

EXPLORING EFL STUDENTS' MOTIVATION AND LEARNING STRATEGIES ON EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY

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Abstract

This research focuses on a student of English Language Education, DI, and looks at the benefits and motivations of extracurricular activities for learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The researcher used a narrative method to explore DI's experiences and perspectives, showing how extracurricular activities like English clubs, debates, and student exchange programs helped improve his language skills and learning. These activities allowed DI to practice English and interact with different cultures in real life. DI's motivation came from both her interest in learning English and the rewards he received for participating. This study highlights how important extracurricular activities are in supporting EFL learning strategies.

Keywords: Learning Strategies, EFL Students, extracurricular activities, narrative inquiry

INTRODUCTION

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) refers to learning English in a country where it is not the primary language, typically in schools or specialized areas such as business or tourism. With globalization, English proficiency has become essential for academic and professional success, making it crucial to explore the strategies university students use to learn the language. Understanding different language learning strategies is vital, as they help students tailor their learning to their needs. Oxford (1990) identifies several strategies, including cognitive (mental processes), metacognitive (planning and monitoring), social (interacting with others), and affective (managing emotions). Additionally, students must recognize their learning goals to select the most effective strategies. Factors like technology and social interactions also influence the learning process.

This research will examine how university students involved in extracurricular activities (ECAs) employ these strategies in their EFL learning. Participation in ECAs helps students develop essential social and leadership skills for today's globalized world. Kaufman and Gabler (2014) emphasize that engaging in ECAs enhances students' social and cultural competencies, while Aoyagi (2020) highlights motivations for participation, such as a sense of responsibility and a desire for progress. Research indicates that involvement in ECAs increases motivation and can improve academic performance (Wallhead, 2014).

Every student employs different learning strategies based on their interests and habits. Mistar and Umamah (2014) found that female learners often utilize cognitive strategies like self-evaluation more frequently, positively impacting their speaking skills. To explore these strategies, this research will adopt a narrative inquiry approach, focusing on personal stories and experiences. Barkhuizen (2022) notes that narrative inquiry goes beyond mere storytelling by considering the broader context of individuals' experiences.

While many studies have examined learning strategies, few have focused on how ECAs influence students' motivation and language learning. Motivation is critical in language acquisition, yet the relationship between strategies developed through ECAs remains underexplored. Dörnyei (1994) and Ushioda (2008) highlight the significance of both intrinsic (internal drive) and extrinsic (external rewards) motivation in language learning. This study aims to fill these gaps by investigating how EFL students' involvement in ECAs enhances their motivation and the strategies they use to improve their English skills. Through narrative inquiry, the research will reveal how these activities support language learning beyond the classroom.

The objectives of this research include understanding why EFL students participate in ECAs and examining the learning strategies they employ during these activities. The findings will benefit students, teachers, and researchers alike. For students, the study will highlight effective methods for learning English and assist in selecting suitable ECAs. For lecturers, the results can enhance teaching methods by illustrating how ECAs complement classroom learning. For researchers, this study will lay the groundwork for future investigations into the role of ECAs in language learning.

In summary, this research aims to illuminate how extracurricular activities and learning strategies contribute to EFL students' motivation and language skills. The study will focus on a female EFL student at a university in Malang who actively participates in various ECAs while balancing her academic responsibilities. It will investigate how these activities help her maintain motivation in learning English and the strategies she employs throughout her learning journey..

METHOD

This research utilized a qualitative approach with a narrative inquiry method to explore the benefits and motivation behind English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning strategies employed by English Education students involved in extracurricular activities (ECAs). The study focused on a female student in her final semester, chosen for her active participation in ECAs and her proficiency in English, providing a mature perspective on her learning experiences. Data collection involved identifying suitable participants, explaining the study's purpose and ethical considerations, and obtaining consent for semi-structured interviews. These interviews aimed to gather insights into how ECAs influenced the participant's motivation and learning strategies, with data accurately transcribed for analysis.

The primary research instruments included in-depth interviews and written reflections, allowing the participant to share her experiences in a conversational setting and express her thoughts in writing. The narrative analysis structured the data chronologically, highlighting key moments in the participant's journey, including her motivations for joining ECAs and the learning strategies employed. The findings revealed that her main motivation was intrinsic, driven by a personal goal of mastering English, while external factors like social pressures also influenced her learning approach. To navigate her learning experiences, the participant used a blend of cognitive, metacognitive, social, and affective strategies, demonstrating adaptability in enhancing her language skills.

