Out-of-class Language Learning (OCLL): A Case Study of a Visually-Impaired EFL Learner

Abd. Rahman[1], Syahrul[2], Hasbi Siddik[3], Evie Syalviana[2], & Suharmoko[1]

[1] Faculty of Education, Institut Agama Islam Negeri Sorong, Indonesia

[2] Faculty of Sharia and Dakwah, Institut Agama Islam Negeri Sorong, Indonesia

[3] Faculty of Education, Institut Agama Islam Negeri Bone, Indonesia

Correspondence: Abd. Rahman, Faculty of Education, Institut Agama Islam Negeri Sorong, Papua Barat Daya, 98414, Indonesia. E-mail: abdrahman28best@gmail.com

Abstract

There is an increasing concern on how to meet the needs of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners with visual impairments. Existing literature has explored how visually-impaired EFL learners participate in learning activities within the formal classroom. However, there is a lack of research examining their out-of-class language learning (OCLL) activities. Therefore, anchored on Benson's (2011) concept of OCLL, a qualitative case study was conducted to investigate the OCLL behaviors of a proficient visually impaired EFL learner. Through personal interviews and journal writings, the study identified three primary stages of OCLL activities that the participant went through: the initial exposure to English, the early production of English, and the development of communication skills. The study revealed that the participant transitioned from passive to active learning by effectively exploring the locus of control and combining a physical and online learning environment. Additionally, the social dimension, encompassing peer interaction and support, helped the participant in optimizing their learning outcomes.

Keywords: Out-of-class, language learning, visual impairment, communicative skills

1. Introduction

The right of visually-impaired (VI) people to have equal access to education was mandated by the United Nations (UN) at the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2006. Currently, 295 million people experience moderate to severe vision impairment, while 43.3 million are reported to have total vision loss or blindness, and most of them are associated with low levels of educational achievement (Bourne et al., 2021; World Health Organization [WHO], 2020). In Indonesia itself, with over five million people with mild to severe visual impairment, they are likely to experience inferior educational outcomes and are at a higher risk of being excluded from schools (IAPB, 2022; Suárez & Cameron, 2022). Persatuan Tunanetra Indonesia stated that less than 20% of children with visual impairment participate in school (Pertuni, 2020). Besides access, blind and visually impaired students also have difficulty adapting to school or university environments as they experience various challenges achieving maximal academic performance (Susanto & Nanda, 2018).

In the area of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), the learning process is more challenging for blind and VI EFL learners. Unlike normal learners, blind and VI learners have more physical, social, and emotional barriers during their learning (Hewett et al., 2017; Spassiani et al., 2017). A study by Krisi et al. (2020) indicated that besides their physical constraints, VI EFL learners experience a range of barriers hindering them from maximizing their learning outcomes. While most language learners use audio and visual channels to access some learning inputs, VI learners rely only on their audio inputs. As a result, they experience difficulties adapting the instructions in the prescribed EFL curriculum that depend on various visual materials, such as pictures and videos (Ghojavand & Roya Baharlooie, 2016).

Besides learning English formally in the classroom, the VI EFL learners are reported to actively engage in varied informal language learning beyond the classroom settings, such as through listening to songs, watching movies, and using social media (Ramos, 2017; Retorta & Cristovão, 2017; Sabljak, 2016). For language learners, including VI students, activities such as listening to English songs, watching movies, and talking to English native speakers either face-to-face or via online chat provided them a significant impetus for English language learning, particularly in providing them a channel to various authentic and meaningful language use (see Benson & Reinders, 2011; Dressman & Sadler, 2020; Choi & Nunan, 2018; Reinders & Benson, 2017; Reinders, 2020). For example, Ramos (2017), studying the learning strategy of VI EFL learners, found that listening to English songs and movies and using English at the workplace were the favorite learning strategies that contributed to the learner's English language development and improved their motivation to learn.

Although the out-of-class learning (OCLL) context is regarded as a significant myriad of language learning, there is little information on how language learners engage within this environment, particularly compared to information on learners' engagement within the formal classroom context. Reinders (2020) reported that in the last two years, only 5% of discussions of the OCLL context were in the top ten journals in the field of language learning acquisition and language education. Addressing this gap in the literature might provide insights on

the nature of OCLL activities in varied contexts and illustrate how learners experienced these activities and to what extent this constitutes their language development. However, the information on how VI EFL learners benefit from learning activities beyond the classroom has not been explored further. To the best of our knowledge, no study has been published on the nature of out-of-class activities among VI language learners. Therefore, the main focus of this article is to describe VI language learners' engagement with OCLL activities. To reach this aim, this study is anchored in Benson's (2011) OCLL concept that emerges from four dimensions: location, formality, pedagogy, and locus of control.

2. EFL Learning with the Blind and VI Learners

Visual impairments refer to disease or injury to the eye that cannot be cured with medication or glasses (Cain & Fanshawe, 2019). While sighted language learners are exposed to an abundance of visual material, such as pictures and videos, VI individuals primarily rely on their auditory sense and perception of objects to proceed with their language inputs (Jedynak, 2018; Krisi et al., 2020; Lintangsari & Emaliana, 2020). Krisi et al. (2020) argued that EFL learners with visual impairments do not have adequate English proficiency as most EFL curricula, particularly in higher education, are designed for sighted ones.

