence also points to considerable individual variability. Not all learners participate equally or benefit to the same extent from informal practices². Factors such as age, gender, proficiency, and access to resources may shape the nature and intensity of learners' engagement^{2,7,41}. For example, boys have been

found to spend more time playing video games in English - a practice associated with vocabulary development - while girls may engage more in receptive forms such as listening to music^{2,15,17}.

The directionality of the relationship between ISLL practices and proficiency remains a key question. Although many studies report a positive association, it is not always clear whether informal practices lead to language gains or whether learners with higher proficiency are more inclined to participate in such activities^{2,7,17}. Research has suggested that prior proficiency can predict engagement patterns more strongly than the reverse, indicating that language development through ISLL may depend on a certain threshold of competence².

In contrast, motivation and engagement appear to influence one another more dynamically. Learners with more favourable attitudes toward both formal and informal learning, stronger ideal L2 selves, and integrative or intrinsic orientations are more likely to engage in ISLL practices^{2,43,47,48}. Moreover, active participation in informal practices can reinforce positive motivational beliefs and enhance learners' self-perceptions as capable language users^{6,21}.

Altogether, these findings underscore the multifaceted nature of ISLL outcomes. While informal practices can support linguistic and affective development, the extent of these benefits is mediated by how learners engage with them. Thus, a deeper understanding of engagement, encompassing behavioural, cognitive, affective, and linguistic dimensions, is essential to explain individual differences and to inform pedagogical efforts that support language learning beyond the classroom.

Learner engagement in Informal L2 Learning (ISLL)

Learner engagement in informal second language learning (ISLL) is a multidimensional construct^{1,2}. This study adopts Arndt's¹ multidimensional framework of engagement, which holistically captures behavioural, cognitive, affective and linguistic engagement in ISLL activities. This approach is particularly valuable for examining learner engagement with greater depth.

The Behavioural Engagement

The behavioural engagement refers to observable indicators of learners' participation in ISLL, such as the frequency, duration, and variety of activities. It includes how much time learners spend on tasks, their persistence, and their level of active involvement⁴⁹. The research shows that learners often prefer receptive activities, like listening to music, browsing social

media, or watching videos, over productive ones, such as speaking or writing^{2,28,50}.

Nevertheless, some studies highlight the potential of specific platforms to foster productive engagement. De Wilde et al.¹¹ reported that 45% of Belgian students spoke English daily, particularly while gaming or using social media. These findings suggest that interactive digital environments can facilitate more active participation. Similarly, German secondary school students reported spending around two hours daily on ISLL activities, with a strong correlation between the variety, rather than the amount, of activities and outcomes like English grades, confidence, and enjoyment². Notably, the higher prior proficiency was linked to the greater activity variety, indicating that learners' proficiency levels may influence their behavioural engagement more than vice versa^{2,7,42}.

The Affective Engagement

The affective engagement involves learners' emotional responses, including enjoyment, interest, and motivation, as well as negative emotions like boredom or frustration⁵¹. Informal learning contexts often foster positive emotions through leisure-oriented activities such as watching TV series, gaming, or listening to music. These activities reduce anxiety and enhance intrinsic motivation^{30,52}, which contributes to sustained engagement^{2,7,19}.

The affective engagement is often the primary driver of participation in ISLL. Learners who held positive beliefs about informal learning tended to engage more frequently and with greater enthusiasm, even showing the levels of affective engagement comparable to the influence of prior proficiency². However, a paradox emerged: learners with the consistently high affective engagement sometimes developed less favourable attitudes toward formal classroom learning, potentially due to an "authenticity gap" between structured instruction and the enjoyment of informal practices^{2,53}. Additionally, external motivations, such as academic pressure or the need for exam preparation, sometimes reinforce the affective engagement as a form of "guilty pleasure"⁵⁴.

The Cognitive Engagement

The cognitive engagement refers to the mental effort learners invest in understanding content, staying on task, and applying strategies to manage their learning⁵⁵. This dimension is typically higher in active activities like speaking, writing, reading, and playing video games, which require concentration and strategic thinking^{30,52}. In contrast, passive activities such as listening to background music often involve multitasking and minimal focus, resulting in the lower cognitive engagement².

Learners' expectations about the effort required for an activity also shape their choices. More proficient learners reported needing less effort for comprehension during informal practices, suggesting that the perceived cognitive demand may decrease with growing proficiency². However, the research shows no strong correlation between the cognitive effort and spoken proficiency^{39,56}, implying that the mental effort alone may not directly translate to measurable language improvement.

The Linguistic Engagement

The linguistic engagement captures the degree of attention learners direct toward language forms, including grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation, during ISLL activities^{1,2}. Productive practices like writing often elicit a high degree of linguistic focus, as learners consciously attend to accuracy and appropriateness. Speaking, particularly in interactive settings such as gaming or online communication, can also promote the linguistic attention, though the focus on form may be less consistent due to the communicative nature of these interaction^{2,38}.

In contrast, receptive activities like listening to music or watching videos tend to involve incidental learning, with the little conscious focus on language unless learners use strategies, including pausing videos, enabling subtitles, or engaging with lyrics^{7,11}. Learners with lower proficiency levels were found to focus more on linguistic forms during meaning-focused activities, while higher-proficiency learners tended to prioritise content over form. This complementary pattern suggests that informal learning may balance formal instruction by engaging learners with different language foci depending on their proficiency⁶. Autonomous learners who employed form-focused strategies demonstrated the notably higher linguistic engagement²⁰.