To ensure credibility, the participant reviewed the final analysis to confirm its accuracy, which strengthened the study's reliability. Ethical considerations were paramount, with informed consent obtained, confidentiality maintained, and a respectful environment fostered for sharing experiences. The overall aim was to authentically reflect the participant's story and ensure the findings accurately represented her experiences in EFL learning.

FINDINGS

This section shares the results of our study on why English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students take part in extracurricular activities (ECAs) to improve their English skills. By conducting interviews and analyzing written reflections, we discovered important themes that reveal the students' motivations and experiences. These findings help us better understand how students engage in learning English and offer valuable suggestions for teachers and program developers.

Motivations of EFL Students for Participating in Extracurricular Activities

The motivations for participating in extracurricular activities (ECAs) can be understood through intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, as well as their impact on academic success. According to Deci and Ryan (1985), intrinsic motivation means doing an activity for its enjoyment, while extrinsic motivation involves participating in an activity to achieve a specific goal or reward.

Filling the Gaps from Previous Education (Extrinsic Motivation)

My main motivation was because, back in the boarding school, I didn't focus much on learning English. So, when I entered the English Education Department, I felt the need to join extracurricular activities to practice more.

The participant's motivation to improve her language skills through extracurricular activities (ECAs) reflects extrinsic motivation, as it stemmed from her need to address gaps in her education. According to Ryan and Deci (2000), extrinsic motivation is crucial for learning when individuals recognize clear benefits from their efforts. In this case, ECAs offered essential opportunities for practice that significantly contributed to her development.

Fun and Practical Learning (Intrinsic Motivation)

I wanted to improve my English skills in a more enjoyable and practical way, so I became active in various extracurricular activities.

This highlights intrinsic motivation, as the student experienced joy and satisfaction in learning English through real-world applications. According to Schunk, Pintrich, and Meece (2008), intrinsic motivation boosts engagement and persistence in learning activities. The extracurricular activities provided an interactive environment that made the learning process rewarding and fulfilling.

Career Aspirations (Extrinsic Motivation)

At first, I was only focused on getting good grades, but after joining these activities, I became more motivated to really master English because I realized how important it is for my future career.

Initially, the participant was motivated by the goal of achieving good grades. However, her involvement in extracurricular activities (ECAs) shifted her focus toward long-term career aspirations. This change reflects extrinsic motivation, as she recognized the importance of English proficiency for her future career. This perspective supports Miller's (2009) findings, which highlight

that clear career goals can boost students' motivation to learn. Understanding the relevance of English for her career encouraged her to take her language learning more seriously.

Building Confidence (Intrinsic Motivation)

Extracurricular activities made me more confident in trying to speak English without being afraid of making mistakes.

The participant emphasized that extracurricular activities (ECAs) significantly boosted her confidence in using English, which is a sign of intrinsic motivation. Her confidence grew due to the enjoyment and support she experienced while practicing in a relaxed environment. According to Bandura (1997), self-efficacy, or the belief in one's abilities, is essential for motivation and learning outcomes. By creating a positive learning atmosphere, ECAs helped her feel more secure in her skills, encouraging her to take risks and further enhance her language abilities.

The Learning Strategies Used by EFL Students in Learning while Participated in Extracurricular Activities

According to Oxford's (1990) classification of language learning strategies, the participant's experiences in extracurricular activities (ECAs) can be categorized into four types of strategies: cognitive, metacognitive, social, and affective. These strategies played a significant role in helping her enhance her English skills during her participation in ECAs.

Cognitive Strategies: Active Use of English in Daily Life

Extracurricular activities made me use English more in daily life. Before, I just learned theory in class, but now I speak and listen to English in real-life contexts.

Cognitive strategies, as defined by Oxford (1990), involve actively using a language through practices such as speaking, analyzing, and critical thinking. The participant in our study applied these strategies by engaging with English in her daily life, especially through extracurricular activities (ECAs). These activities provided her with opportunities to practice what she learned in real-life situations, helping her move beyond theoretical knowledge. By actively speaking and listening, she enhanced her language skills through practical experience and involvement, which are essential components of effective learning strategies.

Social Strategies: Learning Through Interaction

I learned not just from theory, but also from experience and interacting with others.

According to Oxford (1990), social strategies involve learning through interaction with others, seeking assistance, and collaborating. The participant noted that extracurricular activities (ECAs) facilitated her learning by encouraging communication and teamwork. By engaging in conversations and discussions, she was able to learn from her peers and mentors, making the learning experience more enjoyable and meaningful. This interaction not only helped her gain confidence but also improved her skills in a supportive environment.