A growing body of literature has already justified this claim. For example, Ghojavand and Baharlooie (2016), studying the educational challenges of ten Iranian language learners with VI aged 17 to 26 years old, reported that adaptation to the learning material, which is highly visual, was reported to be the main learning barrier for participants. This was caused by the old-fashioned teaching method that relied on extensive visual material. The VI English learners could not adapt well to the learning material available, which was mostly in visual forms. Moreover, less teachers' awareness of the inclusive needs of the VI students, such as insufficient knowledge of using Braille, resulted in ineffective instructional material delivered in the classroom.

Susanto and Nanda (2018) also reported a similar finding, studying 33 EFL learners in one Indonesian inclusive school (SLB type C). Using an ethnographic case study, they found that the EFL classrooms inadequately catered to the needs of VI learners, particularly in modifying teaching instruction. Although there was an expanded core curriculum for the VI EFL learners, the application was still based on the prescribed curriculum for the sighted learners. Furthermore, the study acknowledged the role of assistive technologies such as Non-Visual Desktop Access (NVDA) and Job Access with Speech (JAWS), which were reported to support VI learners in coping with the learning material. Another empirical data was reported by Sofia (2016), who studied VI EFL learners in Greece. Using questionnaires and interviews, the researcher concluded that all the participants perceived EFL learning as challenging due to their vision disability. Besides the embryonic materials, using traditional and less modified teaching approaches for the VI emerged as a learning barrier for them. The lack of learning tools, such as computers and learning software for the VI, exacerbates problems in EFL classrooms. Jedynak (2018) highlighted that besides equipping VI learners with sophisticated technologies for learning language, the use of appropriate teaching methods that can cater to their needs is essential in ensuring the success of VI language learners.

Besides physical issues, such as access to the expanded curriculum and recent assistive technologies, social and emotional factors emerged as one issue to consider in ensuring the success of VI EFL learners. For example, a phenomenological case study by Krisi et al. (2020) illustrated that physiological factors should be considered to ensure the success of EFL learning among VI learners. Self-efficacy, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and locus of control were three main psychological factors reported to mainly influence the language learning outcomes of the Israelian EFL learners who had VI. They argued that it is critical to consider the VI EFL learners' emotional factors to ensure they can deal with language learning challenges, particularly in higher education. Cain and Fanshawe (2019) acknowledged that vision disabilities affect learners physically and emotionally, prompting such feelings of depression, anxiety, and isolation from their sighted peers, which can result in ineffective learning.

3. Out-Of-Class Language Learning (OCLL)

OCLL is any informal language learning activity conducted beyond the classroom context, and it is mainly related to leisure activities such as watching television, playing digital games, using social media, and communicating with native English speakers. Some similar terms were found in the literature, such as autonomous language learning (Hyland, 2004), self-access learning (Murray, 2017), naturalistic language learning (Krashen, 1982), incidental language learning (Trinder, 2017), extramural English learning (Sundqvist & Sylvén, 2019), informal digital learning of English (IDLE) (Lee & Drajati, 2019) and language learning beyond the classroom (Benson, 2011). Dizon (2020) argued that although they provided varied language learning concepts, they similarly referred to the informal language learning context outside the classroom where learners use the language merely for communication. The existing literature on OCLL has provided information on how EFL/English as a Second Language (ESL) learners experienced OCLL activities and how these activities contributed to their English language development (Kashiwa & Benson, 2017; Mideros, 2020; Palfreyman, 2011; Yang, 2020). Reinders (2020) argued that to be successful language learners, they should allocate more time to engage in varied informal language learning experiences that could be mostly found outside the classroom context. Benson (2011) categorized OCLL into four main dimensions: location, formality, pedagogy, and locus of control (see Table 1). Location refers to the learning settings in the room, at the house, in the street, or even virtually through the internet. Formality refers to the level of formality of learning in non-formal or informal settings. Pedagogy refers to the degree of pedagogical practices during the learning process such as the level of instructions and assessment. Locus of control refers to decisions made during learning, such as self-directed or other-directed.

Table 1. Dimensions of OCLL (Benson, 2011; Reinders & Benson, 2017, p. 562)

Dimension	Description	Terms
Location	Where and when the learning takes place	Out-of-class, after class, extracurricular, self-access, out-of- school, distance
Formality	The degree to which learning is linked to educational qualifications or structured by educational institutions	Informal, non-formal, and Naturalistic
Pedagogy	The degree to which teaching is involved	Non-instructed, self-instructed
Locus of control	How decisions are distributed between the learner and others	Autonomous, independent, self- regulated

While there have been empirical studies on English language learning in the classroom for learners with VI (see Cain & Fanshawe, 2019; Krisi et al., 2020; Susanto & Nanda, 2018), there is still a scarcity of studies on informal learning out of the classroom that needs to be explore furthered. Many studies have reported on English language teaching and learning among VI students in the classroom setting (Indrarathne, 2019; Lintangsari & Emaliana, 2020; Susanto & Nanda, 2018), but there is still an absence of information on how VI students informally learn outside the classroom context. To fill this gap, this study examines the nature of informal OCLL language learning activities with a visually-impaired EFL learner.

4. Studies on out-of-Class Language Learning (OCLL)

Studies on OCLL learning involve exploring various studies and scholarly works investigating the effectiveness, methods, challenges, and outcomes of language learning outside formal classroom settings. Literature found that students' internal factors, such as learners' beliefs on the potential benefits of Learning Beyond the Classroom (LBC), and learners' self-confidence, improve the motivation to learn English (Chan, 2016; Dressman & Sadler, 2020; Kocatepe, 2017; Kolpakovienė, 2020). Self-motivated learners tend to engage more actively and persistently in language learning activities outside the classroom (Benson, 2011).

