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Learning Beyond the Classroom in an EFL Malagasy Setting: Two Student Teachers' Experiences

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In this paper, the three authors—a teacher and two student teachers (STs)—highlight the importance of learners' agency in learning beyond the classroom (LBC), drawing on the STs' LBC experiences as EFL learners in Madagascar. Through narrative accounts in the form of vignettes, the STs share their language learning histories (LLHs) beyond the classroom, identifying their purposes and drives for learning English, as well as their difficulties, strategies, and successes. The STs' LLHs underscore the significance of interests that fed into their intrinsic motivation to continuously improve their English language skills and indicate that they were capable of creating learning opportunities and resources in a learning environment that can be considered as "under-resourced" (Smith et al., 2018, p. 8). The implications drawn from the LLHs include the idea of integrating into the classroom learners' interests and strategies beyond the classroom to boost their motivation and the relevance of using LLHs in teacher education to help STs reflect on their learning experiences and existing knowledge about learning, as well as understand the importance of considering and responding to students' genuine needs and interests. This paper breaks new ground in exploring LBC and LLHs in that two of the authors are current students identifying themselves as both EFL learners and future EFL teachers in a Malagasy context. It also sheds light on how to promote LBC in a context where resources can be seen as scarce.

本論文では、教師と2人の学生教師（ST）からなる3人の著者が、マダガスカルにおけるEFL学習者としてのSTの教室を超えた学習（LBC）経験をもとにLBCでの学習者のエージェンシーの重要性を強調する。STは、教室外での言語学習の歴史（LLH）をヴィネット形式の物語で語り、英語を学ぶ目的や動機、困難、戦略、成功などを明らかにする。彼らのLLHは、英語を継続的に向上させるための内発的動機につながる興味の重要性を強調し、「リソース不足」（Smith et al., 2018, p. 8）とされる学習環境において学習機会やリソースを作り出す能力があることを示している。LLHから、学習者のモチベーションを高めるために、教室を超えた学習者の興味や戦略を教室に取り入れるという考え方や、教師教育におけるLLHの活用の妥当性などが示唆された。本研究は、マダガスカル語の文脈の中でEFL学習者と将来のEFL教師を目指す学生が共同執筆しているという点で、非常に独自性の高いものである。この論文は、マダガスカルにおけるEFL学習者と将来のEFL教師である在校生の共著であり、彼ら自身の言葉によって、その声を直接的に伝える。また本稿では、資源が乏しいとされる状況において、LBCをどのように推進するかについても光を当てている。

Keywords

Vola, Fanaperana, and Olivia, the authors of this paper, have three common points of reference: our home country, our love for English, and the desire to teach it. That love and desire brought us together in a university in Madagascar in 2018, where Vola was teaching a course on reflective writing to first-year student teachers, among whom were Fanaperana and Olivia. At the time of writing, Vola was living in Japan while Fanaperana and Olivia were entering their third year of teacher training in Madagascar. Despite the

distance, we have kept in touch through email and social media. We decided to write about learning beyond the classroom (LBC) together because we believe that LBC was the key to our mastering English in Madagascar, where English classes mainly focus on grammar, reading, and writing, and where learning resources can be seen as limited. We also believe that it is especially beyond the classroom that learners can develop and exert their learner autonomy or their "capacity to take control over [their] own learning" (Benson, 2011, p. 2), as they are the decision-makers of what and how to learn. Therefore, for us, promoting learner autonomy necessarily involves LBC.

Our first aim is to give insights into LBC in an EFL Malagasy context, using the language learning histories (LLHs) of Fanaperana and Olivia (referred to as "student teachers" or "STs"). By doing so, we give voice directly to students, as this is to our knowledge, the first paper co-authored by students in this context. The second aim is to highlight what we can gain from the LLHs in terms of ways to help learners learn beyond the classroom and maintain their motivation in and outside class. Our final aim, which is related to the second, is to better promote learner autonomy in the Malagasy context and beyond.

We first describe the context followed by a brief background of the STs. Then, we give some theoretical background and explain the method used for this paper. Next, the STs discuss the necessity and challenges of LBC in the EFL Malagasy context before describing and reflecting on their EFL language journeys beyond the classroom through their LLHs. In addition to their LBC experiences, they reflect on their own future teaching, as they prepare for their teaching practice. Drawing from the STs' learning experiences, Vola finally provides some practical ways in which LBC can be promoted.

Theoretical Background: LBC, LLH, Agency, and Context

LBC is necessary for learners to succeed in their language learning, as the affordances for learning in the classroom can be limited due mainly to time constraints and the non-flexibility of the curriculum (Richards, 2015). It can even be argued that most learning takes place outside the classroom (Benson, 2017). When researching LBC, areas that can be addressed are the affordances and constraints of the settings, the processes involved, including learners' experiences and strategies, and the teacher's role in supporting LBC (Reinders & Benson, 2017). One way to research learners' experiences and strategies is through LLH writing.

LLH writing benefits both learners and teachers. It enables learners to reflect on their learning and to reveal some of the causes of their motivation and attitudes towards the language (Reinders & Benson, 2017). Additionally, LLHs allow both learners and teachers to know learners' perceptions and beliefs related to their language learning and their "seeds" of agency (Murphey & Carpenter, 2008), the latter being an important factor in LBC.