In conclusion, the decision to use Arndt's¹ multidimensional engagement framework was a strategic choice to address a specific gap in the existing research on informal second language learning (ISLL) in Vietnam. Previous Vietnamese studies had largely focused on describing the types and frequency of out-of-class learning activities^{8-10,24,25}, offering little insight into the extent of learners' engagement. Arndt's framework was suited to fill this gap because it provides a multidimensional construct of engagement in ISLL, thus capturing not just what learners do, but how they do it.

RESEARCH QUESTION

1. To what extent do the Vietnamese undergraduate EFL learners engage in ISLL activities in terms of behavioural, cognitive, affective, and linguistic engagement?
2. What clusters of ISLL activities can be identified based on those learners' engagement patterns?

METHODOLOGY

The setting and participants

This study was conducted at a university in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Ninety-six undergraduate non-English-major EFL learners were recruited using the convenience sampling method. The participants were from the two Intensive English classes which the researcher taught. The participants were non-English majors studying English as their foreign language. They were mostly second-year students. The criteria for selecting the participants were twofold: (1) individuals who had experience in informal learning of English, and (2) individuals who gave consent to take part in the survey.

The data collection and analysis

Data were collected using a questionnaire adapted from Arndt¹ that aimed to explore learners' frequency of participation and engagement in informal English learning activities. The survey focused on seven activities: watching videos, listening to music, reading texts, writing texts, gaming, conversations, and listening to spoken English. The categorisation of these activities was informed by Sundqvist and Uztosun⁵⁷, Arndt¹, and Hyland³⁵, whose conceptualisations of informal second language learning (ISLL) closely align with this study's framework. The survey was introduced in class and shared via the class Zalo groups of those classes to invite absent participants. Participation was on a voluntary basis.

The survey consists of two parts. Part 1 collected demographic information, including gender and self-rated English proficiency based on CEFR levels. Part 2 included one frequency item per activity (5-point scale from never to always), followed by four engagement items: behavioural (minutes spent), affective, cognitive, and linguistic (each on a 10-point scale). Participants who indicated "never" on frequency for an activity did not have to answer engagement items for that activity.

After coding and cleaning the dataset, SPSS 25.0 was used to analyse the quantitative data from the survey. Specifically, the descriptive statistics, ANOVA, and

linear mixed models were used to describe engagement patterns, while the hierarchical cluster analysis using Ward's method was used to identify the clusters of activities based on shared patterns of engagement across ISLL activities.

Each engagement dimension (behavioural, affective, cognitive, and linguistic) was adapted from Arndt's¹ to be measured with a single item per activity, given the need to cover multiple activities without overburdening participants. Prior research supports the validity of single-item measures for concrete, unidimensional constructs⁵⁸. Reliability was assessed by treating the items for the same dimension across activities as indicators of the underlying construct (e.g., affective engagement) and calculating Cronbach's α . This approach assumes that a dimension, for example, affective engagement, can be consistently captured regardless of activity. At the same time, some variation in scores is expected because different activities naturally evoke different levels of engagement. As Cortina⁵⁹ notes, Cronbach's α reflects both item consistency and the degree of variability attributable to contextual differences, which is particularly relevant in informal learning contexts for the current study. Thus, Cronbach's α reflects both the consistency of the measure and the activity-related variability inherent in informal learning contexts. The behavioural engagement was excluded from the reliability analysis because it was measured in minutes, which violates assumptions for Cronbach's α . The analysis included only participants who engaged in all activities ($n = 37$), showing high reliability for affective ($\alpha = .93$), cognitive ($\alpha = .91$), and linguistic ($\alpha = .90$) engagement.

RESULTS

This section first presents the demographic characteristics of the study participants, including gender distribution and self-assessed English levels. The sample consisted of 96 participants, of whom 68.8% ($n=66$) were female and 31.3% ($n=30$) were male. Regarding English levels, most participants self-reported the B1 proficiency (56.3%), followed by A2 (27.1%), A1 (12.5%), and B2 (4.2%), indicating a predominantly intermediate sample.

To address RQ1, the participant-level descriptive statistics and a one-way repeated measures ANOVA were calculated for the behavioural engagement, while the Linear Mixed Model (LMM) were utilised to deal with missing values for the affective, cognitive, and linguistic engagement.

The Behavioural Engagement

On a 5-point scale, the most frequently reported activity was listening to music ($M=3.82$, $SD=1.10$), followed by watching videos ($M=3.19$, $SD=1.25$), listening to audio (e.g., podcasts) ($M=2.91$, $SD=1.32$), reading ($M=2.64$, $SD=1.14$), and playing games ($M=2.46$, $SD=1.38$). The least frequent activities were writing ($M=2.29$, $SD=1.04$) and engaging in conversations ($M=2.28$, $SD=1.22$).

Mauchly's Test of Sphericity indicated that the assumption of sphericity was violated, $\chi^2(20)=56.41$, $p<.001$. Therefore, the degrees of freedom were corrected using the Greenhouse-Geisser estimate of sphericity ($\epsilon=.84$).

The results of the ANOVA revealed a statistically significant difference in the mean frequency scores across the seven learning activities, $F(5.01,476.33)=31.91$, $p<.001$. The effect size was large, with a partial eta squared (η^2) of .251, indicating that approximately 25.1% of the variance in behavioural engagement was attributable to the type of learning activity.

Post hoc pairwise comparisons using the Bonferroni correction were conducted to identify which specific activities differed significantly from one another.