Moreover, literature shows that OCLL is closely related to learning autonomy, which plays a crucial role in shaping the effectiveness and outcomes of learning experiences outside the traditional classroom setting (Benson & Reinders, 2011; Chik, 2015; Kocatepe, 2017; Yang, 2020). Yang (2020) used TED videos to examine learners' autonomy development and their perception of using the material to develop their listening skills in the OCLL context. This study showed that the LBC learners used various independent learning techniques, including goal setting, material selection, mixed-method instruction, and self-evaluation. It also demonstrated how associated internal elements—like self-reminder, self-reward, and sense of responsibility—and external elements—like the program's explicit instructional stages and instructors' motivation—influenced learners' degree of autonomy and self-regulation abilities.

While most literature has amplified the strengths and benefits of OCLL, some studies also show the disadvantages of LBC. For example, OCLL activities were highlighted to improve receptive listening and reading skills but were limited in producing improvements in productive speaking and writing skills (Chan, 2016). Kolpakovienė (2020) examined the LBC activities of Lithuanian university students participating in English language courses. Employing survey questionnaires, the study discovered that while the selected LBC activities—using social media, listening to music and radio, reading books, watching movies, and following news—improved participants' vocabulary learning and listening comprehension abilities, they had little effect on their speaking and writing abilities.

5. Methodology

5.1 Research Design

This study aims to understand how a VI EFL learner practices OCLL within their contexts by modeling their experiences to Benson's (2011) framework for examining language learning outside the classroom, focusing on four dimensions: location, formality, pedagogy, and locus of control. To achieve this purpose, the study adopted a case study approach that focuses on the nature of the participant's OCLL activities in his natural settings. One successful VI EFL learner was recruited as a participant. Yin (2003) defined a case study as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context" (p. 18). This research approach assisted the researcher to empirically investigate the phenomenon and "retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events" (p. 4).

5.2 Data Collection and Participant

This study used personal interviews and journal writings as data collection tools. Using multiple data sources aims to ensure the credibility of the data and provides a thick description of the participant's nature of his English language learning beyond the classroom. Creswell (2013) and Guba and Lincoln (1994) acknowledged that using multiple data sources not only enriches the data collected but also improves the trustworthiness of qualitative research. The interviews were conducted three times during eight months. The interview meetings were mainly conducted at home, either in the researcher's or the participant's house in casual meetings, such as during lunch or dinner on the weekend. The first interview was conducted in January 2023, while the second and third interviews were conducted in August and October 2023. The first two interviews took around 40-45 minutes, while the last took 90 minutes. Since the participant is an active diary writer, he let the researcher access his journal writings on his English language history. These journal writings enabled the researcher to track the participant's history and discuss the data during the interview sessions.

Furthermore, the VI English language learner in this study was a 32-year-old man named Andy (pseudonym), who works as a casual lecturer

in eastern Indonesia. His first interaction with English began when he studied at elementary school, where English was taught as an additional subject. Apart from formal learning in the classroom, Andy also interacted with English informally through films and songs, especially when he was starting to reach adolescence. His English learning continued when he continued his graduate studies in Australia. After completing his graduate program, Andy continued teaching at a private university in Indonesia. However, in 2023, Andy continued his doctoral studies in Australia with a scholarship, and it is estimated that he will complete his doctoral studies in 2027.

5.3 Data Analysis Procedures

The thematic approach in which the data was coded is based on concepts and theories that relate to the participant's OCLL (Creswell, 2013). Three stages of the coding process were conducted on the data: open, axial, and selective coding (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2009). In the first phase, each discredited piece of the data was coded, and every related or similar data was labeled in the same code. All the interview transcripts and journal writings were manually read line by line to ensure that the participants' information was coded. Then, in axial coding, connections among the codes are identified to provide a broader category of themes. Finally, in selective coding, core categories or themes that capture the whole idea of the research are determined. The themes were identified through the connections of these codes. The themes and related excerpts were then mapped onto Benson's (2011) four dimensions of out-of-class learning to provide a picture of the OCLL activities of the participant. All the codes and categories that did not have enough supporting data were removed in this stage. Two independent coders examined the data to maintain credibility during the coding process. Once the final code was agreed upon, the results were reported.

6. Findings

6.1 The Initial Exposure to English

Andy's early experience in learning English was passive engagements in which he mostly spent time with some receptive activities such as listening and reading. Because his physical and environmental conditions did not allow him to learn the language effectively in formal classes, various authentic materials outside the classrooms became a source of learning. In this period, Andy mostly listened to English pop songs and watched Western films with the help of lyrics and subtitles to understand the meaning. He believed that it is essential to develop his listening skills: "With various shortcomings, I took the initiative to learn English independently through songs, films, and poetry. Incidentally, one of my hobbies is music and writing poetry" (Interview 1, 21/01/23).

Andy could approach his English learning strategically as he expressed that he applied what he gained from his English learning experiences. He actively operated his locus of control (Benson, 2011; Krisi et al., 2020; Reinders & Benson, 2017) of his learning. He set priorities and began his learning with carefully selected learning materials, which reflected the motivation of choice in language learning (Kocatepe, 2017; Menezes, 2011). His journal writings also showed that listening to songs and following some English programs on the radio or TV were the primary sources of learning English as they were free and accessible for him. Andy illustrated in his journal writings that English songs and English programs on TV or radio were the only learning sources and material he could easily access.

