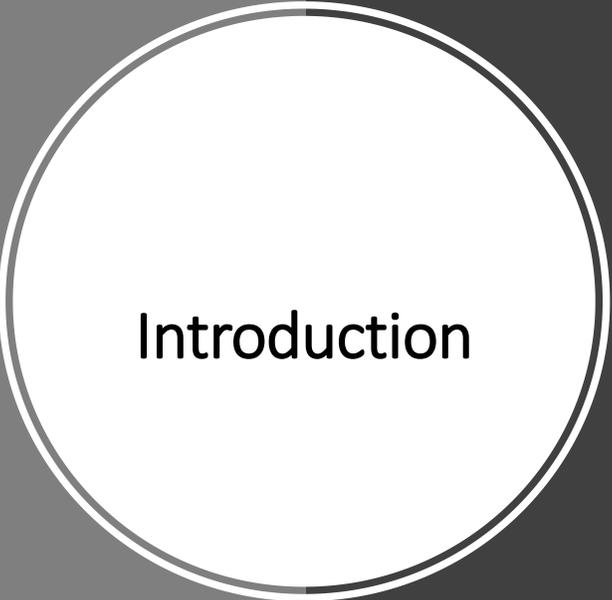




# BEYOND CLASSROOM ENGLISH ACTIVITIES TO GENERATE INTEREST IN ENGLISH AMONG TERTIARY STUDENTS

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## Introduction

- **Some students struggle to learn English taught in formal classroom setting where the teacher's focus is mainly to develop their students' linguistic skills.**
- **For many students such a structural approach to teaching and learning of English can be boring and ineffective (Orhon, 2018, Perell, 2016).**



## Literature Review

- The teaching and learning activities confined to classroom have long been an issue in education around the world (Wen & Piao, 2020; Wahid & Pilus, 2017).
- According to Orhon (2018) the impact of a teacher's teaching within the confines of a classroom, is somewhat limited.
- One way to determine the success of language learning, is to consider the autonomy of learners, described as “a capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision making and independent action” because learners must be independent to develop their proficiency in a second or foreign language skills (Orhon, 2018).
- It is believed that when students have more control in language learning activities, the learning process becomes more meaningful and they are linked closely to real-life events that “stimulate spontaneous language use” (Chen, 2016).



## Problem statement

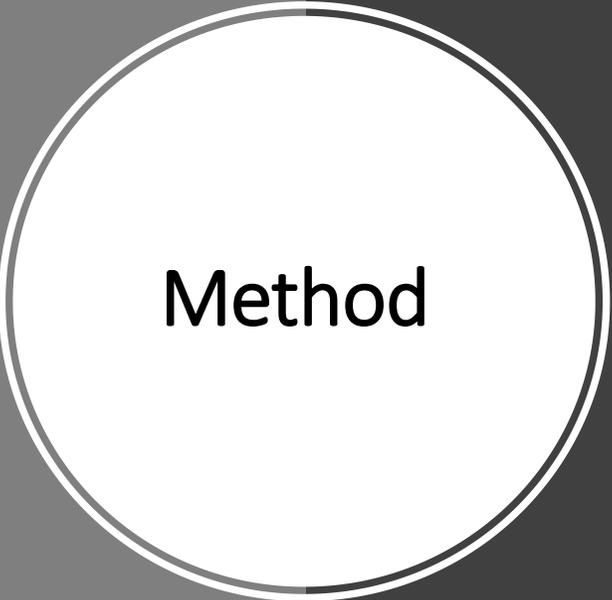
- In a country like Malaysia students do not have the opportunity to practice English outside classroom because the use of their mother tongue and the Malay language being the lingua franca.
- Hence, it is the responsibility of teachers to create opportunities for learners to continue their learning independently beyond classroom by undertaking language activities to attain better language proficiency.
- **This study was carried out to explore attitude, interest and perception of students from a local university in learning English language beyond the classroom setting using activities such as Readers Theatre, Storyboard, Academic Explorace, Spell-It-Right and Group Singing.**

## Beyond-the-classroom activities

- Beyond-the-classroom is defined as “any kind of learning that takes place outside the classroom and involves self-instruction, naturalistic learning or self-directed naturalistic learning” (Benson 2001, p.62, cited by Orhon,2018).
- Beyond-the-classroom activities are task-orientated activities that engages students in creative language use and have less teacher control.