The most frequent activity, listening to music, was engaged in significantly more often than all other activities ($p\leq.001$ for all comparisons), except for watching videos ($p<.001$). Watching videos was also significantly more frequent than reading, writing, playing games, and conversations ($p\leq.001$ for all).

Conversely, the least frequent activities - writing and conversations - did not differ significantly from each other ($p=1.000$) or from playing games ($p=1.000$). However, they were engaged in significantly less frequently than listening to music, watching videos, and listening to audio ($p\leq.001$ for all).

The findings show that participants engage in different informal learning activities with significantly different frequencies. Receptive activities, particularly listening to music and watching videos, are far more common than productive activities like writing and conversation.

To compare the affective, cognitive, and linguistic engagement across the seven activities, a series of linear mixed models (LMMs) was computed. Because participants only provided engagement ratings for activities in which they actively participated, a significant number of missing values were present by design. A standard repeated measures ANOVA would be inappropriate for this data, as it handles the missing data through listwise deletion. This means any participant

Table 1: The descriptive statistics for behavioural engagement [Source: Author]

Activity	Dimension		M	SD	95% CI [LL, UL]
Video watching	Frequency	96	3.19	1.25	[2.94, 3.44]
	Duration (min)	96	74.55	124.59	[49.19, 99.91]
Listening to music	Frequency	96	3.82	1.10	[3.60, 4.04]
	Duration (min)	96	100.36	145.34	[70.82, 129.90]
Reading texts	Frequency	96	2.64	1.14	[2.41, 2.87]
	Duration (min)	96	42.80	46.08	[33.43, 52.17]
Writing texts	Frequency	96	2.29	1.04	[2.08, 2.50]
	Duration (min)	96	34.96	36.42	[27.56, 42.36]
Gaming	Frequency	96	2.46	1.38	[2.18, 2.74]
	Duration (min)	96	53.01	70.97	[38.56, 67.46]
Conversations	Frequency	96	2.28	1.22	[2.03, 2.53]
	Duration (min)	96	33.28	93.18	[14.31, 52.25]
Listening to spoken English	Frequency	96	2.91	1.32	[2.64, 3.18]
	Duration (min)	96	47.85	43.64	[38.97, 56.73]

Note. M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation; CI = Confidence Interval; LL = Lower Limit; UL = Upper Limit. Frequency ratings were on a scale of 1 (Never) to 5 (Every day). Duration is reported in minutes.

with a missing value for even a single activity would be completely removed from the analysis, drastically reducing the sample size and statistical power. This would also bias the results, as they would only reflect the small subgroup of learners who engaged in all seven activities, not the entire sample.

The Linear Mixed Model (LMM) is designed to handle the missing data without excluding entire cases, using all available data points from all 96 participants for a more accurate and representative analysis. Therefore, the separate LMMs were run for each of the three engagement dimensions. The following report details the findings specifically for the cognitive engagement. The activities (N=7) were treated as a fixed effect, and participants (N=96) were included as a random effect.

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics (N, mean, standard deviation, and 95% confidence interval) for the three engagement dimensions across seven informal English activities.

The Affective Engagement

The analysis revealed a statistically significant main effect of the activity types on the affective engagement, $F(6,135.979)=15.971$, $p<.001$. This indicates that students' reported levels of the affective engagement differ significantly depending on the type of informal learning activity.

The estimated marginal means show that Listening to music (M=8.36) was rated as the most affectively engaging activity. This was followed by Gaming (M=7.60) and Conversations (M=7.44). The activities with the lowest affective engagement scores were Writing texts (M=5.78) and Reading texts (M=5.76). Post hoc pairwise comparisons with a Bonferroni correction confirmed these patterns.

- The affective engagement in Listening to music was significantly higher than for all other activities ($p\leq.002$), except for gaming.
- Similarly, Gaming was rated as significantly more engaging than reading ($p<.001$), writing ($p<.001$), and listening to audio ($p=.046$).
- Conversely, Reading and Writing texts were rated as significantly less affectively engaging than all other activities ($p<.001$ for all relevant comparisons) but did not differ significantly from each other ($p=1.000$).

The results strongly suggest that learners find entertainment-oriented activities (listening to music, playing games) significantly more enjoyable than activities traditionally associated with academic study (reading, writing). This difference in affective engagement is a key factor in understanding which informal activities students are likely to prefer.

Table 2: The descriptive statistics for affective, cognitive, and linguistic engagement [Source: Author]

Activity	Dimension		M	SD	95% CI [LL, UL]
Video watching	Affective	90	7.26	2.03	[6.83, 7.69]
	Cognitive	90	7.17	1.98	[6.75, 7.59]
	Linguistic	90	7.28	2.11	[6.83, 7.73]
Listening to music	Affective	96	8.36	2.19	[7.91, 8.81]
	Cognitive	96	7.86	1.87	[7.48, 8.24]
	Linguistic	96	7.19	2.22	[6.74, 7.64]
Reading texts	Affective	76	5.76	2.11	[5.28, 6.24]
	Cognitive	76	6.68	2.21	[6.17, 7.19]
	Linguistic	76	6.87	2.21	[6.36, 7.38]
Writing texts	Affective	73	5.78	2.19	[5.27, 6.29]
	Cognitive	73	7.07	2.10	[6.58, 7.56]
	Linguistic	73	7.29	2.18	[6.78, 7.80]
Gaming	Affective	60	7.60	1.89	[7.11, 8.09]
	Cognitive	60	7.28	2.04	[6.75, 7.81]
	Linguistic	60	7.18	2.06	[6.65, 7.71]
Conversations	Affective	63	7.44	2.02	[6.93, 7.95]
	Cognitive	63	7.52	1.99	[7.02, 8.02]
	Linguistic	63	7.46	2.11	[6.93, 7.99]
Listening to spoken English	Affective	79	7.16	1.97	[6.72, 7.60]
	Cognitive	79	7.33	2.18	[6.84, 7.82]
	Linguistic	79	7.46	2.08	[6.99, 7.93]

Note. M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation; CI = Confidence Interval; LL = Lower Limit; UL = Upper Limit. All ratings were on a 1 to 10 scale.