High interest in English pop songs, English-language films, and English poetry indicated Andy's emotional involvement with this learning assignment (see Rothoni, 2018). This implies that to maintain motivation in learning English, learners must start with interesting learning material to be emotionally involved in the learning process. Behaviorally, Andy searched for English songs and films, checked the lyrics and subtitles, and paused to replay scenes several times before getting used to the target language's pace and tone. In his reflective learning diary, he also noted that he always carried a notebook to write down difficult words and frequently practiced phrases from English films. The application of his English learning experiences to English learning was also reported by Andy when he talked about how his listening skills in English developed rapidly. After some time of listening to music and watching movies, Andy decided to practice what he learned from movies and songs, as he stated:

> "Learning English from films and poetry and other materials is very useful for me because, despite the lack of access to English that I receive in class, I can access films, poetry, and songs in English freely. I can also learn some vocabulary in more depth and know exactly how the vocabulary is used in everyday conversation" (Interview 2, 12/08/23).

Andy's approach to learning English showed that he is highly motivated to expose himself to the target language. The primary purpose of listening to songs, watching films, and listening to everyday conversations with native speakers, was to learn some English vocabulary. He believed that to learn a language well, one must immerse oneself in an authentic environment where high-quality input is abundant. He said:

> "In my context, relying on learning materials in class is impossible. Apart from my physical limitations and the teachers' lack of understanding of my learning needs, which are different from students who have normal vision, the authentic material in this song and film is precious material for me and is very accessible to me even though I come from a low-income family" (Interview 1, 21/01/23).

Learning some English from native speakers through live conversations on TV programs and films seemed feasible for language learning. However, this is not an easy task in actual practice involving behavioral and cognitive efforts in the listening process. In his reflective journals, Andy emphasized the value of active listening, stating that he had deliberately sought to take note of some terms he heard in English discussions and attempted to Google their definitions. He believed this method could help him expand his vocabulary and understand everyday conversations with similar contexts more effectively. During the entire period, Andy engaged behaviorally,

emotionally, and cognitively with the learning goals, tasks, and context (Fredricks et al., 2004). He kept himself entertained and motivated and exposed himself to various listening resources. Andy also sought opportunities to listen to authentic English conversations and made efforts to develop his vocabulary skills. The data also showed that during this period, the OCLL activities had become more independent and naturalistic learning with fewer pedagogical and formal dimensions involved (Benson, 2011).

6.2 The Early Production of English

In this stage, how Andy approached learning English showed that he was highly motivated to expose himself to the target language. While in the early period of his English learning outside the classroom, he strategically created opportunities to hear everyday English in authentic situations. The primary purpose of listening to songs, watching films, and listening to conversations by native speakers, was to learn some English vocabulary. However, during this period, he forced himself to use the language directly in various contexts. Andy explained, "After memorizing many vocabularies and engaging myself with various language inputs through movies and songs, I wanted to practice those vocabularies in real communication either with other EFL learners or native speakers" (Interview 3, 11/10/2023). It could be said that the goal of OCLL at this period shifted from improving receptive skills, such as listening, to productive skills, such as speaking.

To practice his communication skills, Andy joined a free English meeting club that allowed him to communicate with his peers directly. The low level of formality of the meeting and during learning activities encouraged him to practice his speaking skills actively. He described:

> "The learning activity in the meeting club is less formal, so I felt more comfortable practicing my English, especially speaking. My friends and I enjoyed some fun games and the discussion activities since we could use and practice our English without worrying about making mistakes" (Interview 2,
>
> 12/8/2023).

The pedagogical dimension of the English meeting club activities placed his friends as effective learning sources who could provide him with valuable feedback for his English learning. The nature of the English meeting club allowed the group members, especially the more proficient learners, to act as teachers who could provide adequate support for the low-proficiency learners like Andy. Unlike formal classrooms, Andy experienced less pressure to directly ask and seek help from his friends, as he stated:

> "The atmosphere of learning in the meeting club is more friendly, so I feel more comfortable asking everyone whenever I need help. In school, I felt more pressure to ask my teacher, and sometimes I worried whether my questions were relevant, but in the meeting club, I felt more at ease to ask anytime I needed it" (Interview 3, 11/10/2023).

This showed that friends in this OCLL became social learning resources that, to some extent, became more important than teachers. The learning resources in this English meeting club not only relied on the usual resources such as books and handouts, but also relied on interactions with others who could regularly provide feedback and support. Palfreyman (2011) stated that to understand language learning beyond the classroom, researchers should consider the dynamics of learner interactions with "significant others," individuals who often hold greater importance to learners than their teachers do.

While joining the English meeting club that provided Andy with a more naturalistic language learning with less formality, he also joined some free English courses conducted by an international non-governmental organization. The pedagogical dimension of the OCLL activities in this course were more structured with specific assessments and guidance from tutors in a formal environment. Therefore, unlike his engagement in the English meeting club, which was more spontaneous and casual, this English course had more formal interactions, and the tutors were native speakers. Therefore, Andy initially felt nervous and was a passive learner. As he described:

> "I felt very nervous in the English course since the learning environment was more formal with some guided activities by the tutors. Some tutors were also native speakers, so I was not confident with my English, especially when I had conversations with them. It was hard in the first few meetings, but I still enjoyed it. Although I was nervous, I was highly motivated, especially since it was the first time I could directly communicate with native speakers" (Interview 2, 12/08/2023).

Feeling nervous due to some pressure in the English classroom might be experienced by other EFL learners. However, in Andy's case, this nervousness did not hinder him from participating in the learning process. It could be seen from many learning strategies that he chose to reduce his nervousness. For example, in his journal writing, he described that he memorized and prepared key vocabulary words and sentences that likely occurred in the class sessions to make himself more confident. This showed that Andy exercised his locus of control by regulating his learning strategies to handle some barriers that may occur during OCLL learning. Benson (2011) stated that despite obstacles and barriers, language learners who possess an internal locus of control are more likely to get over their challenges and continue learning effectively.