Agency is a significant dimension of learner behavior (Mercer, 2011). In language learning, it is viewed as a starting point for the development of autonomy (Benson, 2007) or as a component of learner autonomy. Gu (2009), for instance, includes learner agency in his conceptualization of learner autonomy, which also includes volition, proactiveness, and self-initiation. Self-initiation is identified as the combination of initial motivation to learn and effortful behaviors (Nguyen, 2008). Agency is, thus, the characteristic that enables learners to make the decision to learn and to pursue the learning regardless of their context. It is undeniable that the context or learning environment influences learners (Benson, 2021; Benson et al., 2018; Lamb & Murray, 2018), as "all learning is

socially situated and culturally constrained" (Little, 1999, p. 16). However, learners are not only reactive to the context; they can also shape their learning environment (Bandura, 2008; Benson, 2021; Carter & Sealey, 2000; Mercer, 2011), i.e., they can contribute to improvements of their own learning environment by exercising their agency, which explains the importance of agency in LBC. As agency involves self-initiation prompted by motivation, it can be argued that agency is related to interest. Interest is a positive emotion integrating affective and cognitive components; it is said to be the cause of self-initiation and persistence (Mynard & McLoughlin, 2020). In LBC contexts, finding and developing interest is an effective way to maintain and regulate learners' motivation (McLoughlin, 2020; Mynard & McLoughlin, 2020).

Context: Resources, Languages, the Place of English, and Background of the STs

Madagascar is among the poorest countries in the world (Osborne, 2016; UNICEF, 2018; Venart & Reuter, 2014) and can be referred to as "under-resourced" (Smith et al., 2018, p. 8) regarding education. Basic resources in pedagogy and infrastructure are considerably lacking. Beyond the classroom, libraries (with books) are mostly the only resources provided by schools and institutions in urban locations. Resources that may be taken for granted in schools in other countries, such as self-access centers, ICT resources (e.g., computers, CD players, unlimited Wi-Fi), or simply any human resources outside class are generally scarce in the Malagasy context. In order to use the Internet, most people, even those at universities in big cities, go to cyber cafes and pay for limited connections. However, many Malagasy people can use Facebook, as it is possible to use it on cell phones at a cheaper price than other Internet services. Nevertheless, such connections are limited.

Malagasy and French are the official languages, and English is a foreign language. While French is mainly used as a language of instruction at school and in most administrative areas, Malagasy is used in everyday life outside school and workplaces. Both languages are used on TV (e.g., news), and most foreign movies and documentaries are dubbed in French. In general, English is taught as a compulsory school subject from the beginning of secondary school. What is taught in class throughout the 7 years consists mainly of grammar rules, reading comprehension, and writing on given topics (e.g., sport, environment); these skills are also what is assessed at school and in national examinations (at the end of Grades 9 and 12). Teachers often predominantly focus on forms and use grammar drills. For example, when they teach the passive voice, they only teach about how to turn the active form into the passive and vice versa but not about when to use them. English is thus taught as a subject that students must learn for exams, but not as a means of communication. As a foreign language, its use is mainly confined to the English classroom.

At university, English is still a mandatory subject but generally remains an academic subject (consisting of reading and writing) among others that students study to pass exams in departments other than English (e.g., French, law, physics). In English departments like the one where the STs studied, all English skills are taught separately along with literature, civilization, and other subjects.

Beyond the classroom, private tutoring and English language centers may exist in some cities, but they are not typically affordable for the general Malagasy population. English clubs created by volunteers (teachers or students) can be found within language centers

and in a few schools in cities. The aim of such clubs is mainly to enable learners to practice speaking. However, there are very few of them, and their existence and functionality heavily depend on the availability of the volunteers leading them, which does not guarantee their consistency (see Vignette 9).

Prior to university, the two STs, Fanaperana and Olivia, had 7 years of English in secondary school, like most Malagasy students do. Having lived in the capital, they have been more fortunate than students in other areas in terms of learning resources, as they can still have some limited access to the Internet and are more exposed to different media, such as social media and television. Also, they had opportunities to join English clubs and register at English language centers.

The STs were entering their third year at a teacher training college in Madagascar at the time of writing this paper. Although they had not had practical teaching experience yet, they had learned about theories of different teaching methods and approaches. In their first 2 years at college, they also attended different courses aiming to help them improve the four language skills.

Methods

Our aim is to enable readers to hear the voices of actual learners on LBC in their context and to learn directly from them. We thus chose to use Fanaperana and Olivia's LLHs in an autoethnographic approach (Ellis et al., 2011) or "self-narratives" allowing readers to "understand the ways in which individuals situate themselves and their activities in the world" (Barkhuizen et al., 2014, p. 2).