The Cognitive Engagement

The analysis revealed a statistically significant main effect of the activity types on cognitive engagement scores, $F(6,132.267)=2.779, =.014$. This indicates that the type of informal learning activity has a significant impact on the level of cognitive engagement.

The estimated marginal means show that Listening to music ($M=7.86$) was rated as the most cognitively engaging activity. This was followed by engaging in Conversations ($M=7.52$). The activity with the lowest reported cognitive engagement was Reading texts ($M=6.68$).

Post hoc pairwise comparisons with a Bonferroni correction were performed to examine specific differences between activities.

- The cognitive engagement for Listening to music was markedly higher than for Reading texts

($p=.006$).

- Similarly, engaging in Conversations was rated as significantly more cognitively engaging than Reading texts ($p=.042$).
- No other pairwise comparisons between activities were statistically pronounced.

The findings demonstrate that learners perceive different informal activities as requiring significantly different levels of cognitive effort. In particular, listening to music and engaging in conversations are perceived as more cognitively demanding than reading texts.

The Linguistic Engagement

The analysis revealed a highly prominent main effect of the activity types on linguistic engagement scores, $F(6,6927.973)=27.314, <.001$. This indicates that the

level of attention learners pay to language forms (linguistic engagement) differs considerably depending on the type of informal activity.

The estimated marginal means show that Conversations ($M=7.46$) and Listening to spoken English ($M=7.46$) were rated as requiring the most attention to linguistic forms. These were followed by Writing texts ($M=7.29$) and Video watching ($M=7.28$). The activities perceived as requiring the least attention to language were Reading texts ($M=6.87$), Gaming ($M=7.18$), and Listening to music ($M=7.19$).

Post hoc pairwise comparisons using a Bonferroni correction highlighted several key differences:

- Conversations and Listening to spoken English were rated as requiring significantly more attention to linguistic forms than all other activities ($p \leq .046$ for all comparisons), but did not differ significantly from each other.
- Reading texts was perceived as requiring substantially less attention to linguistic forms than all other activities ($p \leq .001$ for all comparisons).
- Listening to music was also rated markedly lower than most other activities, including video watching, writing, conversations, and listening to spoken English ($p \leq .001$ for all).

The findings show that learners clearly distinguish between activities based on the perceived attention to language required. Interactive, spoken-word activities (Conversations, Listening to spoken English) and productive tasks (Writing) are perceived as demanding the most attention to linguistic forms. In contrast, Reading and Listening to music are seen as requiring the least focus on language details in this context.

Given these varied engagement patterns, the next phase of this study will employ cluster analysis to determine if distinct groups of activities emerge based on their combined patterns of engagement.

To answer RQ2, the hierarchical cluster analysis using Ward's method with squared Euclidean distance was used to group the seven activities based on the affective, cognitive, and linguistic engagement scores, measured on a 10-point scale⁵⁸. Ward's method minimises within-cluster score differences to form cohesive groups⁶⁰. The analysis, based on seven valid activities ($N=7$, 100% valid), produced a proximity matrix (Table 3), the agglomeration schedule (Table 4), and the dendrogram (Figure 1). The engagement scores (Table 2) were used to support the clustering process.

The clustering process grouped activities by comparing the engagement scores (Table 2), starting with the

most similar pairs and forming larger clusters over six stages. The proximity matrix (Table 3) quantifies score differences, with smaller distances (e.g., 0.068 for video watching vs. listening to spoken English) indicating near-identical profiles. The agglomeration schedule (Table 4) tracks mergers, with coefficients reflecting the difference between merged groups (lower values indicate greater similarity). The dendrogram (Figure 1) visualises the sequence.

The resulting cluster solution is visually represented in the dendrogram (Figure 1).

As shown in Table 4, the clustering progressed as follows:

- Stage 1: Video watching (1: 7.26, 7.17, 7.28) and Listening to spoken English (7: 7.16, 7.33, 7.46) merged (coefficient = 0.034, distance = 0.068), with
- Stage 2: Gaming (5: 7.60, 7.28, 7.18) and Conversations (6: 7.44, 7.52, 7.46) merged (coefficient = 0.115, distance = 0.162), differing by 0.16, 0.24, and 0.28 in the three engagement scores.
- Stage 3: The Video watching/Listening to spoken English pair merged with the Gaming/Conversations pair (coefficient = 0.236). Distances supported this, e.g., Video watching vs. Gaming (distance = 0.138; engagement differences: 0.34, 0.11, 0.10) and Video watching vs. Conversations (distance = 0.187; engagement differences: 0.18, 0.35, 0.18). The four activities' scores ranged from 7.16–7.60 (affective), 7.17–7.52 (cognitive), and 7.18–7.46 (linguistic).
- Stage 4: Reading texts (3: 5.76, 6.68, 6.87) and Writing texts (4: 5.78, 7.07, 7.29) merged (coefficient = 0.400, distance = 0.329), differing by 0.02, 0.39, and 0.42 in engagement scores.
- Stage 5: Listening to music (2: 8.36, 7.86, 7.19) joined the Stage 3 group (coefficient = 1.441, distance = 1.694 for Video watching vs. Listening to music; differences: 1.10, 0.69, 0.09), forming a five-activity cluster.
- Stage 6: The Stage 5 group (Video watching, Listening to spoken English, Gaming, Conversations, Listening to music) merged with the Reading/Writing texts pair (coefficient = 6.560). The large coefficient and distances (e.g., Video watching vs. Reading texts, distance = 2.658; engagement differences: 1.50, 0.49, 0.41) indicate substantial score differences, distinguishing two clusters before this merger.