6.3 The Development of Communicative Skills

In the third stage of learning English, Andy's main goal was to continue improving his language skills, focusing on communication skills. In 2020, Andy got the opportunity to continue his graduate study in Australia. This opportunity was a critical phase in further developing his ability to communicate in English. He had ample opportunities to use English effectively daily in different social settings, such as at the market, at the hospital, on campus and in classes. Andy explained that the opportunity to study in Australia was the most essential phase in developing his English to a more advanced level, as he described:

> "For me, the experience of studying in Australia was the biggest step and allowed me further to develop my English skills in

all aspects of skills. Besides the opportunity to communicate directly with native speakers, I was also given good facilities for people with visual impairment like me. Therefore, I became more confident and highly motivated to learn" (Interview 3, 11/10/23).

However, practicing English in English-speaking countries like Australia was challenging. Andy explained that in practice, what he had learned in Indonesia was sometimes irrelevant in Australia. For example, he learned some English expressions in the restaurant, but when he tried to order some food there, he had difficulty understanding the communication. He had some challenges communicating effectively with native speakers due to their different accents and dialects, and some native speakers spoke relatively faster than he expected.   He explained in more detail:

"When I first came to Australia, I had difficulty understanding conversations with native speakers since they speak faster and have different accents. I initially thought my English was imperfect, so communicating was hard. In the end, I know that understanding the context of communication is vital, so I often study through videos about particular vocabulary that should be used in different environments. For example, I first watched how Australians ordered food and drinks in cafes before I did it" (Interview 3, 11/10/23).

In addition to his behavioral and cognitive engagement during practice, it was also interesting to note Andy's positive attitude toward self-talk in practice. Andy believed self-talk could improve speaking competence because it improves pronunciation of difficult words and fluency when discussing specific common topics. His positive attitude and self-confidence indicated that he was emotionally involved in practice and communication. Additionally, Andy also discussed the benefits of collecting some formulated words and phrases in self-talk because they may be helpful as general responses in many situations, as he stated:

"Understanding the topic and context of communication is very important for me. I still remember when everyone always called me mate. I initially wondered why everyone called him mate. In the end, after I understood the context, I discovered that mate in the Australian context is a term like *mas or daeng* in Indonesia. Therefore, when I had to communicate in a certain context, I familiarized myself with some videos on social media. For example, before I met a general practitioner for a health consultation, I studied the context of the communication from YouTube videos" (interview 2, 12/08/23).

Furthermore, Andy also exercised the concept of location by expanding the learning setting. He not only immersed himself in the physical language environment in many contexts in Australia, such as at the bank, shopping center, and café, but he also benefited from online spaces. Talking to operators through phone calls or chatting with the operators through the chat service of various companies, such as electricity, gas, bank, phone operator, and internet company, allowed him to benefit from natural informal language learning activities available in his environment. He stated:

"Having a phone conversation is completely different from talking face to face, especially with native speakers. When I had a phone call with an insurance company it did not work well since it was hard for me to follow the conversation. Therefore, whenever I had free time, I kept calling any service center from banks, insurance and food companies to practice my speaking skills" (Interview 3,11/10/23).

In the previous two stages, the location dimension referred to the establishment of OCLL environment where Andy could participate actively, such as through a meeting club. In this stage, the OCLL learning environment was naturally accessible to him. Moreover, the online space allowed him to exercise the level of formality of the conversation he wanted to practice. Having a chat on social media with his friends, sending an email letter to his professor, and having a phone call with companies or university representatives were some examples of language learning activities that enabled him to experience some level of formality in OCLL activities.

7. Discussion

This research aimed to provide an in-depth analysis of the journey of an English language learner with a visual impairment. The vision disability forces the participant to work hard to find learning alternatives that fit his needs. In the participant's case, there were three crucial periods in his English learning journey: the initial exposure to English, the early production of English in Indonesia, and the development of communicative skills in Australia. During the initial exposure to English, the participant carried out his learning tasks systematically. Being effectively involved in learning English, he started with tasks that intrinsically interested him before moving on to intellectually challenging tasks. Using songs, films, and poetry strengthened internal motivation in learning. Aspects of interests and hobbies were the primary basis in this early period. During this period, the participant applied his internal locus of control (Krisi et al., 2020; Reinders & Benson, 2017) by independently planning and creating learning goals based on passive communication, such as listening and reading.

Moreover, the location of OCLL activities mainly occurred in the participant's personal space, such as at home and in his room. Schools and other public spaces were inaccessible due to his VI. The lack of learning facilities for VI learners was mainly found not only in public spaces but also in schools (Susanto & Nanda, 2018; Sofia, 2016). Therefore, in this initial exposure to English, the OCLL activities were more self-dependent informal activities that did not involve teachers or tutors much. This phenomenon was described as the main problem faced by VI EFL learners in Indonesia (Lintangsari & Emaliana, 2020). The absence of language learning facilities and the decreased understanding of the participant's learning needs resulted in a scarcity of learning support (Ghojavand & Baharlooie, 2016).

At the next stage, the participant began to improve his production skills, especially speaking, by communicating with his tutors and peers. Even though he admitted feeling embarrassed and afraid when speaking English, his strong internal motivation and less threatening learning

environment outside the classroom made him more confident in speaking. Errors and mistakes in both grammar and vocabulary in the OCLL context are understood as a natural process and do not become a burden as in formal classes at school (see Hyland, 2004; Kocatepe, 2017; Rahman, 2023). Apart from this finding, at this stage, The participant showed mental and cognitive readiness in designing his learning. Besides successfully overcoming fear and shyness in communication, he was also able to design the learning process and evaluate his learning (Brown, 1994).