# Background information of the study

- Lecturers from the Academy of Language Studies at a local university carried out a month long “Language Fest” where task-based language activities were carried out outside the classroom for a period of one month. The activities were:
  - 1. Readers Theatre
  - 2. Storyboard
  - 3. Melodies of Pilah (group singing)
  - 4. Academic Explorace
  - 5. Spell-it-right.
- Competitions were held at different levels ; the classroom, the faculty and the campus. The rules and regulations were briefed to all participants. The end product of each activity required the students to perform their work to an audience which comprised of students and lecturers.
- At the end of the month-long program students were asked to complete a questionnaire describing their experience in taking part in the different language activities.



## Method

- Quantitative data was collected using a questionnaire (students) and qualitative data from structured interview (lecturers) after “Language Fest”.
- students’ attitude, interest and perception towards the Beyond-the-classroom activities held to help improve their English proficiency.
- The questionnaire had a five-point Likert scale, ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree” or “very boring” to “very interesting” requiring participants to respond to each of the 20 statements considering their own experience in learning English via Beyond-the-classroom activities.

## Results and findings

Participants	Mean	Mean difference	t-values	p-values	Decision
Female	3.47	0.09	883	0.378	Not Significant
Male	3.38				
Female & Male	3.44				

The results indicated no significant difference between male students ( $M=3.38$ ) and female students ( $M=3.47$ ). This result was supported by the t-value and p-value. It was found that there was no significant difference on mean test score between the female and male since the p-value was more than 0.05. When the overall attitude of all participants was analyzed, it was discovered that the students had a positive attitude towards out-of-class activities to learn English ( $M=3.44$ ,  $SD=0.09$ ). This shows that students' overall attitude for activities carried out during Language Fest was at moderate level.



Results and findings

Type of activities	Mean score	Standard Deviation
Readers Theatre	4.00	0.755
Storyboard	3.94	0.716
Melodies of Pilah	3.92	0.842
Spell-it-Right	3.97	0.791
Academic Explore race	4.01	0.645

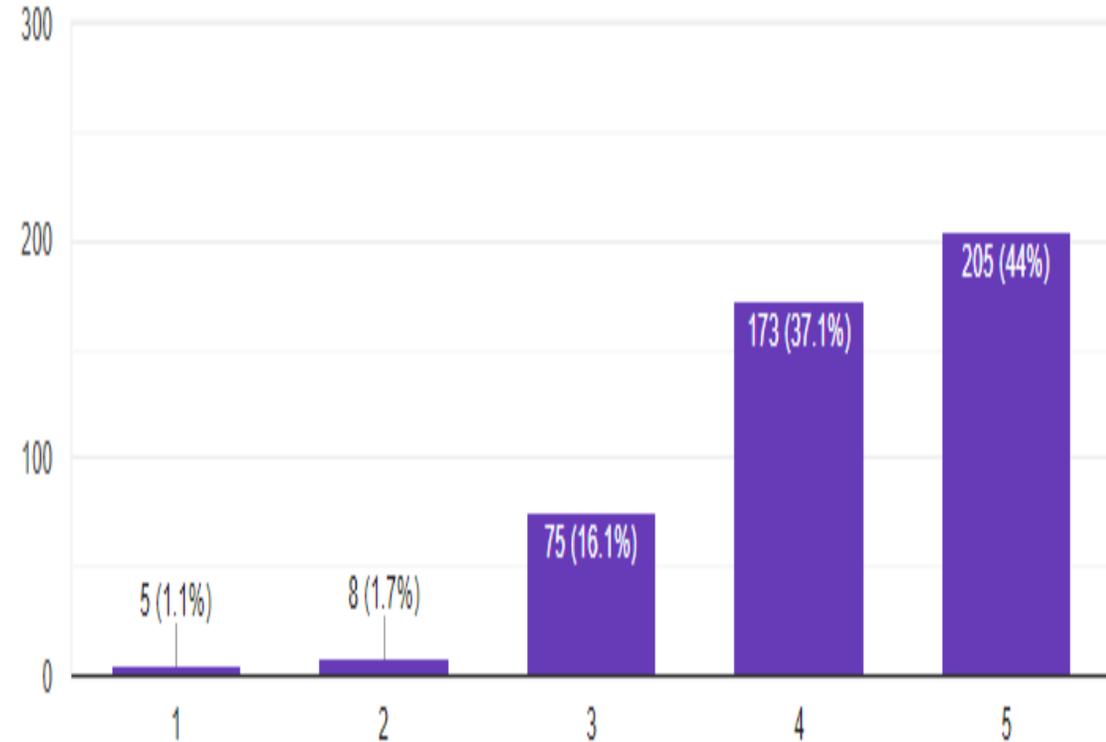
- The study also examined which one among the five activities was perceived as more helpful to improve their English learning outside the classroom.
- Students highly perceived all the five activities as helping them learn English outside the classroom. Nevertheless, the most preferred activities were Academic Explore race and Readers Theatre as seen in Table above.