To help Fanaperana and Olivia write their LLHs, Vola provided them with prompts about activities, settings, times, and views on the effectiveness of their LBC activities. That first step served as a brainstorming activity in a shared Google Docs document. Secondly, Fanaperana and Olivia collected evidence of their LBC from several years of learning English. The evidence included items such as translations of song lyrics, a poster for a play, and diary entries. While collecting evidence and gradually writing their LLHs, we had back-and-forth question-and-answer exchanges within the same Google Docs document for further elaboration and reflection. When Fanaperana and Olivia were satisfied with their LLHs, we divided them into vignettes to make them easier to read. We were aware that autobiographical vignettes are said to enable teachers to reflect on their teaching practices (Ambler, 2012). Though Fanaperana and Olivia were not teaching yet at the time of writing this paper, writing the vignettes allowed them to reflect on their learning, link them to their future teaching, and develop their reflective practice, which is considered "a crucial element of education" and "an essential skill that needs to be nurtured in all teachers" (Farrell, 2019, p. 5). We, thus, believe in the value of LLHs in relation to LBC and to teaching.

The STs' Views: Necessity and Challenges of LBC in the EFL Malagasy Context

From our own experiences as students, we can say that LBC is necessary, especially regarding speaking and listening skills. What students learn in class is quite limited, as previously described. As English is taught as an academic subject and is assessed only through reading and writing in exams, speaking is neglected in class. Students are used to seeing the language rather than speaking it. Teachers do not even speak English most of the time, as they think explaining in the mother tongue or in French helps the students

better than using the target language. That is why most students are not used to listening to English or using it as a means of communication.

LBC is necessary but also challenging for EFL Malagasy students. The first challenge is to find time. Students have class from early morning to evening, and at home, they mainly have time only for their homework and lesson reviewing. Furthermore, LBC requires a huge amount of independence, which implies that they should be capable of managing their time. The second challenge is the lack of materials. What they can find in libraries are mainly grammar books and dictionaries. Most students do not have access to the Internet, which would provide them with different listening resources. Additionally, the rarity of resources such as English clubs makes it difficult to practice speaking. The third challenge is to keep motivation. This may be related to the lack of practice opportunities for students who want to be able to speak English. Also, in LBC, students may feel demotivated, as there is no one to encourage them and no deadline to push them. They may give up easily if they do not have the patience and willingness to make constant effort. Despite these challenges, LBC is possible if students are determined to learn and to improve their English skills, as demonstrated in our LLHs in the following section.

The Two STs' LBC Experiences

In this part of our paper, we share extracts from Fanaperana and Olivia's LLHs in the form of vignettes so that readers may directly learn from them about their experiences of LBC. Six vignettes from Fanaperana are first presented, and these are followed by seven vignettes from Olivia. The vignettes are included in this section without commentary, so that readers may directly encounter the voices and experiences of Fanaperana and Olivia.

Fanaperana's LLH

Vignette 1: Learning for the Test

If someone asked me how long I have been learning English, I would answer 7 years. That was when I started to learn English outside the classroom. In school, English was learned like some other subjects such as math and history. What did I learn at school? English grammar rules, some vocabulary, and expressions related to given themes, such as sports and the environment, which I had to memorize for tests, but which I did not use at all outside the classroom. What I learned at school aimed exclusively to help me pass exams, without considering my understanding and the usefulness of such content in my life. I did not have the opportunity to practice speaking English, which is crucial when learning a language.

Vignette 2: Westlife

It was in the first year of high school when I started to learn English beyond the classroom. My mother bought me a mobile phone with many English songs preloaded in it, such as Westlife's. I loved their songs as I felt they had some kind of depth. Their voices were so nice to hear, and the songs reminded me of my childhood when I often listened to them. However, I did not understand what the songs meant. At that time, I thought if I could meet Westlife one day, I would like to be able to talk to them. That was when I decided to get two notebooks: one for the lyrics and one for the translation (see Figures 1 and 2). At that time, I did not have access to the Internet. Therefore, to have song lyrics, I had to buy them from a store near my school. Then, I began to translate them into French by using a bilingual dictionary. Doing the translation activities triggered my motivation to learn