The location dimension at this stage shifted from the personal space, such as learning at the house, to the more public spaces, such as joining English meeting clubs or joining free English programs with friends. Online spaces, such as social media and YouTube, have also transformed into a learning source that the participant consistently used. The formality dimension also became more formal, such as in English course activities. Therefore, the pedagogical dimension was also broadened to include independent or self-regulated and teacher-guided OCLL activities.

In the third stage, the participant experienced smooth transitions in communication development. The opportunity to interact directly with native Australian English speakers while studying in Australia provided him with a natural OCLL context. The participant's use of topic management and avoidance of complex vocabulary indicated that he could engage cognitively and interactively (Fredricks et al., 2004). In this process, the participant implemented more active learning where affective, emotional, and behavioral factors were complexly applied to learning English outside the classroom. The participant's deep cognitive engagement is characterized by his willingness to invest in mastering English communication skills. The participant no longer experienced emotional issues such as shyness and fear of taking risks because, apart from the natural language environment, support from the people around him increased his self-confidence, especially when communicating in language outside the classroom. Although there is still some discomfort in communicating in classes, OCLL contexts gave him more freedom and support in communicating in English.

At each learning stage, he had a clear goal and worked towards the realization of the goal. Research shows that goal-setting is positively related to language achievement and is a characteristic of autonomous learners (Benson & Reinders, 2011; Dornyei, 1990). Initially, the goal was to improve his listening skills and establish a strong foundation for future participation in real communication. Once he became fluent in English, his primary goal shifted to practical communication skills with management topics. However, the participant may not have achieved high proficiency without his perseverance, discipline, and high motivation (Chik, 2019; Choi & Nunan, 2018). He was willing to take careful notes, prepare vocabulary, and practice pronunciation. The participant's active involvement with English activities outside the classroom showed that he was motivated to learn English. Internal motivation becomes important in contexts outside the classroom because all efforts must arise from within a learner. In contrast to learning in formal classrooms, where school, teacher, parent, and curriculum factors can be external factors that encourage learning, in contexts outside the classroom, motivation must emerge from within the learner himself (Nunan & Richards, 2015; Richards, 2015). The participant's strong motivation to improve his linguistic and communication competences also impacted how he behaved and engaged affectively and cognitively with his learning tasks and goals (Fredericks et al., 2004). This could be seen in his active learning strategies outside the classrooms, such as seeking remedial help, asking for better expressions, and practicing with native speakers.

Some contextual factors influenced the participant's involvement in language learning. The environment where he lived and studied, especially when he continued his postgraduate study in Australia, which used English as a *lingua franca*, gave him linguistic richness that he did not get in Indonesia. For example, the participant had easy access to everyday English conversations with native English speakers at home, on campus, and in the park. This illustrated that the location dimension of the participant's OCLL activities expanded from personal to public spaces. Engagement with English speakers in many settings allowed the participant to expand his knowledge and skill in English. The formality dimension of the participant's OCLL activities was also broadened to involve a variety of formal, non-formal, and informal learning settings. Engagement with his tutors, friends, and even housemates in Australia in various settings gave him a more complex language method to develop his written and spoken communication skills.

Another important point during the learning journey of the participant, especially during his OCLL activities, was the shift from personal to public space. In this process, the researcher recognized sociality as another dimension of OCLL that should be considered as important as another dimension proposed by Benson's (2011). Rahman (2023) defined sociality as "how the social relationships, systems, values, norms and social interactions shape the activities" (Reinders & Benson, 2017, p. 206). The role of social networking that the participant built and found during the second and third stages of the participant's learning journey helped the participant transform his OCLL activities into more effective ones. Support from peers, tutors, and the environment during the last two stages of his English learning enabled the participant to move from a passive to an active learner. The support of his social network, such as friends and tutors, accelerated the participant's learning skills, especially his spoken and written communication skills. Active communication and intense interaction with his peers and tutors during the participant study in Indonesia and Australia gave him a context to use and practice his English meaningfully. In other words, transforming from passive OCLL learners to active OCLL learners would only be possible with support and active engagement with friends and more qualified language users, such as tutors and teachers. Therefore, the researcher proposed another dimension of OCLL, namely sociality, to enrich the existing OCLL dimension by Benson (2011). Reinders and Benson (2017) argued that the current four dimensions of OCLL are embryonic and wait for development to provide a more comprehensive understanding of OCLL activities. Some other studies, such as Palfreyman (2011) and Kocatepe (2017), have shown that the sociality dimension of OCLL could determine learners' level of OCLL engagement. Strong social support and interactions enable OCLL learners to engage with various learning contexts in which they need to learn or master foreign languages, especially English. At the same time, less social support and certain norms and values in society could

hinder EFL learners from taking some benefits from informal language learning activities outside the classroom.

8. Conclusion

The present study examined the nature of the learning experience of a VI EFL learner outside the formal classroom. Based on Benson's OCLL constructs (2011), this study mapped an OCLL experience into four dimensions: location, formality, pedagogy, and locus of control. However, the findings showed that another dimension, sociality, also shaped the nature of OCLL activities, especially during the participant's study abroad. In the early stage of OCLL, the location was mainly in the less physical dimension, such as learning through movies and songs. Still, it eventually became more physical when the learning took place in the free English course, English meeting club activities, and immersion learning in the context of Australia. Talking with friends and native English speakers in Australia brought more opportunities for physical learning. In addition, the level of formality was mostly informal and involved a wide variety of authentic learning materials such as movies, songs, and poems in which the control of learning was mainly initiated by the participant. Therefore, from a pedagogical perspective, less engagement and interaction with teachers and tutors was found.