# Results and findings

- Participants were also asked whether they preferred group or individual language learning activities to improve their language proficiency.
- The study revealed that students preferred group activities compared to individual activities. Figure 2 revealed that more than 80% either agree (37.1%) or totally agree (44.0%) that they prefer group activities compared to individual activities to help them learn English outside the classroom ( $M=4.21$ ,  $SD=0.75$ ).

10. I prefer group activities than individual activities to improve my language proficiency.

466 responses



## Results and Findings

Question	Yes (%)	No (%)	Maybe (%)	M	SD
Would you take part in out-class-language learning activities in future?	84.1	1.0	14.9	2.80	0.36
Do you agree that the language learning activities outside the classroom has helped you to improve in your English language proficiency?	74.9	0.6	24.5	2.24	0.43

Finally, to check if the participants enjoyed the experience of learning English independently outside the classroom, two questions were asked in the questionnaire as seen in the Table above.

The results revealed that more than 84.1% of the participants would take part in beyond-the-classroom language learning activities in future (M=2.8, SD=3.6).

To the question if the beyond-the-classroom activities had helped them improve their English language proficiency, 74.9% students replied “Yes” (M=2.24, SD=0.43).

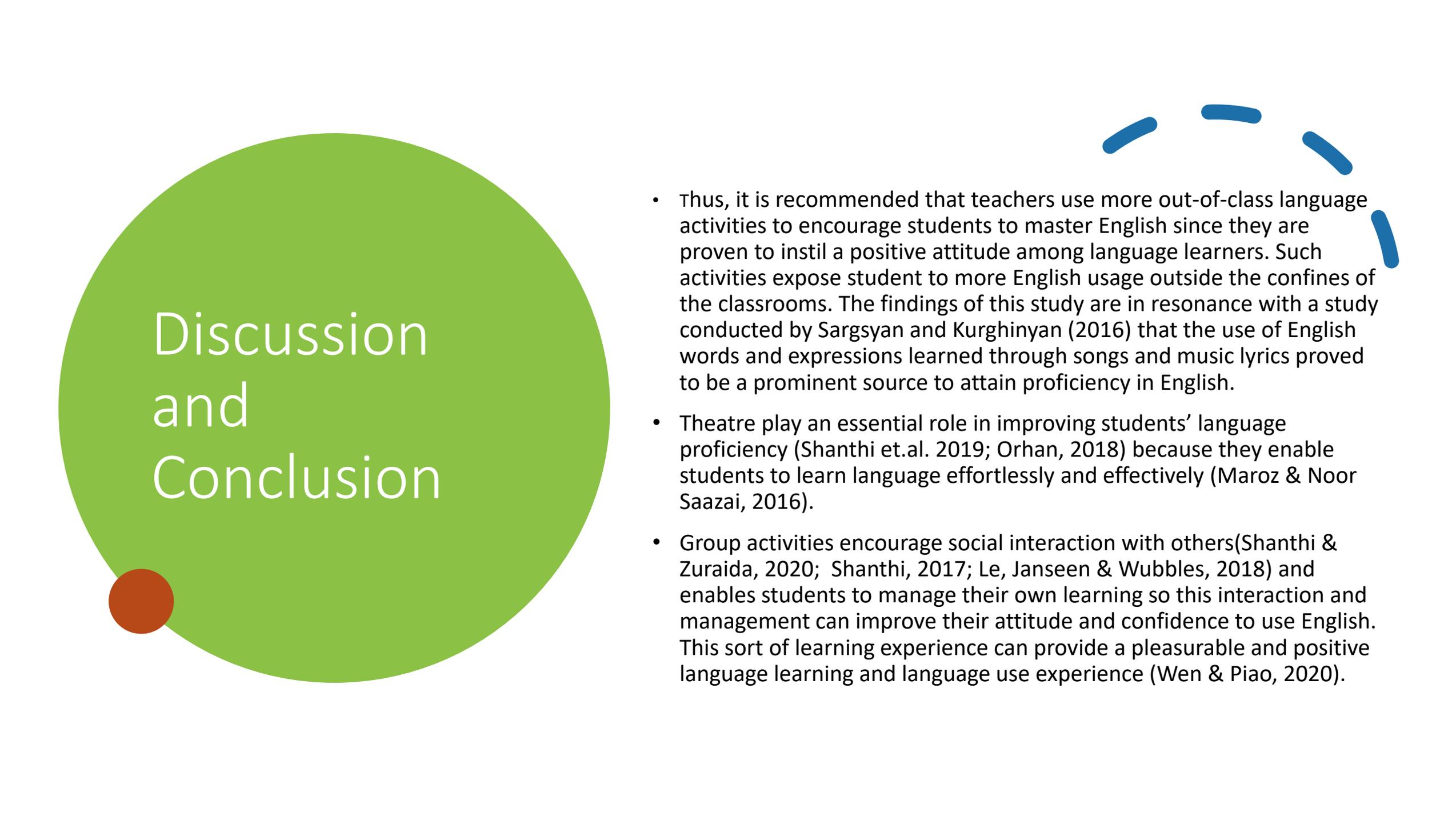
Semi  
structured  
interview....  
lecturers