Table 3: The Proximity Matrix (Squared Euclidean Distance) [Source: Author]

Proximity Matrix							
Case	Squared Euclidean Distance						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	.000	1.694	2.658	2.200	.138	.187	.068
2	1.694	.000	8.255	7.290	.914	1.035	1.794
3	2.658	8.255	.000	.329	3.842	3.876	2.731
4	2.200	7.290	.329	.000	3.369	2.987	2.001
5	.138	.914	3.842	3.369	.000	.162	.274
6	.187	1.035	3.876	2.987	.162	.000	.114
7	.068	1.794	2.731	2.001	.274	.114	.000

(1 = Video watching; 2 = Listening to music; 3 = Reading texts; 4 = Writing texts; 5 = Gaming; 6 = Conversations; 7 = Listening to spoken English)

Table 4: The Agglomeration Schedule [Source: Author]

Agglomeration Schedule						
Stage	Cluster Combined		Coefficients	Stage Cluster First Appears		Next
	Cluster 1	Cluster 2		Cluster 1	Cluster 2	
1	1	7	.034	0	0	3
2	5	6	.115	0	0	3
3	1	5	.236	1	2	5
4	3	4	.400	0	0	6
5	1	2	1.441	3	0	6
6	1	3	6.560	5	4	0

(1 = Video watching; 2 = Listening to music; 3 = Reading texts; 4 = Writing texts; 5 = Gaming; 6 = Conversations; 7 = Listening to spoken English)

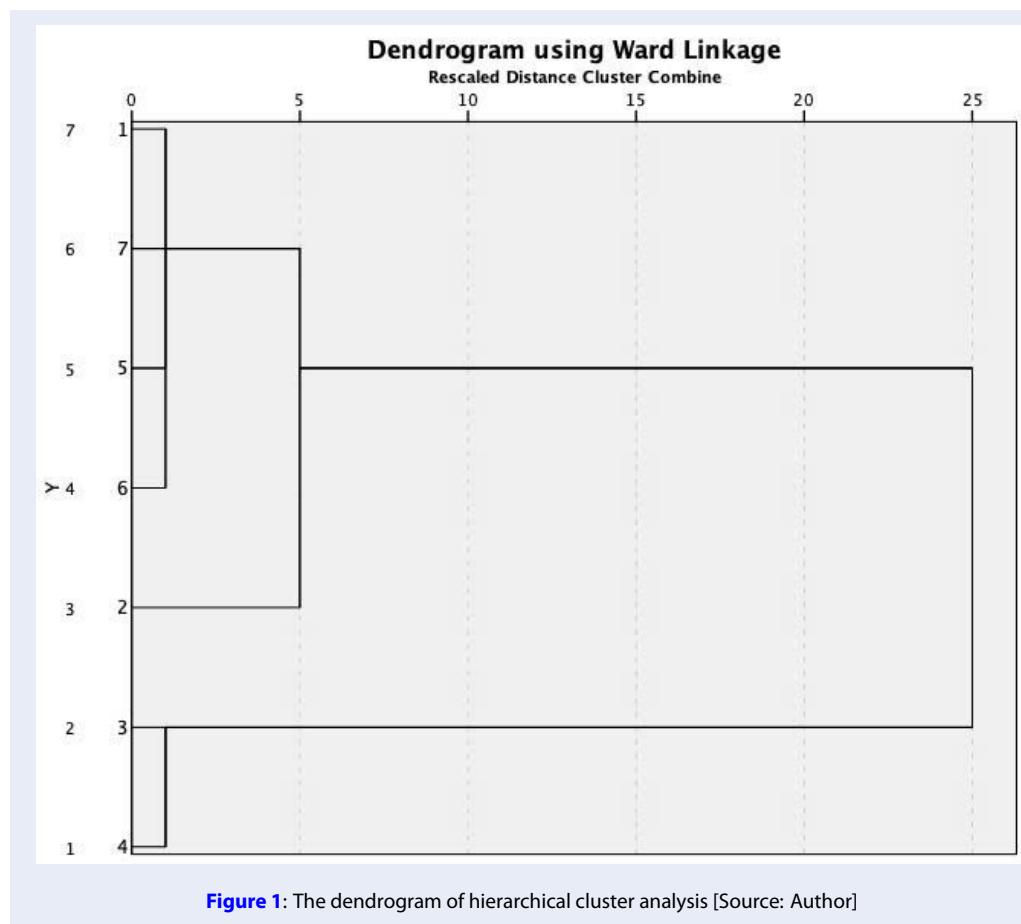
Table 5: The Clusters of ISLL Activities Based on Dominant Engagement Aspects (Ward's Method) [Source: Author]

Cluster	Activities Included	Affective (M)	Cognitive (M)	Linguistic (M)
Cluster 1: Affective-Dominant Cluster	Video watching, Listening to spoken English, Gaming, Conversations, Listening to music	7.16–8.36	7.17–7.86	7.18–7.46
Cluster 2: Linguistic-Dominant Cluster	Reading, Writing	5.76–5.78	6.68–7.07	6.87–7.29

Based on the agglomeration schedule and dendrogram, a two-cluster solution was retained. Table 5 summarises the mean engagement scores for each cluster and the activities included within them.

