

EXPLORING INDONESIAN EFL LEARNERS' EXTRAMURAL ENGLISH ACTIVITIES

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ABSTRACT

Extramural English, also known as English exposure beyond the classroom, has become increasingly relevant for language learning, especially with technological advancements. To better understand how extramural English contributes to the English learning process in the Indonesian context, this study explores the extramural English activities of Indonesian EFL learners. A total of seventy-three university students majoring in English Language Education participated in a survey, which gathered data on their extramural English preferences and perceived benefits for language skills. The data were then thematically analyzed. The findings revealed that receptive-related activities were the most popular, with participants frequently engaging in listening to English songs (94.5%), watching music videos with English captions (82.2%), and watching films or TV series in English with Indonesian subtitles (76.7%). These activities were favored because they were enjoyable and provided opportunities for English development. Moreover, most participants perceived extramural English as beneficial for enhancing their knowledge of language items, language skills, and cultural understanding. The findings suggest that EFL teachers should incorporate more productive extramural English tasks to promote balanced skill development among learners.

Keywords: Extramural English, digital learning, English development

INTRODUCTION

Language learning occurs when meaningful input and output are considered (Gass & Mackey, 2006; Krashen, 2013; Newton & Nation, 2014). Input refers to the language learners are exposed to, such as spoken language, reading, or signed language (Gass, 2015). Meanwhile, output involves productive language skills, where learners focus on conveying their ideas (Newton & Nation, 2014). These processes can occur through extensive programs, communication activities, and interaction via the Internet (Newton & Nation, 2014).

However, classroom-based input and output are often limited to variety and constrained by time. Students in any classroom have diverse interests, needs, learning styles and motivations for learning a language (Richards, 2015). Addressing these differences requires ample learning activities and time. However, the teachers may struggle to provide a wide range of input that caters to every student's preferences (Macintyre et al., 1998). Moreover,

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the fixed duration of classroom instruction further restricts learning opportunities. As a result, relying solely on in-class activities can burden teachers and students excessively.

Just as in-class input and output are limited, out-of-class exposure to English also seems restricted. In non-English-speaking countries, language learners often have fewer opportunities to engage with English. In Indonesia, for instance, most people primarily communicate in Bahasa Indonesia or their native language in daily interactions. Consequently, chances to practice English input and output are relatively scarce. This limitation makes foreign language learning in non-English-speaking environments particularly challenging.

To acknowledge students' differences and best facilitate them with opportunities for English exposure, Extramural English (hereafter EE) or English that the learners are involved in outside the classroom (Sundqvist, 2019) appears to be an effective solution. Specifically, EE involves language activities that learners engage in voluntarily, without external pressure (Sundqvist & Sylvén, 2016). This means that the learners make their own choices to choose learning materials that suit their preferences and set the time or place to do it.

Typically, EE includes activities such as listening to songs, watching television or videos, reading books, novels, and magazines, surfing the internet, playing games, using social media, and interacting online or offline (Sundqvist & Sylvén, 2016). Thus, it can be inferred that EE activities are not restricted to digital-related stuff. However, as technology evolves, new EE activities are constantly emerging.

Digital EE activities seems to be the most popular among the EE activities mentioned above. Activities such as listening to the songs, watching TV, playing digital games, and using internet are frequently mentioned in the literature (Avello et al., 2019; Jensen, 2017; Sylvén & Sundqvist, 2012; Sundqvist & Uztosun, 2023; Warnby, 2022; Zhang et al., 2021). Among these, listening to the songs is particularly favored by language learners (Anggraini et al., 2022; Coşkun & Mutlu, 2017; Zunuaris & Zainil, 2023), suggesting that the majority engage more in input-related activities. Lee & Sylvén (2021) found that EFL learners spent several hours daily on digital EE. Sylvén & Sundqvist (2012) also reported a positive relationship between target language (L2) proficiency and time spent playing digital games.

Studies have shown that EE exposure influences EFL learners' willingness to communicate in the target language (L2 WTC) and enhances their cultural knowledge. Alshammri (2023) revealed that familiarity with online communities impacts Saudi EFL learners' willingness to use English. Activities such as online gaming, Twitter, and Telegram groups encourage the participants to talk and comment in English, as they feel engaged and connected to the community. Similarly, Lee et al. (2022) discovered that while Taiwanese were less inclined than Koreans to use L2 outside the classroom, they demonstrated higher L2 WTC in digital contexts. Additionally, Malyndra et al. (2020) reported that Indonesian learners perceived social media as a confidence booster for communicating in English and a means of learning about foreign cultures. Supporting this, Lee and Draji (2019) reported a significant correlation between Indonesian university students' L2 WTC and their engagement in informal digital learning activities.