English. Though the quality of my translation still needed a lot of improvement, it made sense somehow. Translating was particularly useful in terms of learning new vocabulary. As the vocabulary items were included in songs I enjoyed listening to, it was easier to memorize them. Furthermore, after the translation, I started to understand what the songs were about. It was great because I started to sing with the correct words and at the same time, I felt what the lyrics meant.
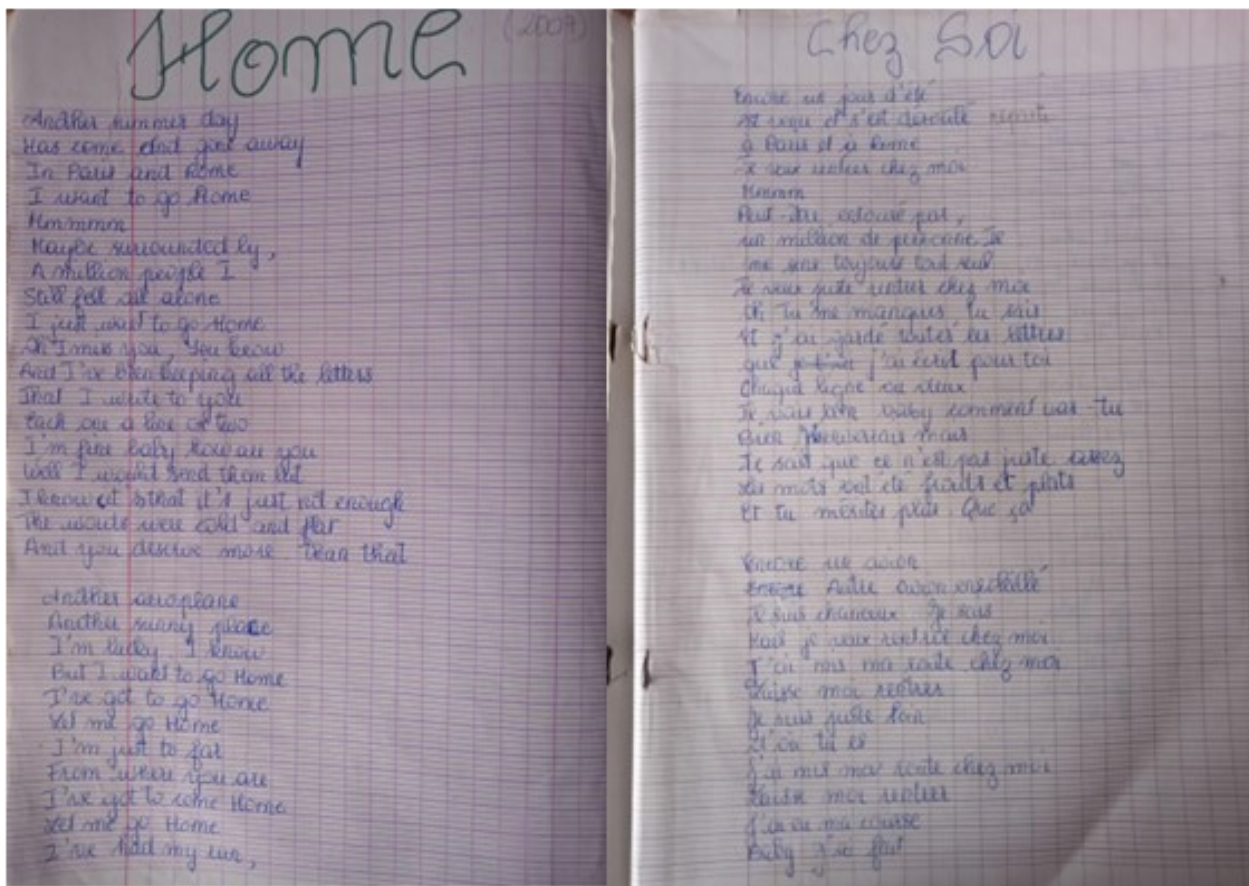

Figure 1. Fanaperana's First Song Translation

Vignette 3: Learning While Having Fun
In the second year of high school, my mother installed the Internet on my mobile phone, and I started to watch videos on Youtube, particularly Westlife's interviews on talk shows (for example, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k4DaYeeEl_A). Frankly, I did not understand anything, but I just liked watching them having fun. I downloaded many of their interviews on my phone. The urge to understand what they were saying resulted in the willingness to learn more to improve my English. I thus decided to engage in other activities. From my experience translating lyrics, I understood that I learn best while having fun. Therefore, I began to read comics in English on MangaToon (a free application for reading manga and comics) on weekends. Through pictures, I was able to guess the meaning of the dialogues. Furthermore, reading the comics improved both my reading skills and my vocabulary. I was able to learn simple English expressions that I could use in daily life.
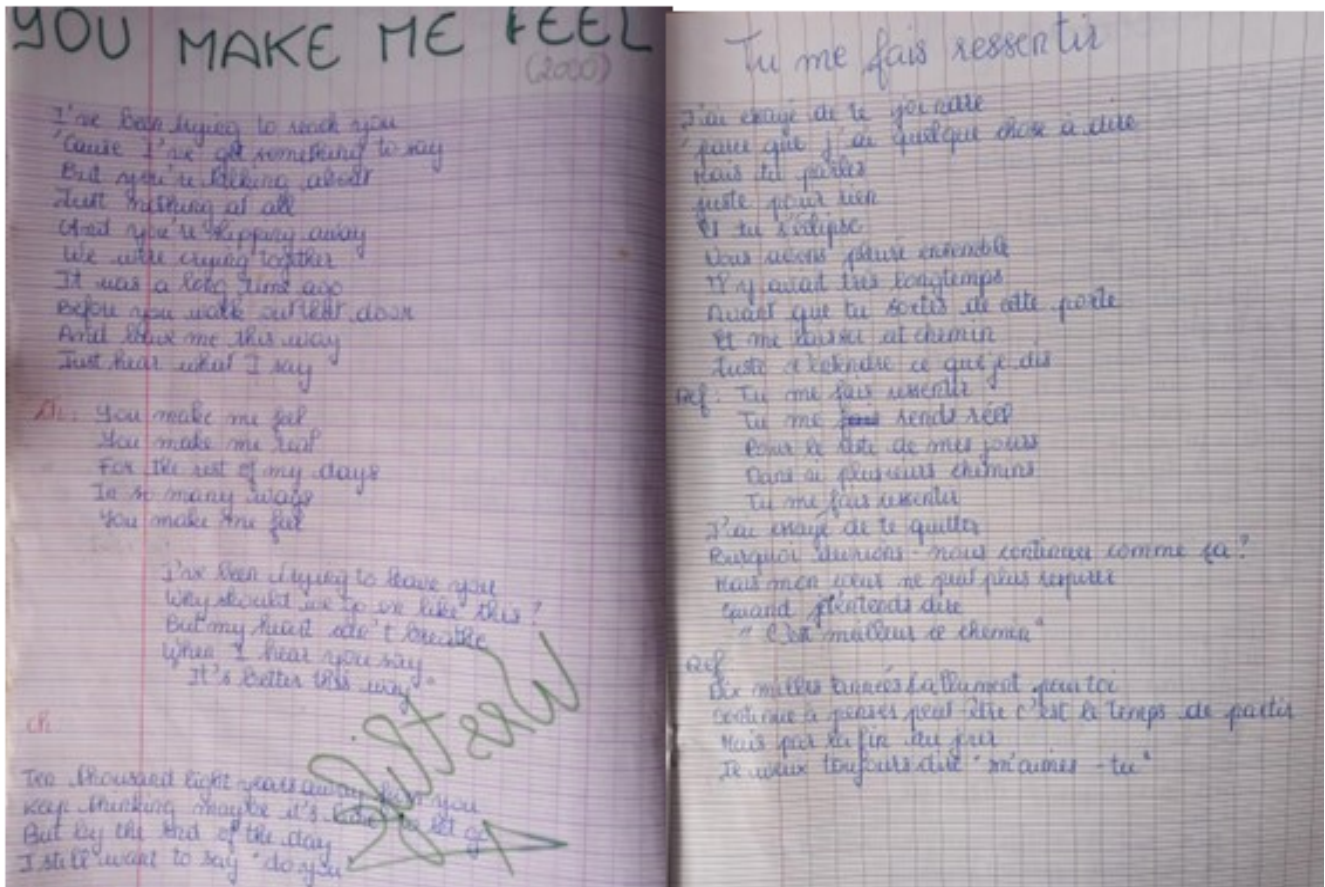
Figure 2. Fanaperana's Third Song Translation