The cluster analysis indicated that ISLL activities fall naturally into two distinct engagement patterns. The Affective-Dominant Cluster encompasses interactive and entertainment-oriented activities, such as Video watching, Gaming, and Conversations, which elicit

the strong affective and cognitive engagement. In contrast, the Linguistic-Dominant Cluster consists of Reading and Writing texts that demand the greater linguistic engagement but evoke the less affective engagement. Collectively, these clusters highlight that learners engage differently depending on the nature of ISLL activities—more emotionally in social and media-based activities, and more linguistically in text-focused activities.



DISCUSSION

The engagement patterns of Vietnamese EFL learners in ISLL expose critical imbalances that challenge simplistic assumptions about the nature of ISLL practices. The results on behavioural engagement show that the Vietnamese learners frequently participate in receptive activities, such as listening to music or watching videos, while spending less time on or even avoiding productive activities like writing and conversation. This tendency to engage more in receptive activities is consistent with previous studies across other contexts^{2,6,11,15,25,34–36}. Speaking activities are the least engaged in this study, which confirms Vo's²⁵ explanation that speaking opportunities in Vietnamese contexts were reported by learners as lacking. Other studies in Vietnam further add that learners were not confident or felt safe to communicate^{8,9}, indicating a challenge that discourages learners from engaging in productive activities.

Listening to music and gaming remain the most emotionally engaging activities (8.36 and 7.60, respectively), showing a consistent alignment with

previous studies across contexts, including Vietnam^{2,6,11,15,25,34–36}. This also supports Sundqvist and Sylvén's⁵² claim that such leisure activities reduce anxiety and act as the main reason for learners to decide to participate in the activity or not, as Arndt² confirmed. However, this emotional allure often masks superficial learning, as Arndt² warns, prioritising entertainment over linguistic depth. The appeal of these activities likely stems from their accessibility and low cognitive demand; however, their overemphasis risks entrenching passive consumption habits, particularly among B1-level learners in Vietnam's resource-scarce EFL context²⁴. The strikingly low affective scores for reading (5.76) and writing (5.78) signal a profound motivational deficit for tasks critical for academic proficiency and productive skills⁷. This disengagement, rooted in the perceived difficulty and lack of immediate relevance of text-based tasks⁸, demands urgent pedagogical intervention. Incorporating guided multimodal reading and writing exercises, which integrate both texts, photos, and music, can reframe these tasks as both emotionally engaging and linguistically rich. Such inte-

gration has been advocated by Lai et al.⁶ as an attempt to gain better “quality” of informal learning, by benefitting from a balance between form-focused and meaning-focused activities.

Cognitively, listening to music (7.86) and conversations (7.52) requires substantial mental effort, driven by real-time auditory processing and social interaction³⁰. Yet, the lower cognitive engagement in reading (6.68) starkly contradicts Arndt’s² assertion that text-based tasks demand high mental effort. This suggests Vietnamese learners may skim texts or multi-task, diluting focus in the Vietnamese context of limited authentic reading material⁸. The reliance on simplified or fragmented online content may further exacerbate this, thus undermining the cognitive benefits of reading². To counter this, educators should integrate multimedia, such as subtitled videos or interactive podcasts, into curricula, pairing them with structured comprehension tasks to enhance cognitive depth while aligning with learners’ preferences for audio-visual input⁶.

The linguistic engagement peaks in conversations and listening to spoken English (7.46), which concurs with Arndt’s² and Cole’s²⁰ findings that interactive activities often prompt attention to form. However, the moderate linguistic scores for reading (6.87) and writing (7.29) indicate a reliance on incidental learning, where learners prioritise meaning over form³⁰ his risks the insufficient linguistic development, warned by Lai et al.⁶ as passive exposure may not translate to active language use. Training learners in explicit strategies, including analysing subtitles, annotating texts, or practising targeted writing, can shift engagement toward intentional learning and maximise linguistic gains.

Taken together, these findings reveal a clear trade-off in how learners perceive informal learning activities differently. Entertainment-focused activities like listening to music and playing games were rated as the most enjoyable (affective engagement) but were not seen as the most linguistically engaging activities. Conversely, productive tasks such as writing and listening to spoken English were most significant in the linguistic engagement but were among the least enjoyed ones. The cognitive engagement occupied a middle ground, with active tasks like music and conversations rated as the most mentally demanding. Notably, this study found that reading texts was consistently the least engaging activity across all three engagement dimensions, except for the behavioural one. Previous studies have slightly different findings, but what remains consistent across contexts is that reading is reported to be less popular compared to other

audio-visual activities, including listening to music or watching videos^{2,6,11,15,25,34,35}.