FIVE lecturers were interviewed

- L1 \_ Students with higher proficiency level mostly took control of carrying out the activities and guided the less proficient ones. That in the end enabled the groups to produce good final performance.
- L2\_ Since students could choose the activity that they wanted to participate; students showed more interest to “show-off” their ability to use English especially in the speaking skill. They practiced more so as not to make mistakes in the final stage performance.
- L3\_ Students with lower language proficiency level did not show much improvement as they played small role in the group task. Task was more dominated by students with higher proficient level. So, I think students with better proficiency level shined and showed greater level of improvement in language skill.

Semi  
structured  
interview....  
continues ....

- L4\_ at the very beginning students were not comfortable or relaxed at the idea of performing in front of an audience because they lacked confidence. But later when I saw them during the final presentation, my students really bloomed.
- L5\_ the students needed me indirectly, I was sort of a guide to them; giving ideas and helping them check the language for their script. The students needed prompting and once they had their acts covered, they spent more time working on the own and the final product of their work was excellent. They had put in a lot of effort and were very creative; I find a very positive attitude to learning English in them that I never saw while they were in my class.
- ❖ It can be summarized that lecturers saw positive changes in the students' ability to use English as seen during the final performance to the audience. Students with low proficiency level needed guidance from their more proficient language learners, thus leading to good team work whereby the students with higher proficiency level were helping the weaker ones so that as a team they could complete the task at hand better.



# Discussion and Conclusion

- Thus, it is recommended that teachers use more out-of-class language activities to encourage students to master English since they are proven to instil a positive attitude among language learners. Such activities expose student to more English usage outside the confines of the classrooms. The findings of this study are in resonance with a study conducted by Sargsyan and Kurghinyan (2016) that the use of English words and expressions learned through songs and music lyrics proved to be a prominent source to attain proficiency in English.
- Theatre play an essential role in improving students' language proficiency (Shanthi et.al. 2019; Orhan, 2018) because they enable students to learn language effortlessly and effectively (Maroz & Noor Saazai, 2016).
- Group activities encourage social interaction with others(Shanthi & Zuraida, 2020; Shanthi, 2017; Le, Janseen & Wubbles, 2018) and enables students to manage their own learning so this interaction and management can improve their attitude and confidence to use English. This sort of learning experience can provide a pleasurable and positive language learning and language use experience (Wen & Piao, 2020).



## Conclusion and Future Research

- Based on the outcome of the study, it is recommended that students should be allowed to explore English materials independently outside the classroom where the process and level of learning that has taken place can be judged based on the final performance of the students in front of an audience. In short, the success of out-of-class activities to encourage English acquisition cannot be judged from the process but rather based on the end product of it.
- Future research look into what was reported by L3 Students with lower language proficiency level did not show much improvement as they played small role in the group task. Task was more dominated by students with higher proficient level. So, I think students with better proficiency level shined and showed greater level of improvement in language skill.

**Thank you**