Vignette 4: Creating More Learning Opportunities

I discovered that English is an international language. Therefore, I started chatting with foreigners on Facebook to get opportunities to practice English and learn new expressions. I also started practicing speaking by myself and with my sister. Then, after graduating from high school, I decided to attend an English language center because I thought I needed improvement in my English learning in general, and I would be able to meet some friends to speak to. I realized that my effort to improve my English speaking paid off when I was able to enter the center as an intermediate student (after a speaking placement test). Attending classes at that center influenced my LBC. First, I had friends with whom I could practice speaking. We decided to speak to each other in English after class when we went home. We did not choose to talk about any specific topics, but we just had free conversations in English. Second, my teacher recommended different websites, in which I was able to read books in epub formats (e.g., https://english-e-reader.net/) and practice listening (e.g., https://www.esl-lab.com/).

Vignette 5: Willingness to Become a Teacher of English

It was from my improvement and my love for English that I decided to study at the Teacher Training College to become a teacher of English. Due to the fiercely competitive examination, I had to study English even harder. Therefore, at home, I watched English programs, such as BBC News and English movies, which are available on paid TV channels. I read English books, and I often practiced speaking to myself in order to improve my English speaking skills.

In college, we rarely had class and hardly spoke in English. Once more, LBC has been a necessity. To improve my reading skills, I read many books. Fortunately, I had an acquaintance who used to be an English teacher, and she was very pleased to give me some of her English books (see Figure 3). Reading the books has improved my reading skills, as one book is about reading many texts with comprehension questions. Other books, such as classic and detective novels, have enabled me to learn a wide variety of vocabulary.
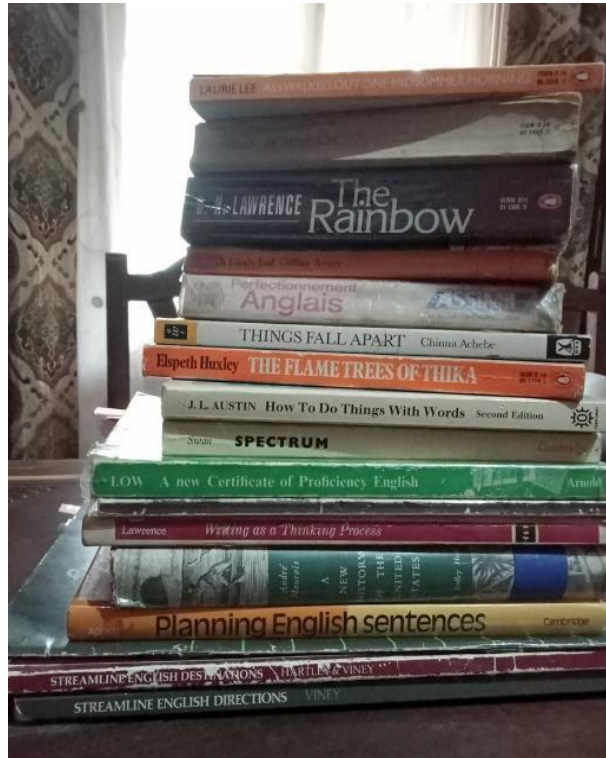

Figure 3. Fanaperana's Book Collection

Vignette 6: Back to Westlife

One day, during the lockdown, I looked through my old downloads, and I watched Westlife's interviews again. I was amazed to see how much I was able to understand compared to 6 years ago, when I first downloaded the videos and had just enjoyed watching them speaking and laughing without knowing what was funny. At that time, I had just said to myself that I would understand someday after hard work and a lot of time, and I was right! I realized that thanks to all the listening practice I had done, I was able to make considerable progress.