The cluster analysis clarifies these contrasts by the two clusters of activities. The first cluster - video watching, listening to music, gaming, conversations, and listening to spoken English - displays the robust engagement (affective: 7.16–8.36; cognitive: 7.17–7.86; linguistic: 7.19–7.46), supporting Lai et al.’s⁶ finding that the activity variety is related to the linguistic engagement. Yet, the dominance of receptive tasks risks overemphasising passive skills, potentially stunting productive competence³⁸. The near-identical engagement between video watching and listening to spoken English (proximity = 0.068) suggests overlap in their audio-visual nature¹⁵, but their high engagement may reflect content enjoyment rather than linguistic focus, as Arndt² suggested. The second cluster—reading and writing - shows more effort on language attention (cognitive: 6.68–7.07; linguistic: 6.87–7.29) but low affective engagement (5.76–5.78), indicating emotional disinvestment. This split underscores a critical issue: Vietnamese EFL learners gravitate toward receptive enjoyable activities, neglecting the analytical rigour of text-based activities essential for academic success, as reported by previous research in Vietnam⁹. Similar trends were also recorded with learners in Western^{2,11} and Asian contexts^{6,35}. The lack of emotional appeal in those linguistically demanding activities tends to discourage learners from doing them for a long time (behavioural engagement), which may limit the linguistic gains, as warned by Arndt².

Interestingly, the two clusters of activities identified in this study parallel the two engagement profiles reported in Arndt’s² studies of secondary school German learners, where the affective and linguistic engagement served as the primary distinguishing factors. In Arndt’s² findings, one group demonstrated significantly the higher affective engagement, while the other was characterised by the stronger linguistic engagement. Similarly, activities in Cluster 1 in this study showed the highest levels of affective engagement (7.16–8.36), whereas those in Cluster 2 scored highest in the linguistic engagement (6.87–7.29). The cognitive engagement did not differ substantially between the two groups in Arndt’s study or between the two clusters here, indicating that the cognitive involvement is a consistent and essential element across most activities. However, in both studies, the group or cluster with the higher affective engagement also displayed the slightly higher cognitive engagement, suggesting a positive relationship between emotional involvement and mental effort. Overall, this correspondence reinforces the validity of distinguishing ISLL

activities into two categories: one that is affectively dominant and emotionally engaging but less form-focused, and another that is linguistically dominant, emphasising language form and accuracy while eliciting lower affective engagement.

This discussion argues that the observed affective divide is not merely a matter of enjoyment versus labour; rather, it reflects a strategic, learner-driven prioritisation of a more holistic, socially-embedded form of communicative competence over the decontextualised, accuracy-focused skills traditionally valorised in the Vietnamese educational system. The overwhelming preference for media-rich activities like music and gaming is consistent with literature highlighting the role of intrinsic motivation and reduced anxiety in ISLL^{2,19,30}. However, a deeper interpretation suggests these digital realms function as a crucial “third space” for the Vietnamese learners within a formal system often described as teacher-centred and exam-driven^{24,25}. In this sphere of authentic language use, they escape the prescribed identity of “student” to adopt more empowering roles as “gamers” or global “users” of English³⁰, allowing them to cultivate a more positive ideal L2 self⁴⁶ - an outcome often secondary in formal instruction. This gravitation towards multimedia is also a cognitively efficient strategy within an input-poor EFL context, as in Vietnam^{8,10}, as the immense contextual scaffolding of visual cues and social interaction lowers the cognitive load of comprehension and creates ideal conditions for incidental vocabulary acquisition^{13,43,44}. The cluster analysis solidifies this interpretation by framing the two groups of activities as competing learning epistemologies: a participatory, meaning-focused approach where language is acquired through social use, versus the analytical, form-focused epistemology of the classroom. This finding recasts the “authenticity gap”⁵³ as a clash of learning philosophies, where learners are not simply avoiding difficult tasks but are prioritising a communicative, usage-based approach they find more relevant. These insights present a critical challenge for pedagogy in Vietnam to foster a more integrated, sustainable path to proficiency. The goal should be an epistemological reconciliation that legitimises the complex digital literacies learners develop in their autonomous “third spaces” to bridge the gap between “school English” and “real English”.

These findings hold particular importance in the context of Vietnam’s ongoing efforts to adopt a second language policy that elevates English from a foreign language to a second language⁵⁹. At the policy level,

the dominance of learners’ engagement with informal language learning activities signals the need for broader recognition of ISLL as a legitimate dimension of language learning. In fact, informal learning of English should be realised as a reality and an inseparable part of the English learning process⁶. Incorporating informal practices into national strategies - through curriculum reform, teacher training, and digital resource development - would ensure that the second language policy takes advantage of learners’ engagement beyond the classroom. At the pedagogical level, teachers can build on learners’ enthusiasm for informal activities by connecting them to more cognitively and linguistically demanding tasks such as reading and writing, while keeping the enjoyment of audio-visual elements, thus balancing enjoyment with academic rigour. Such timely acknowledgement of informal learning potentials and alignment between Vietnam’s second language policy and classroom practices is critical to accelerate progress toward the national goal of widespread English proficiency.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that Vietnamese EFL learners exhibit distinct engagement patterns in ISLL, favouring audio-visual and interactive activities such as listening to music (affective: 8.36; cognitive: 7.86) and conversations (affective: 7.44; cognitive: 7.52) over text-based tasks like reading (affective: 5.76; cognitive: 6.68) and writing (affective: 5.78; cognitive: 7.07). The cluster analysis identifies two clusters of activities: one cluster that elicits the high affective engagement, and the other cluster that demands more linguistic focus. These findings highlight a critical imbalance, with learners’ preference for enjoyable, receptive activities risking the neglect of productive skills essential for well-rounded development of proficiency. Pedagogical interventions should integrate multimedia tasks and provide more authentic interaction opportunities in the classroom to help bridge the receptive-productive gap. Importantly, formal education must recognise informal language learning as an integral part of language learning, leading to revising the curriculum to support learners in harnessing its full potential.

