



## **ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING BEYOND THE CLASSROOM DURING COVID-19 CRISIS-A STUDY BASED ON T E R T I A R Y LEVEL ESL LEARNERS**

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### **Abstract**

Learners who follow English as their second language have numerous avenues to develop their language skills. Empirical evidence and previous researches suggest that language learning is not limited to the classroom and it can be extended beyond the four walls. The purpose of the present exploratory study is to find out the methods that the students use to learn English beyond the classroom considering ten first year undergraduates registered for English Intensive Programme conducted by the Faculty of Management and Finance, University of Ruhuna. The participants were given an open invitation through WhatsApp and the first ten who responded were selected for the study. The data were collected using two focused group discussions based on an open-ended questionnaire via Zoom with the selected participants at their convenience, whose first language (L1) is Sinhala. The gathered data were thematically analyzed. Based on the findings, it was evident that there were many methods of learning English language beyond the classroom— YouTube, Blogs, Games, Clubs, Films, Newspapers, and Social Network Services. Due to the current pandemic situation, teaching and learning process took place in online platform. Since the students were away from in person classroom, it was difficult to allocate adequate time to develop the language skills of the learners. Therefore, majority of the learners were motivated to adhere to alternative authentic approaches beyond the classroom to enhance their language learning skills. Inevitably, learners have become autonomous; who actively seek knowledge beyond the physical boundaries of the classroom. It provides a multimodal input while providing exposure to technology. Moreover, it allows flexibility and convenience by enabling learners to have their preferred pace, mode, and style of learning. The observations revealed that the learners had a positive language learning experience towards their own methods which assisted their language learning process.

**Keywords:** ESL, Technology, Learning methods, Undergraduates, Learning beyond the classroom

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