To sum up, most of my English learning happened beyond the classroom. The simple desire to understand song lyrics became a great desire to pursue my studies in an English-speaking country.

Olivia's LLH

Seven vignettes (Vignettes 7–13) follow from Olivia below.

Vignette 7: "How to Master English Within Just 10 Minutes," a Lie!

Excelling at English has always been my goal since I was in junior high school. I used to admire those English singers and motivational speakers on TV and radio with their

accent and fluency. For me, the fact that they could speak English so fast that I could not understand anything meant that they had mastered the language. However, I did not know the steps and challenges the people went through before becoming who they are. I thought that learning a language would be easy due to the unreal brilliant-sounding straplines I saw on the Internet saying how to master English within just 10 minutes. It was once I committed myself to it that I realized the time and effort required. I will put forward all my processes during my experiences about learning English beyond the classroom.

Vignette 8: "Practice Makes Perfect"

I am best known as a talkative girl, and I am sure that this behavior has helped me throughout my study. The first time my love for English appeared, I chatted with English speakers on Facebook. I always bore in mind what my former teacher taught me, that practice makes perfect, and it worked. I could apply what I was taught in class, learned new lexical items, and had my grammatical mistakes corrected. So, I can say that it was a useful opportunity. At first, I was afraid that they would not agree to text chat with me, but I pretended to be interested in their stories. Unfortunately, it did not last long, but I was not discouraged.

When I was home, I tried to simultaneously interpret what my siblings said from Malagasy to English, and I continued doing that though they were angry. They thought that I was mocking them, and they treated me like a silly girl. I did not care because I only focused on my goal. I was not good at translating or interpreting at that time, but I have been trying my best. It allowed me to increase my vocabulary.

Vignette 9: Motivating English Club

In my high school, our teacher created an English club, which I joined. The club met once a week and we had activities such as games, songs, and debates in English. Later, I became one of the English club leaders and was responsible for creating and leading the activities. We had opportunities to have native-speaker guests from time to time. Talking to them was challenging, as I was afraid to make mistakes in front of them, but it was motivating because I was dazzled by their accents. I said to myself that I shall master this language at any cost. One lesson I learned from those experiences was to never be ashamed of making mistakes. I knew that none of us was born bilingual and making mistakes was normal for everyone.

Leading the club was not an easy task, as I constantly had to find new enjoyable activities to keep the club members interested. Also, I was still a high school student and had to focus on my studies. Therefore, I had difficulty managing my time. There were times when I had to cancel club meetings, which resulted in members leaving the club. Nevertheless, leading the club was helpful in many ways, and especially as a future teacher, the greatest benefit for me was learning how to talk in front of many people.

Vignette 10: Learning Vocabulary Through Comics and Song Lyrics

Apart from practicing speaking, I read comics on the weekends. I found them funny and attractive, as the pictures were close to reality. I could also learn new vocabulary. The more words I learned, the higher my desire to learn became. I tried to remember at least one word a day and used it when I was speaking at the club and in class. I had to make that effort because I wanted to make a good impression, and that contributed to my self-improvement. My wish to improve my English skills became more and more intense.

As I like English songs, I checked the translation of the lyrics of my favorite songs on the Internet, not only to understand the songs but also to know more words and expressions. Though it was an effective way to learn vocabulary, I did not always have the chance to use them, and sometimes, I was not able to use some words appropriately since the meaning of one word could vary according to the context. From then, I started to double-check before using a word to make sure that I used it correctly.

Vignette 11: The Hard Work Paid Off

As I began to gradually refine my skills, I started to watch English cartoons and movies with subtitles to consolidate my listening skills and to acquire the accent, since I have indelibly dreamt of sounding native. The big struggle was the fact that I could not focus on the subtitles and the image at the same time. I was not even able to concentrate on what the characters were saying. My goal was not achieved then, but I carried on watching English movies.

Later, when I watched videos of motivational speakers on Facebook, I felt that something had changed as I began to understand what they were saying even without subtitles. I appreciated their amazing accent and their fluency, and the messages they conveyed were crystal clear. I realized that all my hard work of translating, practicing speaking, and learning vocabulary had paid off. And these were all due to the fact that I like the language itself.

Vignette 12: "Vakivakim-piainana" [hardship]

I recognized the impact of attending the English club when I volunteered to perform in a play (see Figure 4) with my classmates at the university. I had to articulate and speak aloud. I also learned new vocabulary because my classmates and I had to translate the scripts from Malagasy to English, as the original book, *Vakivakim-Piainana*, is in Malagasy. From the collaboration with my classmates, I learned other ways to translate ideas. As we only had about one month and a half to get prepared, we rehearsed almost every day. It really contributed to the improvement of my speaking skills because every mistake we made was corrected by the teacher, whether it was grammar or pronunciation. I learned to speak clearer and louder and to use body language as well as facial expressions, which are necessary skills I need as a future teacher. Preparing for and performing the play was an effective way to improve my English and to have fun at the same time.