While offering meaningful insights into Vietnamese EFL learners’ engagement in informal L2 learning, this study is not without limitations. First, the data relied on self-reported measures, which may be subject to social desirability bias and inaccuracies in participants’ recall or self-perception of their learning behaviours. Second, the sample was drawn from a single institution, which may limit the generalisability of

the findings to other learner populations or educational contexts in Vietnam. Future research should therefore consider employing mixed methods or longitudinal designs to triangulate self-reported data and include participants from multiple institutions to enhance generalisation. Third, the results of two clusters of ISLL activities in this study need further validation across different contexts and with a larger population to confirm their validity.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ISLL: informal second language learning

L2: second language

EFL: English as a foreign language

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

This manuscript has no conflicts of interest.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

The author solely conducted all aspects of this study. This includes identifying the research topic, reviewing relevant literature, formulating the research questions, and designing the research methodology. The author was also responsible for collecting and analysing the data, interpreting the findings, and drafting the manuscript. Every stage of the research process, from conceptualisation to final revision, was carried out independently by the author without the involvement of any co-researchers or collaborators. This statement confirms that the author is solely responsible for the originality, integrity, and content of the entire article.

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Sự tham gia của người học tiếng A nh như ngoại ngữ trong việc học ngôn ngữ không chính thức: Tiếp cận theo phương pháp phân tích nhóm

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TÓM TẮT

Học ngôn ngữ thứ hai theo hình thức không chính thức là một lĩnh vực ngày càng nhận được nhiều sự quan tâm trong nghiên cứu về tiếp thu ngôn ngữ thứ hai. Khái niệm này chỉ việc người học chủ động, và đôi khi một cách vô tình, tiếp xúc với ngôn ngữ thứ hai bên ngoài môi trường giáo dục chính quy. Trong bối cảnh tiếng Anh là ngoại ngữ, đặc biệt ở những quốc gia như Việt Nam – nơi tiếng Anh chưa được sử dụng phổ biến trong đời sống hằng ngày – việc học không chính thức có thể đóng vai trò quan trọng trong việc hỗ trợ cho quá trình học tập chính khóa. Người học tiếp xúc với tiếng Anh qua nhiều hình thức khác nhau như các phương tiện kỹ thuật số, mạng xã hội hay hoạt động giải trí, qua đó tiếp nhận nguồn ngữ liệu tự nhiên giúp nâng cao đáng kể động lực và năng lực sử dụng ngôn ngữ. Mặc dù hiện tượng này đã thu hút nhiều sự quan tâm trên thế giới, các nghiên cứu về việc học ngôn ngữ thứ hai không chính thức ở Việt Nam vẫn còn hạn chế, đặc biệt là về cách người học tham gia trong những bối cảnh này. Nhằm thu hẹp khoảng trống nghiên cứu này, bài viết tìm hiểu mức độ tham gia của người học tiếng Anh như một ngoại ngữ tại Việt Nam trong các hoạt động học ngôn ngữ không chính thức. Dữ liệu được thu thập từ 96 sinh viên đại học tại một trường ở Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh thông qua bảng hỏi được điều chỉnh dựa trên các khung lý thuyết sẵn có. Bảng hỏi đo lường mức độ tham gia của người học trong nhiều loại hình hoạt động theo bốn khía cạnh: hành vi, nhận thức, cảm xúc và ngôn ngữ. Để xác định các mô hình tham gia, dữ liệu được phân tích bằng thống kê mô tả, phân tích phương sai (ANOVA), mô hình hỗn hợp tuyến tính và phân tích phân cụm. Kết quả cho thấy người học thường tham gia vào một số hoạt động không chính thức mang lại mức độ gắn kết cảm xúc và nhận thức cao, trong khi những hoạt động đòi hỏi nhiều nỗ lực ngôn ngữ hơn lại kém hấp dẫn hơn về mặt cảm xúc. Phân tích phân cụm xác định hai nhóm hoạt động riêng biệt: nhóm thứ nhất gồm các hoạt động tiếp nhận và tương tác (như xem video, trò chuyện) gắn với mức độ gắn kết cảm xúc và nhận thức cao; nhóm thứ hai bao gồm các hoạt động tập trung vào văn bản (đọc, viết) có sự tham gia ngôn ngữ nhiều hơn nhưng gắn kết cảm xúc thấp hơn đáng kể. Những kết quả này cho thấy vai trò nổi bật của phương tiện đa phương tiện và tương tác xã hội trong việc làm phong phú trải nghiệm học ngôn ngữ không chính thức, đồng thời chỉ ra thách thức trong việc duy trì hứng thú đối với những hoạt động yêu cầu cao về mặt ngôn ngữ. Các phát hiện của nghiên cứu mang lại những gợi ý thực tiễn quan trọng cho việc dạy và học tiếng Anh tại Việt Nam, đồng thời đóng góp cho những định hướng quốc gia nhằm thúc đẩy tiếng Anh trở thành ngôn ngữ thứ hai trong hệ thống giáo dục.

Từ khoá: học tiếng Anh không chính thức, sự tham gia của người học, tiếp thu ngôn ngữ

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