The findings above align with the language teaching principles proposed by Newton and Nation (2014), which suggest that a supportive and friendly environment fosters a willingness to communicate. Additionally, according to Macintyre et al. (1998) heuristics model of L2 WTC, learners are more likely to speak when opportunities arise. However, these opportunities must be engaging, align with learners' interests, and create a low-anxiety environment to encourage sustain participation (Emeral & Farid, 2024; Krashen, 1982; Noels et al., 2000). This explains why digital platforms are ideal for promoting English communication among learners.

In the same way that EE influences learners' willingness to use the target language, it also plays a significant role in their English development. EE helps language learners improve their knowledge on language items (Jensen, 2017; M. Lee & Révész, 2020; Leona et al., 2021; Muñoz et al., 2023; Peters & Webb, 2018; Sundqvist, 2019; Wahidah et al., 2024; Warnby, 2022) as well as their macro skills (Al-Shamsi et al., 2020; Avello et al., 2019; Lyrigkou, 2019; Salsabila et al., 2021).

Given EE contribution to language development, further research on EE in Indonesia is necessary, particularly within the English Language Education setting. Since students in this program are being trained to become English teachers or instructors, mastering both receptive and productive English skills is essential. Therefore, this study aims to explore Indonesian EFL learners' extramural English activities and their impact on language development. The research questions to address are:

- (1) What are Indonesian EFL learners' most popular EE activities? How much time do they typically spend on them?
- (2) Why do learners prefer those EE activities?
- (3) To what extent do EE activities contribute to their English development?

METHODS

Seventy-three first-year students, aged 16 to 21, from an English Language Education participated in this study. Prospective English teachers are assumed to engage more frequently in various types of Extramural English (EE) activities than students in non-English-related programs. Additionally, first-year students have not been registered to the *Merdeka Belajar Kurikulum Merdeka (MBKM)* Program, a national program that includes activities such as student exchange and internships, so the students' availability to participate in this study is ensured. Thus, convenience sampling was applied to determine participants' availability and willingness to be studied.

A self-report questionnaire was used to collect data in this study. This tool assesses participants' cognition, emotions, motivation, behavior, or physical state (Pekrun, 2020). The questionnaire consisted of three sections. The first section gathered participants' informed consent and demographic information, including their names, ages, gender, and contact details. The second section focused on participants' EE preferences and the time spent on these activities. It included a list of EE activities presented in semi-closed items, where participants selected the activities that they engaged in most frequently and specified the time spent on each. These items were based on the EE activity types proposed by Sundqvist and Sylvén (2016), with additional items incorporated based on findings from a pilot study and discussions with the research team and colleagues. The "other" option was added to accommodate diverse EE activities, allowing participants to provide additional responses. The final section featured two open-ended questions to explore participants' perceptions of how EE activities influence their English development. Specifically, participants were asked (1) which EE activities they enjoyed the most and why and (2) how these activities contributed to their English proficiency. Before implementation, the self-report was piloted to ensure its readability and determine the appropriate completion time.

This study employed a survey design to explore Indonesian EFL learners' EE activities. The data were primarily qualitative, collected through a self-report questionnaire distributed to 88 first-year students in a classroom setting. Before completing the self-report, the participants were informed the study's objectives, provided clear instructions, and asked for consent. Seventy-three (83%) of the population returned the self-report, which, according to Lodico et al. (2010), represents a reasonably good response rate (above 70%).

Responses from the first section of the self-report about participants' EE preferences were converted into percentages and ranked from the highest to lowest to identify the most popular EE activities (see Table 2). Additionally, to assess the average time spent on these activities, the reported durations (hours/week) were calculated and presented in percentages (see Table 3).

A theme-based analysis was conducted for the two open-ended questions. First, the participants' responses were read thoroughly, tabulated and categorized into codes. The coding process was performed using an in-vivo strategy, meaning that the codes were derived directly from the participant's responses (Creswell, 2011). Finally, the themes were generated to interpret the findings (see Tables 4, 5 and 6).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Popular EE Activities amongst Indonesian EFL Learners and the Time Spent on EE

The first research question was intended to identify the most popular EE activities and how much time is spent on those activities. The results of the most popular EE activities amongst Indonesian EFL learners and the time spent are shown in Table 1, 2, and 3.