Meanwhile, more pedagogical and naturalistic nuances were found in the second and last stages. The tutors' and teachers' role in providing some lessons in the free English course and managing the topic subject during his social interaction with native English speakers in Australia provided evidence of the role of pedagogical settings. Meanwhile, the authentic language context in Australia allowed the participant to use and improve his English communication skills naturally. Moreover, in this study, the participant practiced a strong locus of control and thus was recognized as an autonomous language learner. The participant successfully managed his learning without much support from his English teachers and tutors. The participant successfully designed, set goals, and evaluated his OCLL learning. It could be found in how the participant managed the stage of his learning since he started developing reception skills, such as listening and reading, before developing his production skills, such as writing and speaking.

Informed consent

Obtained.

Ethics approval

The Publication Ethics Committee of the Sciedu Press.

The journal's policies adhere to the Core Practices established by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

Provenance and peer review

Not commissioned; externally double-blind peer reviewed.

Data availability statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

Data sharing statement

No additional data are available.

References

Benson, P. (2011). Language learning and teaching beyond the classroom: An introduction to the field. In P. Benson & H. Reinders (Eds.), *Beyond the language classroom* (1st ed., pp. 7–16). Palgrave Macmillan UK. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230306790_2

Benson, P., & Reinders, H. (2011). *Beyond the language classroom.* Palgrave Macmillan UK. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230306790

Bourne, R. R. A., Steinmetz, J. D., Flaxman, S., Briant, P. S., Taylor, H. R., Resnikoff, S., … Vos, T. (2021). Trends in prevalence of blindness and distance and near vision impairment over 30 years: An analysis for the global burden of disease Study. *The Lancet Global Health*, *9*(2), 130–143. https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X(20)30425-3

Brown, H. D. (1994). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy*. Prentice Hall Regents.

Cain, M., & Fanshawe, M. (2019). Opening eyes to vision impairment: Inclusion is just another way of seeing. In S. Carter, L.-A. Abawi, J. Lawrence, C. Brownlow, R. Desmarchelier, M. Fanshawe, K. Gilbey, M. Turner, & J. Guy (Eds.), *Opening eyes onto inclusion and diversity* (pp. 239–288). University of Southern Queensland. Retrieved from https://usq.pressbooks.pub/openingeyes/

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. https://doi.org/10.13189/ujer.2016.040823

Chik, A. (2015). Popular culture, digital worlds and second language learners. In J. Rowsell & K. Pahl (Eds.), *The routledge handbook of literacy studies* (pp. 339–353). Routledge.

Chik, A. (2019). Motivation and informal language learning. In M. Dressman & R. W. Sadler (Eds.), *The Handbook of informal language learning* (1st ed., pp. 13–26). Wiley Blackwell. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119472384.ch1

Choi, J., & Nunan, D. (2018). Language learning and activation in and beyond the classroom. *Australian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, *1*(2), 49-63. https://doi.org/10.29140/ajal.v1n2.34

Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.

Dizon, G. (2021). Subscription video streaming for informal foreign language learning: Japanese EFL students' practices and perceptions. *TESOL Journal, 12*(2), 1-20. https://doi.org/10.1002/tesj.566

Dornyei, Z. (1990). Conceptualising motivation in foreign-language learning. *Language Learning, 40*(1), 45-78. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-1770.1990.tb00954.x

Dressman, M., & Sadler, R. W. (2020). *The handbook of informal language Learning.* Wiley-Blackwel. https://doi.org/10.1002%2F9781119472384

Fredricks, J., P. Blumenfeld & A. Paris. (2004). School engagement: potential of the concept, state of the evidence. *Review of Educational Research, 74*(1), 59-109. https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543074001059

Ghojavand, T., & Baharlooie, R. (2016). Educational challenges of Iranian students with visual limitations for learning English as a foreign language. *Modern Journal of Language Teaching Methods*, *6*(9), 46-55.

Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 105–117). Thousand Oaks: SAGE.

Hewett, R., Douglas, G., McLinden, M., & Keil, S. (2017). Developing an inclusive learning environment for students with visual impairment in higher education: progressive mutual accommodation and learner experiences in the United Kingdom. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, *32*(1), 89-109. https://doi.org/10.1080/08856257.2016.1254971

Hyland, F. (2004). Learning autonomously: Contextualising out-of-class English language learning. *Language Awareness, 13*(3), 180-202. https://doi.org/10.1080/09658410408667094

IAPB. (2024). *Vision Atlas; Quality Education*. Retrieved from https://www.iapb.org/learn/vision-atlas/impact/education/

Indrarathne, B. (2019). Accommodating learners with dyslexia in English language teaching in Sri Lanka: Teachers' knowledge, attitudes, and challenges. *TESOL Quarterly*, *53*(3), 630-654. https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.500

Jedynak, M. (2018). Teaching a foreign language to partially sighted and blind learners: Overview of research findings. *Interdisciplinary Context of Special Pedagogy*, *21*. https://doi.org/doi.org/10.14746/ikps.2018.21.11

Kashiwa, M., & Benson, P. (2017). A road and a forest: conceptions of in-class and out-of-class learning in the transition to study abroad. *TESOL Quarterly, 52*(4), 725-747. https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.409