Vignette 13: Learning on My Own for Self-Satisfaction

As an EFL student, I understand the importance of and the difficulty with autonomous learning. There were times when my motivation was low, especially when I saw people younger than me speaking fluently with an American accent. However, I said to myself, "If I stop now, all my efforts will be in vain, and I will bitterly regret it." Rather than seeing the younger people as a barrier, I should view them as a source of motivation to enhance my strong determination for learning English. Now, I can see the benefits of my devotion in the past through all the improvements I have made. I know the significance of learning with friends. It took me so many years to be able to speak English. I learned from my experience that I can be what I want to be, but I must be patient and persevere beyond the classroom to achieve my goal.

Figure 4. The Poster for the Play

What to Implement in Our Future Teaching

In the previous section, we described our LBC experiences, including our goals, activities, resources, and feelings by means of the vignettes. Taking our experiences into consideration, we will briefly discuss what we would like to implement in our future classes.

Fanaperana's Plan

LBC was crucial for my English learning. That is why I will encourage my future students to learn beyond the classroom. I will give them assignments requiring personal research, for example, a reading assignment requiring them to look for unknown vocabulary. I will also share resources with them where they can learn English effectively, such as useful websites. Lastly, from my experience, I believe that motivation is very important. Therefore, I will do my best to enhance my students' motivation by integrating topics that interest them into my lessons. Moreover, I will help them discover their own motivation to learn English by asking them questions about their interests and future goals and talking about opportunities they may have if they master English (e.g., future jobs or scholarship opportunities).

Olivia's Plan

Just as I did with my own LBC, I will give my students opportunities to link their learning and their interests so that they do not consider LBC as a burden. I will ask them to work in groups and to present topics of their interests for which they have to do some research and acquire new knowledge using the target language. Moreover, to demonstrate that English is a means of communication, not just an academic subject, I will create speaking opportunities allowing for LBC, such as English clubs, drama clubs, or even singing clubs. Once they master the language, creating opportunities for contests with awards is also a way to raise their motivation.

Implications and Conclusions: Vola's Contribution

The STs' vignettes remind me of my LBC experiences related to English when I lived in Madagascar. Like Fanaperana, I translated songs from French into English and vice versa. Also, I valued every resource I could use to improve any of my language skills. For instance, I remember I had to run home every day so that I could watch the BBC News on the national television network at 5 p.m., which was one of the very rare TV programs in English in those days. Like the STs, I agree that those LBC activities were crucial for my language development.

Believing in the importance of LBC and drawing from the STs' descriptions of and reflections on their LBC experiences, I will present three significant implications in this section that include ideas on how to promote LBC and learner autonomy to learners and to help learners maintain their motivation in and out of class. As reflection is essential to develop learner autonomy (Gregersen & MacIntyre, 2014; Little et al., 2017), each implication includes written and/or oral reflective activities.

Raise Students' Awareness of Their Interests Related to Language Learning

In writing and reflecting on their LLHs, both Fanaperana and Olivia emphasized that their interests pushed their willingness to learn and to seek different ways to improve their language skills beyond the classroom. They also linked their interests to their learning, which motivated them more. This mirrors the literature on interest as an enhancer of motivation and performance (e.g., McLoughlin, 2020; Mynard & McLoughlin, 2020; Silvia, 2008). Therefore, it is important that learners are aware of their interests related to the language they learn.

Not all learners have a clear idea of their sources of interests or their language-learning goals. Apart from the need to pass exams, they may not have any interest in English and may not realize the potential benefits of knowing English in their lives unless they are prompted to reflect on them. One way to help them reflect would be to have them discuss and write those benefits down in class along with activities they are doing or can do outside class to improve their English. Having students create posters like the one in Table 1 is recommended by Little et al. (2017), as posters serve "an indispensable awareness-raising function" (p. 28).

Table 1. *Poster on "Why and how do I learn English"*

Why do I learn English?	How do I learn English?
• talk to people in other countries	watch English / American films
• for education / a "must"	read English (books, newspapers)
• main language / nearly everybody can speak it / international language	speak English when I have to and when I want to.
• need it when I grow up / pilot	via projects
• I like English.	by doing grammar exercises

Note. This table was adapted from Little et al. (2017, p. 28).

Use Available Resources and Create Learning Opportunities

With the STs' strong motivation driven by their interests, they developed their agency by using available resources and creating learning opportunities. They understood their responsibilities to seek learning opportunities in a context where "the target language is a

scarce resource . . . and the learner must go out and construct an environment in which it is present" (Benson, 2021, p. 97). As they were aware of the lack of speaking opportunities in class, they looked for ways to practice speaking outside, such as speaking to themselves, siblings, classmates, and even strangers on social media. Furthermore, they used any resources they had at hand. Fanaperana, for instance, made use of her favorite songs to learn vocabulary and to develop her interest in English. Olivia used her siblings as "interpreting resources," though they might not be seen as obvious resources and apparently did not want to be used as such. The STs thus demonstrated that language learning resources in various forms can be created or adapted by learners themselves.