Table 1. Participants' Demographic Variables

Characteristics	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Female	49	67.1
Male	24	32.9
Age		
16	1	1.4
18	29	39.7
19	35	47.9
20	5	6.8
21	3	4.1

Note. N=73 (n represents the number of participants for each characteristic)

The data were obtained from 73 (83%) first-year students from an English Language Education program in Indonesia. In the present study, the females outnumbered the males, with 49 (67.1%) females and 24 (32.9%) males. Furthermore, although they were all from the academic year 2023/2024, their age ranged from 16 to 21, and the majority were 19 (47.9%).

Table 2 List of EE Activities Based on Its Popularity

Rank	EE Activities	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1 st	I listen to English songs	69	94.5%
2 nd	I watch music videos with English captions	60	82.2%
3 rd	I watch films/TV series in English with Indonesian subtitles	56	76.7%
4 th	I watch films/TV series in English with English subtitles	54	74.0%
4 th	I read online	54	74.0%
5 th	I write status updates in English on my social media account	51	69.9%
6 th	I play video games in English (personal)	49	67.1%
7 th	I communicate online with foreigners (chatting)	48	65.8%
8 th	I watch music videos with no captions	44	60.3%
9 th	I leave comments on English websites or social media	42	57.5%
9 th	I play video games in English (with players)	42	57.5%
10 th	I watch music videos with Indonesian captions	38	52.1%
10 th	I watch video content with English captions	38	52.1%
11 th	I read offline	30	41.1%
12 th	I communicate online with foreigners (spoken)	29	39.7%
12 th	I watch video content with no captions	29	39.7%
13 th	I watch video content with Indonesian captions	28	38.4%
14 th	I watch films/TV series in English with no subtitles	20	27.4%
15 th	I write diary/journal/comic/blog in English	18	24.7%
16 th	I communicate offline with foreigners (spoken)	8	11.0%
17 th	I talk to myself in English	3	4.1%
18 th	I send messages in English to my family and friends	1	1.4%
18 th	I speak English with my friend	1	1.4%

Based on the self-report distributed to the participants (see Table 2), the highest percentage was listening to the songs (94.5%), and the lowest was (1.4%) for sending messages and speaking English with family and friends, respectively. The items for "other activities" were filled by five participants. Three (4.1%) participants mentioned that they talked to themselves. Furthermore, one respondent (1.4%) stated that he sent messages in English, while another 1.4% reported speaking English with his friends.

Table 3. Popular EE Activities amongst Indonesian EFL Learners

Top 3 EE Activities	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)	Duration (hours/week)
Listening to English Songs	69	94.5	13.2
Watching music videos (MV's) with English captions	60	82.2	4.8
Watching films/TV series in English with Indonesian subtitles	56	76.7	3.5

As shown in Table 3, the most popular EE activities among the participants were listening to English songs (94.5%), followed by watching MVs with English captions (82.2%) and watching films/TV series in English with Indonesian subtitles (76.7%). These findings align with previous studies, which suggest that learners highly favor receptive-related activities (Anggraini et al., 2022; Coşkun & Mutlu, 2017; Sundqvist & Uztosun, 2023; Zunuaris & Zainil, 2023). The strong preference for listening to English songs may indicate that Indonesian EFL learners benefit more from auditory input. One possible reason is that they may not perceive the opportunity or necessity of using English in daily communication, as they primarily converse in Indonesian or their native languages.

However, these findings also highlight the need for meaning-focused output or productive-related activities. Among the participants, productive-related activities are the least practiced. If learners do not have sufficient opportunities to produce the language, their speaking and writing skills may be negatively affected, making fluency more challenging. Newton and Nation (2014) and Gass and Mackey (2006) also emphasize that language learning occurs effectively when both input and output are adequately balanced.

Regarding time spent on EE activities, participants reported listening to English songs for approximately 13.2 hours per week, watching MVs with English captions for 4.8 hours per week, and watching films or TV series in English with Indonesian subtitles for 3.5 hours per week. These findings are consistent with Sylvén and Sundqvist (2012), who reported that participants spent an average 10.6 hours per week engaging in extramural English activities. The participants in the present study also spent more than 10 hours per week listening to songs (13.2 hours/per week, suggesting ample exposure to English. Given the reported positive correlation between L2 proficiency and exposure time (Coşkun & Mutlu, 2017; Kerstin Sylvén & Sundqvist, 2012), it can be inferred that increased exposure may contribute to the more significant language acquisition.