Kocatepe, M. (2017). Female Arab EFL students learning autonomously beyond the language classroom. *English Language Teaching*, *10*(5), 104-126. https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v10n5p104

Kolpakovienė, A. D. (2020). Out-of-class English language learning among upper-intermediate students. *Sustainable Multilingualism*, *17*, 124-146. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.2478/sm-2020-0016

Krashen, S. D. (1982). *Principles and practice in second language acquisition*. Pergamon Press Inc. https://doi.org/10.2307/328293

Krisi, M., Nagar, R., & Knoll, N. (2020). Psychological factors involved in the acquisition of a foreign language among students with visual impairments. *British Journal of Visual Impairment, 40*(2*)*, 196-208. https://doi.org/10.1177/0264619620961806

Lee, J. S., & Drajati, N. A. (2019). English as an international language beyond the ELT classroom. *ELT Journal, 73*(4), 419-427. https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccz018

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry*. SAGE Publications. https://doi.org/10.1016/0147-1767(85)90062-8

Lintangsari, A. P., & Emaliana, I. (2020). Inclusive education services for the blind: Values, roles, and challenges of university EFL teachers. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education*, *9*(2), 439–447. https://doi.org/10.11591/ijere.v9i2.20436

Menezes, V. (2011). Affordances for language learning beyond the classroom. In Phil Benson & Hayo Reinders (Ed.), *Beyond the language classroom* (pp. 59–71). Palgrave Macmillan UK. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230306790_6

Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. Jossey-Bass. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107415324.004

Mideros, D. (2020). Out-of-class learning of spanish during COVID-19: A case study in Trinidad and Tobago. *SiSal Journal*, *11*(3), 199-219. https://doi.org/10.37237/110308

Murray, G. (2017). Autonomy in the time of complexity: Lessons from beyond the classroom. *Sisal*, *8*(2), 116-134. https://doi.org/10.37237/080205

Nunan, D., & Richards, J. C. (2015). *Language learning beyond the classroom*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315883472

Palfreyman, D. M. (2011). Family, friends, and learning beyond the classroom: Social network and social capital in language learning. In P. Benson & H. Reinders (Eds.), *Beyond the language classroom* (1st ed. pp. 17–34). Palgrave Macmillan UK. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230306790_3

Pertuni. (2020). *Merayakan Hari Braille Dunia 4 Januari 2020: Anak-Anak Tunanetra, Ayo Sekolah*. Retrieved from https://pertuni.or.id/merayakan-hari-braille-dunia-4-januari-2020-anak-anak-tunanetra-ayo-sekolah/

Rahman, A. (2023). Language learning beyond the classroom (LBC): A case study of secondary school English language learners in a rural Indonesian Pesantren. Thesis (PhD (Education) Curriculum, Education Studies) (DUCIER)--University of South Australia, 2023

Ramos, K. V. (2017). A visually-impaired English learner in the context of virtual environments: analysing learning strategies. *Zona Próxima, 27,* 34-50.

Reinders, H. (2020). A framework for learning beyond the classroom. In M. J. Raya & F. Vieira (Eds.), *Autonomy in language education* (pp. 63–73). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429261336-6

Reinders, H., & Benson, P. (2017). Research agenda: Language learning beyond the classroom. *Language Teaching*, *50*(4), 561-578. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444817000192

Retorta, M., & Cristovão, V. (2017). Visually-impaired Brazilian students learning English with smartphones: Overcoming limitations. *Languages*, *2*(4), 12. https://doi.org/10.3390/languages2030012

Richards, J. C. (2015). The changing face of language learning: Learning beyond the classroom. *RELC Journal*, *46*(1), 5-22. https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688214561621

Rothoni, A. (2018). The complex relationship between home and school literacy: A blurred boundary between formal and informal English literacy practices of Greek teenagers. *TESOL Quarterly, 52*(2), 331-359. https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.402

Sabljak, J. (2016). *The benefits of media in learning: case studies of blind learners of English as L2* [University of Zagreb]. Retrieved from http://darhiv.ffzg.unizg.hr/id/eprint/6530/

Sofia, C. (2016). Foreign language learning for the visually impaired in the region of Central Macedonia, Greece: Problems and suggestions. *US-China Foreign Language*, *14*(3). https://doi.org/10.17265/1539-8080/2016.03.005

Spassiani, N. A., Ó Murchadha, N., Clince, M., Biddulph, K., Conradie, P., Costello, F., … Tully, K. (2017). Likes, dislikes, supports and barriers: the experience of students with disabilities in university in Ireland. *Disability and Society*, *32*(6), 892–912. https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2017.1320272

Suárez, D. C., & Cameron, L. (2022). 10 Disability in Indonesia: What can we learn from the available data? *In Sickness and In Health: Diagnosing Indonesia, 172.* https://doi.org/10.1355/9789815011852-015

Sundqvist, P., & Sylvén, L. K. (2019). *Extramural English in teaching and learning*. Palgrave Macmillan. Susanto, S., & Nanda, D. S. (2018). Teaching and learning English for visually impaired students: An ethnographic case study. *Journal of English Education*, *7*(1), 83-92. https://doi.org/10.25134/erjee.v7i1.1530

Trinder, R. (2017). Informal and deliberate learning with new technologies. *ELT Journal*, *71*(4), 401-412. https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccw117

WHO. (2020). *Blindness and vision impairment*. Retrieved from https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/blindness-

and-visual-impairment

Yang, Y. (2020). EFL learners' autonomous listening practice outside of the class. *Studies in Self-Access Learning Journal*, *11*(4), 328-346. https://doi.org/10.37237/110403

Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case study research: Design and methods* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.