The implication would be to help learners think of possible resources around them and share those resources along with strategies they already use. They can be asked not only to consider accessible resources at school (e.g., library, books, and other materials) but also to reflect on their interests and hobbies, their daily activities, the people around them, and the places where they usually are, and then, to try to connect those resources beyond the classroom with their learning. An adapted version of the poster in Table 1 can be used as a brainstorming tool, which might result in an initial checklist of resources, strategies, and activities. Later in the academic year, time to share and reflect on learners' LBC resources and strategies in class is necessary. Sharing can be done through group discussions or peer interviews making use of the checklist. Learners should be reminded that their peers are valuable resources.

Teachers can also help learners create learning communities (e.g., speaking clubs) and projects allowing them to engage themselves. However, teachers should ensure that students make decisions about and feel ownership of the communities and projects. An excellent example is staging a theater performance, as mentioned by Olivia, in which she and her peers were responsible for the translation of the play and most of the organization of the performance.

Integrate Learners' Own Interests and Activities Inside and Outside Class

The third implication is related to the first two and to the promotion of learner autonomy. To foster learner autonomy in the classroom, learners' prior knowledge should be considered and integrated (Dam, 2019). This concerns not only their knowledge about the language itself, but also learning strategies and activities they already use to improve the language. As Little et al. (2017) state, "Engaging the knowledge, interests and skills that learners bring with them is a prerequisite for getting them involved in their learning. . . . It is also central to inclusive pedagogy" (p. 161). Encouraging learners to share their interests, goals, and existing LBC activities with the class and continue using them outside class and giving them opportunities to use the activities in class are ways to acknowledge learners as whole beings and enable them to "bring their other portable selves into learning experiences" (Magno e Silva, 2018, p. 221). In other words, besides being a language learner, a student is composed of different "selves," such as a Westlife fan, a tennis player, a theater performer, and others. If these selves are integrated in their language learning experiences, learners will find their learning more meaningful, and their autonomy will be more enhanced (Magno e Silva, 2018).

There are different ways to integrate learners' interests. One option is to enable them to present the latest news about their favorite singers, sport teams, actors, or anything they are passionate about once a month. That can be used as a warm-up activity and does not take much class time. Another option is to allocate time to talk about their interests

in groups. If learners like translating songs, they can do that as homework along with paying attention to some specific grammar points, for instance. Also, asking learners what activities they would like to do (as a warm-up or closing activity) from time to time can be highly appreciated.

Help Learners Maintain Motivation Through Reflection

Fanaperana and Olivia's LLHs demonstrate that their engagement to the LBC activities came from their intrinsic motivation. However, motivation can fluctuate (Dörnyei, 2020), and not all language learners have strong motivation. Even Olivia admitted that her motivation was not always high, especially when she compared herself to other fluent speakers. To increase her motivation, one way was to think about how much her persistence had paid off through all the progress she had made. Fanaperana also mentioned her tremendous listening improvement as the fruit of her persistence. As Dörnyei (2020) puts it, "the tangible sense of progress has a potent energy-yielding capacity" (p. 144). It is thus necessary for learners to notice and acknowledge their improvement and the outcomes of their persistence so they can maintain motivation.

One way to help learners notice their improvement and effort is having them regularly reflect on their learning via journal writing and discussions. The checklist mentioned above can be helpful. Then, a few times a year, there should be opportunities in class to discuss improvements, other positive points such as enjoyment vis-a-vis language learning, and updates on sources of motivation or demotivation. Additionally, teachers should help students highlight their own improvements by giving them individualized positive progress feedback (Dörnyei, 2020), indicating specifically the effort made.

Writing LLHs in Teacher Education

Through their LLHs, Fanaperana and Olivia were able to identify their purposes and drives for learning English and notice their difficulties, successes, and strategies and approaches to overcome the difficulties. They participated in what Nelson and Bishop (2013) refer to as "conversation about teaching and learning to improve [their] practice and concrete responsive pedagogy" (p. 19). Though Nelson and Bishop refer to collaborative action research with learners in this statement, it can also be applied to collaborative narrative writing, involving retrospective reflections and plans for future teaching. Writing the LLHs also raised the STs' awareness of the constraints of the classroom; of their self-empowerment, which they gained from LBC; and of practices they would like to implement in their future teaching. I would like, therefore, to conclude this paper by offering a suggestion related to the relevance of writing LLHs in teacher education.

In addition to the introduction and practice of different commonly used teaching approaches and methods, teacher education should also build on student teachers' existing knowledge and experiences. Student teachers have rich language learning experiences, which should be explored and used as resources. Gregersen (2022) states when referring to student teachers, "Take a look at what people can bring and make the best of what they brought." Integrating STs' learning experiences and existing knowledge about learning in the planning of their future teaching is a way, firstly, to empower them and help them understand the importance of considering genuine student needs, such as the establishment of the connection between learning and interests and the provision of communities and spaces to practice the language. Secondly, such integration will raise their awareness of their LBC and their own learner autonomy. Thirdly, their experiences

can serve as personalized and localized resources for future teachers and learners, as Everhard (2018) eloquently points out:

> In order to move forward, it is important to look back, to re-read what others (including students) have said, for quite often with the passage of time and with our own added experience, their words take on new meaning and resonance and inspire and impel us to act. (p. 287)

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Review Process

This paper was open-reviewed by Andy Barfield and Vivien Shu Hua Kao of the *Learner Development Journal* Review Network and the Journal Steering Group. *(Contributors have the option of open or blind review.)*

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