EE as Pleasant Activities and Opportunity for Language Development

The second research question aimed to explore the reasons why participants enjoy engaging in extramural English activities. There appear to be various reasons for engaging in EE activities, as shown on Table 4 below.

Table 4. Participants Responses on Reasons to Do EE Activities

Participants' Responses	Codes	Themes
I like music; I love music; I like how music sounds; playing games is my hobby and passion; It feels like I'm inside the movie itself; I love watching movies and reading fantasy books - Imagining them makes me feel like I'm in a different dimension.	Liking	Pleasant Activities
It is fun to watch; I enjoy watching film/tv series the most because it's fun; I feel entertained when playing games, watching series, and listening to music; it's entertaining; reading comics is fun; MSA (my animated story) is fun to watch.	Entertaining	
It makes me feel better; playing games could elevate my moods; my online friends brought joy and laughter; because I meet many friends on there, interact with them, and listen to their story; music helps me to be more cheerful and makes my mood better when I'm sad; I feel comfortable and peace when listening to the music; I feel	Heartening	

Participants' Responses	Codes	Themes
happy and healed when watching film/drama and listening to music; listening to the music makes me feel enjoyed and relaxed		
Talking with foreigner friends and playing video games improve my vocabulary, talking with foreigners helps me with my vocabulary; gaming develops my vocabulary; I learned new vocabularies when speaking with foreign friends via texts/calls; I found new words whenever I read stories and use it on my writing; they really help me with my vocabulary.	Vocabularies	Opportunity for Language Development
Improve my speaking; talking with foreigners helps me with my speaking skills as they correct me; watching podcast and listening to music helps me with the pronunciation; I learned how to pronounce words correctly when speaking with foreign friends via texts/calls; it's because the way they talk is understandable, sometimes they correct me If I had mistaken what I spoke; they really help me with my speaking skills.	Speaking	
Improve my listening; helps my listening skills to grow; watching MSA (my story animated) improves my listening	Listening	

The majority mentioned that they engage in EE activities because they find them pleasant and believe they contribute to their language development. This suggests that their participation is driven not only by personal interest but also by the perceived benefits of improving their English skills. The enjoyment factor was a key reason for their preference for these activities, aligning with a previous study by Emeral & Farid (2024), which found that intrinsic motivation plays a crucial role in encouraging learners to choose and consistently engage in the EE activities they enjoy the most.

Frequent exposure to these activities enables learners to acquire the language unconsciously through listening, watching, gaming, and reading. As indicated by the participants' responses (see Table 4), they are willing to use dictionaries when necessary, such as to understand song lyrics or communicate online with friends. Additionally, interacting with foreigners provides valuable feedback essential for language acquisition. These findings reinforce the significant role of motivation in promoting engagement, fostering a positive attitude, encouraging risk-taking, enhancing openness to interactions in the target language, and ultimately facilitating language acquisition (Krashen, 1982; Noels et al., 2000; Richards, 2015).

EE Contact on English Development

The third research question aimed to identify the benefits of EE involvement on language development. Interestingly, EE involvement was perceived to benefit language learners in various aspects.

Table 5. Participants Responses on EE Contact and their Language Development

Participants' Responses	Codes	Themes
Know some new words; improved my vocabulary; learn new vocabulary; get new vocabularies, slang, idiom that I have never heard from college or school; find new slangs from songs; find new vocabularies, terms, and slangs; increase my vocabulary; there are always new words between story, the lines, or some soundtrack, so when I am too curious about a word, I can look it up on Google and learn it; a lot of vocabulary that is stored in my memories; new words and idioms make me curious and eventually makes me want to search and remember it; gain more phrase; a lot of new terms or words pops up when I listen to music or playing video games; I can learn new words and how they are used in context; looking at the comments at social media helps me to improve my vocabulary	Vocabulary	Language Items
Gain more sentence structure; learn more grammar; helps me with grammar; it expands my grammar knowledge;	Grammar	
Get to know how to pronounce them; know how to pronounce words; learn how to pronounce a word quickly; know better pronunciation; learn how to say the words correctly; my pronunciation is getting better; when I was singing in English song, it makes me speak better in English; accustomed to the pronunciation;	Pronunciation	
Listening to the songs improve my listening skills; I learn listening from the songs; it develops my listening ability; it develops my English in any aspects, especially listening.	Listening	Skills
It helps me to speak with foreigners and improve my speaking; playing games online with online friends helps me to practice speaking.	Speaking	
Watching vlogs or series with English subtitles develops my reading; it develops my English in any aspects, especially reading;	Reading	
Sometimes, I also find new information about foreign cultures in it, like Pep Rally, Prom Night, Thanksgiving and Halloween.	Understanding other cultures	Cultural Knowledge