Cognitive Strategies: Exposure to Complex Vocabulary

When I joined the English debate club, we discussed difficult topics, and at first, I was confused. But over time, I got used to the complex vocabulary and ways of expressing ideas.

The participant employed cognitive strategies to address challenging aspects of the language, such as complex vocabulary and advanced conversations. By participating in debates and discussions within extracurricular activities (ECAs), she encountered more sophisticated language, which significantly enhanced her academic language skills in speaking and writing. Engaging with complex topics provided her with opportunities to practice higher-level vocabulary, essential for improving her English proficiency. This aligns with Oxford's (1990) assertion that engaging in real-life language use is vital for language development.

Metacognitive Strategies: Independent Learning

After joining ECAs, I started watching English movies without subtitles, reading articles or novels in English, and joining online discussions.

The participant utilized metacognitive strategies, which involved planning, monitoring, and evaluating her own learning. After getting involved in extracurricular activities (ECAs), she took greater control of her education by actively seeking out ways to practice English independently. This demonstrated her improved ability to manage her learning outside the classroom and showed greater independence, a crucial aspect of metacognitive strategies.

Affective Strategies: Building Confidence Through Feedback.

My friends and mentors would give feedback, and that really helped me improve.

Affective strategies, which assist students in managing their emotions and anxiety, significantly influenced the participant's learning experience. The supportive environment in extracurricular activities (ECAs) provided her with valuable feedback from classmates and mentors, which boosted her confidence. This feedback helped her address her fears and anxiety related to speaking English, making her feel more at ease with the language. As a result, the positive support she received over time increased her confidence and encouraged her to use English more freely.

DISCUSSION

The findings from this study on EFL students' motivations and learning strategies in extracurricular activities (ECAs) reveal important insights into their personal experiences and how these activities support language learning. The discussion emphasizes two main areas: the reasons for participating in ECAs and the learning strategies employed. This highlights the significance of understanding student engagement in language learning as a crucial aspect of educational development.

The participant's motivations for engaging in extracurricular activities (ECAs) can be divided into intrinsic and extrinsic factors, consistent with the motivation theories of Deci and Ryan

(1985) and Ryan and Deci (2000). One key reason for joining ECAs was to compensate for the lack of English practice in her earlier education, reflecting extrinsic motivation. The participant recognized the importance of English proficiency for academic success, aligning with Miller's (2009) findings on the link between educational background and language learning motivation. Additionally, she sought a more enjoyable and practical learning experience, illustrating intrinsic motivation, as ECAs provided a dynamic environment for real-life English usage. This supports Schunk, Pintrich, and Meece's (2008) assertion that intrinsic motivation enhances student engagement. As her career goals shifted from merely achieving good grades to mastering English for future opportunities, this change echoed Miller's (2009) findings on how career aspirations influence motivation. Participation in ECAs also bolstered her confidence in using English, resonating with Bandura's (1997) concept of self-efficacy, which posits that belief in one's abilities influences learning outcomes.

The learning strategies the participant employed during her time in ECAs reflected Oxford's (1990) principles regarding language learning strategies. She actively practiced English outside the classroom, utilizing cognitive strategies that emphasize direct language application, which improved her skills and made learning more applicable to her life. Furthermore, she stressed the significance of learning through interaction, aligning with social strategies. Engaging in discussions and group activities enriched her learning experience, highlighting the role of social interaction in language acquisition. Her involvement in debate clubs introduced her to advanced vocabulary and complex language structures, demonstrating how cognitive strategies enhance language proficiency. She also applied metacognitive strategies through independent learning, such as watching English movies and reading articles, showcasing her strong motivation. Lastly, the feedback from peers and mentors during ECAs significantly boosted her confidence and language abilities, underscoring the effectiveness of supportive learning strategies.

CONCLUSION

This study explored the motivations and learning strategies of EFL students, specifically focusing on DI's experiences in extracurricular activities (ECAs). The findings indicate that participating in ECAs is crucial for enhancing English skills and fostering both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. DI exhibited a strong intrinsic motivation to improve their English beyond classroom instruction, actively seeking opportunities to practice the language in real-life situations. For instance, joining the English debate club provided DI with practical experience, helping to develop their communication skills while also boosting confidence through the supportive environment of these activities.

Moreover, DI's experiences underscore the importance of balancing classroom learning with real-world applications. They learned to take charge of their learning by seeking additional resources and practicing English outside school, reflecting the concept of self-regulated learning, which suggests that empowered students are more likely to succeed. In summary, this research highlights the significant role of extracurricular activities in enhancing language skills, motivating students, and building their confidence in using English.

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