The majority reported that engaging EE activities contributes to their knowledge on language items, skills, and culture. As the majority stated that EE activities enhance their English vocabulary, this finding aligns with previous studies (Jensen, 2017; Leona et al., 2021; Malyndra et al., 2020; Sundqvist, 2019; Warnby, 2022), which highlight the role of EE exposure in vocabulary enrichment. EE activities provide learners with broader opportunities to acquire vocabulary in various contexts. Additionally, activities that incorporate visualization,

audio, and real-life contexts help learners quickly grasp meanings and retain vocabulary in long-term memory.

Unlike vocabulary, grammar is not frequently mentioned in the literature as a direct outcome of EE involvement. However, this study found that some participants attributed their grammar improvement to EE exposure, a finding supported by previous research (Lee & Révész, 2020; Muñoz et al., 2023; Schurz et al., 2022). The acquisition of L2 grammar can be linked to vocabulary learning through EE activities, as learners observe how words are used in sentences and different contexts. This process enables them to understand grammatical structures implicitly. Moreover, captions and subtitles in EE activities further facilitate grammar acquisition (Lee & Révész, 2020).

Pronunciation was another language item that the participants reported improving through EE activities, corroborating previous research (Schurz et al., 2022). Participants indicated that they learned to pronounce words more accurately by imitating what they heard. For instance, when singing their favorite songs, they naturally listen, memorize, and mimic the lyrics, enhancing their pronunciation skills.

The second theme identified in this study is related to the development of listening, speaking, and reading skills. In terms of listening skills, the findings are consistent with previous research (Al-Shamsi et al., 2020). While some participants mentioned that EE exposure helped improve their speaking skills, none reported benefits for writing. This result is partially supported by Avello et al. (2019). The predominance of input-based activities, such as listening and watching, among participants, explains this outcome.

The final theme that emerged from participants' responses is the acquisition of cultural knowledge. A participant mentioned gaining insights into foreign cultures through reading, which aligns with previous research (Malyndra et al., 2020). Gaining new knowledge, especially about foreign cultures, is another benefit from EE involvement that language teachers can consider when designing or selecting learning materials. Integrating EE into their teaching practice will bring fruitful advantages.

Based on the themes identified, it can be inferred that the majority of participants experience language development, particularly in language forms, as a result of EE involvement. While EE involvement contribute to listening, speaking, and reading, only a few participants explicitly confirmed improvements in these areas. This finding aligns with the fact that the most common EE activities among participants involve receptive skills, such as listening and watching. Therefore, there is a need to promote EE involvement in productive skills, such as speaking and writing, to create a more balanced language learning experience.

CONCLUSION

Successful language learning occurs when input, output, and feedback on the output are effectively integrated. Therefore, exposure to English is a crucial element that language teachers and instructors should facilitate. Fortunately, with the rapid advancement of technology, various forms of English exposure have emerged, allowing language learners to engage in Extramural English activities that align with their preferences.

However, this study revealed that among the available EE activities, the participants prefer receptive-related activities, such as listening to songs and watching videos. This situation may hinder the development of their productive skills if they lack sufficient opportunities to use the language in spoken and written forms. To address this issue, language teachers can incorporate digital tools, such as websites or applications for speaking and writing, to encourage students to communicate with their peers, interact with native speakers, or express their ideas in writing. In other words, integrating digital EE into language instruction can enhance EFL learners' productive skills.

Despite its contributions, this study has certain limitations and offers implication for future research. First, as it primarily explored EE types and EFL learners' perspectives on how

EE influences their English skills, future studies could adopt a quantitative approach to examine the relationship between EE exposure and language proficiency. Second, since this study relied on self-reports to collect data, future researchers may replicate and expand upon it using interviews or observations to obtain more in-depth insights. Lastly, further research is needed to investigate how language teachers or instructors integrate EE into their teaching practice.

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